

Basic Structure Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to help solidify the structural elements for a narrative that is primarily linear (though many of these elements will also strengthen a non-linear narrative as well.) The checklist can be used as an outline before writing or prior to engaging in draft work. The checklist is flexible and may change and evolve with subsequent draft work.

I. Dramatic Structure- Structural elements you should always consider regardless of the length of the play.

Protagonist: SPT0615-JD

Antagonists: Singularity, Triangulum, Cartwheel, Whirlpool, Andromeda, Milky Way

Major Dramatic Question (MDQ- protagonist's goal phrased as a question):

What does it mean to be apparent, at the cutting Edge?

*If there are more than two characters in your play, what character archetypes do the remaining characters fall under.

Confidant: Gravity

Mentor: Gravity

Stakes:

What is at stake if your protagonist does not achieve their goal?

If JD returns home, the confrontation with their family about the mess that is our entire Universe.

Obstacles:

List obstacles does your protagonist need to overcome as they pursue their goal?

- Singularity
- Their siblings
- The seemingly infinite scale of the fabric of spacetime in our Universe.
- JD's internal conflict between their family and their apparent legacy.

Tactics:

List the various tactics your protagonist might use to achieve their goal?

- JD must strike or commit "parricide" on Singularity; a child punching their parent.
- JD must betray their siblings' trust over and over.
- JD will fall off the Edge of the Universe / edge of the stage.

Arch:

How is your protagonist different at the end of the play than they were at the beginning? How has this journey (that is "the play") changed them?

At the end of the musical, JD leaves their family for their "legacy" and becomes apparent. At the beginning of the musical, JD is unapparent/unclear about what is beyond the Edge of their Universe. The quintillion-years journey changed "what is family" to JD.

Tension Building Devices:

What tension building devices are you using to keep the audience engaged throughout? (high stakes, active dialogue/stichomythia, clock- literal or implied.)

- Religious invocations via choreography or customs/rituals or prayers of "Crunch Time"
- "Parent Knows Best" attitude of Singularity
- The Big Bang Taser that functions as a weapon and treated like a powerful talisman
- Sibling rivalry
- The Tidal shift from companion to beast (music theory applications of the wolf fifth)
- Climatic battle between the Galaxy family versus Gravity and their tidal forces

II. The Marsha Norman Paragraph- An outline approach developed by Marsha Norman that shows the narrative arch of a play. Use the information above to shape your paragraph.

Examples:

This play is about Victoria

who wants to be free of her oppressive life

but her familial obligations and expectations stand in her way

It all takes place in a small southern town in the 1920's

Along the way, Victoria learns that she alone is responsible for her happiness.

You know it's over when Victoria is able to testify her true love and true self through song.

This play is about a creature

who wants to be able to free/find himself through language

but he is trapped by his current conduction as a scientific subject

It all takes place in an arctic landscape in the near future

Along the way, the Creature learns that the power to free himself lies within his very body and the memories/dreams it incubates.

You know it's over when the creature has found the words to his song and is able to speak his name

*Using the template below. Type your Norman paragraph to show the narrative arch of your play.

This play is about SPT0615-JD (protagonist or any character in the play)

who wants to have an apparent legacy but their present family does not want them to leave the Universe they are in. (obstacle)

It all takes place from the Center to the Edge of the Universe.

Along the way, JD confronts their past family in order to reach their legacy.

You know it's over when it is Crunch Time (the end of our Universe).

III. Ergri's *Premise* (from his book *The Art Of Dramatic Writing*.) More information about the premise can be accessed here: <https://www.writerswrite.com/fiction/egri/>

Often referred to by other names (thesis, theme, central idea, driving force, plan, plot, basic emotion etc.) A play's premise is essentially a sentence that essentially gives you the beginning middle, and end of the entire play. It is usually phrased in a way that centers the journey of the protagonist

Examples:

Romeo and Juliet: "Great love defies even death."

Macbeth: "Ruthless ambition leads to its own destruction."

Ghost (Ibsen): "The sins of the fathers are visited on the children."

Write a one sentence premise for your play.

The Big Bang leads to family and legacy.
