Three-act sheet

Title: _____
Writer: _____ Draft date: _____

Target length: ☐ 90 ☐ 110 ☐ 120 ☐ other _____ pages

Logline
The story in one sentence.

The film's question
What the climax will answer.

Act One

about a quarter, pages 1 to _____

Set-up
Who, where, and what is missing.

Inciting incident page _____
The event that starts the trouble.

First plot point page _____
The decision or the push that ends the act.

This act's question

Act Two

about half, pages _____ to _____

First half
What the character tries.

Midpoint page _____
What is won, lost or found out.

Second half
How the cost arrives.

Low point and second plot point page _____
The plan collapses, and the choice that leads out of it.

Subplot
Whose it is, and where it collides with the main plot.

This act's question

Act Three

about a quarter, pages _____ to _____

Climax page _____
The confrontation, and the answer.

Resolution
The world afterwards.

This act's question

Page targets, checks and an example

Rough ranges, rounded to whole pages.
At about a minute a page.

WHERE THE TURNING POINTS FALL

Turning point	90 pages	110 pages	120 pages	Your page
Inciting incident	9 to 11	11 to 13	12 to 14	
First plot point	19 to 22	23 to 27	25 to 30	
Midpoint	45	55	60	
Second plot point	64 to 67	78 to 82	85 to 90	
Climax	79 to 86	97 to 105	106 to 114	

FOUR CHECKS

- ☐ Each act ends on a change the story can't undo.
- ☐ Something shifts at the midpoint.
- ☐ The first plot point is the character's choice.
- ☐ The climax answers the question the inciting incident raised.

AN EXAMPLE: LOW TIDE

The sample project in Scriptopus, a 12-page short drama. Its acts come out at roughly three, six and two and a half pages, near enough a quarter, a half and a quarter.

Logline

On the day her late mother's cottage is sold, a sound recordist who listens to empty rooms for a living goes back to record it one last time, and finds the father she has refused to hear for thirteen years already inside.

The film's question

Will Mara make peace with her father before the house is gone?

Act	Pages	The question	Turning points
One	1 to 4	Will Mara stay in the house with the father she blames?	Inciting incident, page 2: Des steps out of the back hallway. First plot point, page 4: she stays to finish the recording.
Two	4 to 10	What happened while her mother was dying, and who decided Mara shouldn't be there?	Midpoint, page 6: on the beach she accuses him, and he walks off without an answer. Low point, page 8: the first of her mother's tapes, explaining that the choice was her mother's own.
Three	10 to 12	What will she do with the truth before the house is handed over?	Second plot point, page 10: after admitting her own part, she picks up her microphone. Climax, pages 10 to 11: as the estate agent arrives, she records Des telling a story about her mother.

Each question is answered at the act break where the next one is raised. She stays, so we need to know what happened; she learns what happened, so we need to know what she will do about it.

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