

Fiction Word Count Guidelines*

Short Stories: 3,500 - 7,500

Novellettes: Up to 17,000

Novellas: Up to 40,000

Novels: 40,000 + words

Short Story

Beat Sheet Stage	3,500-7,500 Words 14-30 Pages
Opening Image	250 / 1
Theme Stated	250 / 1
Set Up	250 / 1
Catalyst	500 / 2
Debate	500-750 / 2-3
Break into II	750 / 3
B Story	1,000 / 4
Fun and Games	1,000-1750 / 4-7
Midpoint	1,750 / 7
Bad Guys Close In	1,750-2,500 / 7-10
All is Lost	2,500 / 10
Dark Night of the Soul	2,500-2,750 / 10-11
Break Into Act III	2,750 / 11
Finale	4,750-6,250 / 19-25
Final Image	6,250 / 25

Novellette

Beat Sheet Stage	Up to 17,000 Words (68 Pages)
Opening Image	250 / 1
Theme Stated	250 / 1
Set Up	250-750 / 1-3
Catalyst	750 / 3
Debate	750-1,750 / 3-7
Break into II	1,750 / 7
B Story	2k / 8
Fun and Games	2k-3,750 / 8-15
Midpoint	3,750 / 15
Bad Guys Close In	3,750-5k / 15-20
All is Lost	5k / 20
Dark Night of the Soul	5k-5,750 / 20-23
Break Into Act III	5,750 / 23
Finale	5,750-7,500 / 23-30
Final Image	7,500 / 30

Novella

Beat Sheet Stage	Up to 40,000 Words (160 Pages)
Opening Image	250 / 1
Theme Stated	1750 / 7
Set Up	250-3,750 / 1-15
Catalyst	3,750-4,250 / 15-17
Debate	4,250-9k / 17-36
Break into II	9k / 36
B Story	9-11k / 36-44
Fun and Games	11-20k / 44-80
Midpoint	20k / 80
Bad Guys Close In	20-27,250 / 80-109
All is Lost	27,250 / 109
Dark Night of the Soul	27,250-31k / 109-124
Break Into Act III	31k / 124
Finale	31-40k / 124-160
Final Image	40k / 160

Novel

Beat Sheet Stage	90k Words (Average**) (360 Pages)
Opening Image	250 / 1
Theme Stated	4k / 16
Set Up	250-8,250 / 1-33
Catalyst	8,250-9,750 / 33-39
Debate	9,750-20,500 / 39-82
Break into II	20,500 / 82
B Story	20,500-24,500 / 82-98
Fun and Games	24,500-45k / 98-180
Midpoint	45k / 180
Bad Guys Close In	45k-61,250 / 180-245
All is Lost	61,250 / 245
Dark Night of the Soul	61,250-69,500 / 245-278
Break Into Act III	69,500 / 278
Finale	69,500-90k / 278-360
Final Image	90k / 360

* Based on Blake Snyder's *Save the Cat* Beat Sheet

** According to Writer's Digest <https://www.writersdigest.com/whats-new/word-count-for-novels-and-childrens-books-the-definitive-post>