

SCENE And SEQUEL (How To Keep Your Fiction Moving)

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A novel that presents its characters and their problems, obstacles and outcomes in SCENES stands a better chance of being compelling and readable.

What is a scene? A scene is something that happens to your character during a particular time in a particular place. A scene presents your character grappling with a goal, a conflict and an outcome: good, bad or indifferent.

A **Scene** has the following three-part pattern:

- * **Goal**
- * **Conflict**
- * **Disaster** (Bad is the best choice for the outcome because it keeps things tense)

You can act out a scene because it contains dialogue, action and forces you character to make decisions. Hint: If you act out your scene and no one moves, says anything aloud or decides anything, then it's more of a SEQUEL.

Eleven Elements of a Scene

Try to include as many of these as you can, noting that **Concrete Sensory Details** are sensory in nature, something definable, i.e. concrete, and are not generalized (details).

1. **Place** (Where are we?)
2. **Character** (Who is present?)
3. **POV** (Point of View—whose eyes are we seeing out of?)
4. **Time Barrier** (When is this happening?)
5. **Purpose** (Why is this happening?)
6. **Sight** (What is around the POV character?)
7. **Sound** (What does your character hear?) Dialogue, we hope!
8. **Taste** (Might be a good meal or the taste of blood or fear in one's mouth)
9. **Touch** (Texture, how something feels against the skin, a punch in the gut)
10. **Smell** (Smell is a powerful memory-trigger)
11. **Light** (Dark? Dimly-lit? Bright sunlight?)

A **Sequel** has the following three-part pattern:

- * **Reaction**
- * **Dilemma**
- * **Decision**

In a sequel, your POV character reacts, thinks and decides about what just happened in the scene. Reactions=feelings. Dilemma=thinking about options. Decision=the next ACTION, which leads you to write the next scene. This is NOT an excuse for a long flashback.

By alternating **SCENES** and **SEQUELS** you follow the path of the three questions:

1. What does your character WANT? **GOAL**.
2. What is the **OBSTACLE** (problem, conflict) stands in his/her way?
3. What is your character willing to do, sacrifice to obtain the **GOAL**?