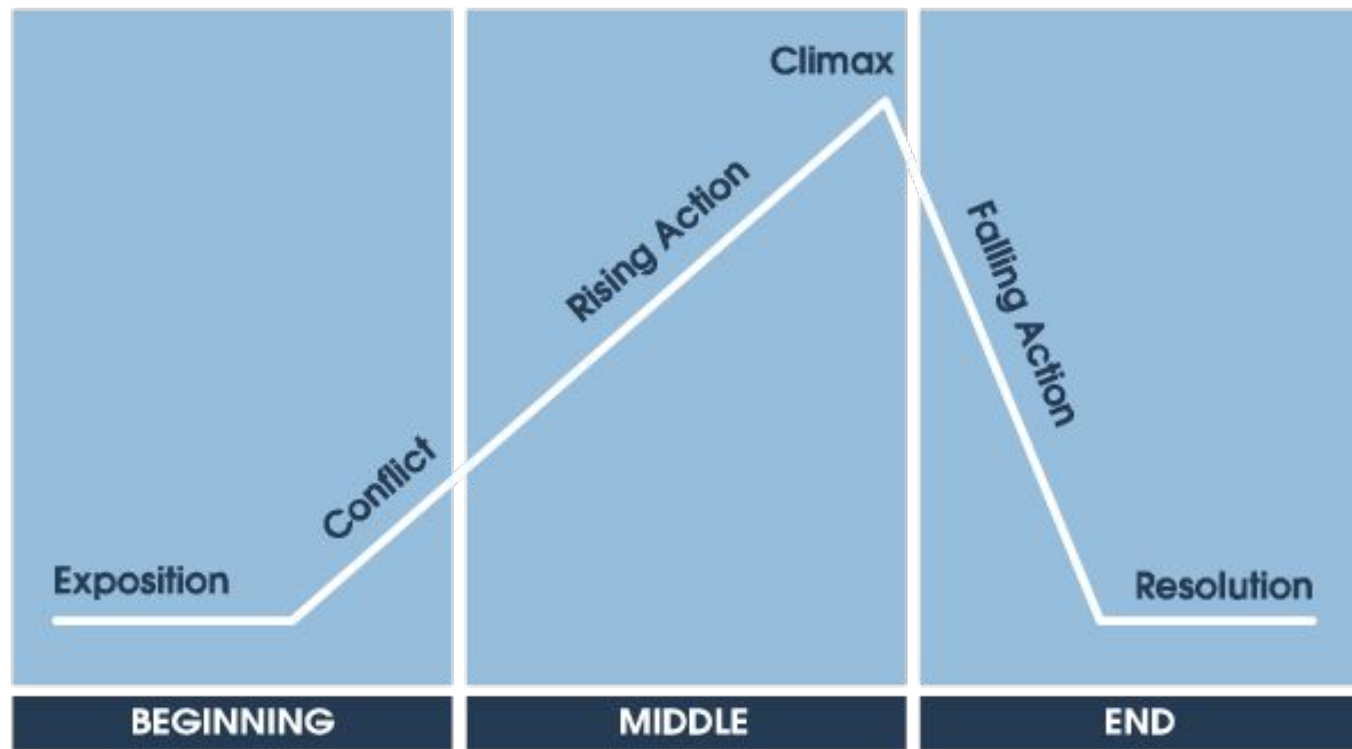


Elements of a Story

English, Roots Charter High School

Plot Line: The plot is the meat and potatoes of the story. It is what sucks the reader in and tells the character's experiences. The plot allows you to map out the events of a story.

Plot Line



Plot Line Overview

1. Exposition- This beginning part of the story introduces the setting and the characters to us. It might also reveal the conflict of the story.
2. Rising Action- This usually takes up most of the story, as the conflict unfolds itself and the characters must try to solve their problem.
3. Climax- The moment of highest intensity in the book. This is the moment when the conflict and the characters take a big turn and something drastic happens to change everything.
4. Falling Action- The climax ends and the end of the story unfolds.
5. Resolution- The end of the story where all the loose ends are tied up. This might also include where a moral is taught or revealed.

Setting & Mindfulness

How many pennies? How much money total?

What was the flavor of the Emergen-C? Of the chapstick?

How many stamps were on the Cafe Rio card?

What was the brand of gum?

What did it say on the cross stitch?

Which cards were on the desk?

What is the title of the book? What page was the book open to?

What colors were on the scarf? Name as many as you can remember.

How many objects total?

Measuring cup and spoon sizes.

Name written on the spatula.

How many ounces full was the water bottle?

Name the kitchen silverware.

Name 3 things in the trail mix.

What kind of car do I drive?

Exposition

This beginning part of the story introduces the **setting** and the **characters** to us. It might also reveal the conflict of the story.

Setting

This includes the location, time, and environment in which a story takes place.

Individual exercise: Describe your bedroom. You may want to include how messy or clean it is, how it is decorated (walls, flooring, bedding, furniture), how light or dark it is, how it smells, what happens inside, who spends time there, and what kinds of sounds you would hear. Then answer the following question: If a stranger walked into your bedroom, what would they think of you? Why?

Setting

Location: (Where would the story be on a map of the world/universe?)

Ex: in West Valley, Utah; in a school; on a beach; on an island; on Mars

Time: (Where in history does it happen? What time of day/night?) Ex: set in the futuristic year of 2092; Medieval ages; in the middle of a hot summer day

Environment: (What key characteristics or props are included in the surrounding area? What sounds/smells/sights are included?) Ex: a crowded classroom filled with 30 desks and chairs and students loudly talking in between class periods vs a bare and dark classroom with no one else in the school building

Setting

Location
Time
Environment



Setting

Location
Time
Environment



Character

The characters are the individuals who propel the action. They can be people, animals, objects, etc.

Characters are created in a variety of ways, but these are the 5 main components of characterization:

1. Appearance - What do the characters look like? What do they wear?
2. Actions - What do they do? Who do they do these actions with?
3. Speech - What do they say? What words or slang do they use? How do they say it? What is their tone of voice?
4. Thoughts/Feelings - What are the characters' hopes and dreams? What do they feel? What are their fears?
5. Reactions/Opinions of other characters (relationships) - What do other characters think of them? How do other characters act around them?

Character through Hunger Games

Appearance:

“I watch as Gale pulls out his knife and slices the bread. He could be my brother. Straight black hair, olive skin, we even have the same gray eyes.” (page 8)

Actions:

“I finally had to kill the lynx because he scared off game.” (page 7)

“I hug her, because I know these next few hours will be terrible for her.” (page 15)

Character through Hunger Games

Speech:

“I volunteer! I volunteer as tribute!”
(page 22)

“ ‘You look beautiful.’ says Prim in a hushed voice. ‘And nothing like myself,’ I say.” (page 15)

Thoughts/Feelings:

“I try to forgive her for my father’s sake. But to be honest, I’m not the forgiving type.” (page 8)

“Leave? How could I leave Prim, who is the only person in the world I am certain I love?” (page 18)

Character through Hunger Games

Reactions of others/Relationships:

“Gale says I never smile except in the woods.” (page 6)

“I don’t care if we’re rich. I just want you to come home.” (page 36), said by Prim



Character

Exercise: You'll be handed a slip of paper with a character's name on it. Describe your character in as many ways as you can. Afterwards, you will guess your partner's character by asking yes/no questions, like the game Guess Who.

Ways to describe your character: What do they look like? What do they do? What do they talk about? What's important to them/how do they spend their time? What are their thoughts? Feelings? What do other people think about them?

Information about Characters

Protagonist

- the main character of the story
- person on whom action centers
- character who pushes the action forward
- character who attempts to accomplish something
- usually seen as a good person or hero/heroine
- usually round and dynamic

Antagonist

- the "bad" guy (goes against the main character)
- character or force that holds the action back

Information about Characters

- Flat
 - not a complicated character to understand
 - easily defined in a single sentence
 - most minor characters are flat, usually easy to stereotype
- Round
 - complicated characters (may have conflicting motives and good/bad qualities), more realistic; reader understands more of their ideas, beliefs, hopes/dreams, etc.
 - capable of surprising the reader in a convincing way (if the character is predictable, the character is flat)
- Foil
 - a character that contrasts with the main character that helps the reader be more aware of some important characteristics of the main character
- Anti-hero
 - a "villain" or underdog that the reader still roots for
- Dynamic
 - characters who change over the course of the story
 - the protagonist is usually dynamic, but not always
- Static
 - characters who don't change throughout the story, but stay the same
 - minor characters are usually static, but not always

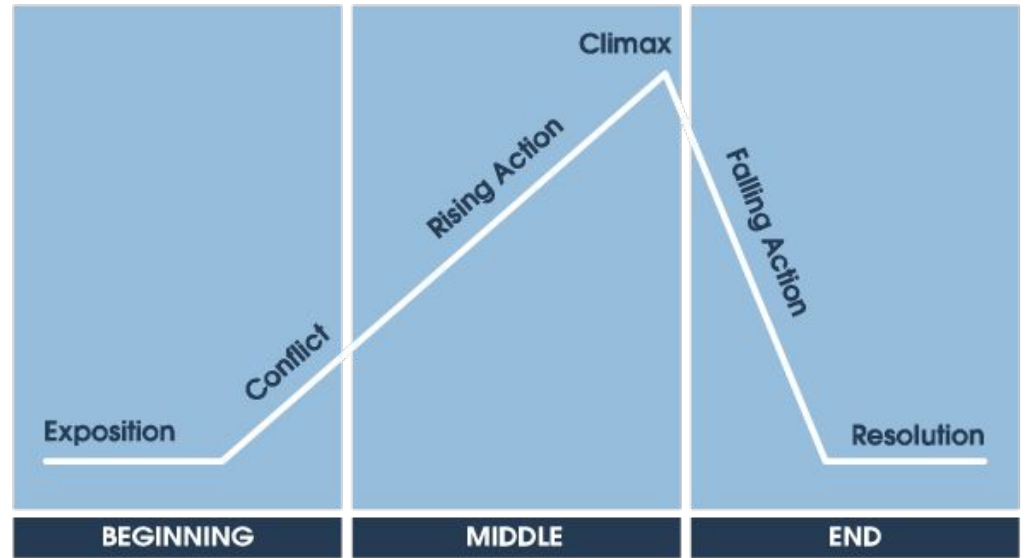
Character & Sandy Hook Shooting

- Read “Dawn and Mary” by Brian Doyle
 - Underline examples of characterization:
 - Appearance
 - Action
 - Speech
 - Thoughts/Feelings
 - Relationship



Plot Line

2. Conflict/Rising Action- This usually takes up most of the story, as the conflict unfolds itself and the characters must try to solve their problem.



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3. Climax- The moment of highest intensity in the book. This is the moment when the conflict and the characters take a big turn and something drastic happens to change everything.

Conflict

The conflicts of the story are the problems the character must face and overcome throughout the plot. Usually there is one main conflict, but there are often mini conflicts within the main storyline that cause the plot to rise and fall multiple times before reaching the true climax. There are two main categories of conflict: internal and external.

Internal Conflict

- **Person vs Self** - internal conflicts happen in the mind of the character
 - Hint: think of the cartoons where a little angel is on one shoulder and a little devil is on the other shoulder, trying to convince the character (internal discussion/debate).

Conflict

External Conflict

- **Person vs Person** - this is the most common form of conflict: one person fighting with another. This conflict can be verbal or physical.
 - Hint: a fist fight, bullying in the hallway, knights dueling with swords
- **Person vs Nature** - characters fight against the natural elements
 - Hint: weather such as rain or snow, disease, wild animals, natural disasters such as earthquakes and tornadoes
- **Person vs Society** - The character fights against the rules of the society/government (usually one against many)
 - Hint: racism, segregation, going against cultural norms/laws, societal rules or expectations

Conflict

Other forms of conflict:

- **Person vs Machine/Technology**
 - Hint: science fiction, artificial intelligence, etc.
- **Person vs Supernatural**
 - Hint: ghosts, dark forces, etc.

Journal Prompt

Have you ever told the truth and had someone not believe you? Have you ever gotten in an argument with an adult? Have you ever wondered whether or not you should say or do something? Write about a conflict you have had in your life. It could be a disagreement with someone else, a time you couldn't make a decision about what to do, or a time when you felt like you stood out from a large group of people. What did you learn from this experience? How are you different because you had this experience?

Conflict

Why is conflict important? What does it teach us about the character(s)? Do we learn from/about them based on the way they respond to conflict?

Make choices that allow your life to resemble a good story. Because most of us live lives that don't make for a good story - we are flat, predictable, we remain consistent over long periods of time. Think of your favorite stories - what makes them captivating to you? It's that a character changes. Characters change by moving through conflict.