

Literary Terms



Character

- **Character** – a person in a story, poem, or play.
- Types of Characters:
 - Round- fully developed, has many different character traits
 - Flat- stereotyped, one-dimensional, few traits
 - Static – Does not change
 - Dynamic – Changes as a result of the story's events

Characterization

- How the author develops the characters, especially the main character.
- This is done through:
 - what the character does or says
 - what others say of and to the character
 - author's word choice in descriptive passages

Characterization

- Direct characterization
 - The author directly states what the character's personality is like. Example: cruel, kind
- Indirect characterization
 - Showing a character's personality through his/her actions, thoughts, feelings, words, appearance, or other character's observations or reactions

Protagonist

- Main character of the story that changes
 - (death is not a change)
 - the most important character
 - changes and grows because of experiences in the story



Antagonist

- A major character who opposes the protagonist
 - the antagonist does not change
- Types of antagonists:
 - people
 - nature
 - society



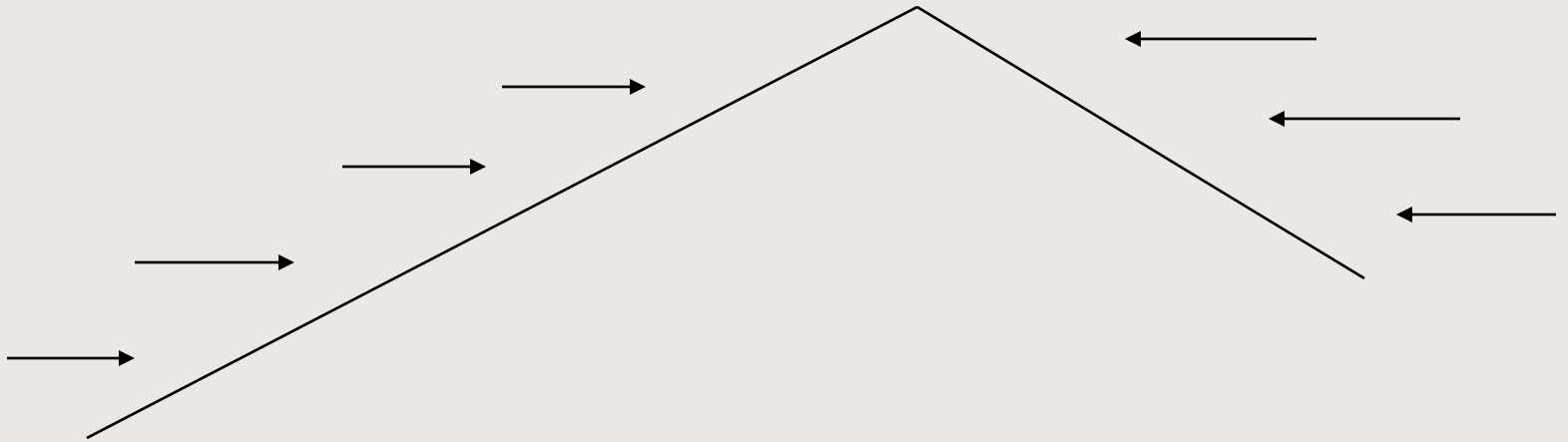
Conflict

- A struggle between two opposing forces
- Types
 - Internal – takes place in a character's own mind
 - Man vs. Him(Her)self
 - External – a character struggles against an outside force
 - Man vs. Man
 - Man vs. Nature
 - Man vs. technology, progress
 - Man vs. Society
 - Man vs. Supernatural



What is the Plot?

- Plot: Series of related events that make up a story.



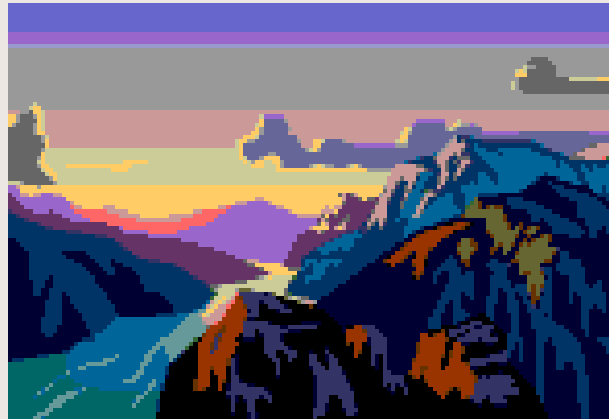
Exposition

- Section that introduces characters, the setting, and conflicts.



Setting

- The time and place of the story's action



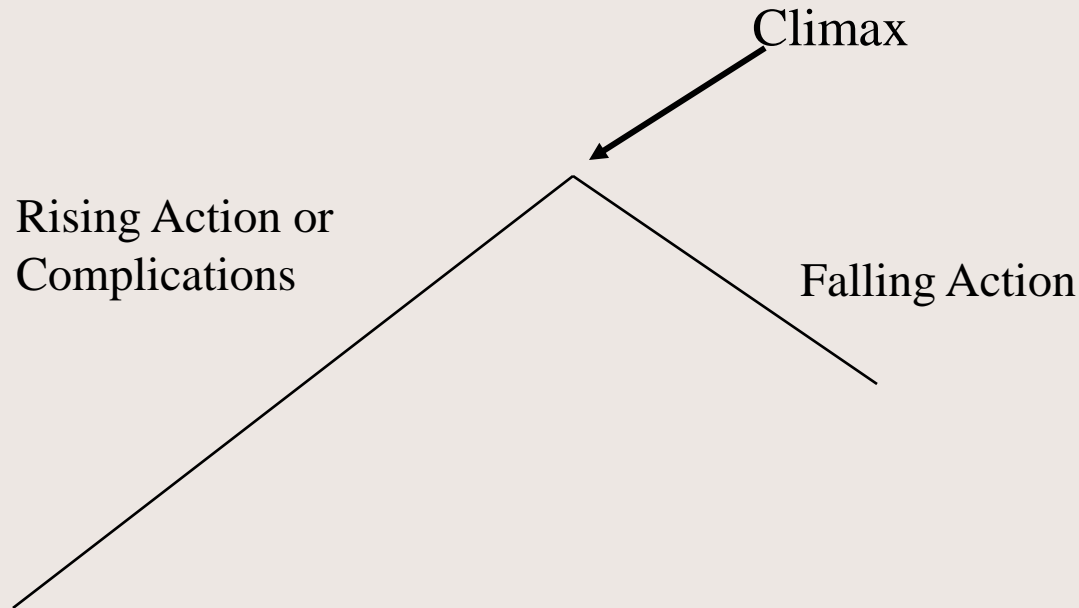
Rising Action

- Consists of a series of complications.
- These occur when the main characters take action to resolve their problems and are met with further problems:
 - Fear
 - Hostility
 - Threatening situation



Climax

- The turning point in the story: the high point of interest and suspense



Falling Action

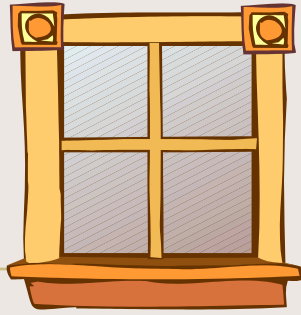
- All events following the climax or turning point in the story. These events are a result of the action taken at the climax.



Resolution

- (Denouement)
- The end of the central conflict: it shows how the situation turns out and ties up loose ends





Point of View

- Vantage point from which the writer tells the story.
 - First person- One of the characters is actually telling the story using the pronoun “I”
 - Third person- Centers on one character’s thoughts and actions.
 - Omniscient- All knowing narrator. Can center on the thoughts and actions of any and all characters.

Theme

- The central message or insight into life revealed through a literary work.
 - The “main idea” of the story



Flashback

- The present scene in the story is interrupted to flash backward and tell what happened in an earlier time.



Foreshadowing

- Clues the writer puts in the story to give the reader a hint of what is to come.



Symbol

- An object, person, or event that functions as itself, but also stands for something more than itself.
 - Example: Scales function is to weigh things, but they are also a symbol of our justice system.



Figurative Language

- Involves some imaginative comparison between two unlike things.
 - Simile – comparing two unlike things using like or as.
 - “I wandered lonely as a cloud”
 - Metaphor – comparing two unlike things (not using like or as)
 - Life is a roller coaster, it has lots of ups and downs.

Figurative Language

- Personification – Giving human qualities to non-human things.
 - “The wind howled”



Irony

- A contrast between expectation and reality



Irony

- Verbal Irony – saying one thing but meaning something completely different.
 - Calling a clumsy basketball player “Michael Jordan”
- Situational Irony – A contradiction between what we expect to happen and what really does happen
- Dramatic Irony – occurs when the reader knows something important that the characters in the story do not know.



Allusion

- Reference to a statement, person, a place, or events from:
 - Literature
 - History
 - Religion
 - Mythology
 - Politics
 - Sports



Suspense

- Uncertainty or anxiety the reader feels about what is going to happen next in a story.



Imagery

- Language that appeals to the senses.
 - Touch
 - Taste
 - Sight
 - Sound
 - Smell

Example:

Creating a picture in the
readers mind through
description



Mood and Tone

- Mood - evokes certain feelings in readers or creates an atmosphere through words and descriptions.
 - Eerie, comical, etc.
- Tone – attitude the writer takes toward the audience, a subject, or a character.
 - Tone is often conveyed through the writer's word choice and details
 - Satirical, mocking, nostalgic, jovial etc.