

Beat Sheet Template

CELT^X

Use this template to map the key story beats of your screenplay, pilot, or short film. Keep each answer short at first. The goal is not to write the whole script but to understand the shape of the story.

Project Overview

Title _____

Format _____

Genre _____

Logline

1. Opening Image

What do we see at the very beginning of the story?

What does this moment tell us about the world, tone, or protagonist?

2. The Protagonist's Starting Point

Who is the main character at the start?

What do they want?

What are they missing, avoiding, or misunderstanding?

3. The Disruption

What happens that unsettles the protagonist's normal world?

Why can't things simply continue as they were?

4. The First Big Choice

What decision pulls the protagonist into the main story?

What are they hoping to gain or avoid?

5. Early Progress

What does the protagonist try first?

Does it work, fail, or create a bigger problem?

6. Rising Pressure

How does the conflict become harder?

What new obstacle, threat, or complication appears?

7. Midpoint

What major event changes the direction of the story?

Does the protagonist gain new information, suffer a setback, or commit more fully?

8. Things Fall Apart

What goes wrong?

How are the protagonist's flaws, fears, or bad choices catching up with them?

9. Lowest Point

What is the protagonist's most difficult moment?

What do they lose, realize, or refuse to face?

10. Final Choice

What decision defines the climax?

How does this choice show who the protagonist has become?

11. Resolution

What changes by the end?

How is the protagonist's final position different from where they began?

12. Closing Image

What final image, moment, or feeling does the story leave us with?

How does it reflect the journey of the story?

Quick Story Checklist

Can you clearly answer these?

- What does the protagonist want?
- What is standing in their way?
- What happens if they fail?
- How do they change?
- What is the story really about?
- Does each beat lead naturally to the next?
- Are there any repeated beats doing the same job?
- Is there a clear emotional journey from beginning to end?