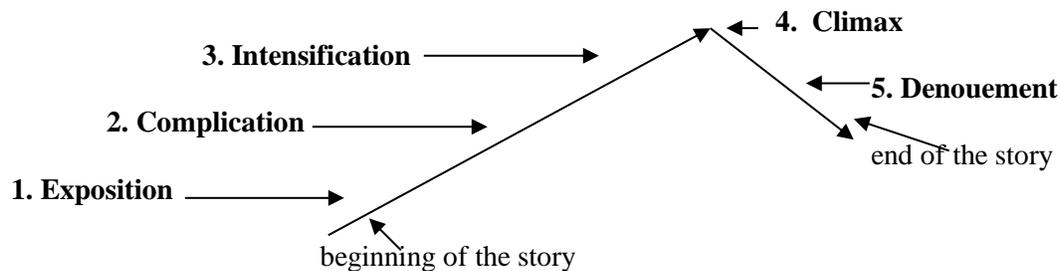


FICTION TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

PLOT

The Classical Plot Line



1. **Exposition:** In general, the setting is established and certain characters are introduced.
2. **Complication:** A problem is introduced that creates conflict.
3. **Intensification:** The problem and the conflict get worse.
4. **Climax:** The most exciting part of the plot.
5. **Denouement:** The resolution—a look at the characters and situation after the climax.

PLOT--continued

- **Protagonist**—the central character
- **Antagonists**—characters, forces, etc., that oppose the protagonist
- **Conflict**—where opposing forces meet—a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills.
- **Suspense**—the quality in a story that makes us want to read on.
- **Mystery**—an unusual set of circumstances for which readers crave an explanation.
- **Dilemma**—two choices—neither favorable.
- **Plot Manipulation** (deus ex machina)—a plot turn unjustified by the situation or characters.

CHARACTER

- **Direct Presentation**—we are told straight out what the characters are like.
- **Indirect Presentation**—we are shown what the characters are like by watching them in action and then making inferences.
- **Flat Character**—a character about which we know little—one-dimensional.
- **Round Character**—a character about which we know a great deal—multi-faceted, more fully developed.
- **Stock Character**—a character who is of a recognizable type and whose actions are predictable.
- **Static Character**—a character that does not change significantly through the action of the story.
- **Developing (Dynamic) Character**—a character that changes significantly through the action of the story.

THEME

- **Theme**—the central insight or unifying generalization about life presented in a story. Not all stories have themes. In addition, a theme is stated as a generalization about experience rather than specific to the story in which it is found.

NARRATIVE POINT OF VIEW

- **First Person Narration**—a character is the narrator.
- **Limited Omniscient Narration**—the narrator is outside of the story—**one** character's thoughts are revealed.
- **Omniscient Narration**—the narrator is outside of the story—**at least two** characters' thoughts are revealed.
- **Objective Narration**—the narrator is outside of the story—no character's thoughts are revealed. Often called “camera eye” or “fly-on-the-wall.”

SYMBOL

- **A symbol**—something that means more than what it is. It is something that represents itself plus something of a different kind. It is an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item that has a literal meaning in the story but suggests or represents other meanings as well.

IRONY

- **Verbal Irony**—when the opposite of what is said is meant. (Not to be confused with satire).
- **Dramatic Irony**—a contrast between what the character says and what the reader knows to be true.
- **Situational Irony**—when the opposite of what is expected to happen happens.