

The three-act screenplay structure is a storytelling model that goes back to Aristotle's dramatic theory as outlined in Poetics.

It is loosely defined as **a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end.**

We can also think of the three-act structure as the **Setup, the Confrontation, and the Resolution.**

Some examples of films you may know

1. "The Wizard of Oz" (1939)

- **Setup:** Dorothy lives on a farm in Kansas and dreams of escaping her dull life. A tornado transports her to the magical land of Oz.
- **Confrontation:** Dorothy embarks on a journey to the Emerald City to ask the Wizard of Oz for help in getting back home. She faces numerous challenges and adversaries, such as the Wicked Witch of the West.
- **Resolution:** Dorothy learns that she had the power to return home all along by clicking her ruby slippers together. She wakes up in Kansas, grateful for her family.

2. "Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope" (1977)

- **Setup:** The film opens with Princess Leia's ship being captured by Darth Vader. Luke Skywalker, a young farmer, discovers a message from Leia hidden in a droid named R2-D2.
- **Confrontation:** Luke joins forces with Obi-Wan Kenobi, Han Solo, Chewbacca, and the droids to rescue Leia and fight against the Empire. They face numerous battles and challenges.
- **Resolution:** Luke joins the Rebel Alliance in a final assault on the Death Star. Using the Force, he successfully destroys the Death Star, dealing a significant blow to the Empire.

3. "The Lion King" (1994)

- **Setup:** Simba, a young lion cub, is introduced as the future king of the Pride Lands. His father, Mufasa, teaches him about the responsibilities of kingship.
- **Confrontation:** Scar, Simba's uncle, kills Mufasa and convinces Simba to flee. Simba grows up in exile, believing he is responsible for his father's death.
- **Resolution:** Simba returns to the Pride Lands as an adult, confronts Scar, and reclaims his rightful place as king, restoring peace and order.

4. "The Dark Knight" (2008)

- **Setup:** Batman (Bruce Wayne) faces a new threat in Gotham City with the emergence of the Joker, a criminal mastermind causing chaos.
- **Confrontation:** The Joker's reign of terror escalates, testing Batman's resolve and forcing him to confront the moral dilemmas of his vigilante justice.
- **Resolution:** Batman ultimately saves Gotham from the Joker's plans, but at a great personal cost. He takes the fall for crimes he didn't commit to protect Harvey Dent's legacy, becoming a fugitive.

5. "Titanic" (1997)

- **Setup:** The film begins with the boarding of the RMS Titanic. We meet the main characters, Jack and Rose, from different social backgrounds who eventually meet and fall in love.
- **Confrontation:** The Titanic hits an iceberg, leading to a catastrophic sinking. Jack and Rose struggle to survive amid the chaos.
- **Resolution:** The ship sinks, and Jack sacrifices his life to save Rose. She survives and reflects on her life, empowered by the love and courage she found.