# AI Writers Guild Lesson Plan

# Module 4: Lesson 2

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## MODULE 4: Plot and Story Arc

## LESSON 2: Developing subplots and secondary arcs with AI.

Every great story is built around its **plot**, the central storyline that takes us on an exciting journey. The plot is the backbone of the story, guiding the main character through challenges, triumphs, and everything in between. It answers the big question: **"What happens in this story?"** Think of the plot as the hero's ultimate adventure—whether it's defeating a villain, uncovering a mystery, or overcoming a personal struggle, the plot is what keeps us turning the pages.

But what about the smaller stories that happen alongside the main adventure? That's where the **subplot** comes in. A **subplot** is a secondary storyline that adds depth and richness to the main plot. It might explore a character's relationships, highlight a theme, or introduce challenges that complement or contrast with the main story. Subplots help us understand characters better, explore side stories, and make the world of the story feel more real.

For example, in *The Lion King*, the **main plot** is Simba's journey to reclaim his place as king. But a **subplot** unfolds with Timon and Pumbaa, who help Simba rediscover his courage and identity. The subplot isn't the main story, but it's essential to Simba's growth and makes the story more vibrant.

As storytellers, you have the power to create not just one captivating plot, but also subplots that add texture and meaning to your tales. Today, we'll explore how to create subplots that connect with your main story and make your writing unforgettable!

### Homework:

- Develop your Subplots.
- Share lessons learned about subplots in Engage.

### Watch the Weekly Video:

- https://logcabinschoolhouse.com/course-catalog

### Materials:

- Subplots from classics
- Lesson Plan

## Trial Prompts - Exploring Subplots Through ChatGPT Prompts

**Trailblazers,**
Subplots are secondary stories that add depth and richness to your main plot. Below are ChatGPT prompts to help you brainstorm and develop subplots for your story. Copy and paste these into ChatGPT, modify them for your own story, and see what creative ideas emerge!

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## 1. Discovering a Subplot Character

Every subplot starts with a character who has their own goals and challenges.

**Prompt to Copy:**

"I'm writing a story where the main plot is about [insert main plot]. Suggest three supporting characters who could have their own subplot. For each character, include what they want most and how it could tie into the main plot."

**Example Prompt:**

"I'm writing a story where the main plot is about a young hero saving their village from a dragon. Suggest three supporting characters who could have their own subplot. For each character, include what they want most and how it could tie into the main plot."

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## 2. Crafting the Subplot's Goal

Subplots need a clear purpose that connects to the main story.

**Prompt to Copy:**

"I've decided my subplot will focus on [insert character]. They are trying to [insert goal]. Help me brainstorm three different ways this subplot could connect to the main plot. Make sure the connection influences the main story in a meaningful way."

**Example Prompt:**

"I've decided my subplot will focus on the hero's best friend. They are trying to prove they are brave too. Help me brainstorm three different ways this subplot could connect to the main plot, such as helping during the dragon fight or uncovering the dragon's weakness."

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## 3. Adding Conflict to the Subplot

Conflict is the heart of every subplot.

**Prompt to Copy:**

"My subplot involves [insert character] who wants to [insert goal]. Suggest three obstacles or challenges that could make this subplot more interesting. These conflicts should create tension and add depth to the story."

**Example Prompt:**

"My subplot involves the hero's best friend, who wants to prove their bravery. Suggest three obstacles or challenges they might face, like being underestimated by others or making a mistake that endangers the hero."

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## 4. Weaving Subplot and Main Plot Together

Subplots are most effective when they intersect with the main plot.

**Prompt to Copy:**

"My main plot is about [insert main plot], and my subplot is about [insert subplot]. Suggest three ways these two storylines could overlap, influence each other, or lead to a dramatic moment in the story."

**Example Prompt:**

"My main plot is about a hero saving their village from a dragon, and my subplot is about the best friend trying to prove they are brave. Suggest three ways these two storylines could overlap, like the friend discovering the dragon's weakness or accidentally causing the hero to be captured."

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## 5. Resolving the Subplot

Every subplot needs a satisfying ending.

**Prompt to Copy:**

"The subplot is about [insert character] and their goal to [insert goal]. Help me brainstorm three different ways this subplot could be resolved by the end of the story. Make sure at least one resolution ties into the main plot's climax."

**Example Prompt:**

"The subplot is about the best friend proving their bravery. Help me brainstorm three different ways this subplot could be resolved by the end of the story, like saving the hero during the dragon battle or realizing bravery comes in different forms."

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## 6. Analyzing Subplots from Other Stories

Practice analyzing subplots by exploring examples from other books or movies.

**Prompt to Copy:**

"Analyze the subplots in [insert book or movie]. Identify one subplot, describe the character involved, their goal, and how the subplot connects to the main plot. Also, explain how it adds depth to the story."

**Example Prompt:**

"Analyze the subplots in *The Lion King*. Identify one subplot, describe the character involved, their goal, and how the subplot connects to the main plot. Also, explain how it adds depth to the story."

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## 7. Generating a Subplot for Your Story

If you're starting from scratch, use this prompt to generate ideas.

**Prompt to Copy:**

"I'm writing a story about [insert main plot]. Suggest three creative subplot ideas that could add depth and complexity to my story. Include the character involved, their goal, the conflict they face, and how it ties into the main plot."

**Example Prompt:**

"I'm writing a story about a young inventor who creates a machine to stop time. Suggest three creative subplot ideas that could add depth and complexity to my story. Include the character involved, their goal, the conflict they face, and how it ties into the main plot."

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## Reflection Questions (After Using ChatGPT):

1. What did you learn about your story by exploring subplots?
2. How did ChatGPT help you think about your characters or themes in new ways?

3. Which subplot idea are you most excited to develop, and why?

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**Challenge Bonus:**
Use ChatGPT to create dialogue or a key scene from your subplot!

**Prompt to Copy:**

"Write a scene where [insert character] is dealing with [insert subplot conflict]. Include dialogue and show how their subplot overlaps with the main plot."

## Big Ideas About Subplots

1. **Subplots Add Depth to Stories**
   - Subplots enrich the narrative by adding layers of complexity and providing more opportunities for character development and thematic exploration.
2. **Subplots Are Connected to the Main Plot**
   - A good subplot ties into the main plot in meaningful ways. It can support the main story, create new challenges, or provide insights that impact the resolution.
3. **Subplots Develop Supporting Characters**
   - Subplots often focus on secondary characters, giving them goals, conflicts, and resolutions that help the audience understand them better.
4. **Subplots Have Their Own Arc**
   - Like the main plot, a subplot includes a beginning, middle, and resolution. It needs a clear purpose and direction to feel complete.
5. **Conflict Drives Subplots**
   - Subplots are most engaging when they introduce conflicts or obstacles, either external (a rival, a challenge) or internal (self-doubt, fears).
6. **Subplots Can Reflect or Contrast the Main Plot**
   - Subplots often echo the themes of the main plot or provide a contrast to highlight different aspects of the story.
7. **Subplots Enhance the Emotional and Narrative Impact**
   - Subplots add emotional stakes, create suspense, or provide moments of relief, making the overall story more engaging.
8. **Balancing Subplots Is Crucial**
   - Subplots should never overshadow the main plot but should complement it. Finding the right balance ensures the story stays cohesive.
9. **Subplots Influence the Main Story**
   - A subplot isn't just a side story; it impacts the main plot in some way, whether through a character's growth, a revealed secret, or a critical action.
10. **Subplots Need a Resolution**
    - Every subplot should conclude by the end of the story, tying into the main plot or wrapping up independently to leave the audience satisfied.

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## Why These Big Ideas Matter

By understanding these concepts, you will learn how to create multidimensional stories that resonate with readers. You'll see how subplots can enhance your storytelling, explore character motivations, and create narratives that are rich, balanced, and engaging.

**CCSS:**

**Here are the potential standards covered in AI Writers Guild. If you are a teacher who has used these in the past, you could easily review these each week and highlight the ones you are covering. You could also weave in any that you feel AI Writers Guild didn't directly cover but would be easy to touch on alongside this curriculum.**

**Writing Standards (Grades 6-8)**

1. **Text Types and Purposes:**

   o **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

   o **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3. A:** Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

   o **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3. B:** Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

2. **Production and Distribution of Writing:**

   o **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

   o **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5:** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

   o **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.6:** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently.

3. **Research to Build and Present Knowledge:**

   o **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

   o **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8:** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

**Language Standards (Grades 6-8)**

4. **Conventions of Standard English:**

   - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

   - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

5. **Knowledge of Language:**

   - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.3:** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

6. **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:**

   - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

   - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

**Reading Standards for Literature (Grades 6-8)**

7. **Key Ideas and Details:**

   - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1:** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

   - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.

8. **Craft and Structure:**

   - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

These standards help ensure that students in the AI Writers Guild develop critical writing and analytical skills, understand the narrative structure, and effectively use technology in their writing process.

**ISTE Standards for Students**

1. **Empowered Learner:**
   - **ISTE 1a:** Students leverage technology to take an active role in choosing, achieving, and demonstrating competency in their learning goals, informed by the learning sciences.

- o **ISTE 1c:** Students use technology to seek feedback that informs and improves their practice and to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.
2. **Digital Citizen:**
   - o **ISTE 2a:** Students cultivate and manage their digital identity and reputation and are aware of the permanence of their actions in the digital world.
   - o **ISTE 2b:** Students engage in positive, safe, legal, and ethical behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices.
3. **Knowledge Constructor:**
   - o **ISTE 3a:** Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
   - o **ISTE 3b:** Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility, and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
   - o **ISTE 3c:** Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
4. **Innovative Designer:**
   - o **ISTE 4a:** Students use a variety of technologies within a design process to identify and solve problems by creating new, useful, or imaginative solutions.
   - o **ISTE 4b:** Students select and use digital tools to plan and manage a design process that considers design constraints and calculated risks.
   - o **ISTE 4d:** Students exhibit a tolerance for ambiguity, perseverance, and the capacity to work with open-ended problems.
5. **Computational Thinker:**
   - o **ISTE 5a:** Students formulate problem definitions suited for technology-assisted methods, such as data analysis, abstract models, and algorithmic thinking in exploring and finding solutions.
   - o **ISTE 5b:** Students collect data or identify relevant data sets, use digital tools to analyze them, and represent data in various ways to facilitate problem-solving and decision-making.
   - o **ISTE 5c:** Students break problems into component parts, extract key information, and develop descriptive models to understand complex systems or facilitate problem-solving.
6. **Creative Communicator:**
   - o **ISTE 6a:** Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
   - o **ISTE 6b:** Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
   - o **ISTE 6d:** Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for their intended audiences.
7. **Global Collaborator:**
   - o **ISTE 7a:** Students use digital tools to connect with learners from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, engaging with them in ways that broaden mutual understanding and learning.

- o **ISTE 7b:** Students use collaborative technologies to work with others, including peers, experts, or community members, to examine issues and problems from multiple viewpoints.

**Technology Skills Covered:**

- **Word Processing and Document Design (Microsoft Word):**
  - o Students learn how to structure, format, and present written content effectively, aligning with ISTE standards on creating original works and customizing messages for audiences.
- **Digital Notetaking and Organization (OneNote):**
  - o Students develop skills in organizing their research, ideas, and drafts, fostering effective digital organization and planning.
- **Creative Writing and Story Planning (ChatGPT, AI):**
  - o Students utilize AI tools to generate ideas, refine prompts, and experiment with storytelling, encouraging innovative design and computational thinking.
- **Research and Information Management (Web Searches, AI Tools):**
  - o Students practice gathering, evaluating, and organizing information digitally, reinforcing their ability to construct knowledge and act as informed digital citizens.

By integrating these technology tools into your course, you're helping students not only become better writers but also equipping them with essential digital literacy skills that align with modern educational standards.