Story Grammar Elements Rating Scale

> **This scale can be used as a genre-specific scoring system to focus on unique aspects of a particular genre.**

A. Main Character

0   No main character is established in the story.

1   A main character is established but very few descriptive details are given; the character may or may not have a name.

2   The main character is presented and described in great detail (e.g., personality traits and physical attributes).

B. Locale

0   No locale or place is mentioned.

1   A locale (e.g., "the woods," "Mt. Everest") is given, but little description is offered.

2   The locale given is described vividly or is unique (e.g., "the town of Atlanta which sits between two rivers and covers over ten square miles," "the newly colonized planet Mintaka").

C. Time

0   The time when the story took place is not provided.

1   The time is given but is traditional in reference (e.g., "a long time ago," "twenty years in the future"); note that "one day" is not an adequate time reference and should be scored a zero.

2   The time given is unusual or described in great detail (e.g., "during prehistoric times when man lived in caves and hunted for his food," "March 31st at 3:00 a.m.").

D. Initiating Event

0   The problem or event which causes the main character to take action is not presented.

1   The precipitating event is clearly evident; it can be a natural occurrence (e.g., "A landslide destroyed the village."), an internal response (e.g., "He felt lonely."), or an external event (e.g., "The gnome stole the king's crown.").

2   The initiating event is well described, unusual, or complex (e.g., "A meteor hit the mountain, which started the landslide that destroyed the village and everything that the man owned.").

E. Goals

0   A goal is not established.

1   A goal is presented but ill-defined (e.g., "Billy decided he would do something about it.").

2   A goal is clearly articulated (e.g., "Billy decided he would do just about anything to rescue his friend.").

*   Add one additional point if two or more goals are clearly articulated.

F. Attempt

0   The actions which the main character initiates to solve the problem are not presented or could not possibly lead to a resolution.

1   The attempt of the main character to solve the problem is presented and would be expected to lead to a resolution.

2   The actions of the main character demonstrate ingenuity or originality (e.g., "Billy used an anti-proton beam to disable the containment field surrounding his friend.").

*   Add one additional point if more than one episode is present (i.e., an initiating event, attempt, and direct consequence).

G. Direct Consequence

0   The direct consequences of the main character's attempt to solve the problem and achieve the goal are not presented; the story does not come to a conclusion; the problem is not resolved.

1   The direct consequences of the main character's actions are presented (e.g., "The man built a new home far away from any mountains and he lived there happily ever after," or "Billy rescued his friend.").

2   The direct consequences are presented, but the ending is unusual, humorous, or contains a moral (e.g., "It just goes to show that crime doesn't pay," "This is how he got the name Eagle Arrow," or "The boy's horse died just as it crossed the finish line in first place.").

H. Reactions (can be expressed anywhere in the story)

0   The emotional reactions of the main character are not presented.

1   Some feelings of the main character are presented, but they are cursory (e.g., "Billy was relieved," or "The boy felt sad.").

2   The emotional reactions of the main character are expressed with depth (e.g., "The boy's heart sank in his chest as he watched his horse, his friend, die.").

I. Title

    0   No title is given.

    1   A title is given, but it is vague (e.g., "The Outlaw").

    2   A title is given that is creative and well-suited for the story (e.g., "The Gunfight at White Snake Bluff" or "A Valuable Lesson").

J. Dialogue

    0   No dialogue is present in the story.

    1   Dialogue is present in the story (e.g., "'Yes,' she said.").

    2   Dialogue is present and is integral to plot progression (e.g., "'One day I'll have my cake and eat it too,' she mumbled in protestation as she huffed her way out of the room.").