

# VISUAL STORYTELLING

## GLOSSARY

**Narrative (for film):** A story with connected events.

**Protagonist:** Main/central character.

**Antagonist:** The force (human, natural or supernatural) that challenges the protagonist from reaching their goal.

**Theme:** The heart of a film; the central unifying concept (e.g. love, death, coming of age). It is embodied in the cinematography, dialogue, plot, sound etc.

**Dramatic Question:** The structural spine of your story. "Will the character solve their dilemma?" (Usually a yes or no answer)

**Conflict:** The challenge the characters must face to achieve their goal.

- The conflict can be seen in worldviews, philosophies, actions, other characters, settings etc.
- The conflict (external and internal) is directly opposed with the protagonist's goal(s).
- Without conflict a story is just a series of events.

**Plot:** a sequence of cause and effect events that create the story.

**Stakes:** The risk to the protagonist if they do not solve their dilemma.

**Genre:** A category of film with similar character tropes, setting, plot and story elements.

## STORY STRUCTURE

**Act:** Broad structural unit of story.

**Beat:** A moment/discovery/event/decision that moves the story forward; a shift in momentum.

**Inciting Incident/Catalyst:** The moment the protagonist's world changes in a dramatic way.

**Plot Point:** A significant event within a plot that spins the action around in another direction.

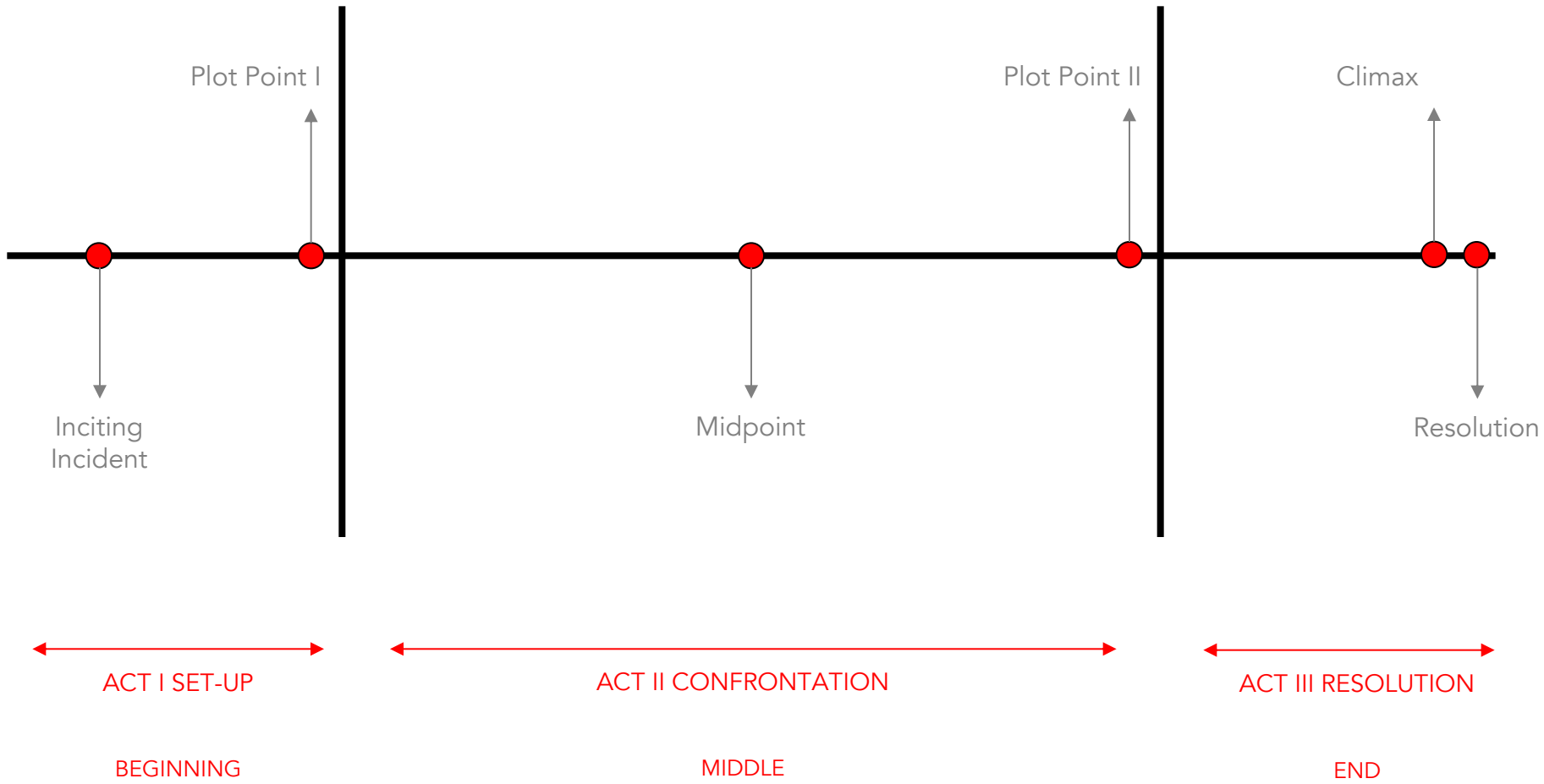
**Midpoint:** An important scene in the middle of the script, often a reversal of fortune or revelation that changes the direction of the story.

**Climax:** The high point of the physical and/or emotional action/biggest obstacle.

**Resolution:** This is the descending part of the story, the end. The conflict is complete, protagonist has transformed, all issues resolved, and the audience sees the new status quo – or what the future holds for the characters.

# 3-ACT STRUCTURE (SYD FIELD)

## FEATURE FILM



# STRUCTURE

## SHORT FILM

ACT I



Set Up

What is their normal?

Inciting Incident

Conflict introduced

ACT II



Obstacles

Develop dramatic action

Midpoint

Increasing intensity

ACT III



Climax

Height of emotional/physical intensity

Resolution

Action resolved

New normal established

# STORY

## DEVELOPMENT

1. What is the dramatic question?
2. What is the normal?
3. Who is the protagonist?
4. What is the protagonist's dilemma?
5. What is the inciting incident?
6. What does the protagonist want?
7. What does the protagonist need?
8. What are the obstacles?
9. What is the theme?
10. What are the stakes?

# CHARACTER

## FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

### Dramatic Question

What is the protagonist's dilemma?

### Character Want:

What does the protagonist want?

### Character Need:

What does the protagonist need?

### Obstacles:

What is standing in their way?

### Stakes:

What is at stake?