

Kishotenketsu Story Template

CELTx

Kishōtenketsu is a four-part story structure that creates progression through development, contrast, and discovery rather than relying entirely on conflict.

Use this template to outline a short film, episode, comic, scene, animation, or character-led story.

Story Idea

Working Title _____

Genre _____

Central Character/Subject _____

Setting _____

Ki: Introduction

- *Introduce the central character, setting, situation, or idea.*
- *Establish a clear pattern and give the audience something interesting to observe.*

Who or what is being introduced?

What is the character's normal situation?

What important image, object, relationship, or routine appears?

What question or feeling should interest the audience?

Sho: Development

- *Expand the situation introduced in the opening.*
- *Add new details, deepen the pattern, and allow the audience to form expectations.*

How does the opening situation develop?

What new detail is introduced?

How does the character, relationship, or setting become more meaningful?

What does the audience currently believe is happening?

Ten: Turn

- *Introduce a surprising change, contrast, revelation, or shift in perspective.*
- *The turn should challenge the audience's assumptions without feeling completely disconnected from the earlier story.*

What unexpected element enters the story?

How does it change the meaning of what came before?

What is the turn based on?

What new question does the turn create?

Ketsu: Conclusion

- *Connect the introduction, development, and turn.*
- *Show how the different elements belong together and allow the audience to see the story in a new way.*

How are the earlier story elements connected?

What does the character or audience now understand?

How has the meaning of the opening changed?

What final image, action, or line will complete the story?

Final Story Check

- ☐ Is the opening situation interesting without immediate conflict?
- ☐ Does the development add new information rather than simply repeat the introduction?
- ☐ Does the turn challenge an assumption?
- ☐ Is the turn surprising but still relevant?
- ☐ Does the conclusion connect the different sections?
- ☐ Does the ending change how the audience understands the beginning?
- ☐ Can any information be communicated visually?
- ☐ Does every stage contribute to the same central idea?