

Story Structure & Character Arc Alignment Chart

Are you a character-driven writer instead of a plot-driven writer? Have you wondered how your protagonist's character arc can parallel the basic building blocks of story structure (Acts I / II / III, Inciting Incident, etc.)? The **Story Structure & Structure-Arc Alignment Chart** can help!

Created as part of the [Character Evolution Files](#), this Alignment Chart shows the [10 stages](#) of a [positive character arc](#) and how they compare to the three-act story structure and other important plot points. You might find both "sides" have more in common than you may have thought!

Please note that the Alignment Chart is more of a visual accompaniment or guide than a worksheet. If you'd like to learn more about each individual stage of the character arc, check out the Character Evolution Files' series Journey Through the Character Arc, starting with [File No. 03](#), which covers the Trigger / Inciting Incident.

Instructions: Print out or download a copy of this chart (which starts on the next page). Refer to it as needed while reading the Journey Through the Character Arc series. You may also use this to help construct your own character arc(s).

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Stage No. in Story Journey	Name of Stage in Character Arc	Name of Stage in Story Structure	Approx. Location in Story (Percentage of Word / Page Count)**	Significance In Plot	Significance in Character Arc
1	Trigger	Inciting Incident	First 2 or 3 chapters, or at the story's 10% mark (NOTE: In terms of story structure, the inciting incident is part of Act I.)	Introduces the protagonist and draws him into the main conflict.	Sparks the protagonist's arc by bringing him face to face with his false belief. Launches him toward his first dilemma / major decision.
2	Comfort Zone	Act I	First 25% of the story	Introduces the protagonist's world / current situation and possible antagonist(s). Also shows the protagonist's initial attempts to adjust to Stage 1.	Shows the protagonist clinging to his false belief. Provides insight to the reader on how the protagonist can grow and change.
3	Point of No Return	First Major Plot Point / End of Act I	The story's 25% mark	Defines the story goal, stakes, and obstacles. Fully brings the antagonist(s) into the fray.	Forces the protagonist to make a decision that changes things forever (or gives him no choice). Helps him realize he might need to let go of his false belief in order to succeed.
4	Struggle	Act II, First Half	Second 25% of the story (from 25% through 50%)	Shows the protagonist's response to Stage 3. Includes reminders of the antagonist(s) and adds more conflict.	Shows the protagonist resisting initial attempts to change. Presents him with information, skills, etc. he needs to envision life without his false belief.

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5	Revelation	Midpoint / Second Major Plot Point	The story's 50% mark	Presents a new event that calls for new decisions, actions, or awareness from the protagonist. Reinforces the story goal and stakes.	Marks the protagonist's switch from reacting to acting. Teaches him why the opposite truth to his false belief is important, and compels him to take the first step in the right direction.
6	Charge	Act II, Second Half	Third 25% of the story (from 50% through 75%)	Shows the protagonist changing course in his approach to obstacles. Offers reminders of the antagonist(s), or increases build-up for next showdown with the antagonist(s).	Shows the protagonist feeling empowered and taking more actions to shed his false belief.
7	Dark Night of the Soul	Third Major Plot Point / End of Act II	The story's 75% mark	Presents a final setback (event or new information) that throws the protagonist off-guard and prompts him to make another decision. May have an "all-hope-is-lost" ambiance.	Forces the protagonist to confront his false belief again, and to finally choose between the false belief and the opposite truth. (NOTE: In a positive arc, the protagonist usually chooses the truth.)
8	Aftermath	Act III, First Half	From 75% through 90%	Shows the protagonist preparing for a final showdown with the antagonist(s) and any results or fallout from Stage 7.	Shows the protagonist coming to terms with his decision to throw away his false belief.

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9	Moment of Truth	Climax (Act III, Third Quarter)	From 90% through 95%	Presents the final confrontation between the protagonist and the antagonist(s). (NOTE: In most positive arcs, the protagonist defeats the antagonist(s).)	Shows the protagonist taking what he learned during the story and using it to prove he has changed.
10	Emergence	Resolution / End of Story (Act III, Final Quarter)	From 95% through the end	Shows the results and/or consequences of Stage 9.	Offers further evidence that the protagonist has changed, and a glimpse into his new life now that he has let go of his false belief.

** Please note that these values are approximate, and may vary slightly from story to story. However, keeping as close to these values as possible can help ensure steady, consistent pacing in your story.