

# STORY SCHOOL



GOALS,  
MOTIVATION,  
CONFLICT,  
STAKES

Presented by  creators



# THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PLOT

Goals, Motivation, Conflict, and Stakes are the building blocks of plot. While none of these elements are themselves plot events, they create the conditions for the plot to happen and to matter to the characters and the reader.

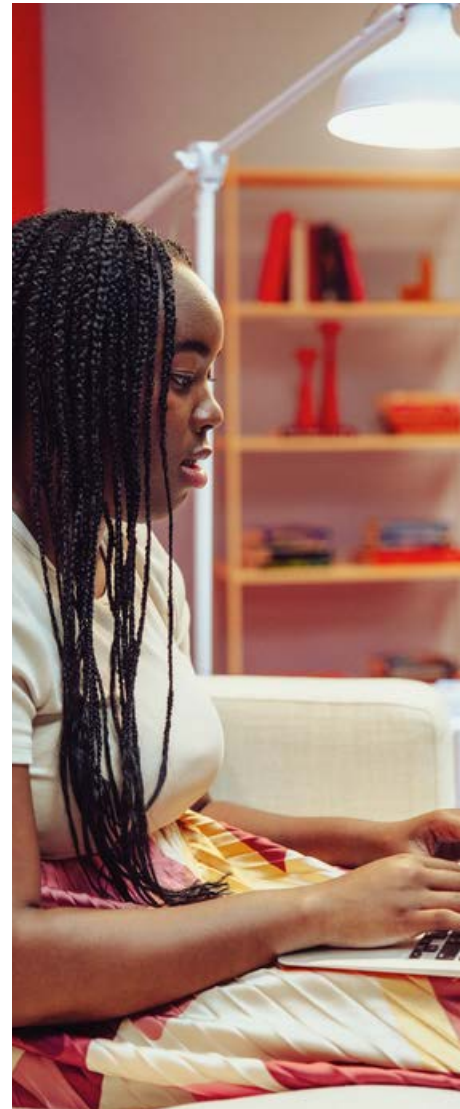
This guide and worksheet will go over these building blocks and help you define the goals, motivation, conflict, and stakes in your story.

# LET'S EXPLORE SOME EXAMPLES.

In *The Kissing Booth*, Elle's GOAL is to date her best friend Lee's brother Flynn, her MOTIVATION is finding true love, the CONFLICT arises because she promised Lee she wouldn't date Flynn, and the STAKES are her lifelong friendship and future romantic happiness.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo's GOAL is to destroy the One Ring and defeat Sauron. His MOTIVATION is that the ring belonged to his uncle and he feels responsible for it. The CONFLICT arises because Sauron does not want him to destroy the ring and does his best to prevent it. The STAKES are the freedom of the entirety of Middle-Earth.

In *Notting Hill*, Will's GOAL is to date Anne, his MOTIVATION is love, the CONFLICT is the class/fame difference between them, and the STAKES are romantic happiness.



# EXAMPLES CONTINUED

In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss' GOAL is to survive the Hunger Games, her MOTIVATION is to protect her sister, CONFLICT arises from the capital wanting to kill her to set an example, and the STAKES are the freedom of the downtrodden districts/freedom from tyranny of the capital.

In *Finding Nemo*, Marlin's GOAL is to find his lost son, Nemo, his MOTIVATION is to keep his family safe after losing his wife, the CONFLICT is the various dangers in the ocean, and the STAKES are Nemo's life.

In *Daisy Jones and the Six*, Daisy's GOAL is to become a successful musician, her MOTIVATION is to prove her parents wrong and claim her artistic agency, the CONFLICT arises from her creative and romantic relationship with her bandmate Billy, and the STAKES are her personal happiness and fulfillment.





# NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.

Use the sheets below to explore your character's goals, motivation, conflict, and stakes.



*STORY SCHOOL*

# GOALS



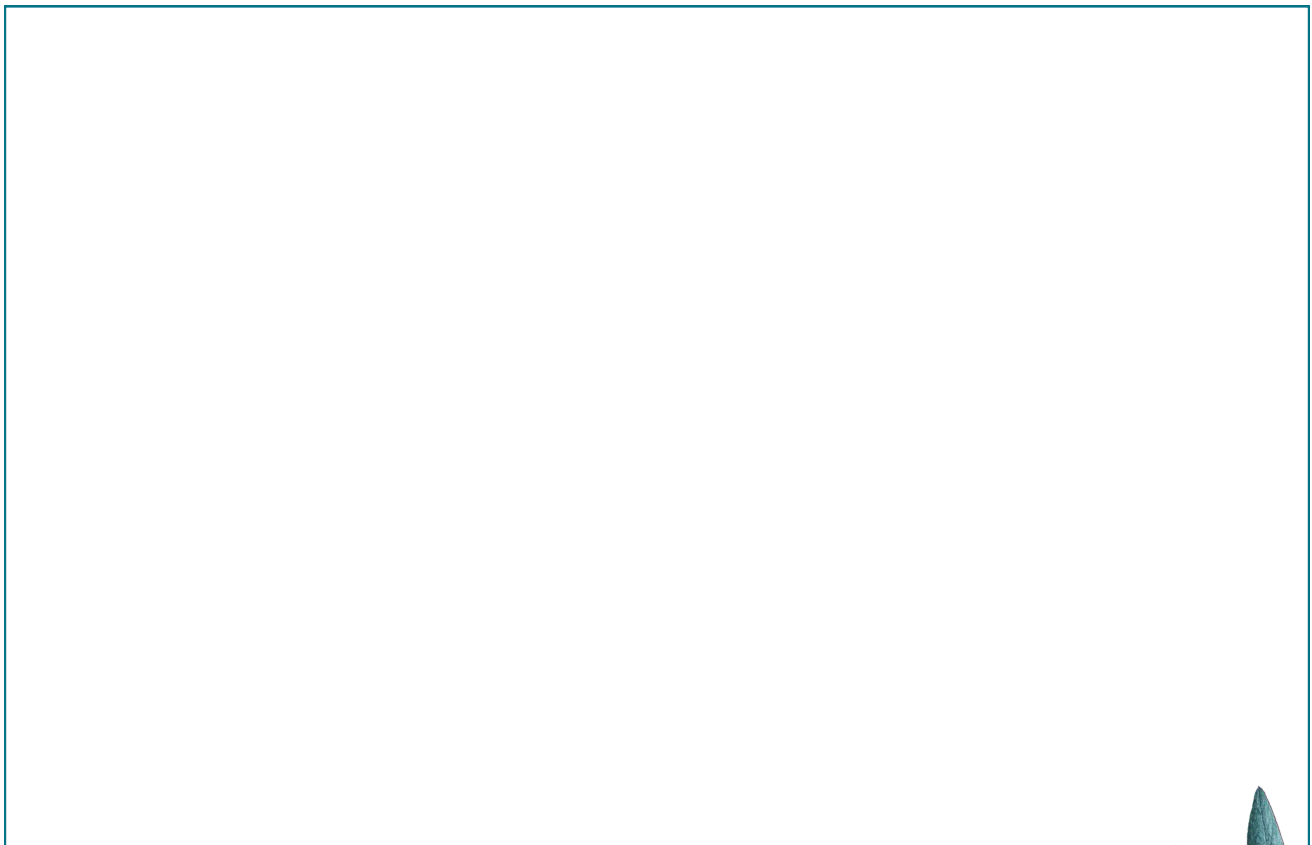
The external thing the character wants to achieve, the thing they are moving towards. Characters are almost always conscious of their goals. The character does not need to achieve their goal for the story to be satisfying, but if the protagonist doesn't achieve their goal, they should ideally have some kind of change of heart about it. A character can have multiple goals throughout the course of the story: a big goal that's broken into smaller goals, or goals that change and evolve in response to events and conflicts.

What is your main character's goal?

# MOTIVATION

Why the character does what they do. Motivation is usually tied to the protagonist's characterization and/or an event in their backstory. The goal is the what of the character's actions, their motivation is the why.

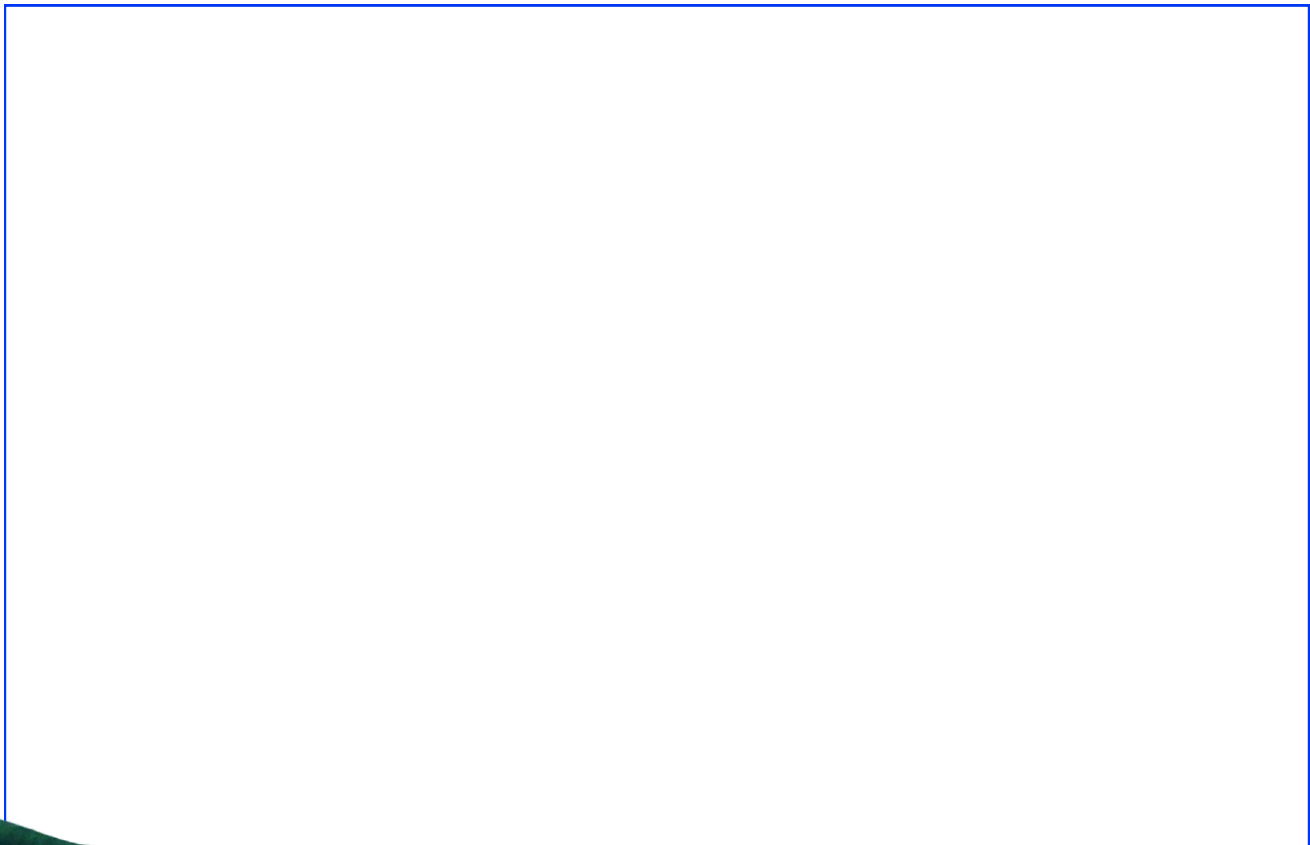
What is your main character's motivation?



# CONFLICT

At its most basic, conflict is a struggle between opposing forces or characters. In Wattpad stories, this is usually created by the protagonist having a goal that is blocked by some other force. The friction between the protagonist wanting something and trying to get it is the conflict. Conflict can be internal or external. Stories can lean harder on one or the other, or have a mix of both.

What is your main character's central conflict?

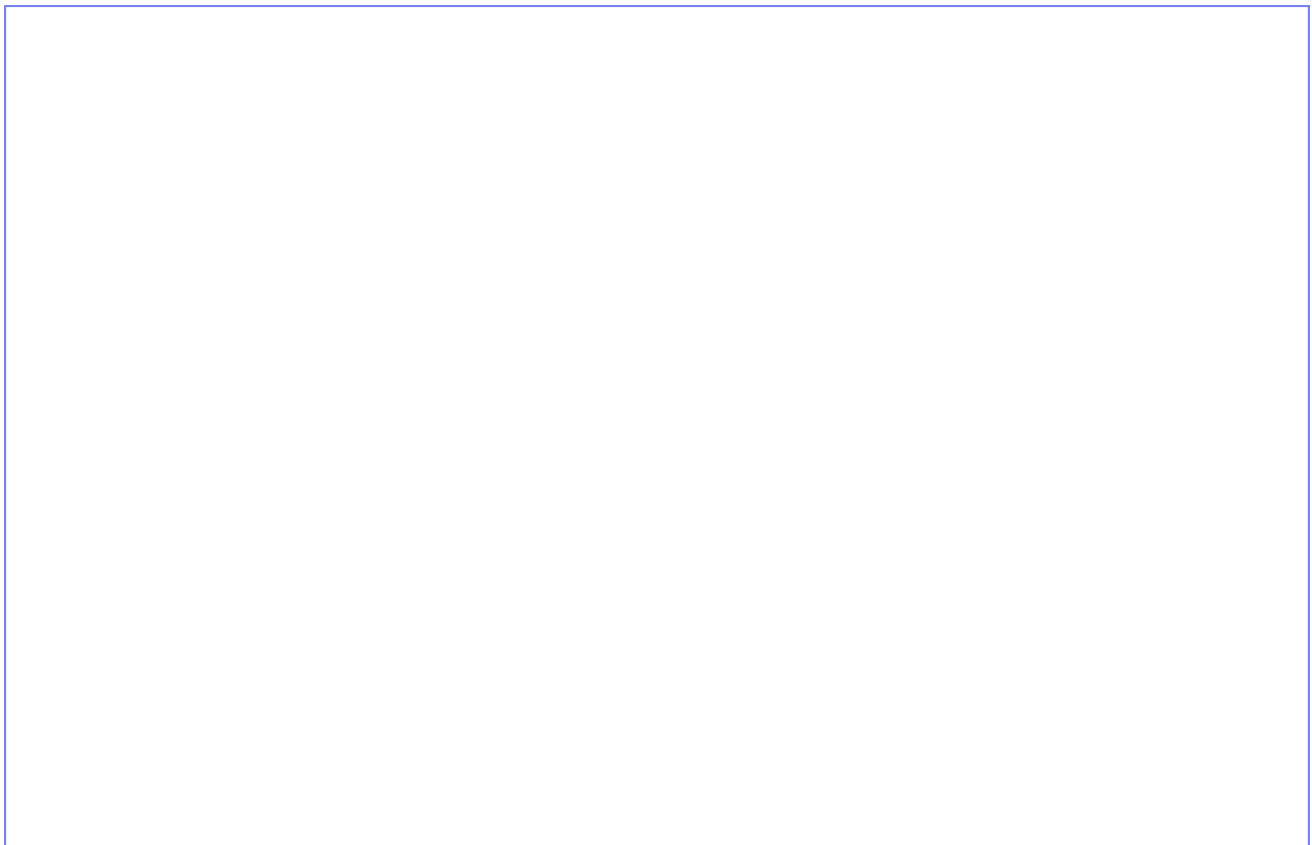




# STAKES

The consequences of the character's actions, their success or failure. Stakes answer the question, "Why do these events matter?"

What are the stakes for your main character?



# GREAT WORK!

Now let's put it all together.

Remember the format from the earlier examples.

The protagonist desires their **GOAL** because of their **MOTIVATION** but the struggle to attain it causes **CONFLICT**, which matters because of the **STAKES**. Use the **GMCS** from your story!

# GOALS, MOTIVATION, CONFLICT, and STAKES

What are the goals, motivation, conflict, and stakes for your main character?

