

18 TECHNIQUES

To get ideas

EXTERNAL SOURCES

1. Massive internet rabbit holes.
2. Analyze similar scenes you love.
3. Use a conflict or trope thesaurus.
4. Dive deep into genre conventions.
5. Don't brainstorm. Let the subconscious take over.

INTERNAL SOURCES

TWIST IT

Take something well-known, standard or already existing and tweak it or turn it completely on its head.

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DEFINE CONSTRAINTS

What do I **not** want to be in this story?

WHAT IF

What if these characters fell in love? What if she had a secret? Question everything. Then, think through the logical consequences as to how this would change the story.

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FLYING PIGS

What are my worst ideas? What is the worst way to solve this story problem?

FREE ASSOCIATION

Use a random word or image generator. Relate whatever comes out to the story idea and free write about it.

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HIDDEN LINKS

Write all characters down on a large piece of paper and draw out existing connections between them. How else could they be linked? Mind mapping story elements can help create a more layered narrative.

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S

SUBSTITUTE

- What element of my story could be replaced with another?
- Could I replace a key beat with a different, stronger scene?
- Could I change the rules of my world?
- Could I change my character's (or the audience's) feelings or attitude towards X?

COMBINE

- Could I combine these two characters?
- How could my scene do two things at the same time?
- Could I condense two subplots into one?

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A

ADAPT

- Which ideas could I adapt, copy, or borrow from other stories?
- What historical event/person could I tweak?
- How could I adapt my target audience?
- What would I need to change in order to...?

MODIFY

- What subplots/characters etc. could I put less emphasis on?
- What subplots/characters etc. could I make more important?
- Could I add another romantic relationship, or another source of conflict?
- What if the story was half or double its current length?

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P

PUT TO ANOTHER USE

- Can I optimize my writing process?
- Can I use a different resource (i.e. if you've been working off Story Genius, take some inspiration from Save the Cat)?
- Could I take a character and give them a different role/archetype in my story?

ELIMINATE

- Could I reduce the time over which the story takes place?
- Do I really need X character? Could their role be performed by someone else?
- What if I eliminated a particular plot element / subplot / secret / scene altogether?

E

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REARRANGE

- Could I swap the order of events?
- Could I rearrange my reveals sequence?
- How could I change my structure so that X happens?
- Could I change the pace?