

The 12 Key Pillars of Novel Construction

Copyright © 2014 C. S. Lakin

Inspection Checklist #3

Conflict with High Stakes

	QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
QUESTION #1	What is the central (outwardly visible) conflict in your novel? Who or what is preventing your protagonist from reaching her goal?	
QUESTION #2	Just how does this conflict element pose problems for your protagonist? Now, can you make it much bigger, much worse? List some possibilities and their outcomes.	
QUESTION #3	What are the personal stakes at risk due to this conflict in your story? Can you raise the stakes more? How? In what way?	
QUESTION #4	What are the things your protagonist loves and cherishes the most? Can you set up the conflict so that he stands to lose those as he goes after his goal?	
QUESTION #5	What public stakes are threatened by this central conflict component? Who and what else will be adversely affected if the MC fails to reach his goal? Can you make it worse?	
QUESTION #6	What will happen right before the climax of the novel to show the conflict at its peak? How will this push the hero into a dark night of the soul?	

	QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
QUESTION #7	How can you make the conflict elements more personal so that it's more painful for your MC? Who can betray her? Fail her?	
QUESTION #8	In what way is your central conflict embodying your theme? How does the conflict force your MC to make thematic choices in the novel, with the hardest choice at the climax?	
QUESTION #9	How will the conflict component be resolved or eliminated (or left a threat) at the end of the novel so that it is satisfying and believable to readers?	
QUESTION #10	What strong inner conflict is your MC dealing with? Come up with two things she must choose between, both unthinkable. Tell how this showcases your novel's theme.	
QUESTION #11	Can you come up with at least five minor, different conflict components you can add to your plot that exacerbate the central conflict of your novel?	
QUESTION #12	How does your MC change by the end of the book due to the central conflict? How do her attitude and actions toward that conflict change, and as a result, how does the conflict itself change?	

Write a one-paragraph summary of your novel highlighting your conflict with high stakes: