



# StoryTeller Masterclass

## Lesson 1



# Lesson 1: How to Edit a Novel with StoryTeller

## The Fictionary Methodology

### “38 Story Elements to a Better Story”

One of our early writers asked me: “How will StoryTeller help my manuscript?”

What a great question! It made me think about the best way to explain the **benefits of using StoryTeller** and you can become your own story editor. The question was the inspiration for creating this masterclass.

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 powerful story will sell your book.**

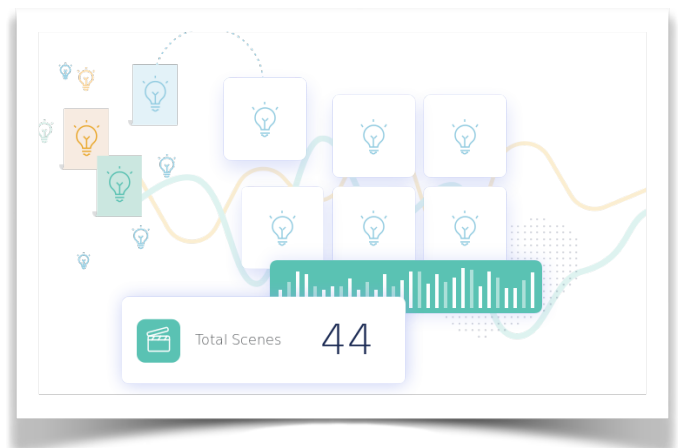
And a powerful story is made up of powerful scenes. StoryTeller is designed to guide you through a scene-by-scene analysis of your story using the 38 Fictionary Story Elements.

So let's start by defining a scene.

### 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, a middle, and an end.

A chapter may contain one scene or many scenes. Usually, the scenes within a chapter are related. Some novels have one scene



per chapter for the entire story. Others have multiple scenes.

## *Deciding how to structure the story is where your artistry comes into play.*

Where you choose to start a new scene will influence the experience you give your readers.

Usually, you'll start a new scene when you change the point of view character, who is in the scene, the storyline, the scene location, or the time.

## 38 Story Elements of a Scene

As we go through each lesson, we'll cover the Story Elements for Characters, Plot, and Settings.

### Characters

Most likely you have at least one character in a scene. The character doesn't have to be a human. It could be a storm. It could be a haunted house. It could be an animal. You get the idea. Whatever "it" is, if you give "it" a scene, "it" must be something relevant to the story

Characters entering or exiting a scene are a good place to start or end the scene.

The screenshot shows the 'Character' tab in the Fictionary app. The form includes the following fields:

- View Character List**: A button labeled 'View'.
- Point of View (POV)**: A text box containing 'Jaz Cooper'.
- POV Goal**: A text box containing 'Service Funeral'.
- POV Goal Internal**: A text box containing '✓'.
- Goal Related to Plot**: A text box containing '✓'.
- What if Goal Fails**: A text box containing 'F'.
- Impact on POV Character**: A text box containing '—'.
- Impact on Protagonist**: An empty text box.
- POV Knowledge Gained**: An empty text box.

A 'Save' button is located in the top right corner of the form. A green chat bubble icon is visible in the bottom right corner of the app interface.

## Plot

Each scene needs a great opening line, an entry hook, a middle, a climax, and an exit hook.

Consider starting a new scene, when the direction of the story changes, the action is significantly different, or you're sharing a subplot.

The screenshot shows the 'Plot' tab of a story development tool. It features a 'Save' button in the top right corner. The form includes the following fields and options:

- Scene Name:** A text input field containing 'Funeral'.
- Story Arc:** A toggle switch set to 'NO'.
- Purpose:** A dropdown menu with 'Don't Know Yet' selected.
- Opening Type:** A dropdown menu with 'I thought' selected.
- Closing Type:** A dropdown menu with 'Action' selected.
- Anchored:** A section with three options: 'POV' (checked), 'SCENE TIME' (unchecked), and 'SCENE SETTING' (unchecked).
- Entry Hook:** A text input field containing a checkmark '✓'.
- Exit Hook:** A text input field containing '✓ [placed hook on last line]'.

A green chat bubble icon is visible in the bottom right corner.

## Setting

The scene must take place somewhere. When the location changes, then consider starting a new scene. The timing of a scene also falls under setting. When there is a significant change in time, consider starting a new scene.

**Watch the 38 Fictionary Story Elements** video series to learn about every story element.

The screenshot shows the 'Setting' tab of the same story development tool. It features a 'Save' button in the top right corner. The form includes the following fields and options:

- Location:** A text input field containing 'Funeral but vague'.
- Date / Time:** A text input field containing a question mark '?'.
- Object:** A text input field containing 'Too Few,'.
- Sights:** A text input field containing 'Need More'.
- Smells:** A text input field containing 'Need More'.
- Sounds:** A text input field containing 'Need More'.
- Emotional Impact:** A text input field containing a checkmark '✓'.
- Location Split:** A toggle switch set to 'NO'.
- Weather:** A text input field containing 'Need More'.

A green chat bubble icon is visible in the bottom right corner.

# The Story Arc

The brain is hardwired to experience a story in a certain way, and it has been this way since the first stories were told. Our short video [Why is the Story Arc Important?](#) gives you historical proof that it's to your benefit to follow the form of the Story Arc.

Notice, I say form and not formula. There is a lot of room for your artistry to shine and still let the Story Arc help you tell the best possible story. Your story will be unique just as you are unique.

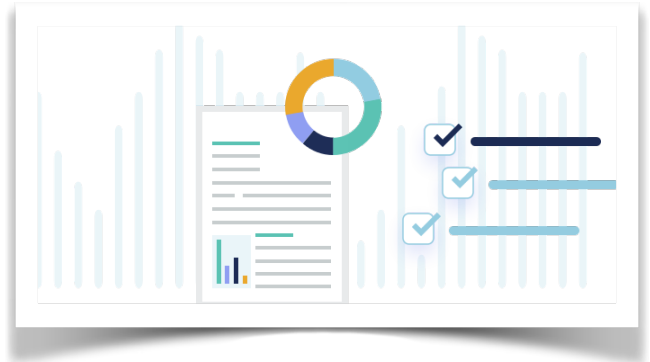
The Story Arc helps you place your scenes in the right place for maximum reader enjoyment. Lesson 8 covers the story arc in detail.



## How Long Should a Scene Be?

Once you've got your story structured, you'll review the word count per scene.

The length of a scene affects the pacing of the story. The shorter the scene, the faster the pacing. The longer the scene, the slower the pacing. This, of course, has exceptions.



The key scenes in your novel such as the **inciting incident**, **plot point 1**, **midpoint**, **plot point 2**, and climax can have a longer word count and still be fast-paced. The action or key events happening in those scenes will drive the pacing.



Keep in mind that many readers use small reading devices these days, and a long scene may seem even longer when read on a small screen. You don't want to tire a reader out.

When a reader finishes a scene, they feel a sense of accomplishment. If a scene is too long, they might get tired and stop reading and not feel accomplished. Seems odd, I know, but technology is influencing the way we read and write.

Now that you know what a scene is and how important it is to the editing process, we'll take you on the exciting journey of story editing based on a scene-by-scene analysis.

## Triggers for Starting a New Scene

Just to recap, a good time to start a new scene is when one of the following changes:

- POV character
- Characters in the scene
- Storyline
- Scene location
- Time

When you start a new scene, you let the reader know to expect a change, and this helps the story flow from one scene to the next.

You can also start a new scene if the word count of your scene is too long for the overall structure of your story.

## 10 Benefits of StoryTeller

To answer the opening question: “How will StoryTeller help my manuscript?” **StoryTeller** can identify and help you fix problems within your manuscript by focusing on the **structure of your story**, not on the words. Nine 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 StoryTeller comes from the built-in **Editing Tips**. These tips explain why each Fictionary Story Element is important, how to use it within StoryTeller, and provide you with specific advice on the area of the manuscript you're working on just when you need it. No more endless searching for writing advice!

**PRO TIP:** Click the question mark beside a Story Element and you'll see the editing tip for that Story Element.

## Fictionary Story Editing Masterclass

Editing a manuscript is a big undertaking, both intellectually and emotionally. It takes time and being thorough can be difficult, but the creative story editing process always pays off.

**StoryTeller** makes editing easier by applying universal storytelling structures to each and every scene. Evaluate and revise your manuscript against 38 Fictionary Story Elements to tell a powerful story people will naturally connect with.

Next up is Lesson 2: Characters and Story Structure

We'll help you make the most of **StoryTeller** with the Story Editing Masterclass.

*The masterclass is yours for free when you subscribe to Fictionary StoryTeller for either a Monthly or Annual Subscription.*

*Without a subscription, you can buy the masterclass for \$99US.*

Here's what you'll get.

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



StoryTeller and this masterclass takes you through evaluating and editing each scene in your novel until you've created a powerful story.