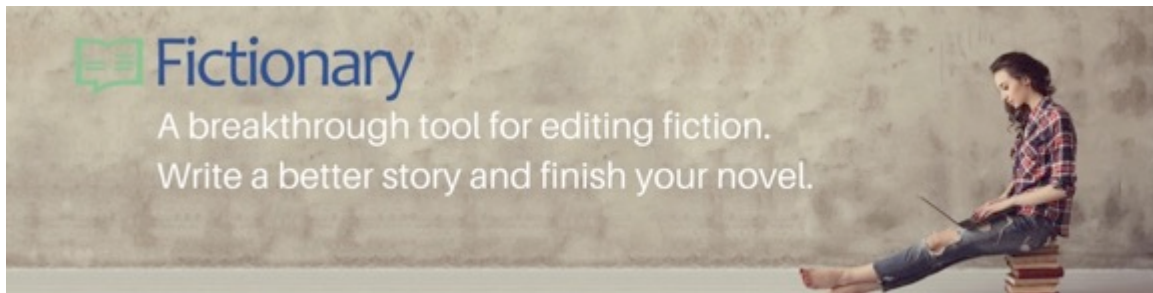




Story Editing Lesson 1

How To Use Fictionary To Make Your Story Great



One of our early users asked me: “How will Fictionary help my manuscript?”

What a great question! It made me think about the best way to explain the **benefits of using Fictionary** and becoming your own story editor.

With a first draft finished, it's time to focus on story and structure. Word choice, style, and copy-editing are all important, but if you don't have a great story, it doesn't matter if you've proofread to perfection.

Excellent grammar and punctuation alone won't sell books. **A great story will sell your book.**

And a great story is made up of great scenes.

What Is A Scene?

A scene is a section of your novel where a character or characters engage in action or dialogue. You can think of a scene as a story with a beginning, middle, and an end.

Usually, you'll start a new scene when you change the point of view character, the setting, or the time. You may start a new scene if the scene your working on is too long to fit the structure of your manuscript.

Fictionary will take you through the process of evaluating each scene in your novel.

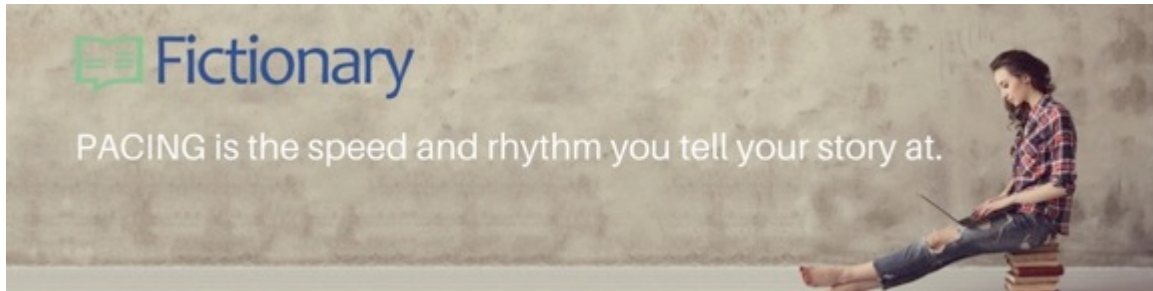
10 Ways To Make Your Story Work

Fictionary can identify and help you fix problems within your manuscript by focusing on the **structure of your story**, not on the words. Some of the critical structural areas are:

1. Pacing
2. Character names and appearances
3. Point of view characters and goals
4. Story arc
5. Plot holes (scenes without a clear purpose)
6. Flow from scene to scene
7. Absence of tension or conflict
8. Empty stage syndrome
9. Confusing timelines or missing objects

The 10th benefit of using Fictionary comes from the built-in **Rewrite Tips**. These tips provide you with specific advice on the area of the manuscript you are working on just when you need it! No more endless searching for writing advice.

Pro Tip: You'll find rewrite tips anywhere in Fictionary where you see a white question mark inside a brown circle. These tips will help you understand the key elements of fiction and the reports.

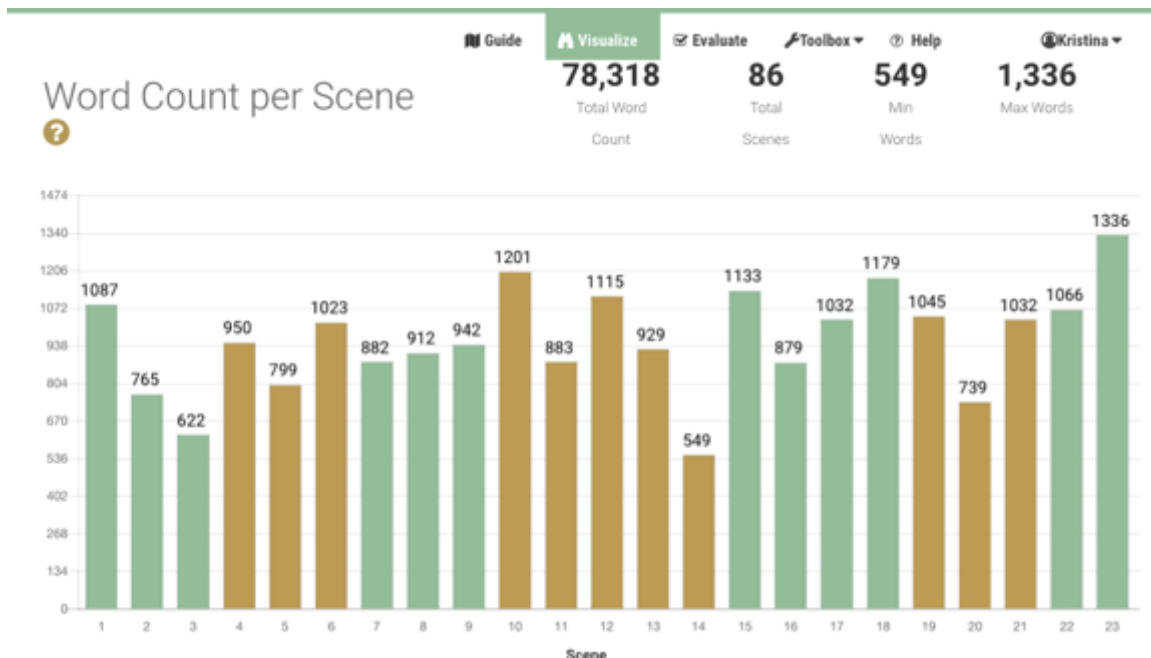


1. Pacing

Problem: The pacing is not working in your novel. The story is too slow or too fast. Knowing your **word count per scene** helps you control the pacing in your novel.

Sometimes you want to slow down the story, using the time to build tension and suspense. Sometimes you want quick action to drive the story forward. **Use longer scenes to slow the pacing and shorter scenes to speed it up.**

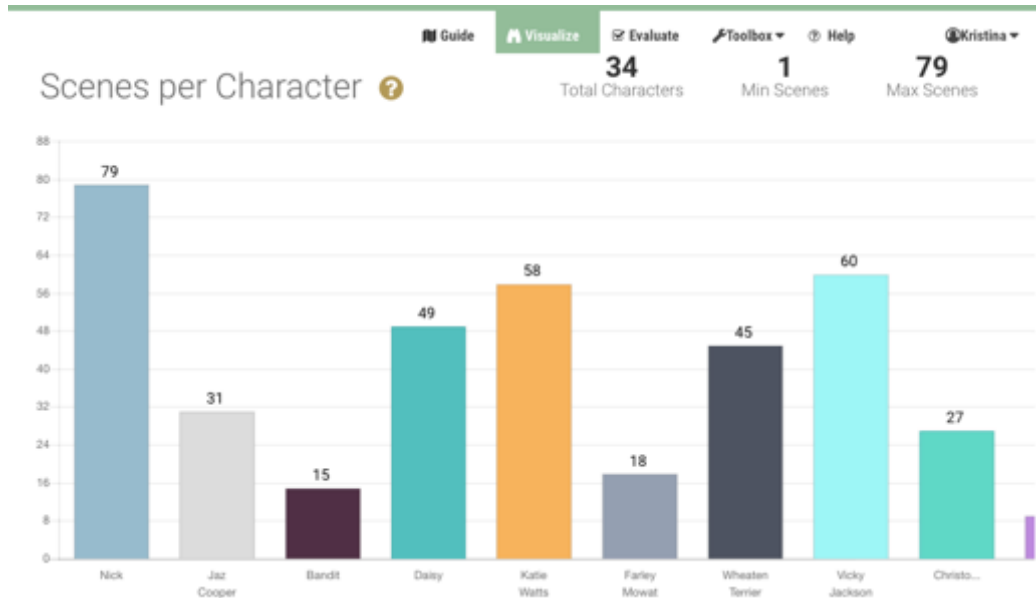
The Word Count per Scene report lets you quickly visualize the pacing.



2. Character Names and Appearances

Problem: Your readers are telling you they don't feel a connection with your characters or they are confused by your characters' names.

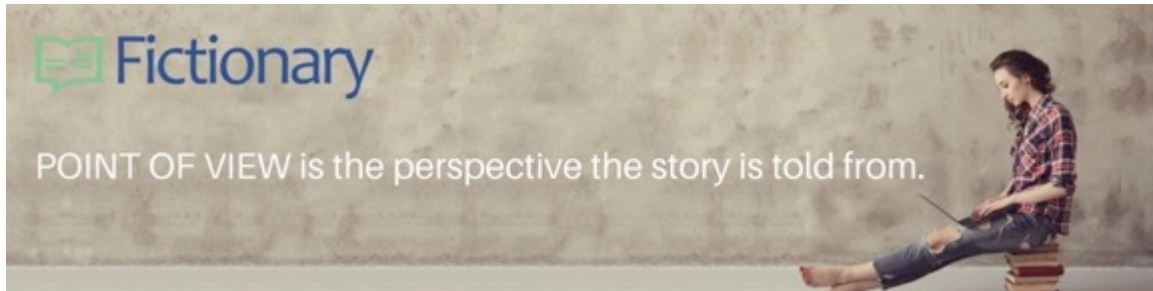
Scenes Per Character and **Cast of Characters** help you visualize all your character names to ensure you don't have too many characters per scene and that your main characters are getting enough time in your novel.



When you can see the cast of characters in one place, you'll be surprised how easy it is to see if character names are too similar.

A screenshot of the Fictionary "Cast of Characters" interface. The table has columns for First Name, Middle Name, and Last Name. The user's name "Tina" is in the top right. A sidebar on the right contains buttons for Save, Add Character, Merge Selected Characters, Delete Selected Characters, Set as Single POV Character, and View Character's Top Scene. A summary box states "Your cast has 31 characters." A blue speech bubble icon is at the bottom right.

?	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alyssa		Bennett
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apollo		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brenda		Greene
<input type="checkbox"/>	Camilla		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Christopher		Jackson
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daisy		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dan		Bennett
<input type="checkbox"/>	Debi		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diana		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dr.		Patron
<input type="checkbox"/>	Evelyn		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Farley		Mowat
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gearie		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Henry		Prost
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inne		Prost
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jaz		Cooper
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jim		
<input type="checkbox"/>	John		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Katie		Watts

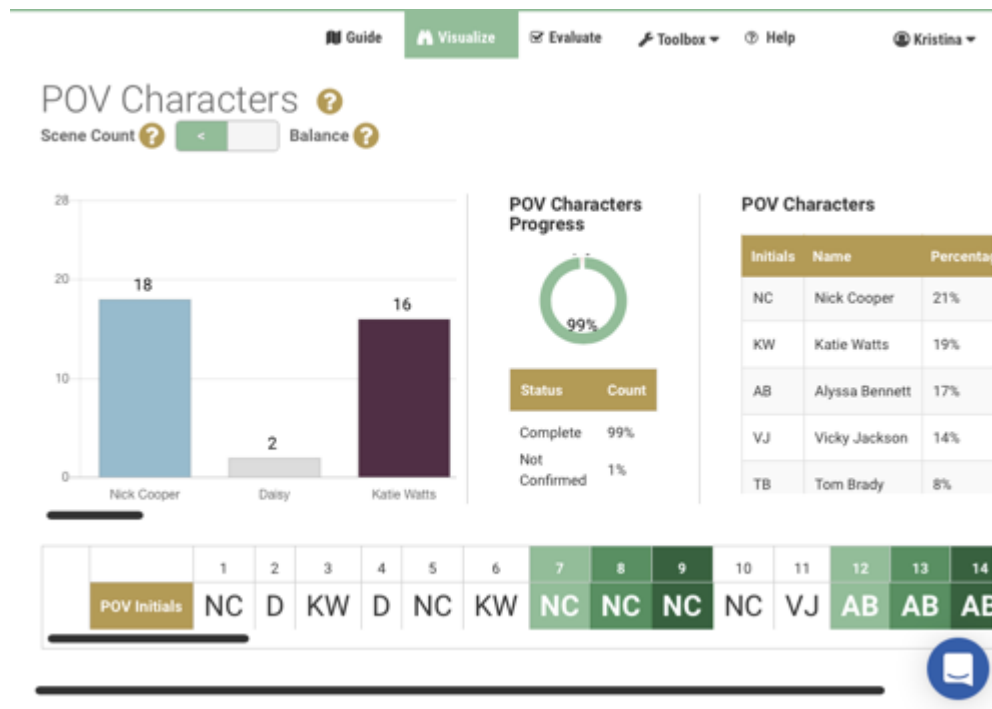


3. Point Of View (POV) Characters and Goals

Problem 1: You're not sure if you're giving the right number of scenes to your POV characters or if you're using them in the best order for dramatic effect.

Problem 2: Your characters don't have strong goals that drive the story forward. See how many POV characters you have and what order they appear in. You control who is telling the story. Everything that happens in a scene should occur through the eyes of the POV character.

The reader will connect with the POV characters if you don't have too many. The reader will also get to know your POV characters by how they experience the scene. The longer a reader spends with each POV character, the more time they have to like or dislike them.

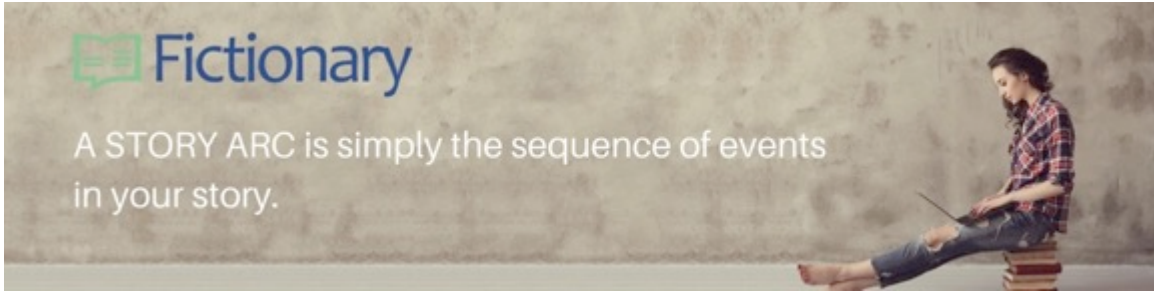


Using the Story Map, you can see the Point of View character goals per scene and ensure your characters have strong goals in every scene that drive the story forward.

The novel shown below is written from one point of view. Multiple points of view can be shown too.

The screenshot shows the Story Map interface with a navigation bar at the top containing 'Guide', 'Visualize', 'Evaluate', 'Toolbox', 'Help', and a user profile 'Kristina'. Below the navigation bar is the title 'Story Map' with a help icon. A toggle switch for 'View Full Story Map' is currently set to 'Off'. A green button labeled 'Select Story Map Elements' is visible. The main content is a table with the following data:

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 6
Point of View (POV)	Jaz Cooper	Jaz Cooper	Jaz Cooper	Jaz Cooper	Jaz Cooper	Jaz Cooper
POV Goal	Survive	Save Daisy	Be a better friend	Teach 1st Class	Not be lonely	Avoid pers...
Scene name	Meet Jaz	Ice Breaks	Intro Katie	Courteous Canines	Tumor	Intro \



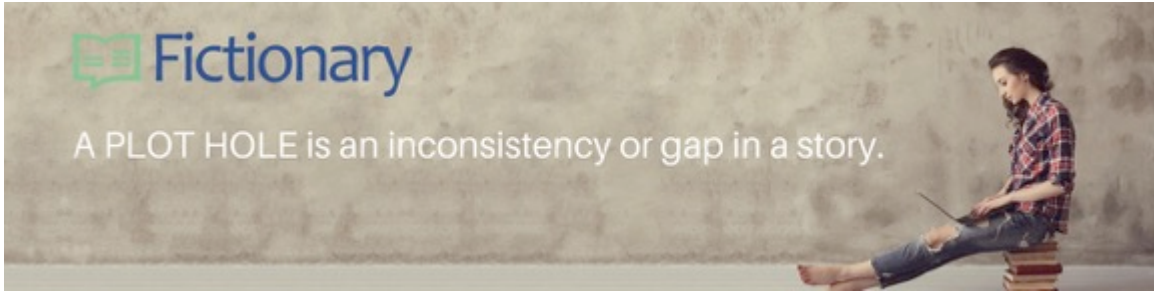
4. Story Arc

Problem: Your readers don't stay engaged for the entire story.

Are your key scenes in the correct place? The story arc will show you where the inciting incident, plot points, and climax should be. You'll be able to place these key scenes for the highest dramatic effect.

This story arc shows my work in progress on Evolution (my latest novel), along with several of the character entry and exit points overlaid.

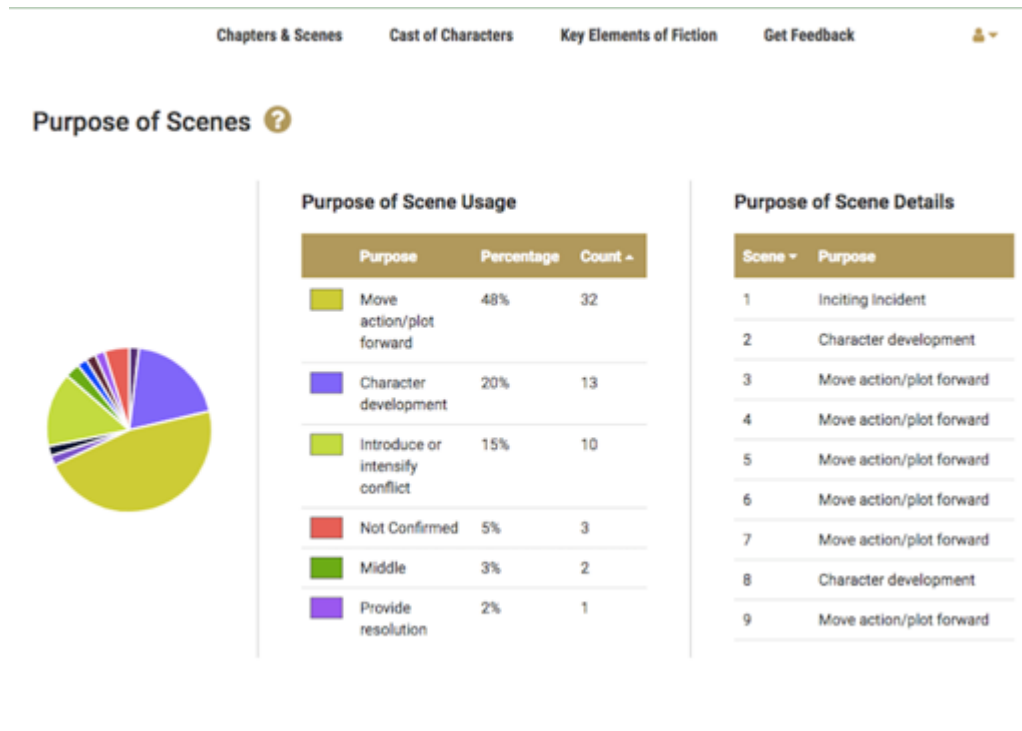


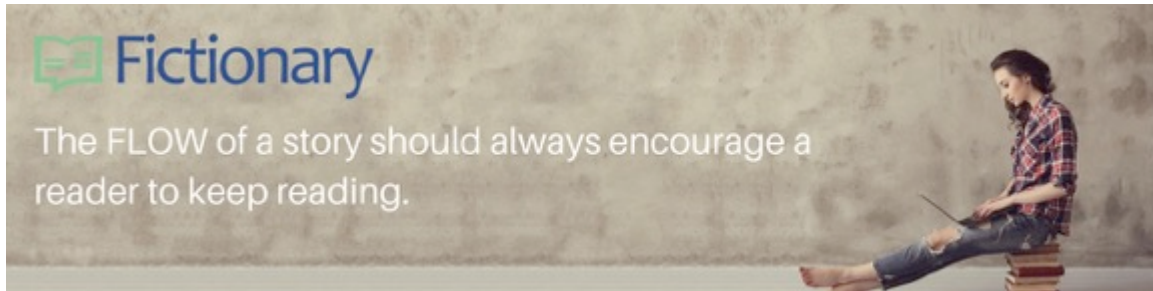


5. Plot Holes (scenes without a clear purpose)

Problem: Some scenes cause plot holes by not being connected to the story.

This usually means the scene doesn't have a purpose. If you don't know the purpose of each scene in your novel neither will your reader, and you most likely have a plot hole.





6. Flow

Problem: Readers stop reading at the end of a scene or at the beginning of the next scene.

How do you open and close each scene?

What are the **entry and exit hooks**?

The flow of your novel depends on leading the reader into and out of your scenes. Fictionary helps you work on how you're entering and exiting scenes.

You can quickly see if you're using repetitive opening and closing types that might bore your reader. You can ensure you've used dramatic entry and exit hooks to get the reader into the next scene and keep them there.

[Guide](#)
[Visualize](#)
[Evaluate](#)
[Toolbox](#)
[Help](#)
Kristina

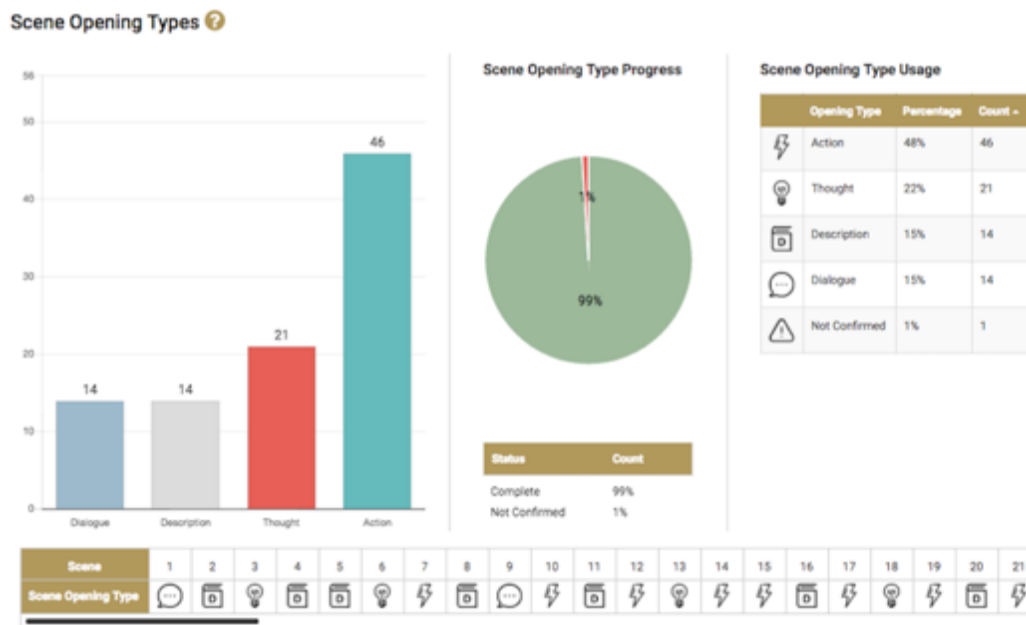
Story Map ?

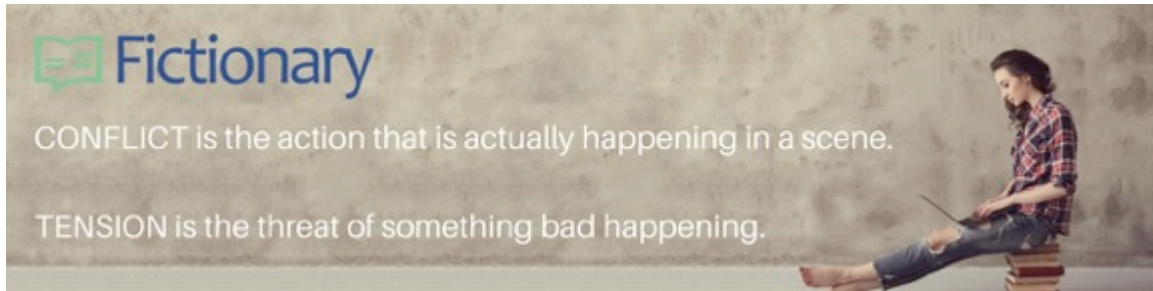
View Full Story Map On Off [Select Story Map Elements](#)

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 6
Scene name	Meet Jaz	Ice Breaks	Intro Katie	Courteous Canines	Tumor	Intro \
Opening Type	Action	Action	Description	Description	Thought	Thou
Closing Type	Thought	Dialogue	Dialogue	Thought	Dialogue	Acti
Entry Hook	Why is Jaz upset?	On dangerous ice.	Jaz embarrassed	Jaz intimidated	Who is at door?	What's in N
Exit Hook	Will Jaz die?	Friendship at stake	Jaz upset with Katie	Empty home	Is Jaz crazy?	Is Jaz

You can also see just your **scene opening or closing types**. Check out how many times you use each type, the percentage of use, and the order the types appear in.

You can see quickly if you have the balance right for your genre. Here's a peek at my novel *Look The Other Way*. You can see I've opened almost half of the scenes with action.





7. Tension and Conflict

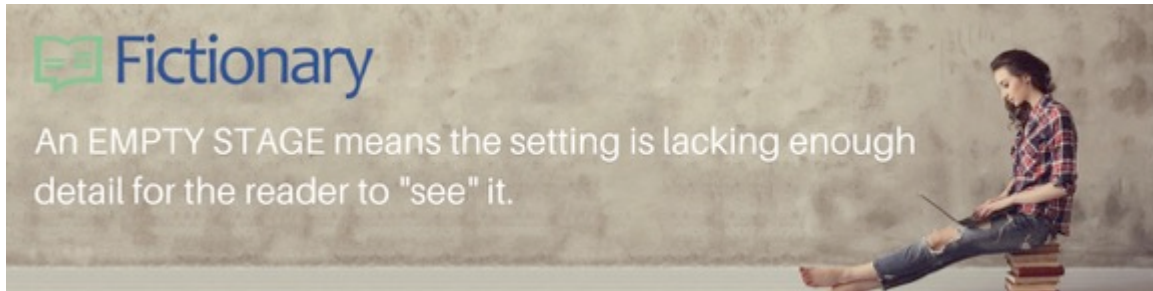
Problem: Your beta readers are telling you they are bored or skimming in places. Do you have enough **tension and conflict** in each scene? Too many scenes in a row without tension or conflict will bore your reader.

Guide Visualize Evaluate Toolbox Help Kristina

Story Map ?

View Full Story Map On Off [Select Story Map Elements](#)

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 6
Scene name	Meet Jaz	Ice Breaks	Intro Katie	Courteous Canines	Tumor	Intro \
Tension	Dog trapped.	Ice getting weaker.	Katie doesn't like J...	Panic attacks		Hidden m
Conflict	Ice against Jaz an...	Daisy resists Jaz	Pressure from Katie	Police questions	Unwanted visitor	Aggress



8. Empty Stage

Problem: Your readers can't visualize your settings and are not moved emotionally by them.

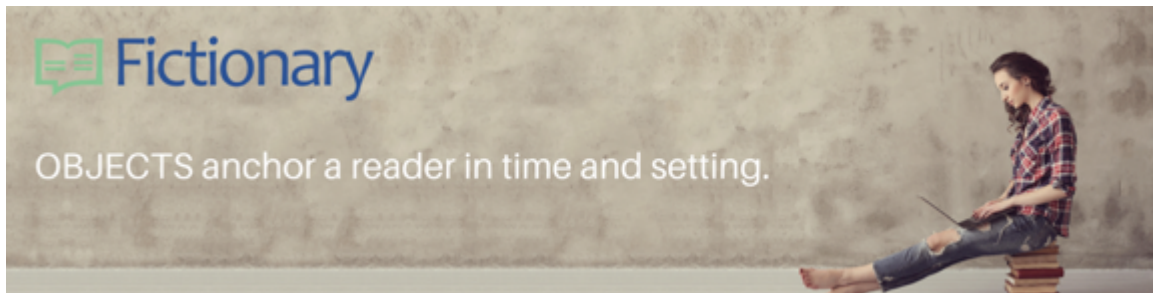
Are you using **senses and objects** to fill the stage? You'll know quickly if your stage is empty, and an empty stage means unengaged readers. Note I have the advanced mode turned on, so I see the full set of elements.

Guide Visualize Evaluate Toolbox

Story Map ?

View Full Story Map On Off Select Story Map Elements

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5
Scene name	Meet Jaz	Ice Breaks	Intro Katie	Courteous Canines	Tumor
Object	Grandfather clock	Slippers, dog collars	Disinfectant, coffee	Leash	Wine, flowers
Sights	Empty cupboard	Daisy on ice	Katie in PJs	Dogs entering class	Katie on porch
Smells	Bandit's bed			Dog pee	
Sounds	Clock	Whine, barking	Whine	Barking	Pulse in ears
Taste					Wine
Touch		Ice on feet	Wet snout	Dog paws on legs	Hug



9. Confusing timelines or missing objects

Problem 1: Your readers are lost in time or complaining they can't keep track of time.

Problem 2: You're not sure where key objects appear in your novel.

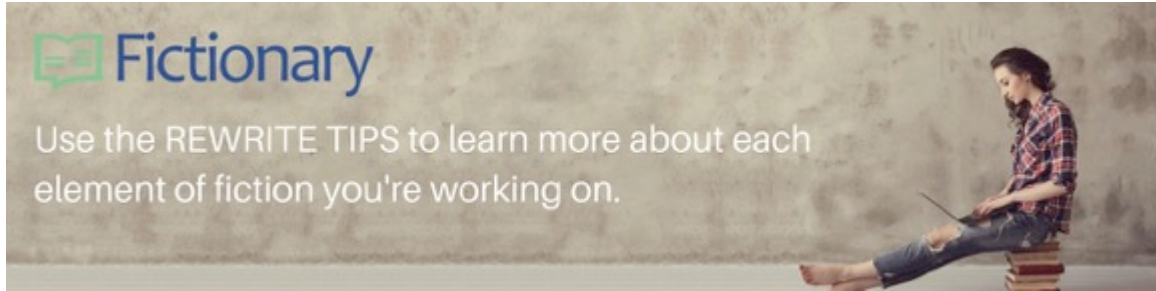
You can keep track of the time in which a scene takes place. You can also see which scenes important **objects** appear in. If you want, you can even add a row that shows which characters are in the scene, too. Then it's clear **who** knows about the objects and **when** they know about them.

Guide Visualize Evaluate Toolbox Help Kristina

Story Map ?

View Full Story Map On Off Select Story Map Elements

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 6
Scene name	Meet Jaz	Ice Breaks	Intro Katie	Courteous Canines	Tumor	Intro V
Date/Time	Early morning	Early morning	Early morning	Daytime	Evening	Same e
Object	Grandfather clock	Slippers, dog collars	Disinfectant, coffee	Leash	Wine, flowers	Plant,



10. Rewrite Tips

Problem: You don't have time to search through how-to-write or self-edit books to find the knowledge you need to turn your first draft into a great story readers love.

If you're struggling with finding advice on story editing, Fictionary provides this at your fingertips. The rewrite tips are focused on the area you're working on, eliminating time-consuming searches through books or the internet.

The screenshot shows the Fictionary web application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Guide', 'Visualize', 'Evaluate', 'Toolbox', and 'Help' options, along with a user profile 'Kristina'. The main content area is split into two panels. The left panel, titled 'Scene 1', contains a 'Word Cloud' and a text editor with a rich text toolbar (B, I, U, etc.). The text in the editor is a chapter of a story. The right panel is a sidebar with a 'CHARACTER' section and a 'Rewrite Tip' section. The 'Rewrite Tip' section is highlighted with a black box and contains the following text:

Rewrite Tip:
An important question to ask yourself about a scene when evaluating plot is: **What is the purpose of the scene?**

Story Arc ? Scenes are the building blocks of your story, and the stronger each scene is, the stronger your story will be. To make every scene memorable, you must know its purpose.

Purpose ? The purpose of the scene relates to the overall story. If a scene is not driving the story forward, then ask yourself what is the purpose of including the scene in your novel.

Opening Type ?

Closing Type ? If the purpose you need is not in the drop down menu, add a new purpose by typing in the text field and clicking the add button.

Anchored ?

Entry Hook ?

Exit Hook ?

At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a 'Need More?' link and a blue circular icon with a white envelope symbol.

What's in Lesson 2

An in-depth look at Characters and Novel Structure.

If you subscribe to Fictionary, you'll receive the full course.

Fictionary Story Editing Course

Lesson 3: How To Improve Your Plot

Lesson 4: How To Improve Your Settings

Lesson 5: How To Use Word Count To Evaluate Your Scenes

Lesson 6: Connect Your Readers To Your Characters

Lesson 7: Make The Most Of Your POV Characters

Lesson 8: Story Arc And Engaging Your Readers

Lesson 9: Finding Plot Holes

Lesson 10: Draw Your Readers Into and Out of Each Scene

Lesson 11: Maximize Your Use of Tension And Conflict

Lesson 12: Check For An Empty Stage

Lesson 13: Keep Your Timeline Clear

Lesson 14: Bringing It All Together