



What Makes a Film Work Well



Essential Conditions to Any Drama

- An unresolved issue with the outcome in doubt.
- A deep commitment to action by a character with whom we can identify.
- The character must be involved in a conflict which has, at its heart, high personal stakes.
- Urgency, or a sense of deadline.



Types of Central Conflict

- **Man vs. Man:** Conflict between two characters (protagonist vs. antagonist).
- **Man vs. Self:** Within a single character. These usually involve "either/or" situations. Sometimes this is referred to as a double blind situation (the cruelty of the absolute).
- **Man vs. Nature or Man vs. Society:** Character or characters confronting a difficult situation.



Organization of The Cause to Effect Film

- The actions often set into motion by **inciting incident**.
- This event lets the audience know what form the conflict will take.
- There follows a period of rising tension.
- This is a series of episodes, individual scenes in which conflict begins to heighten and complications develop.
- When the conflict is approaching its height, a crisis occurs - this is a turning point, an event that makes the resolution of the films conflict inevitable.
- This is followed by the film's climax which occurs when the basic conflict is actually resolved.
- This is generally followed by the denouement, a short wrap up scene in which any loose ends of plot and character are tied up or resolved, (Aristotle called this "the unravelling").



Theory of Plot Development

- Film opens up with an incident that captures the audience's attention and then slowly increases the tension (via a series of episodes or incidents) until the film reaches its conclusion.
- Action does not increase in a straight arc.
- Increases in stages.
- Each of these stages is followed by some sort of comic relief (a tension breaker - or pause), before the next episode and increase in tension occurs.



Willing Suspension of Belief

- The ability to make an audience forget that it is only a movie.
- People become so engaged in it that they forget everything around them and are effectively caught up in the action.
- One sure sign appears when people start talking back to the screen.
- Conversely, if you find yourself checking your watch repeatedly, wondering how it was you were convinced to shuck out the bucks to watch this turkey, or simply contemplating any of a zillion other examples of life's little mysteries, you know the film has not pulled off willing suspension of disbelief .
- Ultimately, if a film does not manage to attain willing suspension of disbelief it does not work.