

## Save the Cat Writes a Novel

Descriptions from online handout by [Jessica Brody](#)

	Plot Beat	Description	Brainstorm
<b>Act 1</b>	Opening Image	Before “snapshot” of your main character/hero and their world	
	Theme-Stated	Statement made by a character (normally not the hero) that hints at what the hero’s arc will be (i.e. what the hero must learn/discover before the end of the book)	
	Set-Up	Exploration of the hero’s status quo life and all its flaws. This is where we learn what the hero’s life and world look like before its epic transformation	
	Catalyst	Inciting incident that happens to the hero which will catapult them into a new world or new way of thinking	
	Debate	Reaction sequence in which the hero debates what they will do next, usually presented in the form of a question	
<b>Act 2</b>	Break into Two	The moment the hero decides to accept the call to action, leave their comfort zone, try something new, venture into a new world or new way of thinking	
	B Story	The introduction of a new character or characters who will ultimately serve to help the hero learn the theme	
	Fun and Games	This is where we see the hero in their new world. Also called “the Promise of the Premise,” this section represents the “hook” of the story, why the reader picked up the novel in the first place	
	Midpoint	Literally the middle of the novel, where the “Fun and Games” culminates in either a “false victory” or a “false defeat” Something should happen here to “raise the stakes” and push the hero toward real change	

	Bad Guys Close In	If the midpoint was a false victory, this section will be a downward trajectory where things get consistently worse for the hero. If the midpoint was a false defeat, this section will be an upward trajectory where things get seemingly better. Regardless of trajectory, the hero's inner demons or "internal bad guys" are also closing in	
	All is Lost	The lowest point of the novel. This is an action beat where something happens to the hero that, combined with those "internal bad guys," pushes them to rock bottom	
	Dark Night of the Soul	Another reaction beat (similar to the Debate) where the hero takes a moment to react to everything that's happened leading up to this moment. The darkest night before the dawn, this is the moment right before the hero figures out the solution to their big problem and learns the theme	
<b>Act 3</b>	Break into Three	The aha moment! The hero realizes what they must do to not only fix all of the problems created in act 2, but more importantly, fix themselves	
	Finale	The hero proves they have truly learned the theme and enacts the plan they came up with in the "Break into 3." Bad guys are destroyed, inner demons are conquered, lovers are reunited. The hero's world is not only saved it's a better place than it was before	
	Final Image	Mirror to the "Opening Image", this is the closing "snapshot" of who the hero is now that he's gone through this epic and satisfying transformation	