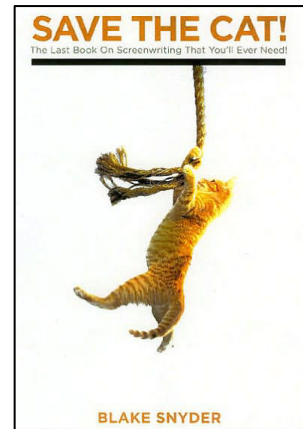


## Blake Snyder's Beat Sheet - *Explained*

The Blake Snyder Beat Sheet breaks down three-act screenplay structure into 15 bite-size, manageable sections called beats, each with a specific goal for your overall story. Below is an explanation of each beat. The page numbers are not strict, they are approximations of where the beats should occur in a 110 page screenplay.

### THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET (aka BS2)

**Opening Image (1)** – A visual that represents the central struggle & tone of the story. A snapshot of the main character's problem, before the adventure begins. Often mirrors the Closing Image.



**Set-up (1-10)** – Expand on the opening image. Present the main character's world as it is, and what is missing in their life. Stasis = Death, the “before” life of the protagonist is such that if it stays the same, he or she will figuratively die. In addition, the main character's flaw, his problem that needs fixing over the course of the story, is revealed. (In many stories, it is not the main character's flaw, but another central character's flaw that is presented for him to resolve over the course of the story – for the character to ‘arc’)

**Theme Stated (5)** (during the Set-up) – The message, the truth you want to reveal by the end of your screenplay. What your story is about in a larger sense. Usually, it is spoken to the main character or in their presence, but they don't understand this truth...not until they go on the journey to find it.

**Catalyst (12)** – A moment where the opportunity to go on a journey is presented to the main character. Life as it is now changes. It is the telegram, catching your loved-one cheating, allowing a monster onboard the ship, a secret holographic message from a galactic princess, etc. The “before” world is no more, change has begun. (Catalyst is the same as the *Inciting Incident* or *Call to Adventure*)

**Debate (12-25)** – Change is scary and for a moment, or a brief number of moments, the main character doubts the journey they must take. Can I face this challenge? Do I have what it takes? Should I go at all? Often the hero denies the call to adventure at first.

**Break Into Two (Choosing Act Two) (25)** – The main character makes a choice and to go on the journey, and our adventure begins. We leave the “Thesis” world and enter the upside-down “Anti-thesis” world of Act Two.

**B Story (30)** – This is a discussion about the Theme – the nugget of truth. This discussion often takes place between the main character and the love interest. So, the B Story is usually called the “love story”.

**Fun & Games (30-55)** – “The Promise of the Premise” – This is the fun part of the story. The Fun & Games is the first half of Act II where the audience is entertained as the main character explores the new world and overcomes the type of obstacles they have been promised by the premise of the film, it's genre, even it's one-sheet poster. This is when the detective finds his clues and interviews his first witnesses to the murder mystery, when Indiana Jones tracks down the possible resting place of the Arc, when Harry & Sally are stuck together over and over seeming to annoy one another. The Fun & Games are what we came to see the movie for!

**Midpoint (55)** – The midpoint is the largest plot twist of the film, it raises the stakes of the main character's goal, can change the goal completely, or at least makes the requirements of the goal much more difficult. It can feel like a new movie is starting as a result of the midpoint. Here the main character must recommit to the new goal, for which there is no turning back. Often it is the B Story that incites the midpoint plot twist. Often a “ticking time clock” for resolving the goal begins ticking at the midpoint.

**Bad Guys Close In (55-75)** – Now the Fun & Games get serious. The BGCI is the second half of Act II where the audience is exhilarated by an ever more complex and overwhelming set of obstacles to the main character’s goal. Here the main character’s gifts are of no use, their plans are foiled, their team can be split up, or a trusted friend will betray them. The detective himself is now being chased and shot at, Indiana Jones is discovered by the Nazis and thrown into a snake pit, Harry runs into his first wife and takes out his anger on Sally. (In terms of B Story, there is a saying “sex at 60”, that is page 60)

**All is Lost (75)** – The low point of the main character’s journey. The moment that the main character loses everything they gained so far, or realizes everything they now have has no meaning. The main character has lost even more than if he’d never gone on the journey in the first place. At the All is Lost, something or someone dies. Blake Snyder calls this the “Whiff of death.” It can be physical or emotional, but the death of something old makes way for something new to be born. The detective’s partner is killed, and he is powerless because its the commissioner who is behind the original crime. Indy has lost the Arc to the Nazis and believes Marion is dead. Harry & Sally sleep together and may have thrown their entire friendship away.

**Dark Night of the Soul** – The main character hits bottom, and wallows in hopelessness. The *Why hast thou forsaken me, Lord?* moment. Mourning the loss of what has “died” – the dream, the goal, the mentor character, the love of your life, etc. But, you must fall completely before you can pick yourself back up and try again. Here the main character’s arc is complete as they fully understand the truth they could not see when they set out on the journey. The DNOTS is directly followed by “New Information” also delivered via the B Story. This information functions as a second Catalyst that gives the main character the choice again, to pack up and go home, or give it one more try to complete the journey. The DNOTS can be anywhere from 10 pages long to a single action or word by the main character.

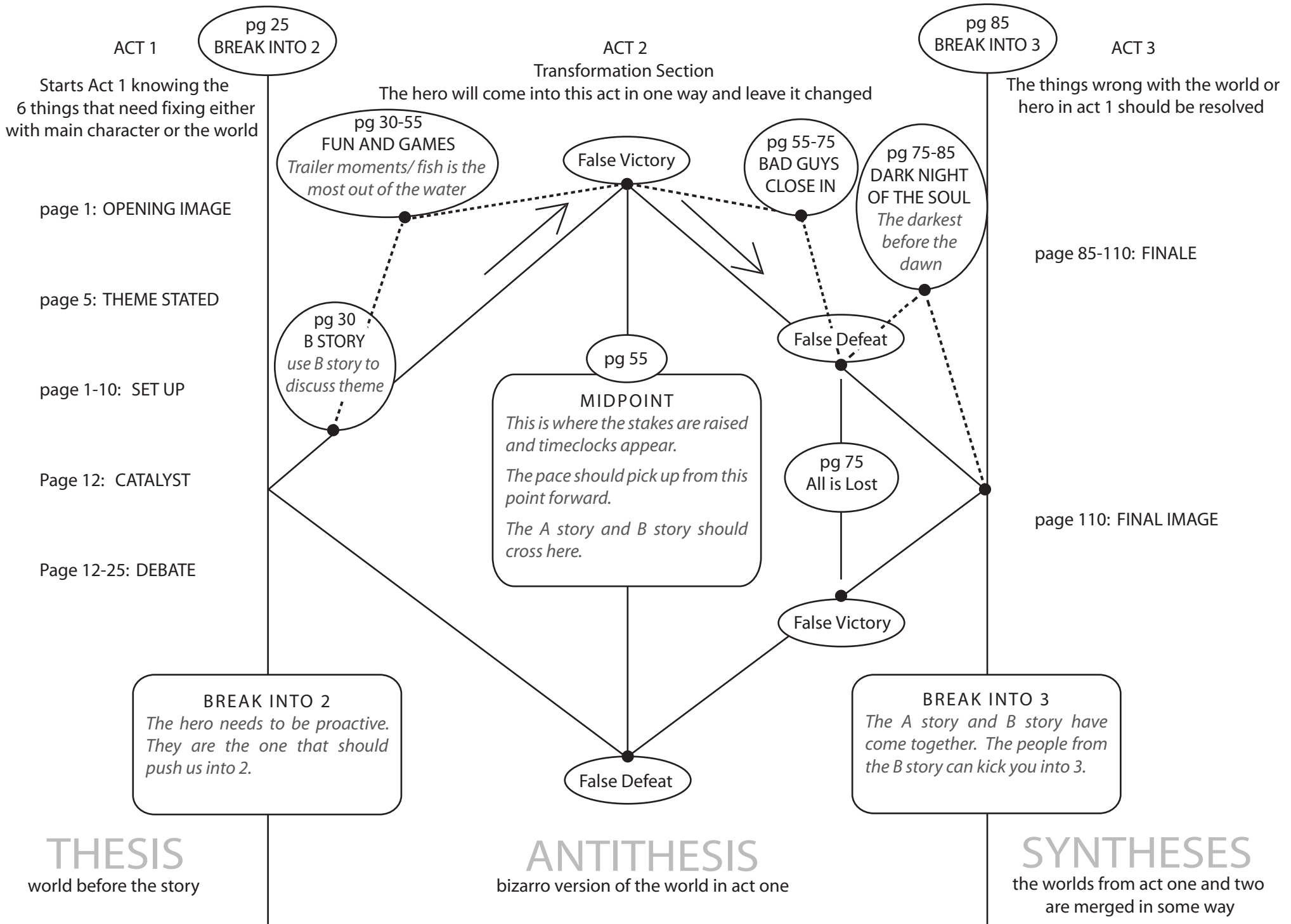
**Break Into Three (Choosing Act Three) (85)** – Thanks to a fresh idea, new inspiration, or last-minute Thematic advice from the B Story (usually the love interest), the main character chooses to try again. The New Information presents the final goal the main character will have to achieve to complete the journey.

**Finale (85-110)** – The main character confronts the antagonist or force of antagonism with new strength. This time around, the main character incorporates the Theme – the nugget of truth that now makes sense to them – into their fight because they have experience from the A Story and context from the B Story. So we can say the main character has left the “Anti-thesis” world and entered the “Synthesis” world. Here the journey will be resolved, one way or another.

**Final Image (110)** – opposite of Opening Image, proving, visually, that a change has occurred within the character.

**THE END**

# SCRIPT STRUCTURE



## THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET

PROJECT TITLE:

GENRE:

DATE:

1. Opening Image (1):

2. Theme Stated (5):

3. Set-Up (1-10):

4. Catalyst (12):

5. Debate (12-25):

6. Break into Two (25)

7. B Story (30):

8. Fun and Games (30-55):

9. Midpoint (55):

10. Bad Guys Close In (55-75):

11. All Is Lost (75):

12. Dark Night of the Soul (75-85):

13. Break into Three (85):

14. Finale (85-110):

15. Final Image (110):