



Use 5-Step Dramatic Action and TEARS to Craft Scenes

Use the 5-step classic dramatic action sequence combined with the TEARS method for a powerful framework for structuring page-turning scenes in a screenplay or novel.

5-Steps of Dramatic Action	TEARS Method
<p>1. Setup/inciting incident</p> <p>The opening argument + the catalyst</p>	<p>TAKE US DEEPER EMOTIONALLY</p> <p>Show protagonist's archetypal weakness through reaction to the catalyst</p>
<p>2. Mounting obstacles</p> <p>Escalate impossible challenges to the breaking point</p>	<p>ELEVATE THE STAKES</p> <p>Add character's decisions, time constraint, and threats to reach goals</p>
<p>3. Crisis question</p> <p>Protagonist faces a pivotal dilemma forcing a reevaluation of the goal</p>	<p>ADVANCE THE STORY</p> <p>Reveal crucial evidence leading to new evaluation or new a subplot complicating the protagonist's goal</p>
<p>4. Climax answer/climax action</p> <p>Character takes a decisive action leading to moment of truth</p>	<p>REVERSE THE EXPECTATIONS</p> <p>Add false win, false loss, ally turns enemy, enemy turns ally, or plot twist or theme twist that challenges the protagonist's assumptions</p>
<p>5. Resolution</p> <p>Reveal consequences of actions and decisions as positive, negative, or doubly positive, or negative and show the change</p>	<p>SET UP THE NEXT SCENE</p> <p>End of a cliffhanger or unresolved conflict or introduce the location or need for next scene</p>