

Act One

one-quarter the length of the story.

total length: 1/4:

introduce your characters and the problem or conflict

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often contains the inciting incident the event that gets everything rolling—although this event sometimes has already occurred when the story begins.

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first turning point which is somewhat smaller than the turning point that ends the act

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By the end of Act One, the audience knows who and what your story is about and, at least initially, what's at stake.

The first act drives to a emotional peak the highest in the film so far, necessitating the action that launches the second act.

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Act Two

one-half the length of the story.

total length: 2/4:

story's pace increases as complications emerge

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unexpected twists and reversals take place,

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You need your second act to continue to build as new information and new stakes are woven into your story.

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The second act drives to an emotional peak even greater than at the end of Act One, necessitating the action that launches the third act.

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Act Three

slightly less than one-quarter the length of the story.

total length: 1/4:

As this act unfolds, the character is approaching defeat; he or she will reach the darkest moment just as the third act comes to a close.

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It intensifies

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That tension then pushes you into the resolution those last moments where you resolve the story, tie up loose ends as necessary, and let your hero out of the tree

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**Act One**  
one-quarter the length of  
the story.

introduce your characters  
and the problem or  
conflict

often contains the  
inciting incident the  
event that gets everything  
rolling—although this  
event sometimes has  
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the story begins.

first turning point which  
is somewhat smaller than  
the turning point that ends  
the act

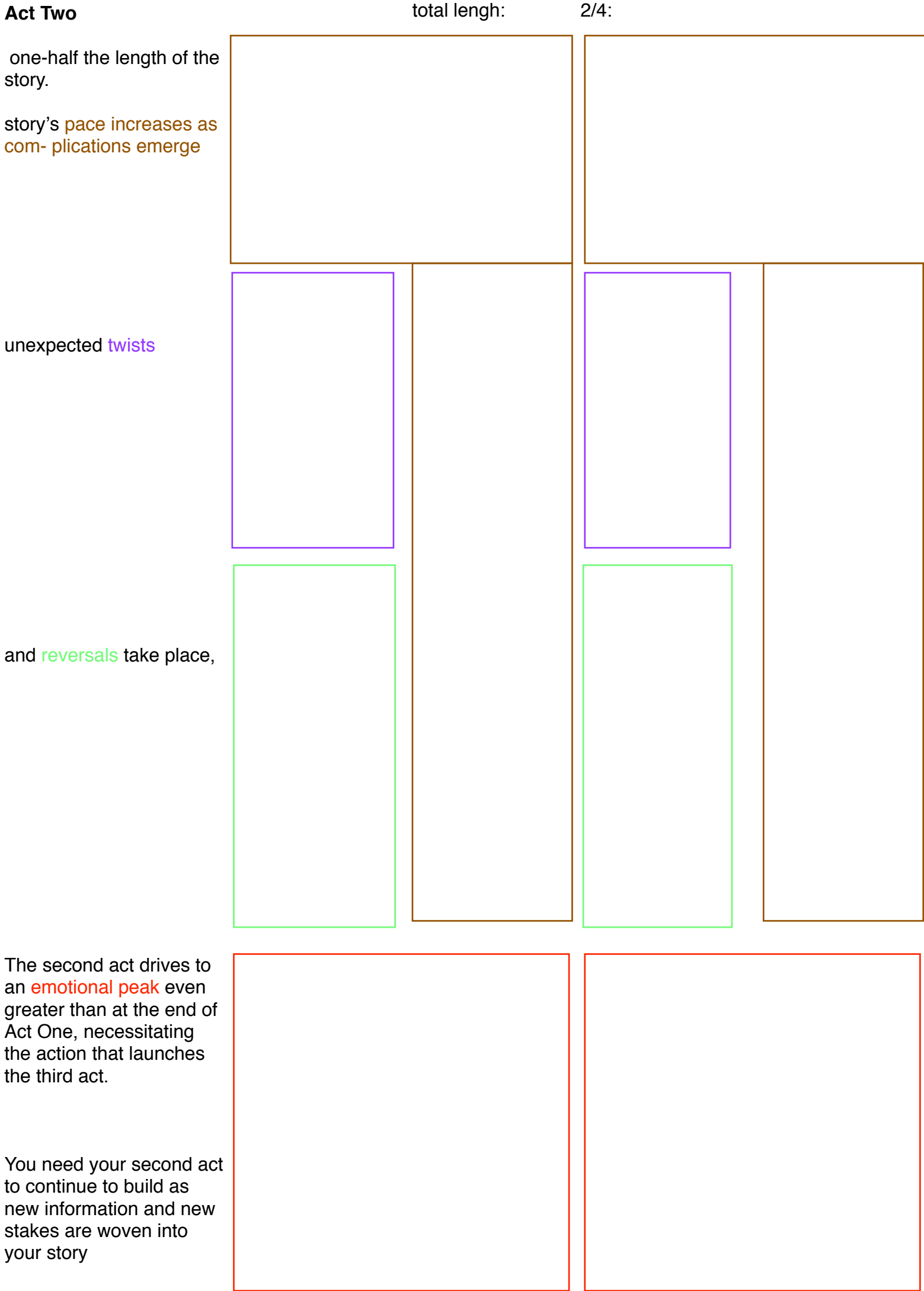
The first act drives to a  
emotional peak the  
highest in the film so far,  
necessitating the action  
that launches the second  
act.

By the end of Act One,  
the audience knows who  
and what your story is  
about and, at least  
initially, what's at stake.

total length:  
Audio

1/4:

Visual



Act Three

slightly less than one-quarter the length of the story.

As this act unfolds, the character is approaching defeat; he or she will reach the darkest moment just as the third act comes to a close.

It intensifies

That tension then pushes you into the resolution those last moments where you resolve the story,

tie up loose ends as necessary

, and let your hero out of the tree

total length:

1/4: