

10 Key Elements of Your Screenplay Pitch

When you're pitching a story, you need to hit the major beats. Your screenplay needs to have all these elements, although how you tell it may vary. It may not be chronological in the script, but in the pitch, you have to tell the story in order.

1) Where is your hero stuck when the story opens? What does she want that she doesn't have?

2) Something brings change. What is that?

3) The hero now has an immediate problem. It may have some relation to what she wanted in the beginning, but it's bigger than that initial desire. What is the problem and what's her plan for solving it?

4) Who become her allies? What secrets do they have that will play out later, especially in terms of the hero trusting them?

5) Who or what stands against your hero? What power does your villain have, and how does it play directly into the underlying fears of your hero?

6) The plan seems to be working -- and then suddenly there's a catastrophe. The threat we thought we were facing is revealed to be much bigger and overwhelmingly powerful. What happened?

7) Your hero is now faced with her worst fear. On the one hand, she needs to scramble to survive and regroup, and on the other hand, the stress brings out the worst in her. Allies bail or appear to be untrustworthy. She regresses back to being the person she was at the beginning of the story, someone who cannot possibly handle all of this. Painful emotional growth, and it's overwhelming. What happens?

8) Your hero overcomes the internal obstacles to form a new plan that will (she hopes) overcome the external obstacles. What is this?

9) The new plan appears to fail. The villain is victorious, all seems lost. What happens to push the hero to find the strength to become the person she was meant to be, rather than the person she was at the beginning of the story?

10) What does winning look like? What connection between the hero and someone or something else makes us appreciate the success and feel complete?