

Module 2 Workshop: Turn Your Idea Into a Story You Can Actually Write

What this is

This is a guided workshop built from Module 2: Story Development.

If Module 1 is where you find the spark, Module 2 is where you stop treating your idea like a daydream and start treating it like a build.

You are going to feel the difference between:

- having an idea you like, and
- having a story concept with a premise, conflict, stakes, and theme.

That difference is confidence.

What you will walk away with

- 3 strong “what if” premise statements
- 1 chosen premise refined into a one-sentence premise + one-paragraph story concept
- A conflict and stakes map (internal + external)
- A first-pass theme statement (what you want the audience to feel or leave with)

The promise (and the honest limitation)

In 90 minutes, you will not outline a whole novel or write a full play.

You will do something more useful. You will build the core engine of your story.

In the full Creative Story Mastery program, Module 2 then expands this into deeper development work and a repeatable process you can use again and again.

Workshop structure

1) Welcome: from idea to premise

Framing: Most writers do not get stuck because they lack talent. They get stuck because they are trying to draft before they have a premise that can carry weight.

Key distinction (Module 2): - An idea is interesting. - A premise is an idea under pressure.

Write this at the top of your page: *Today I am building a story engine, not chasing inspiration.*

2) Exercise 1: Premise Statements

Module 2 starts here: articulating the “what if” at the heart of your story.

Step A: Generate 5 “what if” lines (5 minutes) Use your seed from Module 1, or choose a fresh one.

Prompts:

- What if ___ happened to someone like me?
- What if a character wanted ___ but the cost was ___?
- What if the thing they fear most is exactly what they need?

Step B: Upgrade 3 of them. For each, add:

- protagonist
- situation
- pressure

Template: *What if [protagonist] is forced into [situation], and must [pursue goal] while [pressure/constraint] makes it harder?*

Step C: Choose 1 Decision rule: pick the one that makes you think, “I can see scenes.”

3) Mini-lesson: conflict is momentum

Module 2 teaches this plainly: conflict drives story momentum.

If nothing pushes back, your story does not move.

Write this line: *My story moves because something resists what my protagonist wants.*

4) Exercise 2: Conflict Mapping

This is where your premise becomes usable.

Draw two columns:

External conflict (outside the character):

- Who or what opposes them?
- What system, person, deadline, environment, or truth blocks them?

Internal conflict (inside the character):

- What belief, wound, fear, or desire sabotages them?
- What do they want to be true, but cannot yet live?

Now add stakes under each column:

- If they fail externally, what happens?
- If they fail internally, what happens?

Raise the stakes (quick dial): Choose one and turn it up:

- time pressure
- public exposure
- relational loss
- moral cost
- irreversible consequence

Output: one sentence: *This story is about a character who wants , *but* stands in the way, and if they fail, ____.*

5) Mini-lesson: theme is the aftertaste

Module 2 includes theme discovery for a reason. Theme is not a lecture. Theme is the emotional residue your story leaves behind.

Write this: *My theme is what I want the audience to feel, question, or carry home.*

6) Exercise 3: Theme Reflection

Answer fast, no overthinking:

- What excites you most about your story's premise?
- Where does your character face the biggest challenge?
- What message or feeling do you want the story to leave with readers?

Now write a first-pass theme statement:

- *This story explores...*
- *This story argues...*
- *This story asks...*

Then write the “shadow theme” (the uncomfortable truth):

- *What I am really writing about is...*

7) The Story Concept Paragraph

Write one paragraph (6–8 sentences):

- premise (one sentence)
- protagonist + goal
- external opposition
- internal opposition
- stakes
- the kind of ending you are drawn to (hopeful, tragic, bittersweet)

This is not your final synopsis. It is your first true blueprint.

8) Close: the taste, and the next step

You have just done what most writers skip. You built the engine before you started driving.

Your 24-hour task: Write a 10-beat outline (one line per beat) using your story concept paragraph as the guide.

If you want more (and you probably do): This is the surface layer of Module 2.

In the full Creative Story Mastery program, you go deeper with guided development, stronger structural tools, and a repeatable method for turning any seed into a story with momentum.

You do not need more motivation. You need a system.

Materials

- Timer
- One worksheet or a single Google Doc
- Two coloured pens (optional, great for conflict mapping)

Accessibility options

- Speak answers into a voice note, then transcribe
- Work in 3-minute bursts (instead of 10–15)
- Use mind-maps instead of paragraphs