

ADVANCED PLACEMENT ENGLISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION

ELEMENTS OF FICTION

FUTURE SUCCESS NO-BRAINER

- If you already know the material included in a lecture — do yourself a favor and refrain from writing it down.
- If you know the material, but are unsure of whether or not you will remember it for a test — write it down.
- If you do not recognize the material at all — WRITE IT DOWN!!!

FICTION

- Fiction refers to any work of narrative, prose, or verse that is wholly or in part a work of the imagination.
- Examples: folklore, fairy tales, short stories, epics, plays, and novels.



MIMESIS

- In *Poetics*, Aristotle refers to the process of mimesis (or imitation).
- One of his contentions is that poetry imitates life. This is also true of fiction.
- However; when it comes to fiction literature we are discussing a reconstruction, or representation of life.



LITERARY ELEMENTS

PLOT

- Aristotle — Plot is the arrangement of incidents to create an effect.
- Most plots have a beginning, a middle, and an end; not necessarily in that order, and **conflict**.
 - : Can be external (human VS human or human VS environment) OR internal (human VS self)

EXPOSITION

- Basic background for the story.
- Author sets the time and place, introduces characters, and establishes the basic situation and conflict, or the potential for conflict.

COMPLICATION

- The complication (rising action) develops and intensifies the conflict.

CRISIS

- The moment of greatest conflict.
- This is the turning point.
- Leads to the resolution.

FALLING ACTION

- The action after the crisis in which the conflict moves toward resolution.

RESOLUTION

- Also referred to as the denouement, or conclusion.
- Outcome of the plot and the conflict.

SHORT FICTION & THE FIVE STAGES OF PLOT

- Usually, these five stages are present in short fiction.
- In novels, the action may repeat many times throughout the course of the work.
- In general, older, more traditional works use this order of plot.
- Some modern works do not.
 - **In medias res**
 - Author may deliberately refuse to employ a resolution and leave the action open-ended.

ORDER OF PLOT

- Usually chronological
- May begin at the beginning, the middle, or end, and work backwards.
- If it begins **in medias res**, the literary device of **flashback** is used to introduce information we would not get otherwise.

CHARACTER

- Refers to any individual within a story.
 - **Protagonist:** central character
 - **Antagonist:** character with whom the protagonist is in conflict with

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- **Flat/Static characters**
 - One type, one characteristic, stereotypes, or caricature
- **Round/Dynamic characters**
 - Multidimensional characters with the capacity to grow or change

METHODS OF CHARACTERIZATION

- **Direct Characterization** Methods
 - Names of characters
 - Appearance of character
 - Characterization by the author

METHODS OF CHARACTERIZATION

- **Indirect Characterization** Methods
 - Characterization through dialogue
 - Characterization through action

SETTING

- Essentially where and when the action takes place.

- **Functions:**

1. Background

2. As an antagonist

3. For atmosphere

4. Means of revealing character

5. Means of reinforcing the theme

6. Time of day/historical time to make a point

POINT OF VIEW

- **Narrative Voice:** speaker of the story; the one who tells. The speaker and the author are *ALWAYS* two separate entities.
- **Point of View:** the method of narration that determines the position or angle of vision from which the story is told.

TYPES OF POINT OF VIEW

Participant Narrator:

- Writes in the first person ("I")
- Can be either a major or minor character.

TYPES OF POINT OF VIEW

Nonparticipant Narrator:

- Writes in the third person ("he," "she")
- Can possess different levels of knowledge about characters
- **All-knowing** or **omniscient** (sees into any and all characters)
- **Limited omniscience** (sees into one character)
- **Objective** (does not see into any characters, reports events from outside)

TYPES OF POINT OF VIEW

Innocent Narrator

- Also known as the **naïve narrator**.
- A character who fails to understand all the implications of the story.
- **Unreliable Narrator**
 - The point of view is that of a person who we perceive, is deceptive, self-deceptive, deluded, or deranged.

TYPES OF POINT OF VIEW

Stream of consciousness

- Phrase coined by psychologist William James to describe the procession of thoughts passing through the mind.
- In fiction: the presentation of thoughts and sense impressions in a lifelike fashion — not in a sequence arranged by logic, but mingled randomly.

THEME

- The central, overriding statement about life that unifies and controls the work.
- The author's message in writing.
- Tend to be abstract:
 - The unfailing corruption of power
 - The unfailing power of love
 - The fear of death or judgment
 - The importance of identity

SYMBOL

- Something that stands for something else because of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance.
- A visible sign of the invisible.

TYPES OF SYMBOLS

- Traditional
 - Accepted associations
 - Common property of a culture
 - Widely accepted as universal
- Original
 - Derive meaning from the author
 - Highly original to the author
 - Can become traditional, but for the most part are largely confined to the context of the work

USE OF SYMBOLS

- **Setting**

- May stand for something more than the geographical or historical element

- **Plot**

- An event may be symbolic of something else

- **Character and Symbol**

- A character can stand for something through the use of names
- Objects characters use may also function as symbols

ALLEGORY

- A type of literature in which the characters and frequently the setting and events represent abstractions such as ideas, qualities, or events.
- Frequently moral, religious, or political.
- Usually assigns a symbol to a character or event and uses it consistently.