

DRAMATICA®

Table of Story Elements

Based on a theory and materials developed by
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What is this chart?

This chart illustrates the core Dramatica structure found in all complete stories. Its four major areas—Situation, Activity, Manipulation, and Fixed Attitudes—represent areas of conflict essential to every fully explored story. Nested within each of these four areas on this chart are various story components which are used to create dramatic story points such as the “Story Goal” and “Problem.” The components have been arranged according to their relevance to genre, plot, theme, and character.

Why should you use this chart?

As a writer, you’ll want to explore your story as completely as possible. This chart serves as a reference guide to help you understand the fundamental relationships that exist between the story components essential to developing a fully explored story.

Situation

Past		How Things Are Changing	
Fate Knowledge Order Chaos Thought	Prediction Actuality Inertia Change Perception	Fact Proven Accurate Non-accurate Un-proven	Security Effect Result Process Cause
Interdiction Ability Equity Inequity Desire	Destiny Aware Projection Speculation Self-Aware	Threat Theory Expectation Determination Hunch	Fantasy Trust Ending Unending Test
Future		Present	
Openness Consideration Faith Disbelief Reconsider	Delay Pursuit Support Oppose Avoid	Work Certainty Deduction Induction Potentiality	Attract Proaction Acceptance Non-acceptance Reaction
Choice Logic Conscience Temptation Feeling	Preconception Control Help Hinder Un-controlled	Repel Probability Reduction Production Possibility	Attempt Inaction Evaluation Re-evaluation Protection

Activity

Understanding		Doing	
Instinct Knowledge Ability Desire Thought	Senses Actuality Aware Self-Aware Perception	Wisdom Proven Theory Hunch Un-proven	Skill Effect Trust Test Cause
Interpretation Order Equity Inequity Chaos	Conditioning Inertia Projection Speculation Change	Experience Accurate Expectation Determination Non-accurate	Enlightenment Result Ending Unending Process
Obtaining		Gathering Information	
Approach Consideration Logic Feeling Reconsider	Self Interest Pursuit Control Un-controlled Avoid	Prerequisites Certainty Probability Possibility Potentiality	Strategy Proaction Inaction Protection Reaction
Morality Faith Conscience Temptation Disbelief	Attitude Support Help Hinder Oppose	Analysis Deduction Reduction Production Induction	Preconditions Acceptance Evaluation Re-evaluation Non-acceptance

Manipulation

Developing A Plan		Playing A Role	
State of Being Knowledge Inertia Change Thought	Situation Actuality Order Chaos Perception	Knowledge Proven Result Process Un-proven	Ability Effect Accurate Non-accurate Cause
Circumstances Aware Equity Inequity Self-Aware	Sense of Self Ability Projection Speculation Desire	Desire Trust Expectation Determination Test	Thought Theory Ending Unending Hunch
Changing One's Nature		Conceiving An Idea	
Rationalization Consideration Support Oppose Reconsider	Commitment Pursuit Faith Disbelief Avoid	Permission Certainty Acceptance Non-acceptance Potentiality	Need Proaction Deduction Induction Reaction
Responsibility Control Conscience Temptation Un-controlled	Obligation Logic Help Hinder Feeling	Expediency Inaction Reduction Production Protection	Deficiency Probability Evaluation Re-evaluation Possibility

Fixed Attitude

Memories		Impulsive Responses	
Truth Knowledge Actuality Perception Thought	Evidence Ability Aware Self-Aware Desire	Value Proven Effect Cause Un-proven	Confidence Theory Trust Test Hunch
Suspicion Order Inertia Change Chaos	Falsehood Equity Projection Speculation Inequity	Worry Accurate Result Process Non-accurate	Worth Expectation Ending Unending Determination
Innermost Desires		Contemplations	
Closure Consideration Pursuit Avoid Reconsider	Hope Logic Control Un-controlled Feeling	Investigation Certainty Proaction Reaction Potentiality	Appraisal Probability Inaction Protection Possibility
Dream Faith Support Oppose Disbelief	Denial Conscience Help Hinder Temptation	Re-appraisal Deduction Acceptance Non-acceptance Induction	Doubt Reduction Evaluation Re-evaluation Production

LEGEND: Color Coding of the Chart

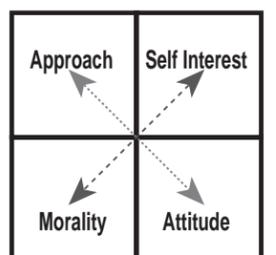
Activity (For Example)	Throughline The largest items on the chart illustrate where genre is best represented. They represent the broadest contexts in which a story's conflicts are explored.	Morality (For Example)	Issue Within each concern are for “thematic” Issues. This is where theme is best represented. The Issue and its diagonal opposite, the “thematic counterpoint,” form the foundations of a thematic conflict.
Obtaining (For Example)	Concern Within each throughline are four Concerns. This level is where plot is best represented. Concerns indicate the topic of concern in each act.	Temptation (For Example)	Problem The smallest items on the chart is where character is best represented. They represent the building blocks used for constructing characters and the problems that drive them.

Understanding the Table Structure

The Dramatica table of story elements is comprised of many **Quads** (groupings of four squares or items). These quads range in size from the largest—the throughline-sized quad—to the smallest—the element-sized quad. Each quad is nested within a larger quad; the only exception being the throughline quad which is the largest.

Items positioned diagonally across from one another in a quad are referred to as **Dynamic Pairs**. There are two dynamic pairs per quad. When considering the relationship of the items in a quad, dynamic pairs are the most likely to generate conflict.

In the illustration to the right, notice the two dynamic pairs: Approach/Attitude and Self Interest/Morality. The dynamic pair of Attitude and Approach is more likely to create conflict than either the pairing of Attitude and Morality or Attitude and Self Interest. Use dynamic pairs to heighten conflict in your story.



Example of one Quad with two Dynamic Pairs

