

Before and After Plotting Method Diagram (Handout 2)

This method is flexible enough to work for plotters and pantsters. It allows you as the writer to start with whatever information you know about your character or story.

(start here) Step 10: New person.

Step 9: What causes #10?

Step 8: What happens before #9?

Step 7: What makes #6 worse?

Step 6: What happens after #5?

Step 5: A big change. The best/worst that could happen.

Step 4: What happens after #3 and/or before #5?

Step 3: What follows #2?

Step 2: What is the inciting incident and what happens after?

Step 1: The story begins (start here)

Ground Level: History/backstory

*If the stairs image doesn't work for you, use a number line/timeline or bulletin board. I've even used a long strip of banner paper with Post-it notes, then rearranged the notes as needed. The point is to fill in what you know, then determine what comes before and after those scenes or twist/plot points. Even if you write scenes out of order, you will know where and how to use them.