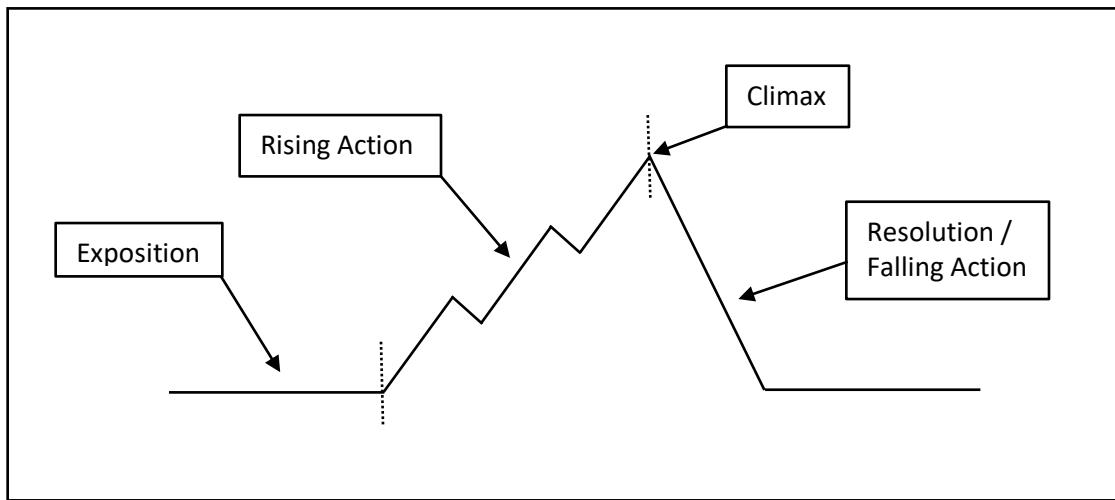


The Elements of Fiction



1. **Exposition:** This is the beginning of the story. Often it reveals:
 - * Some of the characters – *Protagonist* (good guy!) – *Antagonist* (bad guy!)
 - * The setting of the story – This is *where* and *when* the story takes place. The *when* could be the *time of day* or the *year* or a combination of both.
 - * The beginning of the plot – The plot is a series of events that form a pattern of action with a beginning, a middle, and an end. They move from one place or event to another in order to form a pattern, usually with the purpose of overcoming a conflict.
2. **Rising Action:** These are the plot events that happen on the way to the story's climax that increase the tension in the story.
3. **Climax:** This is the critical point in a story where the conflict ends. The main character is either successful or fails at what s/he has been trying to accomplish all along. Often it is the point of the most action in the story, but it doesn't have to be. When the main characters have no more tasks to accomplish, the climax has passed.
4. **Resolution (Falling Action):** The resolution or falling action are the events that occur after the climax that tie up "loose ends"; it is a tricky part of a narrative to write since the author has to decide which parts of the plot to tie up and which to leave as questions for the reader to think about (or leave for a future story). Part of the decision regarding what to tie up and what to leave open often depends on how much the author wants to satisfy the reader's need for a sense of justice or closure.

Conflict in Plot

Plots usually involve one or more **conflicts**, which are problems that need to be solved. The more rewarding plots are often built around mental, emotional, and moral conflicts.

- 1. Person vs. nature:** The main character is facing something in nature – a storm, the ocean, a blizzard, the wilderness.
- 2. Person vs. person:** The main character is fighting against one other individual. It doesn't have to be two humans. A character can be fighting a robot or a zombie or a vampire. The idea is that it's a *one on one* battle.
- 3. Person vs. society:** This is when the main character goes against accepted beliefs in society. Stories about the civil rights movement are a good example of person vs. society conflict.
- 4. Person vs. self:** In this kind of conflict, the character must overcome an internal struggle. S/he has to make a difficult decision – choose good over evil, honesty over lying, try to overcome a fear to move forward, etc.

Foreshadowing: This is when the reader is given little hints about an important future event.

Something like providing clues in a mystery novel, foreshadowing ensures that when an important event occurs, the reader thinks: "Oh, I should have seen that coming" rather than, "This doesn't fit anywhere in this piece!"

Mood: The mood is the feeling the reader gets while reading the story. The author helps to create the mood by using carefully chosen descriptive words. It can be compared to the use of music in films. Examples of mood are: hostile, optimistic, threatening, excited, bitter, defiant, etc.

Theme: The theme is a social or psychological issue like aging, violence, alienation, love, friendship, or maturity. The simplest way of defining theme is this: it is the description of the basic challenges of mankind ("the human condition").

Symbolism: In literature, a symbol is an object, event, or a character that's used to represent an abstract idea; it is something which stands for something else. The key thing to remember is that readers aren't told that something is a symbol, unlike a metaphor (the flower of my love) or a simile (my love is like a flower). A symbol just sits there inside the story... readers are simply expected to understand its symbolic existence.

white dove = peace

Santa/mistletoe = Christmas

red roses = love

wedding ring = marriage/eternal love

fire = life, hope

stars & stripes = America