

English 10 Short Story Terms



SETTING: The background against which the action takes place. Setting includes:

1. **Geographical location** - Maple Ridge, Canada, The North Pole
2. **Time** - century, year, season, time of day
3. **Mood or Atmosphere** - the emotional colouring of the story (ex. haunting, sad, lonely, spooky, peaceful, hateful).
4. **Social Setting** - this includes issues in society that the characters might be struggling with family life. or issues like war, racism, or political problems.

PLOT: Plot is the order of events in the story. The plot action of the story builds up to a climax and then falls to a conclusion or resolution of the conflict.

- A) **Introduction** - catches the reader's interest; introduces the setting, the characters, and the mood.
- B) **Inciting Incident** - the conflict is introduced
- C) **Rising Action** - the conflict develops or becomes increasingly complicated
- D) **Climax** - the point of the highest interest, tension, and emotion
- E) **Falling Action** - the "let down" or decline of events that lead to the conclusion
- F) **Conclusion** - explains what happens in the end. It is relatively short and believable

DÉNOUEMENT: a French term to describe the "unknotting" of the plot or conflict following a climax.

FORESHADOWING: This is when the author presents the reader with a "sign" or "hint" of what is to happen later in the story. Foreshadowing prepares the reader for the climax, the resolution and for any possible changes in the character.

FLASHBACK: when the story shifts from present to past, usually done in order to illustrate an important point or reveal a change in character.

DIRECT PRESENTATION: The author (or a character in the story) tells us straight out what a character is like.

INDIRECT PRESENTATION: The author *shows* what the characters are like; we determine what they are like through their actions or words.

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POINT OF VIEW: The perspective from which the story is told/the person who tells the story, or through whose eyes the events are "seen" (First person = "I", Third person = he, she, it, they).

1. **First Person:** When one of the characters tells the story from his/her perspective. The pronoun "I" is used.
2. **Omniscient:** This point of view allows the narrator to relate the thoughts and feelings of all the characters in the story. (Uses he/she to tell the story).
3. **Limited Omniscient:** This point of view allows the narrator to relate the thoughts and feelings of only one character in the story. (Uses he/she).
4. **Objective:** In this point of view, the author becomes a roaming video camera that can record only what is seen and heard. He/she cannot enter into the character's mind. Ex. He quickly darted behind a tree. A young girl came around the corner singing softly to herself when suddenly the boy jumped out and yelled, "Boo!" - we don't know the characters' thoughts or feelings, we just see how they behave.

CHARACTER:

When describing a character remember the following: what do they look like? What are their personality traits? (Are they strong, weak, messy, clumsy, easy-going?) What are their behaviours? (How do they behave towards others?) What are their mental/emotional characteristics (how does the character think/feel?).

Characterization: The method of presenting the special qualities or features of a character.

The **Protagonist** is the main character in the story

The **Antagonist** competes against/opposes the protagonist (the "bad guy").

Character Foil: a character who is the opposite of another. One, that by contrast, underscores or enhances the distinctive characteristics of another.

CHARACTER TYPES:

1. **ROUND** character: a well-developed, complex (3 dimensional) character.
2. **FLAT** character: has only one dimension. We see only one side of this character's personality, and therefore, do not learn very much about the character.
3. **STATIC** character: does not undergo any significant changes throughout the story. The opinions, beliefs, attitudes, actions, or behaviours of a static character remain much the same throughout.
4. **DYNAMIC** or **DEVELOPING** character: undergoes a permanent change resulting from the conflict he/she is involved in. The change can be for better or worse.

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CONFLICT: It is the heart of plot. Without the tension provided by the conflict, you wouldn't have a story. The conflict is the struggle between opposing characters or forces, usually the protagonist versus someone or something else.

The four main conflicts are:

1. **Character vs. Character** - when two characters are in conflict with one another.
The conflict may be physical, emotional, or psychological. Ex: two women are in love with the same man, a husband and wife argue over their living conditions.
2. **Character vs. Self** - when the character experiences an emotional conflict, such as, trying to make a decision or trying to make sense of some event.
3. **Character vs. Society** - the character may be in conflict with society. For example, an environmentalist fights to preserve a wilderness area that most residents of the nearby area would like to see opened for development.
4. **Character vs. Nature/the environment** - when the character struggles against natural forces - a hurricane, a snowstorm, a flood.

THEME: *All stories, poems, plays, and novels have a theme.*

The theme is the central idea of the story/the author's message to the reader. When trying to determine the theme, think about the conflict and the lessons the characters have learned. This is what the author wants the reader to understand about life.

SYMBOLISM: The use of symbols to express ideas; attributing symbolic meanings or significance to objects, events or relationships. **SYMBOL:** a mark or sign that has special meaning. Ex: the cross symbolizes Christianity and a dove symbolizes peace.

IRONY: Using words to express the exact opposite of their actual meaning. Or circumstances that have a result opposite of what is expected.

There are 3 types: **Verbal** (the opposite of what is said is meant), **Dramatic** (the audience/reader knows more than the other characters. For example, we know one character is evil, whereas the others trust him), and **Situational** (the opposite of what one expects happens in a situation).

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