

# A beat sheet template for you to use

Here's a beat sheet template you can use (with approximate placement as percentages of your story's length).

## How to use this template

- Print out any copies you require
- Decide your story's approximate length (e.g., 80,000 words) and use the percentages to locate each beat (e.g., Midpoint around 40,000 words).
- For each beat, write **one or two sentences** describing what happens in **your** story there.
- Use this as your high-level outline while drafting, and adjust as the story evolves.

## Act 1 – Beginning

### 1. Opening Image (0–1%):

A “before” snapshot of your protagonist and their ordinary world.

### 2. Theme Stated (~5%): (Optional)

Someone (not usually the protagonist) hints at the central lesson or question of the story.

### 3. Set-Up (1-10%):

Establish the protagonist's everyday life, supporting cast, stakes, and flaws; show what's missing or wrong.

### 4. Catalyst (~10%):

The “inciting incident” - something happens that disrupts the status quo and creates a problem.

### 5. Debate (10-20%):

The protagonist hesitates, argues with themselves or others, and wonders whether to act or how to respond.

## **6. Break into Two (≈20%):**

The decisive moment when the protagonist commits to a course of action and enters a new world or situation (Act 2).

## **Act 2A – Fun and Games**

### **7. B Story (≈22%): (Optional)**

Usually a relationship subplot (friendship, romance, mentor, etc.) that supports the theme.

### **8. Fun and Games (20-50%):**

The “promise of the premise”: the core situations, adventures, or challenges that show what your story is really about.

### **9. Midpoint (≈50%):**

A major turning point: a false victory or false defeat that raises the stakes and changes the game.

## **Act 2B – Bad Times**

### **10. Bad Guys Close In (50-75%):**

Internal and external pressures increase; antagonistic forces tighten their grip; things get progressively worse.

### **11. All Is Lost (≈75%):**

The apparent worst moment: a major failure, loss, or betrayal; a “whiff of death” (literal or metaphorical).

### **12. Dark Night of the Soul (75-80%):**

The emotional low point, where the protagonist digests the disaster, questions everything, and seems ready to give up - until they discover a new insight or way forward.

### **13. Break into Three (≈80%): (Optional)**

Armed with new understanding (often tied to the theme), the protagonist makes a fresh decision that launches the climax (Act 3).



### **Act 3 – End**

### **14. Finale (80-99%):**

The climactic sequence: the protagonist applies what they've learned, confronts the main problem, and resolves the central conflict.



### **15. Final Image (≈100%): (Optional)**

A closing snapshot that mirrors or contrasts the opening image, showing how the protagonist and their world have changed.

