Short Story / Novel

The Elements of Fiction

There are four main parts to every work of fiction.

* Character
* Setting
* Theme
* Plot

1. **Character**

**Protagonist** – The main character. The action revolves around this character

**Antagonist** – The person or force which has a conflict with the protagonist

**Minor** – A less-important character

**Flat** character – We do not know a lot about.

**Round** character – We have a lot of information about them.

**Dynamic** Character – A character who changes in the course of the story.

**Static** Character – A character who remains the same.

**Stereotyped** character – Has qualities recognizable as being from a particular “grouping” of people.

**Foil** character – is a strong contrast to the protagonist.

***Characteristics*** can be shown by:

* What the author says about the character
* What a character says about him/herself
* What other characters say about him/her
* What the character does

1. **Setting**

* Includes **the time** of the story (year, hour etc.)
* Includes **the place** of the story (country, city, street, etc.)
* Includes **the atmosphere** of the beginning of the story (use adjectives)

1. **Theme**

Theme is the central thought or **main idea** behind the story. It is usually a reflection of some important or significant aspect of life.

1. **The Plot**

Plot is what happens in the story. It is the framework for the story.

3.

2. 4.

1. A Plot Diagram 5.
2. Introduction

* Meet the *characters*
* Learn about the *setting and atmosphere*
* Identify the *main conflict* and type
* Identify the *activating circumstances* of the story

1. Rising Action

* Events pile on events
* Conflicts intensify

1. Climax

* The turning point of the story
* (Sometimes the most interesting or exciting part of the story. You can also look at where the main conflict you identified in #1 changes or “shifts” )

1. Falling Action

* Find out how the protagonist wins or loses the conflict
* Loose ends are tied up
* The *suspens*e of the story decreases
* Can vary in length

1. Conclusion

* May state a *moral* or give an explanation
* May be a surprise
* May be an unresolved ending

**Literary Terms and Devices**

**Allusion** – A short reference to a famous person, place or event.

**Atmosphere** – The feeling or mood of the story.

**Audience** – The intended reader.

**Bias** – An unfair influence of someone’s opinion.

**Cliché** – An idea or phrase that has been used too much

**Conflict** – A clash of opposing ideas, emotions, forces or persons.

Person vs. Person

Person vs. Self

Person vs. Environment

Person vs. Supernatural

**Connotati**on- Meanings or associations suggested by that word.

**Contrast** – Placing two very different people, objects, ideas or feelings very close together.

**Denotation** – The dictionary definition of a word.

**Description** – The use of descriptors to create a vivid image or understanding.

**Emphasis** – A part that is made more significant or important.

**Flashback** – A sudden switch from present to past.

**Foreshadowing** – A hint of what is to come. It is used to create suspense.

**Genre** – writing that shares certain features (ex. Comedy, mystery, tragedy, etc.)

**Hyperbole** – A purposeful exaggeration.

**Irony** –

**Dramatic** - A difference between what the audience knows and what a character knows to be true. Ex. Romeo and Juliet

**Situational** – A difference between what happens and what would be expected to happen. Ex. Straight A student gets a failing grade.

**Verbal** – Difference between what is said and what is meant. Ex. Wow! I’m so excited about doing all this homework for Cristina’s class!

**Metaphor** – a comparison between two unlike things using “is”

**Mood** – see atmosphere

**Moral** – the intended message or lesson

**Narrator** – The person “telling” the story. It can be anybody, not always a character in the story.

**Point of View** – The perspective of how the story is told.

First Person – Uses “I”. We know what this character thinks and feels.

Limited Omniscient – Told from outside the characters, but in the perspective of one character. Uses “he” or “she” but is limited to knowing the thoughts and feelings of just this one character.

Omniscient – Tells the thoughts and emotions of more than one character.

Objective – No thoughts or emotions of any characters are provided. The “camera lens.”

**Narrator** – the character telling the story

**Personification** – Giving human qualities to inanimate objects or things.

**Sarcasm –** Saying the opposite of what you mean in order to be funny or mean.

**Satire –** Writing about something serious in a funny way in order to show its faults.

**Simile** – a comparison between two things using like or as

**Slang** – Very informal language

**Speaker** – The person who is speaking. (See narrator.)

**Suspense** – something that keeps the reader wondering what will happen next

**Symbol** – a person, object or act that suggests something deeper. Ex. A dove = peace

**Title** – Gives a hint or clue about the story

**Tone** – The writer’s attitude toward the material or reader.

**Understatement** – When less is said than is really meant.