Fictionary

Story Editing Lesson 2

Characters and Novel Structure

Why do people read novels?

We think it's to find out what happens next. But what happens next is only interesting if it the "what happens next" involves characters or something that is important to a character.

Characters **ARE** your story. They act and react. They create emotion. They show motivation. Without any of this, you don't have a story. That's a tall order for your characters. So how do you make sure you're getting the most out of them?

You rewrite and revise until your characters are performing at their best.

Characters and Novel Structure

You've finished your first draft, so most likely you know who your characters are, what they look like, where they work and so on. But what about how they fit into your story structure? To understand this and make the most of it, you must evaluate your characters in the context of the structure of your novel.

Fictionary scans your manuscript, lists your characters, and links them to a scene.

All characters active in a scene or mentioned in a scene are listed. If you don't want mentioned characters to show up in your reports, you can move them from

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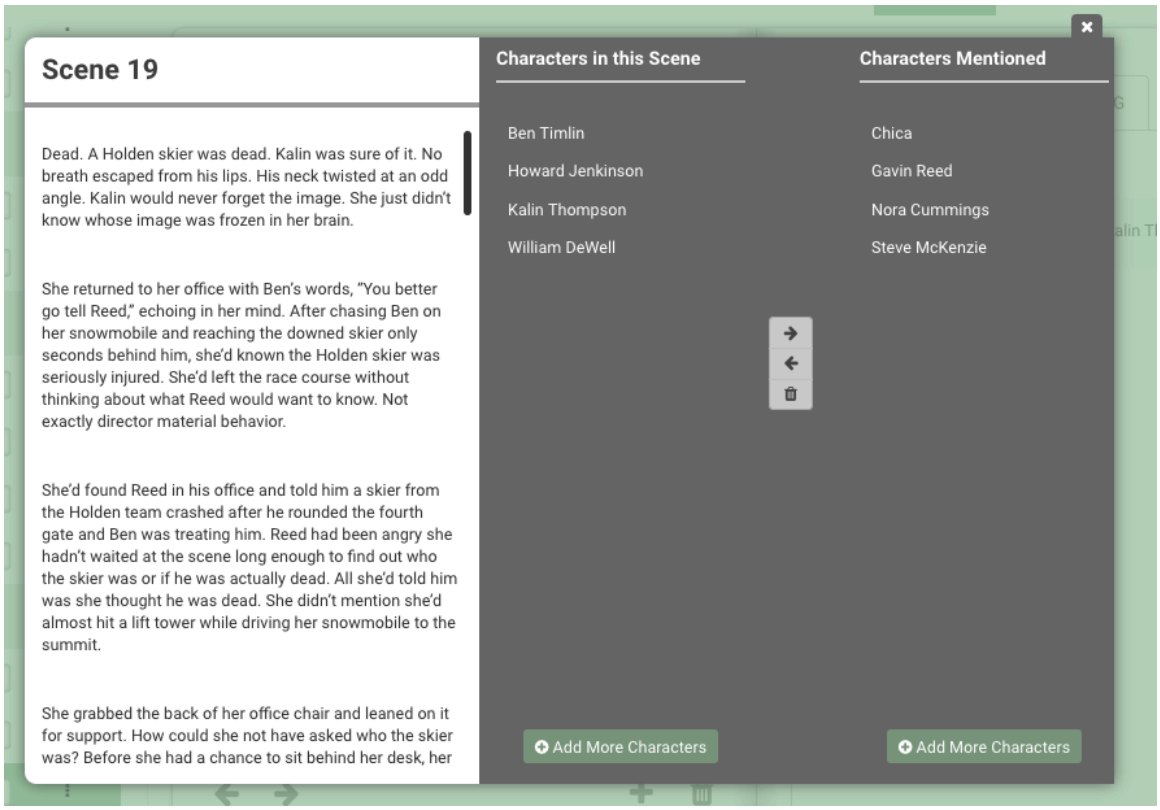
being in a scene to mentioned using the View Character List link on the Evaluate page. This is what I've done here.



Point of View

By now, you'll also know if you're writing from first-person point of view (POV) or third person. You've also decided if you are writing from multiple points of view or a single point of view. In essence, you know who is telling your story. Fictionary will help you keep track of POV and how you balance your POV scenes throughout the novel.

Fictionary has taken a first pass at listing your POV characters for each scene. It's up to you to confirm the list is correct.

Pro Tip: If you write from a **single POV,** select that character on the Cast Of Characters page and set him/her as the Single POV character. You won't need the report I'm about to talk about, so skip down to Advanced Mode in this lesson.

You can confirm your POV for each scene by quickly scanning the POV character on the Evaluate Page.

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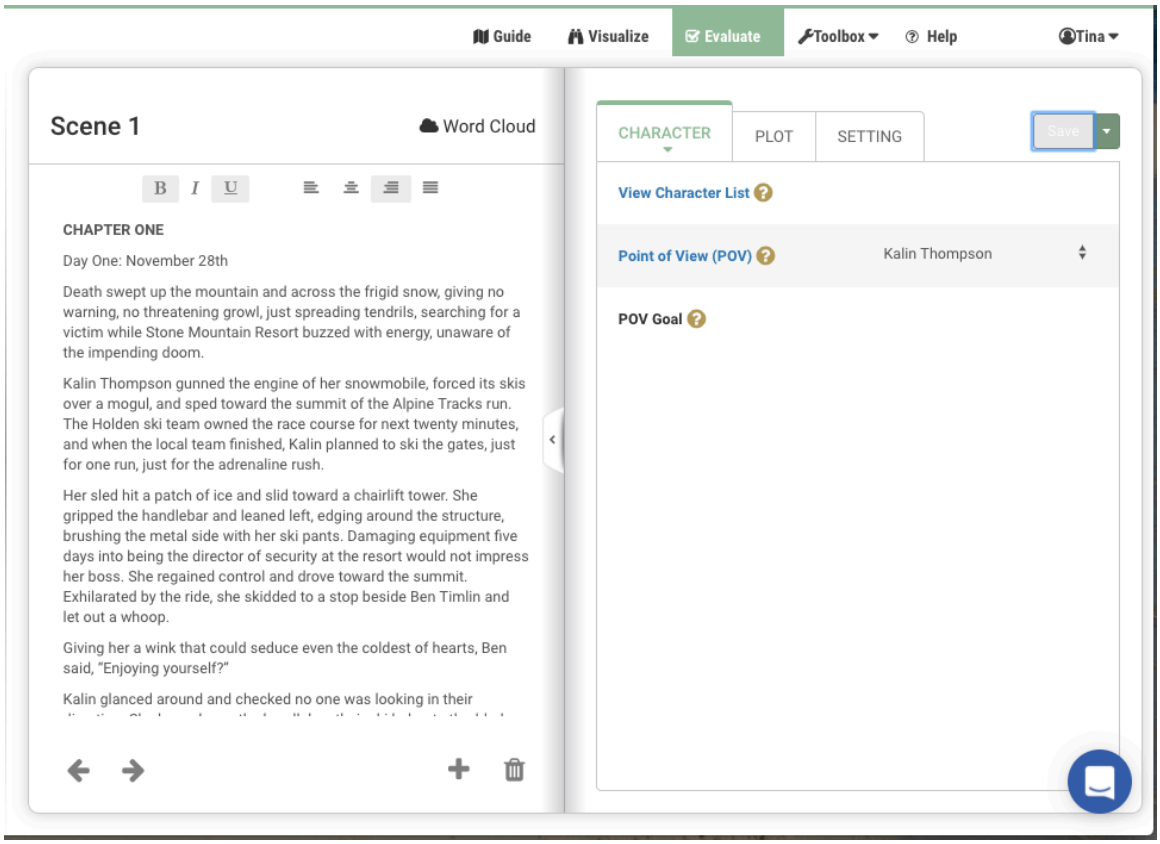
Pro Tip: After checking each scene, use the Save All button to save everything once.

Here you can see my POV character for Scene 1 is Kalin Thompson.



Once you've confirmed your POV characters, the POV Characters report will show you who your POV characters are, how many scenes each POV character has, and the order they appear throughout the novel.

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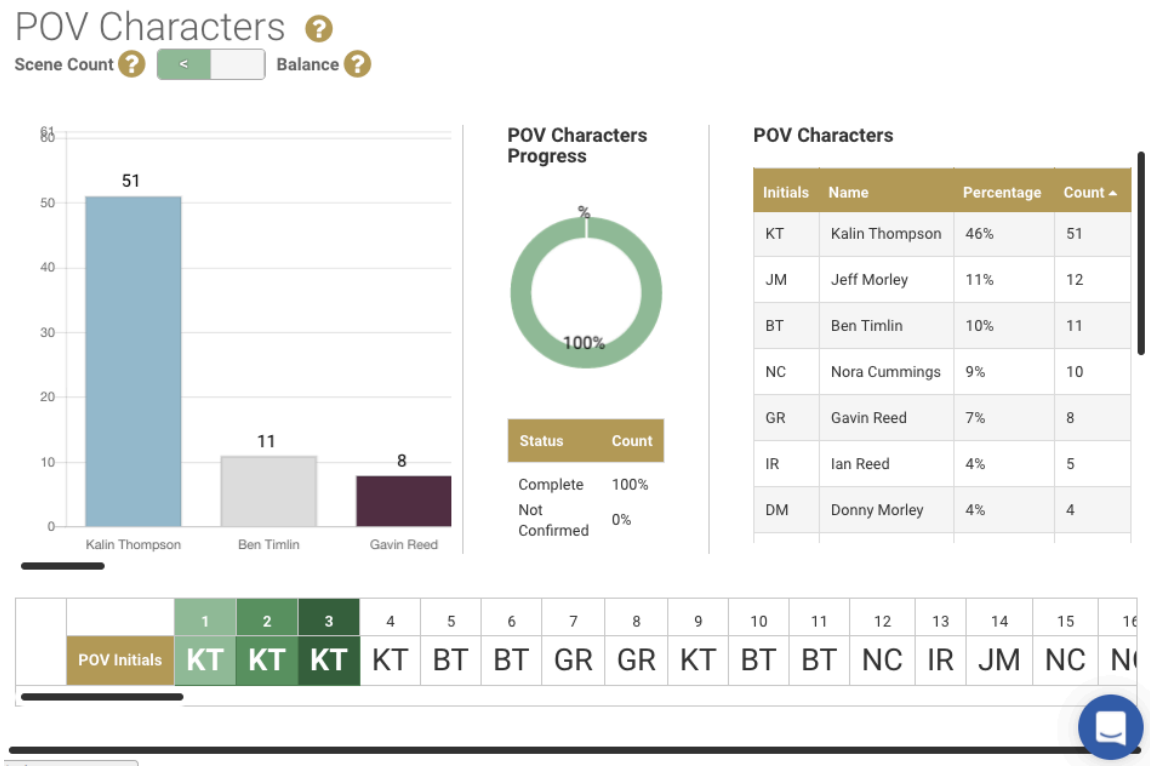
Below you can see Kalin Thompson is the POV character for 46% of the scenes. This is great as she's the protagonist, so she should have the most scenes.



In a later lesson, we'll go into more detail about how to read this report.

As you go through each scene, you can focus on the basic elements of fiction and give the POV character a goal for the scene.

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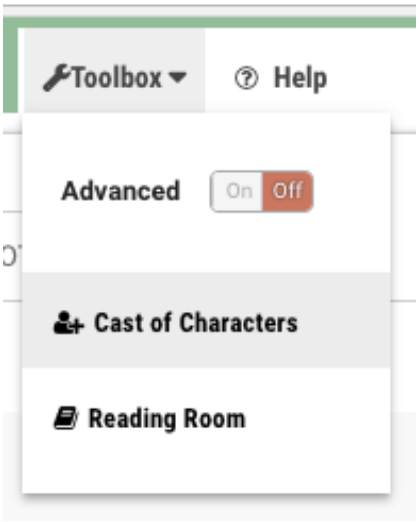
Advanced Mode

If you want to delve deeper, switch to the advanced mode in Fictionary. You can do this in the drop-down menu from the Toolbox.



When thinking about the POV character for each scene, ask yourself:

- What is the POV's internal goal for the scene?
- How does the goal relate to the plot?
- What happens if your POV doesn't achieve the goal?
- How does the scene affect your POV character?
- How does the scene affect the protagonist (if that's not the POV for the scene)?
- What knowledge does the POV character gain?
- Are the characters in motion?

Once you've answered the questions, check each scene to ensure the reader will understand the answers. You can show, tell, or imply the answers. It's up to you to find the right balance. The more important the event, the more you should show the reader what's happening. The less important could be told quickly, so the reader can move on to the good stuff.

I cover each of the questions in more detail in future lessons.

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