

Short Story Elements & Other Literary Terms

Plot — The sequence of events in a story

Exposition — An author's introduction to the characters, setting, and situation at the beginning of the story

Narrative Hook — The point in a story or novel at which the author catches the reader's attention by presenting an interesting problem or situation

Rising Action — The part of the plot that adds complication to the plot's problems and increases reader interest

Climax — The point of greatest emotional intensity, interest, or suspense in a story. It is usually the point at which the protagonist either succeeds or fails

Falling Action — The action that follows the climax

Resolution — The part of a plot that concludes the falling action by revealing or suggesting the outcome of the conflict

Conflict — The struggle between two opposing forces

External Conflict — A character struggles against some outside force

Internal Conflict — A struggle within the mind of a character who is torn between opposing feelings or goals

Antagonist — The character or force that opposes the protagonist in the story

Protagonist — The central character in a story, the one upon whom the action centers

Setting — The time and place in which a story happens