

5 Keys to Unlocking the Secrets of Novel Writing

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The 5 Writing Keys

- Key 1: Story Arc
- Key 2: Character Arc
- Key 3: Point of View (POV)
- Key 4: Show vs. Tell
- Key 5: Exposition



Why Are the 5 Keys Important?

- Required for a good, coherent story
- Provide structure
- Give writers a roadmap
- Can help diagnose story problems
- If missing, readers will sense something is “off”



Key 1: Story Arc

- Also known as “narrative arc” or “dramatic arc”
- Path or journey of the story
- Stories unfold according to certain events happening at a certain time



Key 1: Story Arc

What are the parts of a story arc?

- Exposition
- Rising Action
- Climax
- Falling Action
- Resolution (Denouement)



Key 1: Story Arc Exposition (Introduction)

- Reader's introduction to the story
- Includes needed background information
- Who—introduction to main characters
- Where—setting, location, world-building tidbits
- When—time period, season, dates, etc.



Key 1: Story Arc Exposition

Example:

It was a dark and stormy night.

Terrible trope...but it does, in fact, give you some information.



Key 1: Story Arc Exposition

Example from “Trine Rising”:

“If I don’t understand my ciphers, I won’t get to be a seer. They’ll never let me choose an amulet,” Taddie whimpered, his breaths turned to little puffs of steam in the chill air of the stable.

Mirana Pinal bit her bottom lip and furrowed her brows in amused concern at the little boy’s predicament. “You were born a seer. Nothing and no one can take away the gift the Aspects Above gave you.”

She knew that all too well.

...

Mirana waved her hand, sending a small current of intent to the lamps with the gesture. They flared to life dispelling some shadows and creating others as evening descended outside of the stable.

“Taddie, you’re only six summers old. I think you have some time to learn your numbers. You saw Falantir in shambles just like me. Just like the rest of the seers.”

Taddie wiped his nose with a sleeve. “Ai, but you were the only one who saw it was the Ken’nar.” He was right. Her interpretation of that vision led to the order extending her father’s tour of duty. And may have sent him to his death.

...

He lowered his watery sapphire-blue gaze. “I’m stupid.”

“You are not stupid. Just because you don’t understand something, doesn’t make you stupid. If anyone is failing here, it’s me. I’m not doing a good job explaining things to you.”

Taddie played with a piece of straw. “You never fail at anything.”

He could not be more wrong.

...

“My maithe has us older scholaire’e teaching you younger ones to help us both learn our lessons. So, like it or not, we’re in this together. Let’s try something different.”

She searched the monstrous stable for something that would help the little boy learn the simple sum. The horse paddocks made up one quarter-mile-long arm of the massive, multi-storied square of the learning hall, all guarded by the imposing watchtower, Jasal’s Keep. The three aisles of paddocks housed hundreds of warhorses for Kin-Deren province’s army. Despite the wet snow falling outside, the bodies and breath of the horses made the stable nearly comfortable. And Taddie loved horses.

— “Trine Rising” by C.K. Donnelly

A close-up photograph of a black computer keyboard. A gold key with a decorative, ornate head is resting on the Enter key. The key has a small rectangular notch on its stem. The keyboard keys are visible, including the Enter key, Shift key, and a key with a left arrow. The background is slightly blurred, focusing on the key and the keyboard.

Key 1: Story Arc Exposition

We learn:

- The names of the main character (Mirana) and a supporting character
- Where they are (in a massive stable)
- The time of day (evening)
- Weather (cold, wet snow is falling)
- Location (the stable is in the learning hall complex and houses warhorses)



Key 1: Story Arc Exposition

We learn:

- Mirana is a student herself
- Her mother is a person of importance
- We see Mirana in her normal, everyday life (at home, tutoring a younger student)
- Allusions to story tension


Nothing and no one can take away the gift the Aspects Above gave you. = She knew that all too well.

Taddie played with a piece of straw. “You never fail at anything.” = He could not be more wrong.



Key 1: Story Arc Exposition

- We learned all this information in just the first 3 pages of the first chapter of “Trine Rising”.
- Don’t “force feed” reader massive amounts of explanatory or backstory info
- Work in bits, through a character’s point of view, state of mind



Key 1: Story Arc Rising Action

- When story conflict begins to ramp up
- Includes:
 - **Inciting Incident**—the triggering event that kicks off the main events of the story; story-driven or the event
 - **Call to Action**—event that propels the main character out of his everyday circumstances; character-driven or character's response
 - Some feel these are one and the same; differences can be subtle
- Readers are starting to see what the story is *really* about



Key 1: Story Arc Rising Action

Example from “Star Wars”:

- **Inciting Incident**—Darth Vader quickly interrogates the newly captured Princess Leia, accusing her of stealing the Death Star plans.
- **Call to Action**—Luke’s family on Tatooine has been killed, and he has just learned he possesses the Force from his father. He makes the decision to join Ben Obi-Wan Kenobi to bring the Death Star plans to Rebel leaders on Alderaan. He has little choice but to go forward.



Key 1: Story Arc

Rising Action

Example from “A Christmas Carol”:

- The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge back to his unhappy childhood and shows him that his former fiancée, Belle, ended their relationship because he was too obsessed with money. Then, the Ghost of Christmas Present takes him to his employee Bob Cratchit’s bleak Christmas dinner, where Scrooge learns his son, Tiny Tim, is gravely ill and in danger of dying unless his family’s circumstances change.



Key 1: Story Arc Climax

- Scene of highest tension in the story
- Storylines and characters come back together
- Main character makes his/her do-or-die decision and acts on it
- This is NOT the story's end



Key 1: Story Arc Climax

Example from “Star Wars”:

The rebels fight for their lives and for galactic freedom at the Battle of the Death Star at Yavin. Luke decides to embrace the Force (do-or-die decision) and uses it to destroy the Death Star (acts on his decision).



Key 1: Story Arc

Falling Action

- Tension begins to break because of main character's decision
- Loose ends are tied up



Key 1: Story Arc Falling Action

Example from “Star Wars”:

Han Solo congratulates Luke on the erstwhile Jedi’s miraculous shot as Luke hears the voice of Obi-Wan telling him, “The Force will be with you. Always.”



Key 1: Story Arc Climax, Falling Action



"Star Wars" (1977, LucasFilm/Twentieth Century Fox)



Key 1: Story Arc Resolution (Denouement)

The narrative world of the main characters is restored, or rather a “new normal” has been established, but with new understanding for them.



Key 1: Story Arc Resolution (Denouement)

Example from “Star Wars”:

Luke, Han, and Chewbacca receive medals of valor from Princess Leia and are saluted by their newfound compatriots.



Key 1: Story Arc

Summing It Up

- Exposition
- Rising Action
- Climax
- Falling Action
- Resolution (Denouement)



Key 1: Story Arc

QUESTIONS?



Key 2: Character Arc

- A character arc is to a character as what a narrative arc is to the story.
- A character arc is internal; story arc is external.
- Critical events happen to the character certain points
- Readers today expect certain things to happen at certain points in the story. If they don't, they'll know something feels "off" but might not know what.
- Rather than thinking this will make your story formulaic, it will do anything but!

Key 2: Character Arc

Parts of a Character Arc



- Some tools have divided a character arc into percentages of the story
- These percentages are “rules of thumb”—a story doesn’t require elements to occur in *exact* spots but should be approximate.

Key 2: Character Arc

0% to 25% Point

- See protagonist in his everyday life
- Learn what his goal/want is



Key 2: Character Arc

0% to 25% Point

Example from “Star Wars”:

Luke Skywalker is bored out of his mind on his family’s moisture farm on Tatooine. He yearns for adventure, possibly by joining the Empire as a military starfighter pilot.



Key 2: Character Arc

0% to 25% Point

From the earlier example of “Trine Rising,” we learn:

- Mirana’s everyday life
 - She is a student
 - Her mother is a person of importance
 - She tutors younger students
- Mirana’s great want/need
 - Although all the information Mirana has about her magical powers points to her destroying her homeland of Kinderra with them, she wants to be able to use them to save her people.



Key 2: Character Arc

26% to 50% Point



- Enter this phase with the “Call to Action/Adventure”
- Main character begins response to obtaining his goal

Key 2: Character Arc

26% to 50% Point

Example from “Trine Rising”:

Quite literally in the middle of the story, Mirana agrees to become the student of Kinderran hero and Trine, Tetric Garis, who has promised to teach her how to use all three of her powers safely.



Key 2: Character Arc

51% to 75% Point



- Main character picks up knowledge and supporting friends along the way
- Tension rises
- Main character experiences set-back(s)
 - The more set-backs, the more tension, but must show something learned from failures
- May have first meeting between protagonist and antagonist, where protagonist fails but escapes to learn from the failure

Key 2: Character Arc

51% to 75% Point

Example from “Star Wars”:

Luke meets Han Solo and Chewbacca. Kenobi begins instructing Luke on the Force with his lightsaber, at which Luke fails miserably at first. Tension rises as the group is captured and brought onboard the Death Star. Disguised as stormtroopers, Luke and Han set about to rescue Princess Leia, while Ben Kenobi seeks to disengage the tractor beam so they can escape. Luke catches the first glimpse of Darth Vader, his nemesis and the man he believes murdered his father.



Key 2: Character Arc

51% to 75% Point



Example from “Trine Rising”:

Mirana begins to learn the basics of military life from Garis as the Kin-Deren province Fal’kin army rides to stop the Ken’nar from gaining control of a strategic bridge complex, Two Rivers Ford. While at the ford garrison, tension mounts when she uses her Seeing Aspect to discover the Dark Trine has changed the timing of his attack.

Key 2: Character Arc

76% to 100% Point



- Main character has acquired the knowledge he needs to accomplish his goal
- Protagonist must make a fateful choice to bring about goal
- Protagonist and antagonist meet again for a climactic battle
- Protagonist achieves goal

Key 2: Character Arc

76% to 100% Point

Example from “Star Wars”:

Luke and Han have rescued Leia, however, before they can escape, Luke sees Darth Vader and watches helplessly as the Sith Lord kills Obi-Wan, his beloved mentor. Before they can truly be free, the tension rises more, and Luke must battle against TIE fighters, thereby acquiring some starfighting skills. Soon after, Luke and his fellow rebel starfighters attempt to bring down the Death Star, but time is running out. Once again, Luke is confronted by Darth Vader, this time in their fighters, with the tension rising to a fevered climax. At last, Luke decides he cannot defeat the planet-destroying satellite by skill alone; he must trust in his Force powers. He opens himself to the Force and destroys the Death Star, thus saving the galaxy.



Key 2: Character Arc

76% to 100% Point



"Star Wars" (1977, LucasFilm/Twentieth Century Fox)

Key 2: Character Arc

76% to 100% Point

Example from “Trine Rising”:

Mirana taps into what fighting skills she has to avoid being killed by the Ken’nar as she desperately searches for her mentor Tetric Garis amid the furious battle at the ford. In the distance, she sees her compatriots—including her parents—surrounded by the Ken’nar. She decides that whatever peril her powers may bring in the future, if she doesn’t use them now, her parents and thousands of Fal’kin will be killed. She acquires what she needs to focus her Trine powers and saves her family and compatriots, defeating the Dark Trine and his Ken’nar army.



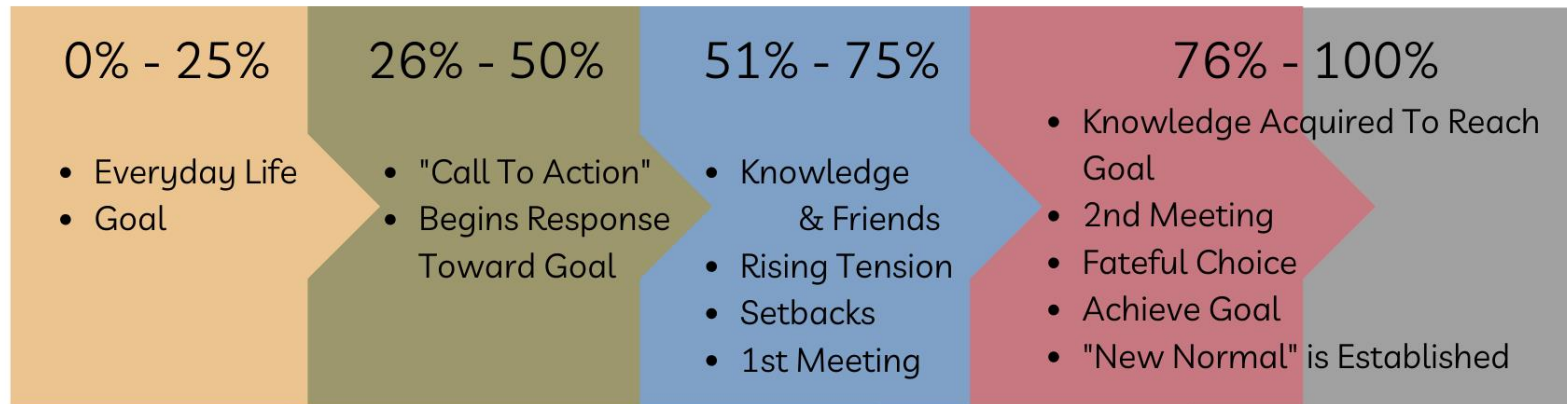
Key 2: Character Arc

Summing It Up

- 0% - 25%
 - Everyday life
 - Learn character's goal
- 26% - 50%
 - Call to action
 - Begins response toward goal
- 51% - 75%
 - Knowledge to reach goal
 - Gains friends
 - Setbacks & rising tension
 - May have 1st meeting between protagonist and antagonist
- 76% - 100%
 - Knowledge acquired to attain goal
 - 2nd meeting
 - Protagonist makes fateful choice
 - Goal is achieved
 - New normal reached



Story Arc



Character Arc

Key 2: Character Arc

QUESTIONS?



Key 3: Point of View (POV)

What is Point of View (or POV)?

- Who is telling the story? From whose perspective?
- Only ONE PERSON at a time gets to tell the story—otherwise it's like a family Christmas around the dinner table
- Multiple POVs
 - Common but can become “crowded” if too many
 - Multiple people can tell the story, but always stay in just his “head” for scene/chapter



Key 3: Point of View (POV)

The 3 Common Types of Narrators

- Omniscient Narrator
- 1st Person
- Deep 3rd Person



Key 3: Point of View (POV)

Omniscient Narrator

Omniscient Narrator

- An unnamed narrator—**who is not a character**—tells the story and knows everything about everyone at all times
- Not used much anymore
- DO NOT USE, unless you make the Omniscient Character an actual character, something like “Susie,” the protagonist and ghost from “The Lovely Bones.”



Key 3: Point of View (POV)

1st Person Narrator

1st Person Narrator

- Character, often the protagonist or main character, is telling story
- Narrator Pronoun: “I” and “me” (vs. him/her, he/she)
- Very intimate
- POV Character needs to be “in the room”; can **ONLY** know what is actually experienced
 - If not physically present, must find out the information in a different way (told by another character, reads it, sees something, etc.)
- Story colored by the narrator’s perceptions, prejudices, feeling, thoughts, opinions, etc.



Key 3: Point of View (POV)

1st Person Narrator

Example, 1st Person:

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago — never mind how long precisely — having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off — then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.

— “Moby-Dick” by Herman Melville (1851)



Key 3: Point of View (POV)

1st Person Narrator

Example, 1st Person:

DISARM THE TOY INDUSTRY

That's what it said. There was no question about it.

The button was worn by a tiny indignant-type little old lady wearing what looked like an upturned flowerpot on her head and, I suspect (viewing it from this later date) a pair of Ked tennis shoes on her feet, which were primly hidden by the Automat table at which we both sat.

I, toying moodily with my chicken pot pie, which of course is a specialty of the house, surreptitiously examined my fellow citizen and patron of the Automat.

Wiry, lightly powdered, tough as spring steel, the old doll dug with Old Lady gusto into her meal. Succotash, baked beans, creamed corn, side order of Harvard beets. Bad news--a Vegetarian type. No doubt also a dedicated Cat Fancier.

— Excerpt, *In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash* by Jean Shepherd (1966; Doubleday); “A Christmas Story”



Key 3: Point of View (POV)

Deep 3rd Person Narrator

“Deep” Third Person Narrator

- A character, often the protagonist or main character, is telling story
- Called “deep” because of the level of emotion and intimacy is that of 1st person POV
- Narrator Pronoun: him/her/him, he/she/zhe
- POV Character needs to be “in the room”; can ONLY know what is actually experienced
 - If not present for a conversation, action, etc., CANNOT know about it or must find out the information in a different way (told by another character, reads it, sees something, etc.)
- Story related is colored by the narrator’s perceptions, prejudices, feeling, thoughts, opinions, etc.



Key 3: Point of View (POV)

Deep 3rd Person Narrator

Example, Deep 3rd Person (Mirana Pinal):

Why would the Aspects Above even call forth someone cursed? It made no sense—unless they were so disgusted with their creation tearing itself apart for more than three thousand summers, they wanted to wipe the land clean of the stain of their Aspected people. Maybe the Thrice-cursed would purge all of creation for the Aspects Above. Maybe the deity was just as ignorant and uncaring as the ocean she once believed her escape. Maybe there simply were no Aspects Above at all. Maybe Lord Garis was right, and prophecies were just meaningless words written by senile old men and women. Or maybe all the evil in Kinderra had been brought about, not by divine vengeance, but by the choices of men. Or of a girl.

— “Trine Rising” by C.K. Donnelly



Key 3: Point of View (POV)

Summing It Up

- In both examples, we are firmly in the main characters' mind as they process events around them.
- We clearly see:
 - The characters' state of mind
 - What they are thinking by showing us in their comments and introspection
 - Ishmael is bored and depressed
 - Mirana is distraught to the point of suicide



Key 3: Point of View (POV)



“Kung Fu Panda” (2008, DreamWorks/Paramount Pictures)

Key 3: Point of View (POV)

QUESTIONS?



Key 4: Show vs. Tell

Showing vs. Telling:

- Not the mystical, secret knowledge we think it is.
- Simply do NOT label (tell) a character's emotions—describe them in as many senses as possible.



Key 4: Show vs. Tell

Example 1:

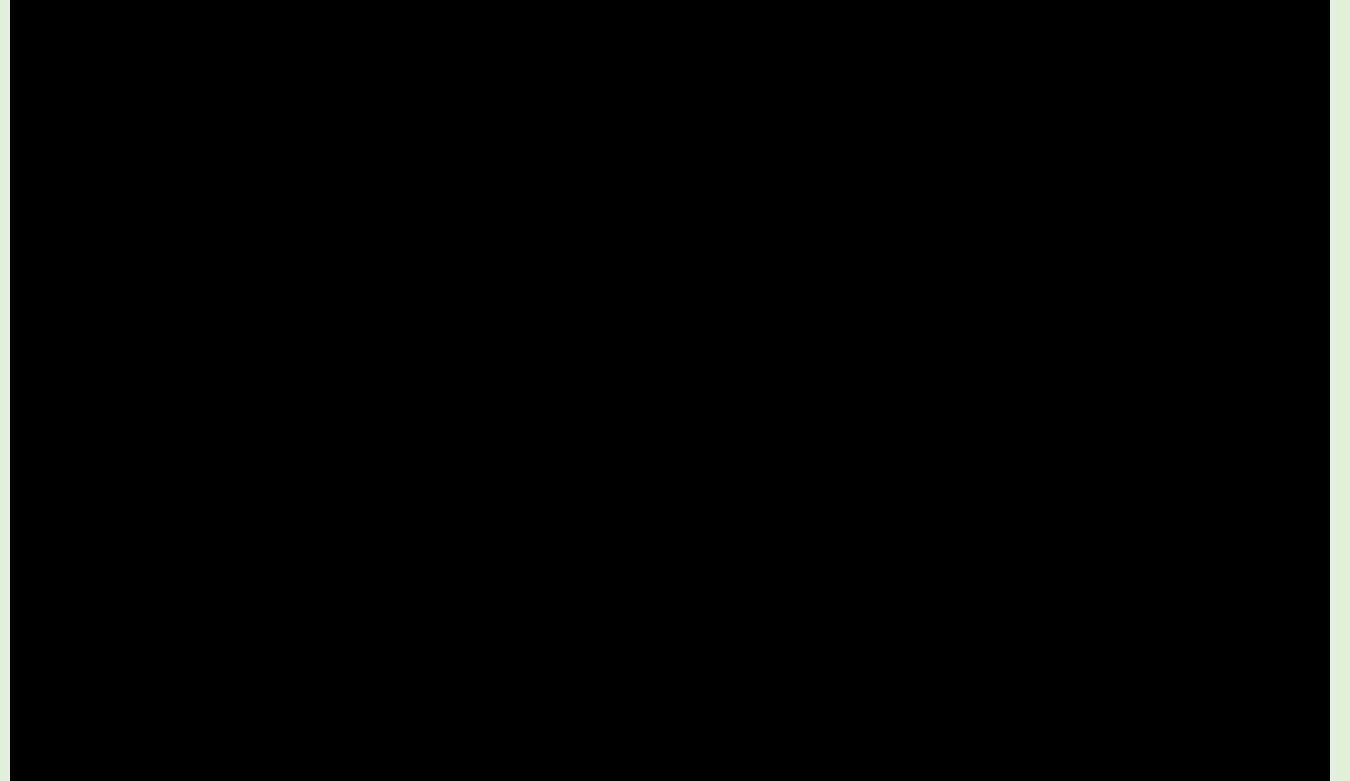
A: He was angry.

B: He curled his fingers into white-knuckled fists and clenched his jaw until it cracked. With a menacing whisper, he said, “Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.”

— Based on *The Princess Bride* by S. Morgenstern, abridged by William Goldman (1973, Harcourt Brace)



Key 4: Show vs. Tell



“A Christmas Story” (1983, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer [MGM])

Key 4: Show vs. Tell

Example 2A: Mirana is seeing her first glimpse of Rhadaz. She has never been outside of her home city, but has also recently learned an act meant to save many lives has cost the lives of many others, including a handful she was trying to protect.

The sun had sank beneath the Mer-Salma Sea far to the east by the time Mirana and Garis walked the last mile on the road that led to Rhadaz, giving their tired mounts a rest and stretching their own weary muscles.

They passed through a gate with an archway that culminated in a point, heavy iron grates still held high to let the last of the travelers in. Once night fell, they would be closed keeping the city safe; she realized the deserts offered little defense at night.

Mirana was entranced by her first view of Rhadaz. The setting sun painted the whitewashed buildings a deep red-gold. Short squat homes, tall rectangles of shops and inns, and an occasional domed tower created a curvilinear patchwork quilt of buildings. And everywhere there were tiles – tiles in fantastic colors and patterns. Tiles adorned the steps and stoops for home and businesses. They decorated the vaults of arches and the floors shops. She remembered the tile work in her room in Kasan.

Although the vendors were closing their carts and shops for the evening, she smelled the exotic scents of food and spices from cooking fires and caught tantalizing glimpses of wares she had never seen before.

She was so enamored at the sights and smells around her, she did not notice Garis take a right turn down a side street as they wound their way to the Learning Hall at the city's heart.

— “Trine Fallacy, Book 2” by C.K. Donnelly (early draft)



Key 4: Show vs. Tell

Example 2A: Mirana is seeing her first glimpse of Rhadaz. She has never been outside of her home city, but has also recently learned an act meant to save many lives has cost the lives of many others, including a handful she was trying to protect.

Mirana and Tetric walked the last mile to Rhadaz as the sun embraced the western horizon, each step feeling like a mile to her saddle-weary muscles and her burdened thoughts.

The setting sun painted the whitewashed buildings of Rhadaz scarlet. Diluted blood. In the rain puddles at Two Rivers Ford. In the keep vision. She shook her head to clear it.

Tiles rendered in a riot of colors and tangled patterns adorned the steps and stoops of homes and shops. Their intense colors and violent designs swirled in her mind like so many amulets at her ill-fated Choosing Ceremony. Or those of the overwhelmed Fal'kin at the ford. The dead in the Vale i'Dúadar. The scents of exotic spices from cooking fires hung cloying in the air, heavy and pungent as burial incense.

She trailed behind the Trine, thoughts running in relentless circles, searching for a noble answer to the abomination that was the Power from Without. What a hypocrite she was to believe she was somehow above the Ken'nar when she killed more than one thousand of them without even thinking about the cost.

— “Trine Fallacy, Book 2” by C.K. Donnelly



Key 4: Show vs. Tell

Summing It Up



- Which examples do you think convey emotion in a more engaging way to the reader?
- By “telling,” the writer does exactly that—she simply tells us the character is angry, for example.
- In “showing,” we can see the emotion by the physical reactions and the vocal inflections—she’s drawn a picture of anger.

Key 4: Show vs. Tell

QUESTIONS



Key 5: Exposition

What is Exposition?

- This is the literary device, NOT the introductory part of the Story Arc
- Explanatory info or backstory info
- Gives necessary information about a situation or character
- Easy to give this information as a “brain dump” or “info dump”
 - Telling us readers everything we need to know all at once, aka force-feeding us details.
 - A brain dump of exposition stops the story dead in its tracks, can be boring reading, and many times we readers don’t need to know half of what’s given in exposition to make it through the scene.



Key 5: Exposition

Here are 5 points to consider when writing exposition:

1. Why does the reader need to know this information? Do they REALLY need this to understand what's going on?
2. Why is the character thinking about this particular information?
3. Why is he thinking about it now?
4. What's the least amount we readers have to know to get through the scene?
5. Can you leave it out altogether?



Key 5: Exposition Using Dialogue



- Dialogue is a good way to introduce exposition
- Steer clear of what I like to call, “Well, Billy” moments
 - You know them as the cheesy explanations the characters give each other on “CSI” when they are all scientists and probably already know this information

Key 5: Exposition

Using Dialogue



Example (Good Exposition):

The Ain Magne/Dark Trine is pondering the possibility that Mirana Pinal is one of the prophesied Trines and her potential to unravel his plans for conquering a strategic bridge complex.

His seer pushed at his mind in alarm. ... *If she is a Trine, do you think she is one of those predicted in the Trine Prophecy?... It says— ...*

... Aren't you a little old for minstrel's tales? ... he snapped back.

He was far too pragmatic to believe in the dire words written by a forgotten soothsayer thousands of summers ago. What exactly did the prophecy say, anyway? Chronicled in the Book of Kinderra, a Thrice-cursed and a Thrice-blessed, a Dark Trine and a Light Trine, were cast as mortal enemies. It portended in dramatic fashion great upheaval in Kinderra as one of the Trines would come to destroy, the other to rebuild. He remembered well those who cared for him as a boy had remained vigilant for signs that the Trine Prophecy was being fulfilled, lest his own young life be in danger.

— “Trine Rising” by C.K. Donnelly

Key 5: Exposition Using Dialogue



Notice how the information is given:

- With dialogue then introspection.
- Information about the Trine Prophecy is needed so the reader can fully understand the stakes of the story.
- The reader needs to learn this information now as the concept of Trines and the prophecy grows from here and colors much of the story.
- Notice we are fully in the Dark Trine's mind, including a bit of childhood reminiscence.

The total information of exactly what the prophecy says is **ONE SENTENCE**.

Key 5: Exposition Using Dialogue



“The Perfect Storm” (2000, Warner Bros.)

Key 5: Exposition Summing It Up



- Explanatory info or backstory info
- Gives necessary information about a situation or character
- Dialogue can be used to give exposition info to reader
- Don't over-do it

Key 5: Exposition

QUESTIONS?





Pulling It All Together

🔑 Key 1: Story Arc

🔑 Key 2: Character Arc

🔑 Key 3: Point of View (POV)

🔑 Key 4: Show vs. Tell

🔑 Key 5: Exposition

Grammar and typos can be easily fixed. These 5 keys to unlocking the secrets of novel writing—Story Arc, Character Arc, Point of View, Showing vs. Telling, and Exposition—are required knowledge for a good, coherent story. They take some work to perfect but are worth every moment of study and practice.

The background features a teal-to-blue gradient. Overlaid on this are four speech bubbles of different colors: a red one at the top, a purple one on the left, a green one at the bottom, and a yellow one on the right. Each bubble contains a large, light-colored question mark. The word "QUESTIONS" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image, overlapping the speech bubbles.

QUESTIONS

For More
Information
& Resources

Story Arc:

**“Inciting Incident vs. Call to Action (Adventure)” by Karen Woodward,
blog**

<https://bit.ly/3hTuGB3>

MasterClass: “Elements of a Narrative Arc” by guest blogger Judy Blume

<https://bit.ly/3qZAhKI>

*Has an excellent example of the narrative arc explained through Dickens’
“A Christmas Carol.”

**Writing 101: What Is Denouement? Learn About the Difference Between
Denouement and Epilogue With Examples**

<https://bit.ly/3qZEq0N>



For More
Information
& Resources

Character Arc:

Reedsy: “Writing Compelling Character Arcs”

<https://blog.reedsy.com/character-arc/>

“How to Create a Powerful Character Arc” by Jerry Jenkins

<https://jerryjenkins.com/character-arc/>

“Storytelling Blueprint” by writing blogger David Villalva

<https://davidvillalva.com/the-storytelling-blueprint/>

*Best tool I’ve found—very detailed but explained very clearly

For More
Information
& Resources

Point of View (POV):

**“Conquering the 6 Enemies of Deep Point of View” by Edie Melson,
“The Write Conversation” blog**

<https://bit.ly/2TZssYX>

*By far, THE best information of Deep 3rd POV—I keep Post-It notes on this by my computer

“Deep POV—What’s So Deep About It” by Beth Hill, Ed., “The Editor’s Blog”

<https://bit.ly/3hXQz1X>



For More
Information
& Resources

Show vs. Tell:

“Show, Don’t Tell: What You Need to Know” by Jerry Jenkins

<https://jerryjenkins.com/show-dont-tell/>

Reedsy: “Show, Don't Tell: Tips and Examples of The Golden Rule”

<https://blog.reedsy.com/show-dont-tell/>



For More
Information
& Resources

Exposition:

MasterClass: Exposition

<https://bit.ly/3AKT2pn>

Reedsy.com: “Exposition in Literature”

<https://blog.reedsy.com/exposition-in-literature/>

*Please skip the examples of omniscient narrator exposition—Bad, bad, bad

Chuck Wendig TerribleMinds Blog: “Ways to Make Exposition Your Bitch”

<https://bit.ly/3hX6y0n>

***NOTE:** Wendig drops f-bombs in his blogs like powdered sugar sprinkled on beignets, but he’s an absolutely brilliant writer. If you’re squeamish about swearing, skip this one.

For More Information & Resources

Other Resources:

“The Writer's Journey - 25th Anniversary Edition: Mythic Structure for Writers 4th Edition “ by Christopher Vogler

<https://amzn.to/3pFtswm>

*The gold standard for understanding major story themes and character archetypes. Literally every fiction story follows this journey to some degree, no matter what the genre.

“The Fantasy Fiction Formula” by Deborah Chester (Foreword by Jim Butcher)

<https://www.fantasticfiction.com/c/deborah-chester/fantasy-fiction-formula.htm>

*Good information on how to write a scene for all genres

“Emotion Thesaurus” by Becca Puglisi & Angela Ackerman

<https://amzn.to/3kM15c2>

ABOUT CINDY KIBBE



Cindy Kibbe, writing as C.K. Donnelly, has more than 20 years of journalism, writing, and marketing experience.

Her debut fantasy novel, **“Trine Rising, The Kinderra Saga: Book 1,”** has received critical acclaim and literary awards, including the 2020 NYC Big Book Award for Epic Fantasy; the 2021 Independent Press Association Awards for Fantasy; and the 2021 IndieReader Discovery Awards for Young Adult.

Her second novel, **“Trine Fallacy, The Kinderra Saga: Book 2,”** will launch Aug. 26, 2021.



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