Story archetypes prompt cards

These cards are designed to help people or groups think about a project or other task they are undertaking in terms of a story.

Each item is to be seen as a metaphor for something or someone in real life.
Characters

Angry mob

The source of resistance to change who either need to be overcome or persuaded to lay down their pitchforks.
Characters
Characters

Ghosts
The memories of past victories or failures that can inspire or weigh heavily on your task.
Characters

**Warrior**
Someone who brings strength and skill to the task. A powerful ally.
Characters
Characters

Arch-villain

The main antagonist. This could be a person, a group or it could even be the "status quo".
Characters
The dragon

The dragon comes from outside to cause chaos, fear and uncertainty. It must be overcome or neutralised.
Characters
Characters

Wise mentor
A source of wisdom and help when things are at their bleakest.
Characters
Citizens/villagers

The people. They may be in peril and need saving. They may be your greatest source of help.
Characters
Characters

**Heroine/Hero**

The person or people who take on the challenge and drive the story to its conclusion.
Characters
Characters

**Sidekick**

The reliable, indispensable source of help and encouragement for the heroine/hero.

A constant presence, they are often the one who **really** saves the day!
Characters
Fighting the dragon

A threat or problem emerges and the task is to defeat it or equip others to.

Sometimes the dragon wins!

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Seven_Basic_Plots
Story types
Story types

Rags to riches
The poor protagonist, through hard work or good fortune, manages to overcome adversity.

The “riches” may not be what the protagonist expected.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Seven_Basic_Plots
Story types
Story types

The quest
You set out on a journey of discovery, overcoming the challenges and returning with a powerful object.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Seven_Basic_Plots
Story types
Story types

Voyage and return

After setting out on a journey into the unknown the hero deals with the challenges they encounter, returning with nothing except their experiences.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Seven_Basic_Plots
Story types
Story types

Comedy
A story that leads to a successful and happy conclusion.

Doesn’t have to be funny!

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Seven_Basic_Plots
Story types

**Tragedy**
A villain rises to power then falls from grace and order is restored.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Seven_Basic_Plots
Story types
Story types

Rebirth
A serious event challenges the protagonist to re-evaluate themselves. They emerge transformed.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Seven_Basic_Plots
Story types
Objects and places

**Magic amulet**

The enabler. The power from this object allows the protagonists to complete their task.
Objects and places
The cursed ring

An object that is taken on the quest that poses a threat. It must either be endured or destroyed.
Objects and places
Objects and places

Buried treasure

Your quest’s ultimate goal. Requires effort to locate and uncover.
Objects and places
Objects and places

Haunted House
Inhabited by ghosts. Usually associated with painful memories.

Sometimes has to be returned to in order to overcome previous bad experiences.
Objects and places
Objects and places

The castle

Either your position of strength from which you venture or the challenge that you need to conquer.
Objects and places
Objects and places

The yawning chasm
A natural and inevitable barrier to progress.

It needs to be overcome by ingenuity, courage or a leap of faith.
Endings

The “happy” ending
The successful conclusion to the story.

Regardless of the journey, the intended goal was achieved.
Endings
The cliffhanger

The story has yet to play out; there is no clear resolution.

Maybe the story worked out differently for different people.
Endings
Endings

The “unhappy” ending

The intended goal wasn’t achieved.

Perhaps something of greater value was obtained instead?
Endings
Endings

The moral
The meaning behind the story.

This is the most important message that you want the people who hear your story to understand.
Endings