Big Story Questions Worksheet

# Step One - Basic Information

Story Name:

Story Genre:

Story Meta-Genre:

Subgenre:

Story Length:

Story Format:

# Step Two – Answer some or all of the following questions about your Audience

1. Target audience?
2. Why are they my target audience?
3. Why will this story appeal to my target audience?
4. What about this story will appeal to my target audience?
5. How will this story affect my target audience?
6. What does my target audience know about my story’s topic?
7. What does my target audience know about my story’s theme?
8. What will my audience get from the story? And how will they get each of these things?
   1. Skills? How?
   2. Perspective? (New perspective or Confirming perspective?) How?
   3. Information? How?
   4. Novelty? How?
   5. Emotion? How?

# Step Three: Answer the following questions about your story’s core argument.

1. What is your story’s core argument?
2. What supporting arguments can you present?
3. What parts of the story (plot) will support that argument?
4. How will the characters reflect that argument?
5. How will the setting and locations in the story reflect that argument?

# Step Four- Answer some or all of the following questions about your setting.

1. What is important for me to know about my setting? (People, Culture, Geography, Architecture, Technology, Other)
2. Why choose this setting? Why is it the best setting for telling this story?
3. How does this setting reflect the core arguments of the story?
4. How realistic is this setting?
5. If it is a real place, how much do I actually know about it?
6. If I don’t know the setting, do I have easy access to resources about it?
7. What are the key locations of my setting, and what do they symbolize in the story and how do they represent the story themes and arguments?
8. How is the reality of the setting different from the one the audience knows?
9. What is the tone of the setting?
10. How does the setting reflect that tone?
11. What is the ranking of my story elements? (Put them in order)
    1. Character?
    2. Plot?
    3. Setting?

# Step Five: Answer some or all of the following questions about each of your characters.

### The Main Character

1. Who is my main character?
2. Why is that character the best character to use to tell this story?
3. Is this character going to be Changing or Unchanging?
4. If the character is Changing, how does their character arc reflect the core argument of the story.
5. If the character is Unchanging, how does their personality and beliefs reflect the core argument of the story?
6. What is this character’s driving human need they need filled?
7. How does the character’s goal reflect that underlying human need?
8. Is that character’s goal to…Attain? Maintain? Lose?
9. What positive personal traits does the character have, and how do they reflect the core argument of the story?
10. What negative personal traits does the character have, and how do they reflect the core argument of the story?
11. What physical traits (style of speech, body language, clothes, etc) does the character have and how do they reflect the character and make them special?
12. How does the character’s personal history reflect the core argument(s) of the story?

1. In what ways is this character going to be sympathetic to your target audience? How are they going to connect with this character?

### The Main Opponent

1. Who is my main opponent?
2. Are they an Active or Passive Opponent?
3. Why is that character the best character to oppose my main character?
4. Is this character going to be Changing or Unchanging?
5. If the character is Changing, how does their character arc reflect the core argument of the story in a negative way?
6. If the character is Unchanging, how does their personality and beliefs reflect the core argument of the story in a negative way?
7. What is this character’s driving human need they want filled?
8. How does the character’s goal reflect that underlying human need?
9. Is that character’s goal to…Attain? Maintain? Lose?
10. How does the character’s goal put them in conflict with the main character?
11. What positive personal traits does the character have, and how do they reflect the core argument of the story?
12. What negative personal traits does the character have, and how do they reflect the core argument of the story?
13. What physical traits (style of speech, body language, clothes, etc) does the character have and how do they reflect the character?
14. How does the character’s personal history reflect the core argument(s) of the story?
15. In what ways is this character going to be un-sympathetic to your target audience? How is the audience going to be made to dislike the character?

Supporting Characters (answer these for each supporting character and other opponent)

1. Who is this character?
2. What is the character’s connection with the main character?
3. What role or roles do they play in the story? (Sounding board, Foil, Plot Device, Love Interest)
4. Why do they fill those roles? How do they fill those roles?
5. Does this character have a human need they want filled? What is it?
6. How does the character’s goal reflect that underlying human need?
7. Is that character’s goal to…Attain? Maintain? Lose?
8. How does the character’s goal put them in support or opposition to the main character?
9. What positive personal traits does the character have, and how do they reflect the core argument of the story?
10. What negative personal traits does the character have, and how do they reflect the core argument of the story?
11. What physical traits (style of speech, body language, clothes, etc) does the character have and how do they reflect the character?
12. How does the character’s personal history reflect the core argument(s) of the story?
13. In what ways is this character going to be sympathetic or un-sympathetic to your target audience? How is the audience going to be made to like or dislike the character?

Background Characters (answer these for each character or group of characters in the story)

1. Who are these characters?
2. What role do they play in the story?
3. How do these characters represent their group?
4. How do these characters represent the ideas of the story?
5. What do these characters want? (If anything?)
6. Are they working in support or opposition to the main character?
7. Are they working in support or opposition to the main opponent?
8. What physical traits make them distinct?
9. How will you make the audience feel sympathy for these characters or not feel sympathy for them?

# Step Six: What is the plot of the story?

For each level of the story, figure out the IDEA structure, going from top (overall story) to bottom (chapter or scene). If you are using this for a Short Story, then you’ll only need to fill out the Overall Story and the Scene list. If you’re using it for a novel, then Overall Story, Chapter, and Scene would work fine. If you’re using it for a Novel Series or Serial, then you’ll need to fill out Overall Story, Story Arc (with each Novel being an arc in the series), Chapter, and finally each Scene.

**Introduction**

1. Who’s involved?
2. Where are they?
3. What do they need? Why do they need it?
4. What are their goals? (Attain, Maintain, or Lose)

**Development**

1. What actions are they taking to achieve that goal?
2. What opposition will they face? (Active, Passive, Lack of Resources, Lack of Ability)

**Event**

1. What are the events which occur after they begin pursuing that goal?
2. For each event, answer the following:
3. What is the event? (Is it positive, neutral, or negative?)
4. What is the reaction to the event?
5. What are the results of that reaction? (if any?) (Is it positive, neutral, or negative?)

**Apex**

1. What is the climax of the story? (or arc, chapter, scene?)
2. How is the climax bigger and more significant than what came before?
3. How will the climax reflect the core argument of the story?
4. What is the wrap-up?
5. How will this wrap-up reflect the core argument of the story?
6. How will this wrap-up affect the characters and their relationships?
7. Will the wrap-up leave anything open?