

Top Ten Story Development Tips

Writing off the top of your head sometimes works to capture your first big idea. However, real planning and preparation can save you a lot of frustration and massive rewriting later. Outlining and breaking down the dramatic elements of a story are well worth the effort.

1. Create a world that's true to real life or fantastical or that mixes the mundane with the magical. But whatever set of rules you create for that world, make sure you follow them.
2. Don't tell; show! As much as you can, show the audience your story. For example, why have a character say "I'm afraid" if he can hid under a bed instead?
3. Sometimes, writers hit a block. The best way to overcome it is to keep writing. Write about why you can't think of any more ideas. Write about how you feel about your story. Write until you get excited about your story again.
4. Learn dramatic structure. Every play has a beginning, middle and end. You should be able to show where this is in your play. Learn the wisdom of the basic formula CHARACTER + OBSTACLE = CONFLICT.
5. Develop an ear for dialogue. Dialogue drives your story, so you must excel in writing it. You learn dialogue both by acting, by listening, and by learning that stage dialogue is much more simpler than "real speech." Write dialogue that gives your characters energy and advances the plot at the same time.
6. Write with suspense. You want to create a sense of "what happens next?" in the mind of the audience. Tease the audience giving just enough information along the way to keep the story moving and the suspense building. Boredom is dramatic failure.
7. Write characters that want something and try to get what they want at every moment. Make sure that each character has something at stake, a consequence if he doesn't get what he wants.
8. Create a "ticking clock" that puts the characters under pressure to get what they want right away.
9. Make sure there is a good reason for your play. It's not enough for two characters to sit around and talk for a while and then leave. There needs to be some important reason why we're watching them now, at this particular moment.
10. Enter your own tip HERE! Every writer creates a bit of advice that works best for them to craft an original and engaging story.