



SHORT STORY ELEMENTS

Ms. Mirzo
ELA 7th Grade

WHAT IS A SHORT STORY?

A brief, imaginative narrative containing few characters, simple plot, conflict, and suspense which leads to a climax and a swift conclusion.

Can be read in one sitting

THE 4 ELEMENTS OF THE SHORT STORY

1. PLOT
2. SETTING
3. CHARACTER
4. THEME

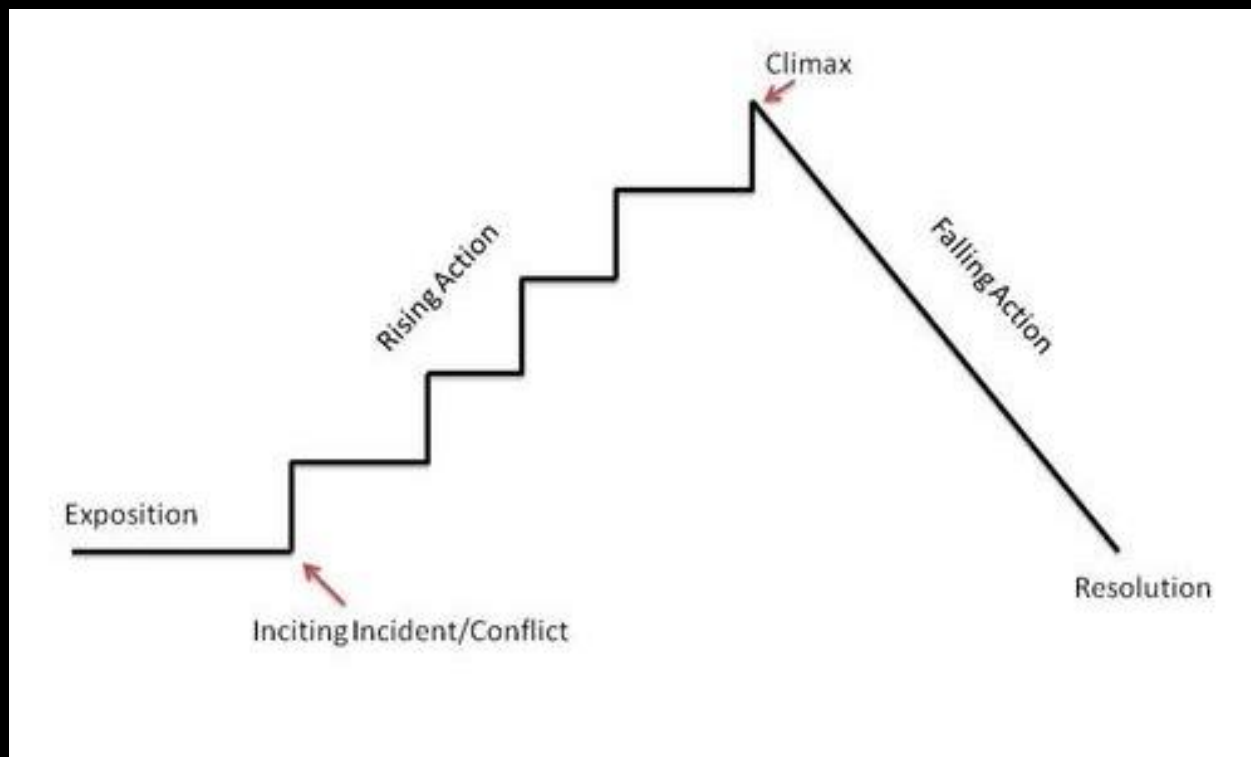
#1. PLOT

The chain of events in a story.
Consists of 6 main ingredients:

1. Introduction/Exposition
2. Inciting incident
3. Rising action
4. Climax
5. Falling Action
6. Resolution

PLOT GRAPH

An excellent way to map out a story's



INTRODUCTION

Introduces the reader to:

Setting

Basic situation

Characters involved

Narrative Hook: question or statement that
grabs the reader's attention

INCITING INCIDENT

The first major action in the story that sets the story in motion (gets the ball rolling).



RISING ACTION

Incidents which carry the plot along. It often includes the following:

- Foreshadowing
- Flashback
- Conflict
- Suspense

FORESHADOWING

A technique for hinting at events that may occur later in the plot.



FLASHBACK

The insertion of an earlier event into the time order of a narrative.



CONFLICT

It is what prevents the main character from getting what he or she wants

The plot is driven by climax and it is **THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE OF THE STORY**

There are two types of conflicts: Internal and External

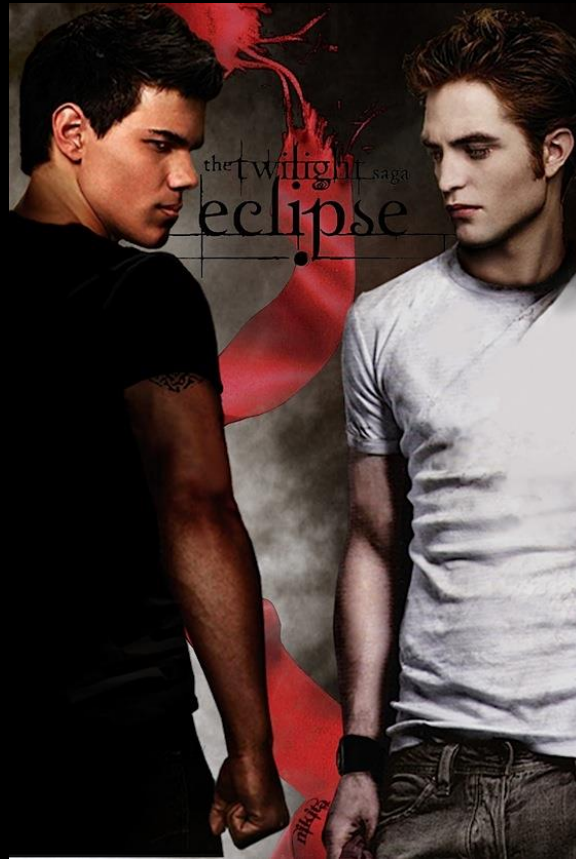


INTERNAL CONFLICT: MAN VS. SELF



EXTERNAL CONFLICT

MAN VS MAN



EXTERNAL CONFLICT: MAN VS. SOCIETY



EXTERNAL CONFLICT: MAN VS. THE ENVIRONMENT (NATURE)



SUSPENSE

The feeling of excitement and curiosity that keeps the reader turning the pages; created by making the readers wonder how the conflict will be resolved



CLIMAX



The highest point of interest in the story when the character(s) solves his/her struggles

Usually the point of highest emotion

The climax can be **SUBJECTIVE** (there may be different answers, so you must prove your choice)

FALLING ACTION

The character completes the action of his/her decision



THE RESOLUTION

The final workings of a story's conflict
All of the loose ends are tied up (usually)



Narrative Twist: a surprise ending

#2. SETTING

The time (time of day, season, present, past, future) and the location (country, planet, town, buildings, PLUS a description of the surroundings) where the action occurs

Helps to create the mood and atmosphere of the text



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ATMOSPHERE

The feeling that the setting evokes (i.e.
mysterious, happy, eerie)



MOOD

The author's emotional attitude toward the subject matter (i.e. excitement, nostalgia)

The story as a whole!

NOT the mood of the characters

#3. CHARACTERS

Any personalities who
are involved in the plot
of the story (people,
animals, fantasy
characters)

Usually less than 6 in a
short story



PROTAGONIST



Usually the “good guy”
or hero in the story

The main character that
we follow

The character that strives
to solve the conflict

ANTAGONIST



The “bad guy” or
villain in the story
Usually creates
conflict for the main
character

SECONDARY CHARACTERS

Other characters who are necessary to moving the plot along, but may not be involved with the central conflict



CHARACTER TRAITS

Physical and personality characteristics that are revealed through:

- 1. What the character does**
- 2. What the character says**
- 3. What other characters say or do about the character**
- 4. What the author states directly**
- 5. What the author infers (does not directly tell you)**

#4. THEME

The central idea about life that the story highlights; **THE MAIN IDEA.**

The message the author is conveying.

1. Determine the specific conflict
2. Decide what side of the conflict the story represents
3. How is the conflict resolved? Who wins? Who loses?

THEME

Theme is **NOT** the moral of the story

Theme is **NOT** plot

Theme **IS** the general subject matter of a work of art

Theme may contain a message

Example:

Old Man and the Sea- The struggle is more important than the outcome.

THEME

Not all short stories have a theme; some are just for entertainment or fun

