

Hello - different kind of video today. This is a computer screen recording, so I didn't have to brush my hair, and you guys don't have to look at me. Win-win! I'm going to outline my NaNoWriMo novel later today and I wanted to do a quick run-through of my outlining process beforehand, so I don't have to try to explain it whilst outlining.

I did a video like this last year that is called '9 blocks in the plot board' or something along those lines and it goes over all this stuff. I wanted to do an updated, more coherent version so I made a slideshow presentation. Now I will talk you guys through the three-act, 9 block 27 chapter, outlining process that I've been using to outline all of my novels lately.

Before we begin - disclaimer. I am NOT a story structure professional. I did not invent story structure and I make no claims that this is the best and/or only way to outline. This is one of many different methods and this method is still like a work in progress. If you want to use this 27 chapter structure, that would be awesome.

I hope you let me know how it works for you and if you have any ideas for changes or refining certain points. Definitely let me know because, like I said, this is still a work in progress and I'm still trying to figure this thing out. So 3 act structure is the base of this. I like 3 act structure because it makes a lot of sense to me.

You know, beginning, middle, end - straightforward. It's also familiar because you know most things in life have a beginning, a middle and an end. In writing a three-act structure, the beginning, middle, and end translates into setup, conflict, resolution. The first act is setup, the second act is conflict, and the third act is resolution, but it also goes deeper.

Each act will also have its own set up, conflict and resolution, and this pattern of set up, conflict, resolution will constantly appear. Each arc within the story will have a set up, a conflict, resolution. Each chapter, each scene beginning, middle, end - set up, conflict, resolution.

Act one is the set up act. The general point of act 1 is to set up everything for the rest of the story but within act one, this set of act there is, of course, a beginning, a middle, and an end. The setup to Act one is introducing the hero, the hero's ordinary world and the problem that will disrupt the hero's ordinary world.

The conflict is how the inciting incident changes the hero's life. The resolution to this setup and concept combination, is that the hero's life has changed and the hero is pushed into a new world. Act two is the conflict Act. This act is usually harder to pin down and describe because it will change drastically for every story you know.

Introductions are straightforward. You introduce what you'll be working with. Endings are also pretty straightforward. You need to resolve everything you introduced from the beginning. If the first act is the stuff happening to the hero, and the last act is the hero taking action and resolving the story, then the middle is the hero's emotional and mental transformation.

The hero at the end of act 1 is not yet equipped to handle act 3, thus act 2. Within act 2 we of course have a set up, a conflict and a resolution. The set up is the hero experiencing the new world they were pushed into from the first act. The conflict is the hero experiencing a crisis of this new world and evolving and changing. The resolution of the second act is the hero being transformed and dedicating themselves to finding the solution to the problems they face.

The third act is where everything falls apart and goes to hell and gets put back together again. In the first act, you introduce the problems. In the second act you play around with the problems, and in the final act you resolve those problems. The setup of the third act is, you have a dedicated transform hero who faces such crazy problems that victory seems impossible.

The conflict of this act is the hero working harder than ever to overcome these struggles and find the power within themselves to take action and complete their story. And finally, the resolution is the solution to all this. In many stories this means the hero goes to battle, wins and thus resolves all of their problems.

Obviously, not every story is the hero winning and succeeding, but even if the hero fails, the problems must still be resolved. Most, if not all the questions still need to be answered. I'm personally a happy ending kind of girl, so I don't really have much experience with failing hero resolutions. In my version the hero wins - hooray, go hero!

Now we have three acts and three parts within each of those acts and that leaves us with what I call the nine blocks. The first act has introductions, the effect of the inciting incident and the pinch or the plot twist, and the push into the second act. The second act has the hero experiencing the new world which contrasts with their old world. The midpoint, which is the point of reversal for the hero, the point where

they stop letting things happen to them and decide to take action.

Then the hero beginning to take action and dedicating themselves to finding a solution. Then in the third act we have the second plot twist pinch. The hero is more determined than ever but then something bigger than ever gets in the way to deter them. This leads to the darkest moment where things look bleak and impossible.

The hero must find the power within themselves take action and make all the different strings of plot converge and combine. Then you have the big battle the climax in the resolution. These are the nine blocks. Now I take the nine blocks and give each of those a beginning, middle and end, and that is how I end up with a 20-7 chapter outline base.

The act one set a block is the introduction, the inciting incident and the immediate reaction of the inciting incident. The second block is divided into chapters, of like a long term reaction how this will continually affect the hero's life. The hero taking action because this far just stuff has been happening to them and begging to stand up for themselves.

Then of course there is a consequence to taking action. For the third block of act one we have rising pressure and stress the hero's life is changing. Change is scary and then - BAM - the first plot twist or the pinch. Something happens that the hero can no longer ignore or even try to ignore. They are being pushed into this new direction whether they like it or not.

Act two block. This block I feel has the most room for flexibility. You want to cover the introduction into the New World, contrast with the old world and give the hero some time for fun and games and playing around in this new world. If it's like a new romantic relationship, for example, then this block could be the lovers getting to know each other.

But maybe they have conflicting opinions on something, and they have to make compromises, which is different from how they lived in their old life. The second block is the build-up to the midpoint. The midpoint itself and the reversal, what the midpoint most dramatically and immediately changes for the hero.

The final block of this act is the hero reacting to this change in themselves and deciding to put on their hero hat and take action, dedicating themselves to solving the problem at hand. No matter what in the

third act the hero experiences, trials unlike anything they've dealt with before. Good thing they are so dedicated now after the midpoint, because a weaker version of the hero would not survive this part of the story.

They are put through trials, they experience another plot twist that makes things even worse and they find themselves in the darkest moment. Things look bleak. Victory is impossible but then they pull themselves together, find the power within and take action because now they are determined. Things can't get any worse and they can only go up from here.

The hero takes action and now they are the one making stuff happen. The action the hero takes forces the plot to converge and gather and then the explosions happen. In the last block of the last act we have the battle struggle, the final fight the hero must overcome. We have the climax, the point of no return and then we have the resolution.

What happens after the climax? What is the aftermath? What is the falling action? The story is wrapped up, maybe with a few loose strings, maybe with a pretty little bow but either way there is a satisfying battle and a resolution to bring about the end of the story. And there we have it. This is the outline I use; 3 X 9 blocks 27 chapters.

Sometimes chapters get combined or split out, but I use these 27 points as a guide for 27 story events that push the plot forward. Try to make it pretty open-ended and a lot of the time I will twist it a bit to fit better to the story, rather than the other way around of twisting my story to fit the outline. The structure is like a skeleton for the story but it's not supposed to be something really prominent.

When you're talking to a living, breathing, smiling, laughing person, you aren't thinking about their skeletal structure underneath. At least, you're probably not because that's a little weird, but hey no judgement here people. Books have souls and personalities, and life. The structure is just the foundation it gives it a bit of shape but what you put on that skeleton is not always restricted to this shape.

A lot of people have similar skeletons but that doesn't mean those people are anything alike. A quiet literary novel could be built off this outline, as well as a dynamic explosive thriller. This is just a foundation on which to build your story up, and there are lots of different structures.

In my version of the three act structure, all the acts are the same length but sometimes the middle act is

50% of the story and the first and third each get 25 percent. Sometimes the acts are broken up in different places. I've seen a couple of story outlines where the second plot twist is at the end of the second act not at the beginning of the third act like I do it.

There are just so many different ways to structure story and this is just one of them, so yeah . I hope you enjoyed this video I hope I made at least some sense. Again, I'm not a professional at anything. I would love to hear your thoughts though. What do you think of the structure? Would you ever use something like this to outline, or what structure do you prefer to use? Now I am going to outline my NaNoWriMo novel using this 27 chapter, structure of course. Good luck with all of your writing and outlining endeavours. I'll have a new video up soon - I hope you have a good night.