PLOT HOLE & LOGIC CHECK

Find the “Wait, why didn’t they just…?” problems before your readers do.

Every story has rules. Characters have knowledge, limitations, motivations, and access to certain resources. This worksheet helps you stress-test your plot and catch moments where something doesn't quite add up.

You don't need to explain everything. You just need to make sure the important things make sense.



QUICK START

If you're short on time, check these five things first:

1. What is the biggest problem in my story?

2. Why can't the characters solve it immediately?

3. What information or resource could make solving it easier?

4. Why don't they use it?

5. What is the weakest piece of logic in my current plot?



01. THE “WHY DIDN'T THEY JUST...?” TEST

For every major problem in your story, ask:

What is the obvious solution?

Why doesn't the character use it?

Do they actually have access to it?

□ Yes

□ No

□ Only under certain conditions

If they can't use it, why?

Would a reasonable character try something else?

Have I shown the reader why that option doesn't work?

□ Yes

□ No



02. CHARACTER LOGIC

Characters should make decisions based on what they know, not what the author knows.

What does the character know at this point?

What don't they know yet?

What do they believe is true?

What are they wrong about?

Given what they know, does their decision make sense?

□ Yes

□ No

□ Needs more setup

If they make a bad decision, why would they realistically make it?



03. MOTIVATION CHECK

For every major decision:

What does the character do?

-
-
-
-

Why do they do it?

-
-
-
-

What do they want?

-

-
-
-

What are they afraid of?

-
-
-
-

What would happen if they did nothing?

-
-
-
-

Is there a stronger or more obvious choice they could make?

□ Yes

□ No

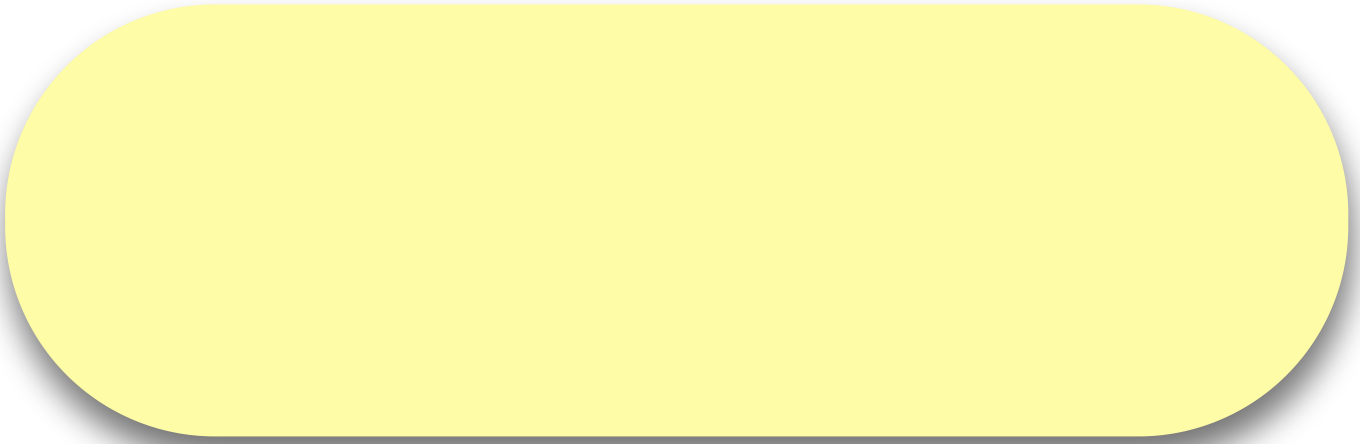
If yes, why don't they?



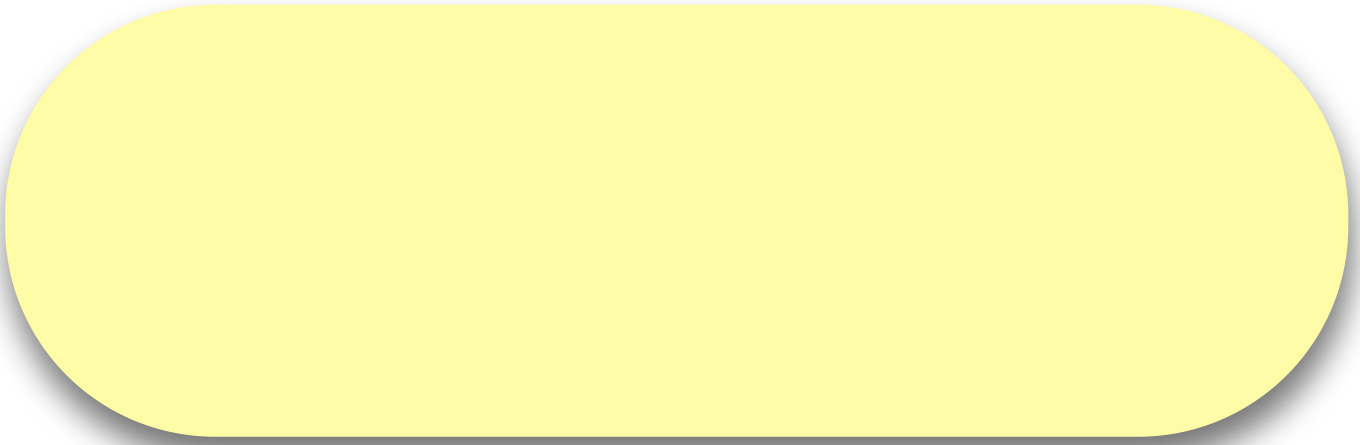
04. INFORMATION CHECK

Information can make or break a plot.

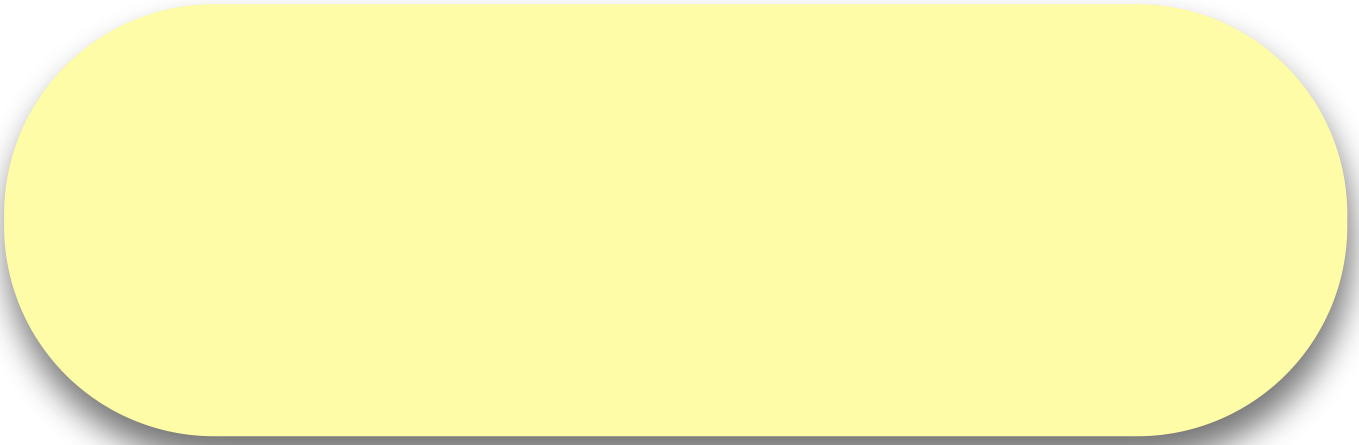
Who knows the important information?



Who doesn't know it?



When does each character learn it?



Could they realistically have found this out earlier?

□ Yes

□ No

If yes, why didn't they?

Is the information being hidden for a believable reason?

□ Yes

□ No



05. TIME & TRAVEL CHECK

Stories often break when time doesn't add up.

When does this event happen?

-
-

How long does it take?

-
-

Where is each character during this time?

-
-

How long would the journey realistically take in this world?

-
-

Could the characters physically be where the story says they are?

□ Yes

□ No

□ Need to check

Is there enough time between major events?

□ Yes

□ No



06. WORLD RULES CHECK

Especially important for fantasy, sci-fi, supernatural, and historical fiction.

What rule does this plot point depend on?

Has this rule already been established?

□ Yes

□ No

Have I established any exceptions?

Does this event contradict an earlier rule?

□ Yes

□ No

If the rule exists, why isn't it being used elsewhere?

What stops the rule / magic / technology from solving every problem?



07. RESOURCE CHECK

Characters can only use what they actually have access to.

What resources does the character have?

□ Money

□ Weapons

□ Knowledge

□ Allies

□ Authority

□ Technology

□ Magic

□ Transportation

□ Information

□ Other: _____

What resource could solve their current problem?

Why can't they use it?

Have I established this limitation?

□ Yes □ No



08. CONSEQUENCE CHECK

Actions should have consequences.

What does the character do?

What should realistically happen because of that?

What actually happens in the story?

Are those two things compatible?

□ Yes □ No

What consequence might I be forgetting?

Who else should be affected?



09. THE COINCIDENCE CHECK

Coincidences can start problems. They shouldn't conveniently solve every problem.

Does this event happen because of a character's choice or simply because the plot needs it?

Could I give the character more agency here?

□ Yes □ No

What could they actively do to cause this event?

10. THE VILLAIN / ANTAGONIST CHECK

If your antagonist is capable and has a clear goal:

What do they want?

What could they realistically do to stop the protagonist?

Why haven't they done it already?

What prevents them from winning immediately?

Does the antagonist behave consistently with their goals and abilities?

□ Yes

□ No



11. THE CONVENIENCE CHECK

Look for moments where the plot gets rescued too easily.

Does someone arrive at exactly the right moment?

□ Yes □ No

Does someone discover exactly the information they need?

□ Yes □ No

Does a problem disappear without a clear reason?

□ Yes □ No

Does a character suddenly behave differently because the plot needs them to?

□ Yes □ No

If you answered yes, what could make the event feel earned?



12. MAJOR PLOT HOLE LOG

Don't try to solve every problem immediately. Track them.

Problem / Question

-
-
-
-

Where It Happens

-
-
-
-

Why It Doesn't Make Sense

-
-
-
-

Possible Fix

-
-
-
-

Fixed?

-
-
-
-



13. THE DOMINO TEST

Pick one major event.

EVENT:

What caused it?

↓

What happens immediately afterward?

↓

Who is affected?

↓

What do they do because of it?

↓

What happens next?

↓

What larger consequence does this create?

If you can't follow the chain, you may have a missing step.



14. THE READER TEST

Pretend you've never seen the story before.

What question would a skeptical reader ask here?

Where would they ask, “Why didn't they just...?”

What information would answer that question?

Have I given the reader that information before they need it?

□ Yes

□ No

FINAL LOGIC CHECK

Before you call the plot finished:

□ Characters make decisions based on what they know.

□ Major decisions have believable motivations.

□ Characters can't easily solve problems they are meant to struggle with.

□ Important information reaches characters at believable times.

□ Travel and timing make sense.

□ World rules remain consistent.

□ Actions have consequences.

□ Coincidences don't conveniently solve major conflicts.

□ The antagonist has believable reasons for their choices.

□ The plot doesn't depend on characters behaving unnaturally stupid.

□ Major reveals have enough setup.

□ I know how to explain the biggest “why didn't they just...?” questions.



THE FINAL QUESTION

What is the one plot hole I absolutely cannot leave unresolved?

And what is my fix?

REMEMBER

You don't need to explain every single thing. But if the reader notices a gap before you want them to, the story has a problem.

