

Save the Cat Beat Sheet

Plan the 15 beats, calculate page targets, and check the structural mirrors before drafting.

STORY TITLE

TOTAL PAGES

LOGLINE

THEME QUESTION

BEAT	TARGET	TARGET PAGE	ONE-LINE PLAN
ACT ONE			
1. Opening Image	0-1%		
2. Theme Stated	5%		
3. Setup	1-10%		
4. Catalyst	10%		
5. Debate	10-20%		
ACT TWO			
6. Break into Two	20%		
7. B Story	22%		
8. Fun and Games	20-50%		
9. Midpoint	50%		
10. Bad Guys Close In	50-75%		
11. All Is Lost	75%		
12. Dark Night of the Soul	75-80%		
ACT THREE			
13. Break into Three	80%		
14. Finale	80-99%		
15. Final Image	99-100%		

PAGE TARGET FORMULA

Total script pages x beat percentage = target page. Use a range when the beat spans several pages.

Establish, Then Disrupt

Make the setup specific enough that the Catalyst breaks something the protagonist values.

1 Opening Image

0-1%

ACT ONE

Show the story before change. What visual condition will the ending answer?

2 Theme Stated

5%

ACT ONE

Let someone raise the story's central question before the protagonist understands it.

3 Setup

1-10%

ACT ONE

Establish the protagonist, ordinary world, goal, relationships, and problems that need attention.

4 Catalyst

10%

ACT ONE

Disrupt ordinary life with an event the protagonist cannot fully undo.

Choose the New World

The Debate has to cost something, and Fun and Games has to deliver the promise of the premise.

5 Debate

10-20%

ACT ONE

Show doubt, avoidance, preparation, and the cost of staying where they are.

6 Break into Two

20%

ACT TWO

Make the protagonist choose the unfamiliar Act Two world.

7 B Story

22%

ACT TWO

Introduce the relationship or thread that carries the internal lesson.

8 Fun and Games

20-50%

ACT TWO

Deliver the premise through attempts, discoveries, wins, and complications.

Raise Stakes, Then Break

Track the midpoint shift and the damage caused by the protagonist's own weakness.

9

Midpoint

50%

ACT TWO

Create a false victory or false defeat that raises the stakes and changes the goal.

10

Bad Guys Close In

50-75%

ACT TWO

Increase external pressure while the protagonist's internal weakness causes damage.

11

All Is Lost

75%

ACT TWO

Collapse the plan and make the loss feel final.

12

Dark Night of the Soul

75-80%

ACT TWO

Give the protagonist space to face the failure and the truth they resisted.

Resolve Through Change

The final plan should use what the protagonist learned, and the final image should prove it.

13 Break into Three

80%

ACT THREE

Combine the external plot and internal lesson into a new plan.

14 Finale

80-99%

ACT THREE

Test the changed protagonist through a decisive plan, complication, and final action.

15 Final Image

99-100%

ACT THREE

Mirror or contrast the opening image so the change is visible.

FINAL STRUCTURE CHECK

- ☐ Opening Image and Final Image: what concrete contrast shows the change?
- ☐ Theme Stated and Dark Night: where does the protagonist finally understand the question?
- ☐ B Story and Break into Three: what lesson or relationship makes the final plan possible?
- ☐ Catalyst and Finale: how does the ending answer the disruption that began the story?