

Elements of the Short Story

A **short story** is a work of fiction that can be read in one sitting.

- ✓ Fiction-a story created by the imagination; not based on real events
- ✓ Non-fiction- a story based on real people or events



Most short stories share certain structural elements (building blocks).

Knowing these elements can help you better understand and appreciate the story.

Characters & Characterization

The **characters** are the people or animals in the story.

Types of Characters

Protagonist – the main character in the story, *usually* the character with whom the reader sympathizes.

Antagonist – the character in conflict with the main character

Flat (Static) Character – a character who is not well developed by the author; this type of character does not change as a result of experiencing the conflict in the story

Round (Dynamic) Character – a major character in the story who changes as a result of experiencing the conflict in the story. These characters are usually well developed by the author through the use of:

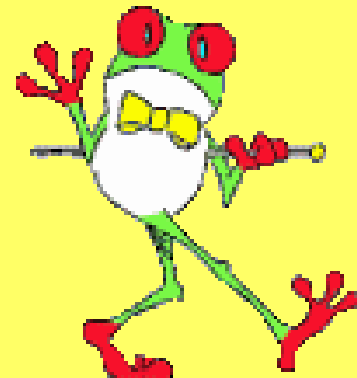
T-the thoughts of the character

O-other's reactions to the character

A-the character's actions

D-direct description by the author

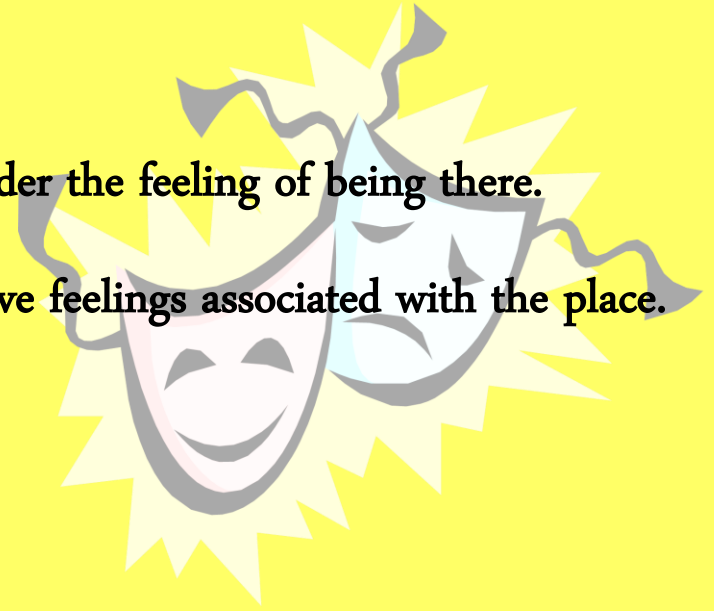
S-what the character says



Setting

The **setting** is the time and place of the story.

- The setting puts the reader in the story by giving the reader the feeling of being there.
- Atmosphere, or **mood** is created by the positive or negative feelings associated with the place.



Theme

The **theme** is the lesson, message or observation about life the author is attempting to relate by telling the story.

- Theme is usually inferred by the actions and words of the characters in the story, not directly stated by the author.
- (Examples: “Friendship is more important than possessions.” “The inner beauty of a person is much more important than what they look like on the outside.”)

Point of View

The **point of view** is the perspective or position from which the story is being told.

- **First person point of view** –the narrator is a character in the story and can only tell the reader what he thinks or feels, or what other characters tell or show him
- **Third person point of view** – the narrator is outside the story

Third person limited- the outside narrator can only see into the mind of one character

Third person omniscient -the outside character can see into the mind of all characters in the story

Conflict

Most short stories center around a conflict. **Conflict** is the struggle between opposing forces.

Types of Conflict

External Conflicts:

- Man vs. Man – character struggles with another character
- Man vs. Nature – character struggles to overcome elements of nature
- Man vs. Society – character struggles with the rules or customs of society
- Man vs. Obstacle or Fate – character struggles against uncontrollable forces of fate (poverty, bad luck, illness, etc)

Internal Conflicts:

- Man vs. Self – character struggles to overcome inner conflict (important decision, overcoming a fear, etc.)

Plot

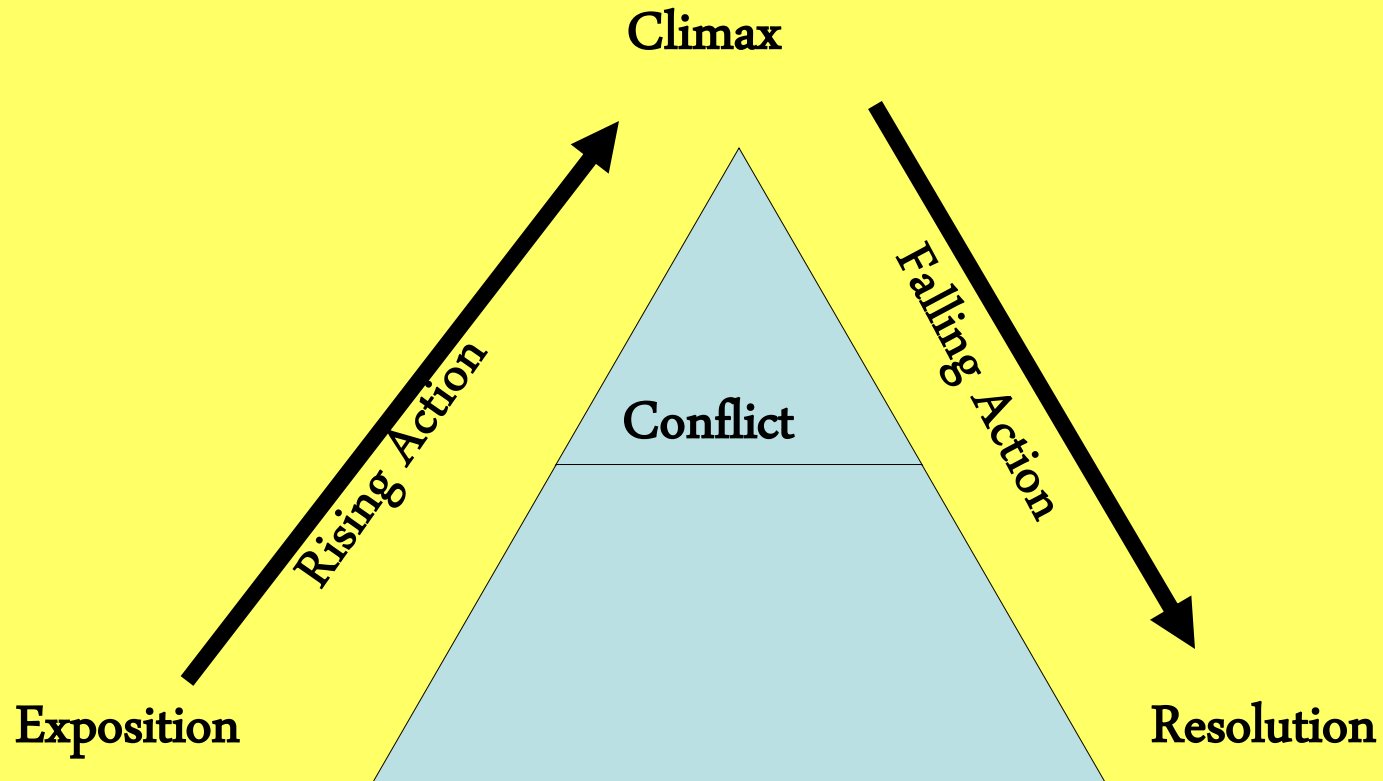
The **plot** is the sequence of events in the story.

- The plot may be told in **chronological order** (time order)
- There may be **flashbacks** sequence of events is interrupted to go back to an earlier time

The plot includes:

- Exposition** – beginning of story. The setting is described and the characters are introduced.
- Conflict** – the struggle or problem between opposing forces.
- Rising Action** – Events occur that uncover the conflict and lead up to the climax.
- Climax** – the point of highest suspense; the conflict is the greatest.
- Falling Action** –the events after the climax which close the action.
- Resolution** – part of the story in which loose ends are tied up.

PLOT DIAGRAM



Story Elements Rap



<http://www.flocabulary.com/fivethings.html>

Story Elements Rap

Check it out yo...

Setting, that's like where it's going down,
Could be the train compartment, a castle or a town,
Could be the Arctic winter - like *To Build a Fire*
The temperature's dropping, excitement is getting higher,
Setting sets the scene so the scene seems set,
Could be the Italian restaurant where we met,
Setting gives us the where and the when,
Could be modern day, the future, or way back when.

Plot, Character, Conflict, Theme,
Setting, yes these are the 5 things
That you're going to be needing
When you're reading or writing
A short story that's mad exciting x2

Plot is the action, the quest for satisfaction,
What's going down, what's going to happen.
Four men at sea in an open boat,
Rowing and hoping that they can stay afloat. The plot:
They have to make it to the beach,
But the waves are big, and the shore seems out of
reach,
Plot is a series of events... like Lemoney Snicket,
It could be crazy, wild or straight wicked.

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Knock knock, who's there? Oh, it's the **characters**,
The people in the story who carry out the action.
Characters can be pretty, tiny or clean,
Characters can be silly, whiney or mean,
Juliet is a character, and so is Romeo,
Pokemon has characters and so does Yu-gi-oh,
Characters could be dogs, lions, or hippos,
JK Rowling chose Harry Potter. "Why?" Who knows!

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Uh-uh! Put your snack back in your backpack we're not finished!

Something gone wrong! That's the **conflict** kids

A struggle in the plot, now who's on top,

Could be a fight for money, like some robbers and cops,

Could be an internal conflict - a struggle inside,

Like I don't want to tell the truth but I don't ever want to lie,

Flick something in your eye, now you're conflicted,

What created drama? The conflict did.

Plot, Character, Conflict, Theme,

Setting, yes these are the 5 things

That you're going to be needing

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A short story that's mad exciting x2

The **theme** of the story is the main idea,
The central belief or the topic that's in there,
It's usually something abstract like sacrifice,
Isolation or resurrection: we're back to life,
Like don't lie, don't practice libel,
The theme of *To Build a Fire* is survival,
Survival on your own like Fievel Moskowicz
Flocabulary's something that you HAVE TO GET...

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