

CONFLICT FROM CHARACTER

“Conflict reveals character”

ROBERT MCKEE

This insightful quote is a powerful reminder that the essence of a compelling screenplay lies in the dynamic interplay between conflict and character. Let's delve into a step-by-step process to help you harness this principle to craft riveting screenplays.

Step 1: Define Your Character: Start by listing at least five key traits of your character, including their flaws. These traits and flaws will guide your character's actions and reactions throughout the story.

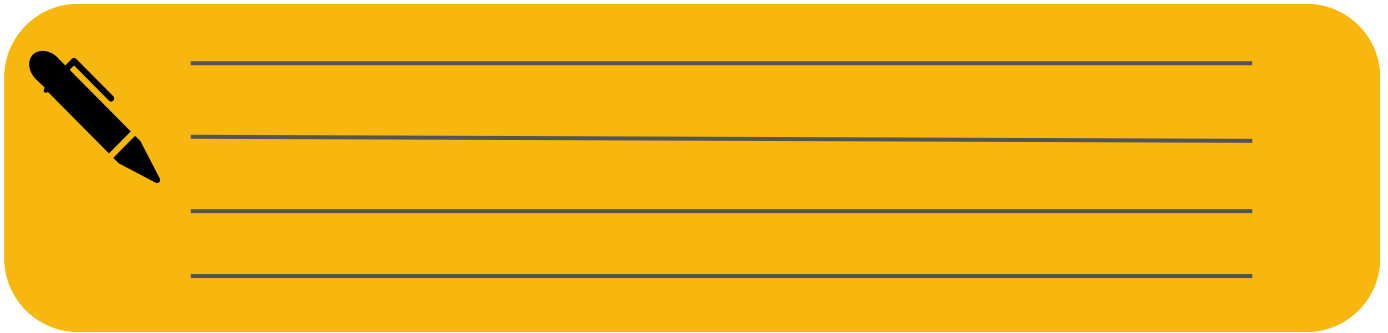
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 2: Identify Your Character's Desire: Write down what your character wants more than anything else - and why. This should be a strong, personal goal that drives them throughout the story. Consider how their flaws might influence this desire.

THE SCRIPT READER

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Step 3: Establish the Stakes: What will happen if your character doesn't achieve their goal? What do they stand to lose? Write down the consequences of failure. This is what your character is risking, and it should be significant enough to motivate them. Consider how their flaws, weaknesses, or limitations might heighten these stakes too.



Step 4: Create an Obstacle: Now, brainstorm obstacles that could prevent your character from achieving their goal. Consider the following questions:

- What person could stand in their way?
- What circumstances could make their goal harder to reach?
- Could their flaws create additional obstacles or exacerbate existing ones? Write down at least three potential obstacles.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 5: Explore the Struggle: Let's delve deeper into your character's reaction to these obstacles. For each obstacle you've listed, answer the following questions:

- Given their unique traits and flaws, how would your character react to this obstacle initially?
- What actions would they take to overcome it?
- How does this struggle reveal a new aspect of their character or highlight their flaws? Remember, the character's reactions should be consistent with their traits and flaws and not necessarily how you would react.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Step 6: Raise the Stakes: As your story progresses, the stakes should increase. This could mean the consequences of failure become more severe, or a new desire emerges that's even more important. For each obstacle, consider how the stakes could be raised and jot down your ideas. Also, think about how these heightened stakes could further reveal your character's traits and flaws. For example, how might their determination intensify when faced with greater risks? How might their flaws become more apparent under increased pressure?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 7: Show, Don't Tell: For each character reaction you've listed in step 5, think about how you can show this through their actions, rather than telling it through dialogue or exposition. Write down specific actions that demonstrate their responses to the obstacles and how these actions reveal their flaws.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 8: Resolve the Conflict: Now, imagine how the conflict could be resolved. Remember, resolution doesn't always mean success. It could also mean failure, or a realization that leads to a change in desire. For each obstacle, write down a potential resolution and how it reveals the final aspect of your character. Consider whether they overcome their flaw, if it becomes a strength, or if it remains a challenge for them.

