

English 8

Fiction Terms

Chronological Order

Chronological order is a list written in the same order in which events happen in time.

Example. Today, I went to school, I learned at school, and I returned home from school.

Climax

The climax is the moment of greatest emotional tension in a narrative, usually marking a turning point in the plot at which the rising action reverses to become the falling action. If we were looking at the plot structure as a pyramid, it would be the point at the top. It is the third part of a story's development.

Example. In *The Outsiders*, the rumble is seen as the climax of the story.

Conflict (internal, external)

The conflict is the struggle within the plot between opposing forces. The protagonist engages in the conflict with the antagonist, which may take the form of a character, society, nature, or an aspect of the protagonist's personality.

- Internal conflict is a struggle that takes place in the protagonist's mind and through which the character reaches a new understanding or dynamic change.
- External conflict is a struggle between the protagonist and another character against nature or some outside force.

Example. An example of conflict in *The Outsiders* is when Bob holds Ponyboy's head under water in the fountain.

Falling Action

The falling action is characterized by diminishing tensions and the resolution of the plot's conflicts and complications in a story. It is the fourth part of a story, after the climax.

Example. In *The Outsiders*, the falling action takes place as the characters learn of Johnny's and Dally's deaths and Ponyboy finally sits to write his composition assignment.

Flashback

A flashback is a narrated scene that marks a break in the narrative in order to inform the reader or audience member about events that took place before the opening scene of a work.

Example. In the movie *Saving Private Ryan*, the movie opens with an older man standing in a war cemetery. He then flashes back and recalls his experiences of WWII. The movie then closes with a return to the man in the cemetery.

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Foreshadowing

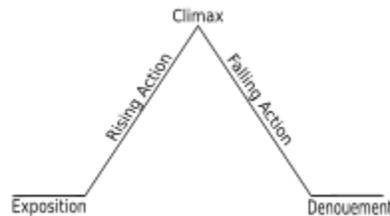
Foreshadowing is the introduction early in a story of verbal and dramatic hints that suggest what is to come later.

Example. In *The Outsiders*, Ponyboy and Johnny encounter a problem with the Socs at the movies, which foreshadows the fight and killing of Bob a little later in the novel.

Plot

Plot is an author's selection and arrangement of incidents in a story to shape the action and give the story a particular focus. Discussions of plot include not just what happens, but also how and why things happen the way they do. Stories that are written in a pyramidal pattern divide the plot into five essential parts: Exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution (also called denouement).

Example.



Exposition

The purpose of exposition is to provide some background and inform the readers about the plot, character, setting, and theme of the essay/story or motion picture.

Example. In *The Outsiders*, we are introduced to the main characters and the Greasers versus Socs rivalry.

Resolution

Resolution (also known as the denouement) is the conclusion of a plot's conflicts and complications. The resolution consists of events between the falling action and the actual ending. Conflicts are resolved, creating normality for the characters, and a sense of release of tension and anxiety for the reader.

Example: In the final scene of Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It*, couples marry, an evildoer repents, two disguised characters are revealed for all to see, and a ruler is restored to power.

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Rising action

The rising action is the part of the story where a complication creates some sort of conflict for the protagonist. This is after the characters and setting have been introduced in the exposition. It is the second part of the pyramid story structure.

Example. In *The Outsiders*, the rising action takes place when Johnny kills Bob in self-defense.

Setting

The setting is the physical and social context in which the action of a story occurs. The major elements of setting are the time, the place, and the social environment that frames the characters. Setting can also be used to evoke a mood or atmosphere that will prepare the reader for what is to come. Sometimes, writers choose a particular setting because of traditional associations with that setting that are closely related to the action of a story.

Example. Stories filled with adventure or romance often take place in exotic locales.

Suspense

The anxious anticipation of a reader or an audience as to the outcome of a story, especially concerning the character or characters with whom sympathetic attachments are formed. Suspense helps to secure and sustain the interest of the reader or audience throughout a work.

Example. In *The Outsiders*, the description given of Ponyboy's head being repeatedly plunged into the fountain builds suspense, which leads to the death of Bob.

The above definitions constitute the terms related to fiction that are examinable in English 8.

These definitions were gathered from public domain content at wikipedia.org, dictionary.com, for students in the Saint Thomas Aquinas High School English Department.

Fiction is a literary work based on the imagination and not necessarily on fact. The terms on this list apply mostly to the study of short stories and novels, but could also be used in connection to non-fiction, biography, narrative poetry, and drama.