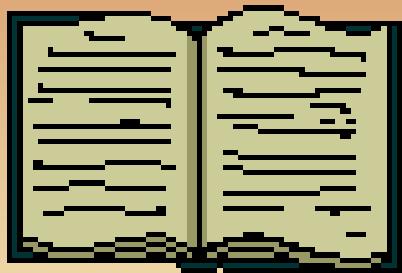


The Elements of Fiction

Elements of Fiction: The What?



- Setting
- Plot
- Character
- Methods of Characterization
- Conflict
- Point of View
- Theme
- Symbolism
- Other

Setting:

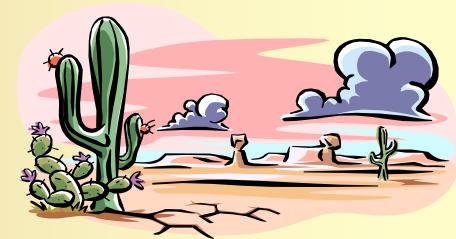
The locale and time of a story that creates mood and atmosphere. Can be used to tell the reader about



The Catcher in the Rye: New York, 1940s



Lord of the Flies:
deserted island, the future.



The Bean Trees:
Arizona/Oklahoma
1980s.

Setting:

Can be used to show:



Geographic location



*A specific place,
building, city, etc.*



*A time period During
WWII, 1865*



*Socioeconomic
characteristics of a
location – wealthy
suburbs, poverty-
stricken urban area.*

Setting:

The place and time in which a story's action takes place; also, in a broader sense, the culture and the ways of life of the characters and the shared beliefs and assumptions that guide their lives.



“...it was so quiet and lonesome out, even though it was Saturday night. I didn’t see hardly anybody on the street. Now and then you just saw a man and a girl crossing the street with their arms around each other’s waists and all, or a bunch of hoodlumy-looking guys and their dates, all of them laughing like hyenas at something you could bet wasn’t funny. New York’s terrible when somebody laughs on the street very late at night. You can hear it for miles. It makes you feel so lonesome and depressed.”

The Catcher in the Rye (81)

Setting:

in some works of fiction action is so closely related to setting that the plot is directed by it.

“The new man stands, looking a minute, to get the set-up of the day room. One side of the room younger patients, known as Acutes because the doctors figure them still sick enough to be fixed, practice arm wrestling and card tricks...Across the room from the Acutes are the culls of the Combine’s product, the Chronics. Not in the hospital, these to get fixed, but just to keep them from walking around the street giving the product a bad name.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (19)



Setting:

can establish the atmosphere of a work.



“During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country.”

“The Fall of the House of Usher” by
Edgar Allan Poe

Plot



The literary element that describes the the structure of the story. It shows the arrangement of the events within the story

Plot Structure



Climax: The turning point. The most intense moment (either mentally or in action).

Rising Action: the series of conflicts and crisis in the story that lead to the climax.

Falling Action: all of the action which follows the Climax.

Exposition: The start of the story. The way things are before the action starts.

Resolution: The conclusion, the tying together of all of the threads.

Elements of Plot



- Conflict : a character or problem with which the protagonist must contend . Without conflict, there is no plot.

- *Interpersonal Conflict:*



- Man VS Man

- Man VS Nature

- Man VS Society



- *Internal Conflict:*

- Man VS Himself



Character

A participant (people , animals, things, etc. presented as people) that appear in a literary work.

Types of Characters:

- **Protagonist:** the central character of a story

Round are convincing and true to life. Have many different and sometime contradictory personality traits.

Dynamic: convincing, undergo some type of change in story, often because of something that happens to them.

- **Antagonist:** the character that stands in opposition to the protagonist

Flat Character: stereotyped, shallow, often symbolic.

Static Character :does not change in the course of the story.

Methods of Characterization

1. Direct Characterization: The author develops the personality of the character by direct statement
 - “he was an old man..” (*The Old Man and the Sea*)
2. Indirect Characterization - Revealing the characters thoughts through
 - Words
 - Actions
 - Actions and Reaction of other Characters
 - Physical appearance
 - Own thoughts



Point of View: Who is telling the story?



Omniscient Point of View: The author is telling the story.

“The boy with fair hair lowered himself down the last few feet of rock and began to pick his way toward the lagoon. Though he had taken off his school sweater and trailed it now from one hand, his grey shirt stuck to him and his hair was plastered to his forehead. All around him the long scar smashed into the jungle was a bath of heat.”

The Lord of the Flies - William Golding

Point of View

Limited Omniscient: Third person,
told from the viewpoint of a character
in the story.



“In his black suit he stood in the dark glass where the lilies leaned so palely from their waisted cutglass vase. He looked down at the guttered candlestub. He pressed his thumbprint in the warm wax pooled on the oak veneer. Lastly he looked at the face so caved and drawn among the folds of funeral cloth, the yellowed moustache, the eyelids paper thin. That was not sleeping. That was not sleeping.

All the Pretty Horses - Cormac McCarthy

Point of View

First Person: Story is told from point of view of one of the characters who uses the first person pronoun “I.”



“I have been afraid of putting air in a tire ever since I saw a tractor tire blow up and throw Newt Hardbine’s father over the top of the Standard Oil sign. I’m not lying. He got stuck up there. About nineteen people congregated during the time it took for Norman Strick to walk up to the Courthouse and blow the whistle for the volunteer fire department.”

The Bean Trees - Barbara Kingsolver

Theme



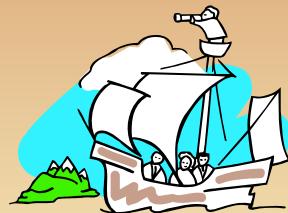
The **theme** of a piece of fiction is its central idea. It usually contains some insight into the human condition.

- In most short stories, the theme can be expressed in a single sentence.
 - In longer works of fiction, the central theme is often accompanied by a number of lesser, related themes, or there may be two or more central themes.
 - Themes should be stated as a generalization.
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Symbolism

A person, event or thing that represents an idea, quality, or concept larger than itself.

A Journey can symbolize life.



Water may represent a new beginning.



Black can represent evil or death.



A lion could be a symbol of courage.



Figurative Language:

Any expression that stretches the meaning of words beyond their literal meaning.

Metaphor: a figure of speech in which a comparison is implied by analogy but is not stated; the comparison of two unlike things without the use of “like” or “as” (e. g. “the night would be my eyelids” – a comparison between night and eyelids, page 2)

Simile: a comparison of two unlike things using “like” or “as” (e. g. “...moonless Caribbean night... It’s like moist black velvet” – comparison of two unlike things, night and moist black velvet with the use of “like,” page 1)

Personification: a metaphorical figure of speech in which animals, ideas, things, etc. are represented as having human qualities (e. g. “...a sharp hunger was picking at him” – hunger as something that could pick, page 3)

Figurative Language:

Any expression that stretches the meaning of words beyond their literal meaning.

Allusion: an implicit reference to an historical, literary, or biblical character, event, or element (e. g. “I have played the fox, now I must play the cat of the fable.” – a reference to two of Aesop’s fables, page 12)

Irony: a contradiction or incongruity between appearance or expectation and reality; a figure of speech in which the literal meaning of the words is the opposite of their intended meaning; an incongruity or discrepancy between an anticipated and realized outcome (e. g. “We do our best to preserve the amenities of civilization here.” Zaroff when he is hunting men for sport – is this civilized? page 5)

Literary Devices



Suspense: the sustained interest in a narrative created by delaying the resolution of the conflict (e.g. the author begins building suspense with mysterious references to Ship-Trap Island that has the crew very nervous. Page 1)

Foreshadowing: any clue or hint of future events in a narrative (e. g. “the place [Ship-Trap Island] has a reputation—a bad one.” This will be the place where Rainsford’s life will be threatened. page 1)



Other Fiction Elements

- **Allegory** - The representation of abstract ideas or principles by characters, figures, or events in narrative, dramatic, or pictorial form
 - **Atmosphere:** the prevailing emotional and mental climate of a piece of fiction.
 - **Cliché** - stereotyped expression; a sentence or phrase, usually expressing a popular or common thought or idea, that has lost originality, ingenuity, and impact by long overuse, as sadder but wiser, or strong as an ox.
 - **Dialogue:** the reproduction of a conversation between two of the characters.
-

Other Elements Continued

- **Euphemism** the substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh, or blunt. The expression so substituted: “To pass away” is a euphemism for “to die.”
- **Flashback:** starts in the present and then goes back to the past.
- **Hyperbole** -intentional exaggeration used as a figure of speech for comedy or emphasis.
- **Idiom** –an expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent elements, as kick the bucket or hang one's head,
- **Mood** - the feeling that a work of literature evokes

Other Elements Continued

- **Oxymoron** - a phrase comprised of seemingly contradictory terms: "bittersweet," "jumbo shrimp," and "act naturally" are a few examples.
- **Satire** a form of literature which points out human vice or folly by way of ridicule, sarcasm, irony and other devices. It is usually intended to bring about a change in the behavior ridiculed.

Examples: George Orwell's fable, "Animal Farm," is an allegorical satire of the Russian Revolution.

Other Elements Continued

- **Pun** - the humorous use of a word or phrase so as to emphasize or suggest its different meanings or applications, or the use of words that are alike or nearly alike in sound but different in meaning; a play on words.

- **EXAMPLEs :**

- *He ate so much over the holidays that he decided to quit cold turkey.*
- *To write with a broken pencil is pointless.*

- **Paradigms:**

Examples

- *Coming-of-age or rite-of-passage story*
 - *Heroic quest for love, truth, fame, fortune, etc.*
 - *Character's disillusionment or fall from innocence*
 - *Selling one's soul to the devil*
 - *About storytelling or about becoming a writer or an artist*
 - *Search for identity*
-

Other Elements Continued

- **Scene:** a piece of the story showing the action of one event
 - **Structure:** the way time moves through a novel.
 - **Style:** The habitual manner of expression of an author. An author's style is the product of choices, made consciously or unconsciously, about elements such as vocabulary, organization, diction, imagery, pace, and even certain recurring themes or subjects.
 - **subplot:** a plot that is part of or subordinate to another plot
 - **suspension of disbelief:** the reader's temporary acceptance of story elements as believable, usually necessary for enjoyment
 - **Tone:** the tone of “voice” that the author uses
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Other Elements Continued

ALLITERATION: the repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of words.

• ALLITERATION IN PROSE

Alliteration is fun to say and enjoyable to hear. Without knowing it, you probably use alliteration to call attention to certain words. Many familiar phrases and expressions use alliteration. These include "down in the dumps," "hale and hearty," and "turn the tables." Tongue twisters rely on alliteration.: "rubber baby buggy bumpers. Many sayings such as these use alliteration:

- *He who laughs last laughs first.*
- *Time and tide wait for no man.*

When writers want to emphasize certain words, they may use alliteration. Notice the ideas that are emphasized by alliteration in these examples.

- *The deep churned. Something had happened down in the dim, foggy-green depths.*
Paul Annixter, "Battle in the Depths"
- *Touch each object you want to touch as if tomorrow your tactile sense would fail.*
Helen Keller, "The Seeing See Little"
- *There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing.*
Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

ALLITERATION IN POETRY

Alliteration is one of the poet's most important sound techniques. It makes particular words stand out. It also connects the words to be emphasized. Look for the repeated consonant sounds in this poem:

*Then up and spake an old sailor,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane."
~Henry W. Longfellow, "The Wreck of Hesperus"*