



# ELA Virtual Learning

# **Creative Writing**

May 15, 2020



## Creative Writing

### Lesson: Fri., May 15

**Objective/Learning Target:** Students will create an outline for an original spec script.

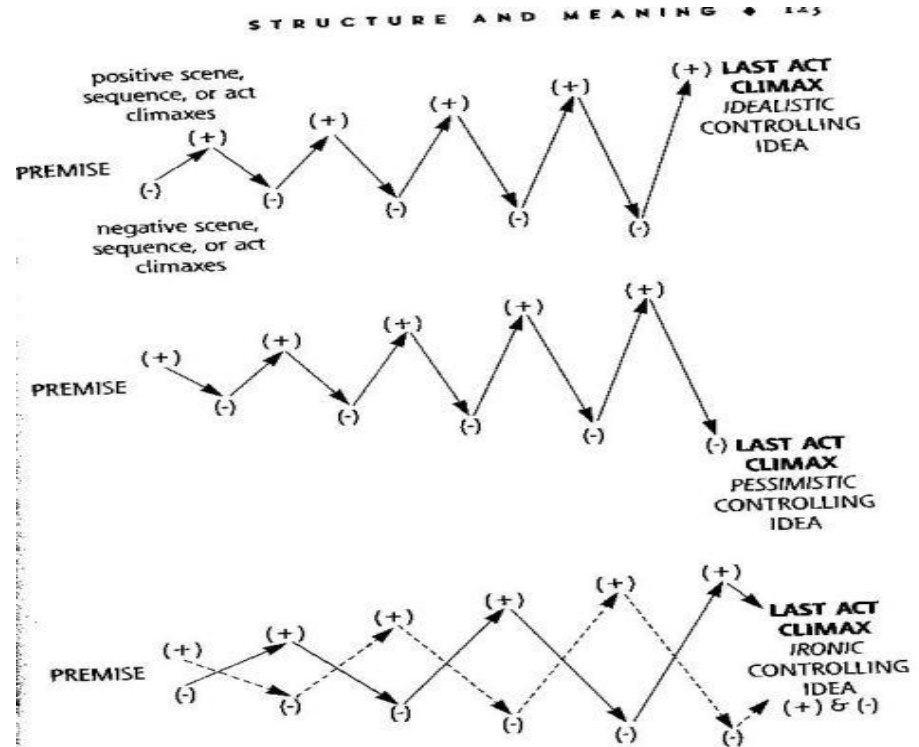


## Creative Writing

**Review:** We've learned before that characters must have motivation, and the obstacles (or conflict) thwarting that character's desire propels the story forward. When she makes progress toward her goal, we consider that a net positive change. Any kind of setback would be considered negative.

## Creative Writing

**Review (cont'd):** According to Robert McKee, the final “value” in the story structure determines its controlling idea-idealistic, pessimistic, or ironic. These scenes make up the structure of your story.





## Creative Writing

**Warm-up:** Watch [this clip of Marilyn Horowitz](#), a writing professor at NYU, describing how to write a “beat-by-beat” outline for a sitcom script.



## Creative Writing

**Lesson:** Creating, as Horowitz calls them, the “act breaks,” you begin to construct a framework on which your story can “hang.” For these same moments, Robert McKee refers to them as “turning points,” and they’ve been used in storytelling all the way back to Greek tragedies like *Oedipus the King*.



## Creative Writing

**Lesson (cont'd):** Horowitz encourages you to consider the character's "worst nightmare." In other words, what you're considering for your episode are the *stakes*. Considering what the character wants, what's the worst thing that can happen? Defining and dramatizing this potential outcome heightens tension in your story and engages the audience. Let's consider Hamlet for a moment.



## Creative Writing

**Lesson (cont'd):** In *Hamlet*, the young prince has recently lost his father, and his mother promptly married his uncle... We learn this by the end of the second scene of play! So what's at stake? Well, at the end of the first act, his father's ghost visits him and demands he avenge his "foul and most unnatural murder." Worst-case scenario? Hamlet fails in his quest, letting down his father, and ruins the lives of many others in the process... Well, it *is* a tragedy!





## Creative Writing

**Practice:** Create an outline for your own original story idea for the existing series you've been studying (which is called a spec script). Using Horowitz's steps, create your turning points and then decide how you can use scenes to lead up to those "act breaks." Remember, action defines character! Design scenes that challenge them, revealing internal conflict. Action-->reaction.



## Creative Writing

**Model:** Consider [this student example](#) of an outline for an original episode of *The Big Bang Theory*.



## Creative Writing

### **Additional Practice/Resources:**

[How to Become a Television Comedy Writer](#)

[Screenwriting Glossary](#)

[Screenplay Formatter Add-On for Google Docs](#)