



StoryTeller Masterclass

Lesson 2



Lesson 2: Characters and Novel Structure

Why do people read novels?

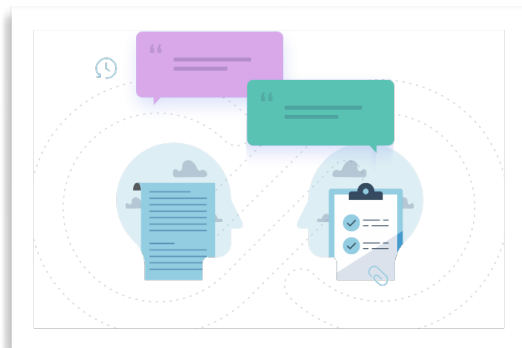
We think it's to find out what happens next. But what happens next is only interesting if it the "what happens next" involves characters or something that is important to a character.

Characters are your story.

Characters 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.

Characters in a scene are the characters who have a role in the scene. If you think of a play, it's who's on stage. The second set of

characters are the offstage characters who are mentioned. So as a writer, you need to know exactly who's in and who's mentioned in a scene.

The fewer characters in a scene, the more time a reader has to get connected with that character.

And it's really important because your readers want to cheer for somebody or cheer against somebody depending on the story. So the number of characters is going to influence that.

Too many characters in a scene and the reader's going to get lost.

Think of the characters in a scene in the context of readers connecting to them.

Character Introduction

Once you know have a list of characters for your novel, you'll start assessing them on a scene-by-scene basis. You're going to assess whether it's the character's first scene. So if it's a first scene, this first time, the character is in the story, then character introduction needs to be considered.

The more major a character is, the longer the introduction. For the minor characters, not as much. So once you reader is engaged with the character, you not only need to know when they come in the story, you need to know when they exit the story.

If you have a protagonist and they enter the story early, which they should, you don't want them exiting early. The protagonist must be in the climax scene, and they must also be in the key scenes such as the inciting incident and plot points.

Character names

One more thing about characters in a scene.

This is a chance to look if any of the character names are confusing. For example, if there is a character Jack and a character John, the reader's not going to remember the difference. If they are in one scene together, they might, but say three or four scenes goes by now, John appears.

The reader's going to think is that Jack or John? And they won't know. And it drives the reader crazy when they have to flip back and go, who is this character that this just happened to?

How StoryTeller Helps

StoryTeller scans your manuscript, lists your characters, and links them to scenes.

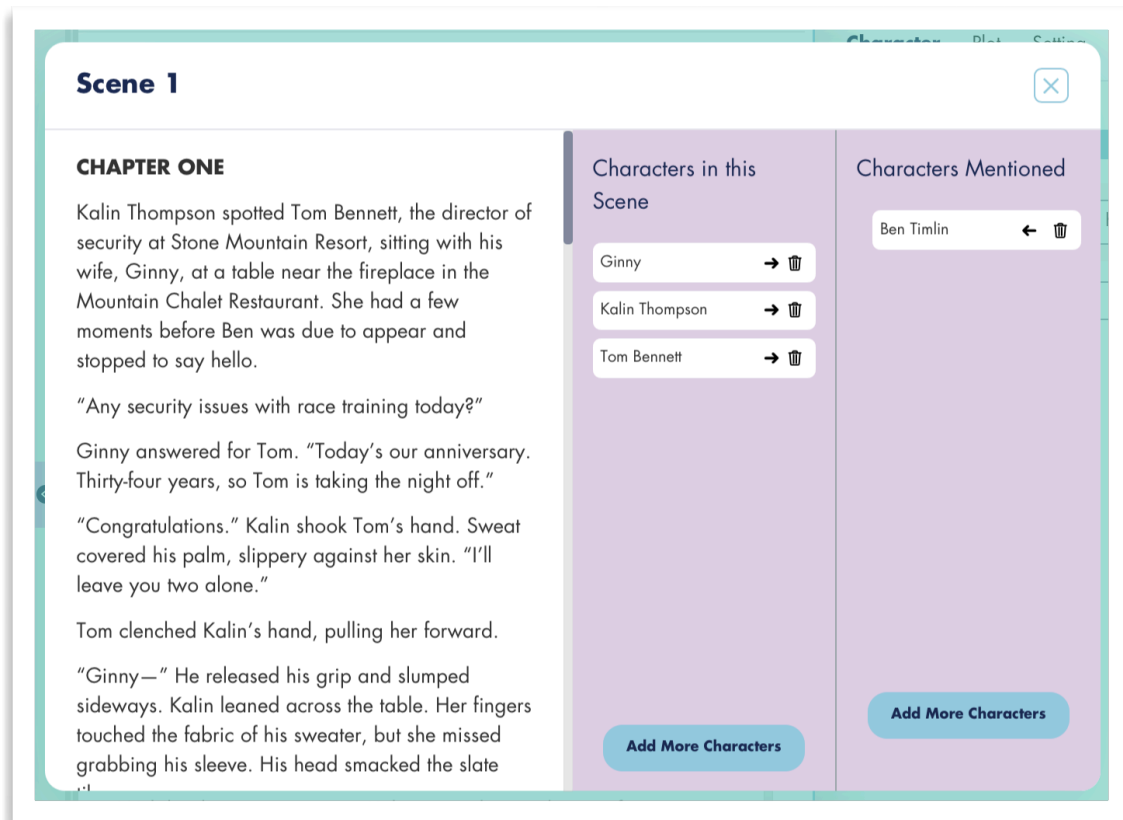
All characters active in a scene or mentioned in a scene are listed. If you don't want mentioned characters to show up in the character insights, you can move them from being in a scene to mentioned by clicking **View** beside **View Character List** on the **Evaluate** page.



View Character List

View

Below, I've moved Ben Timlin from being a character in the scene to a character mentioned in the scene.



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. **StoryTeller** will help you keep track of POV characters and how you balance your POV scenes throughout the novel.

StoryTeller 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: Write from a single POV?

Select that character on the Cast Of Characters page and set them as the Single POV character.

If you write from a single POV, you won't need the report I'm about to talk about, so skip down to Advanced Mode in this lesson.

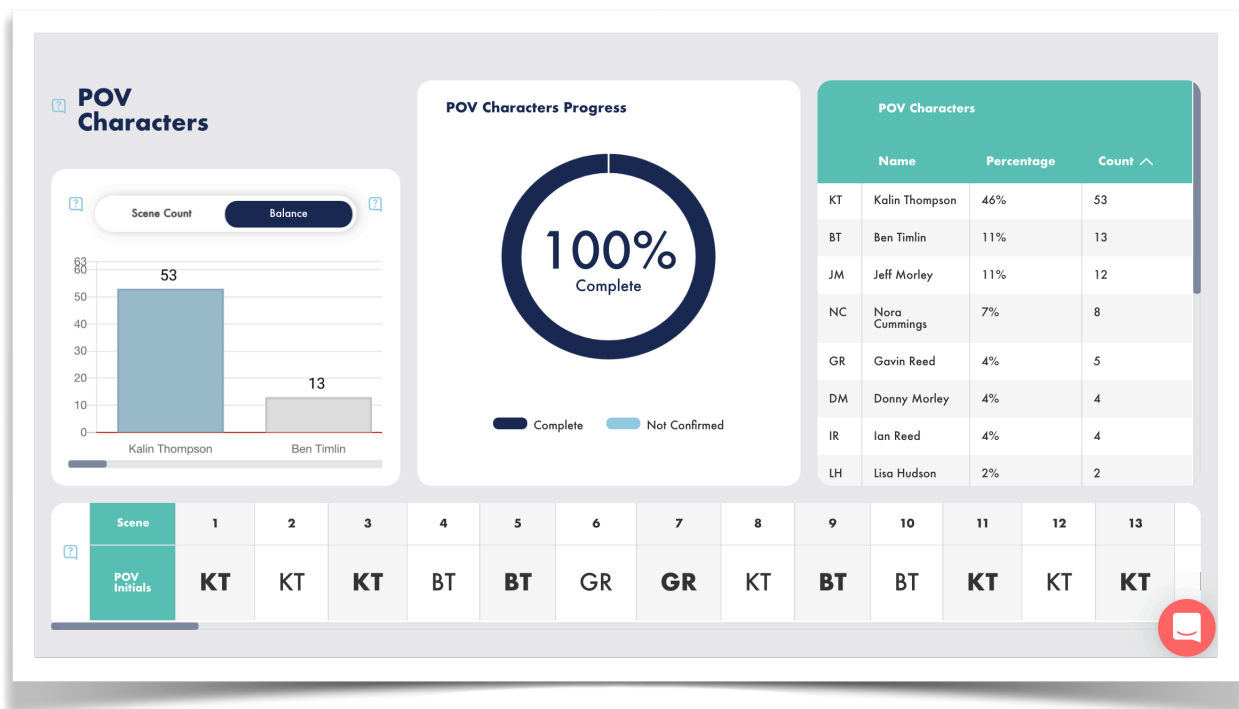
You can confirm your POV for each scene by quickly scanning the POV character on the Evaluate Page. Here you can see the POV character for Scene 1 is Kalin Thompson.

The screenshot displays the Fictionary StoryTeller interface. On the left, a sidebar lists chapters and scenes. The main area shows the text for Scene 1, which is titled "CHAPTER ONE". The text describes a scene where Nick and his wife are at a restaurant, and Kalin Thompson is the point of view character. On the right, the "Evaluate" tab is active, showing a table with columns for Character, Plot, Setting, and Notes. The "Point of View (POV)" is set to "Kalin Thompson".

Character	Plot	Setting	Notes
View Character List	View		
Point of View (POV)	Kalin Thompson		
POV Goal	goal		

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

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 insight.

As you go through each scene, you can focus on the basic Story Elements and give the POV character a goal for the scene. Because if the POV Character doesn't have a goal in a scene, then what are they doing? Nothing. And "Nothing" is boring.

As a bonus to the masterclass, I've linked the relevant videos from the Story Editing Series Fictionary has posted on Youtube. The videos give the next level of advice about the Story Element.

For more information on the POV Character Goal watch: [POV Character Goal](#).

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

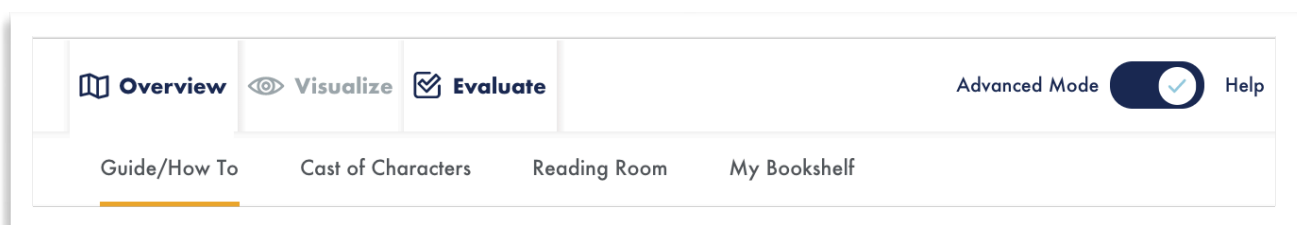
- What is the POV's internal goal for the scene? Watch: [POV Goal Internal](#)
- How does the goal relate to the plot? Watch: [POV Goal Related To Plot](#)
- What happens if your POV doesn't achieve the goal? Watch: [What if the POV Character Fails to Reach Their Goal](#)
- How does the scene affect your POV character? For this and the following question, watch: [Scene Impact on Characters.](#)
- How does the scene affect the protagonist (if that's not the POV character for the scene)?
- What knowledge does the POV character gain? Watch: [POV Knowledge Gained](#)
- Are the characters in motion? Watch: [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 can be "told" quickly, so the reader can move on to the good stuff.

Advanced Mode

If you want to delve deeper into the Character Story Elements, switch to the advanced mode in **StoryTeller** using the toggle at the stop of the screen.



Fictionary Story Editing Masterclass

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