

**Story Planning Worksheet 1**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Suggestions and Hints</b>	<b>Outline your elements here</b>
Plot	Good plots twist and turn but lead only to one place. Surprise your reader and you keep him/her reading.	
The detective	The best detectives are the memorable ones – make your sleuth a “character,” whether she is a fool, an egotist, a vamp, a real smarty or just plain gorgeous, make her memorable (8 inch heels)	
The crime	Murder is good but only in fiction. Avoid the stolen roller-skates or the lost notebook unless you have a new slant on these lesser crimes. Theft has to be of a valuable item, not a pogo stick.	
The situation: Setting	Exotic places can be engaging, but if you pick a place no one wants to go, you also can make that work. Hawaii, International Blvd., Montclair, Sri Lanka, London can all be engaging if you use concrete detail in your description. Remember, the people in these places have to talk like they belong there.	
Social Setting	Social setting has relevance to dialect and to a deeper societal meaning for your work. The characters have to be consistent with the social setting; know that gang murders and husband/wife murders in the ‘burbs both have social settings even though they are very different from each other.	
Suspects	These should be memorable and their characteristics can, and maybe should, be clues to the solution of the crime. A limp, right handedness, a mutual friendship of a suspect might lead to solution of the crime. Weird	

	<p>suspects are memorable.</p>	
<p>Clues</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>A red herring</p>	<p>Choose your clues with care, nothing too obvious unless it is a red herring. A wallet dropped by the crime scene is a bore unless it came there in an interesting way, or maybe was planted by a “hidden” suspect. Work hard on the clues as your reader will be looking for them more than any other single element.</p>	
<p>The reveal</p>	<p>The “drawing room” is over used as is the “return to the crime scene. Why not in a swimming pool? Or maybe on an airplane which is about to crash? The reveal does not have to be done at 5 miles an hour. Be inventive but keep the sleuth in character.</p>	
<p>Motive</p>	<p>Often the motive is revealed at the same time as the perpetrator. Make it fit the character.</p>	
<p>Opportunity</p>	<p>Your criminal cannot have been out of town at the time (unless she hired the murderer). Opportunity must also fit but can be one of the ingenious aspects of the story.</p>	
<p>Legal aspects</p>	<p>Especially if you are emphasizing the social justice implications of the crime or the criminal, the legal aspects could be important. Be sure you know what you are talking about, not that you should check with a lawyer, and avoid continuing your own biases and stereotypes (unless they are used for a purpose.</p>	