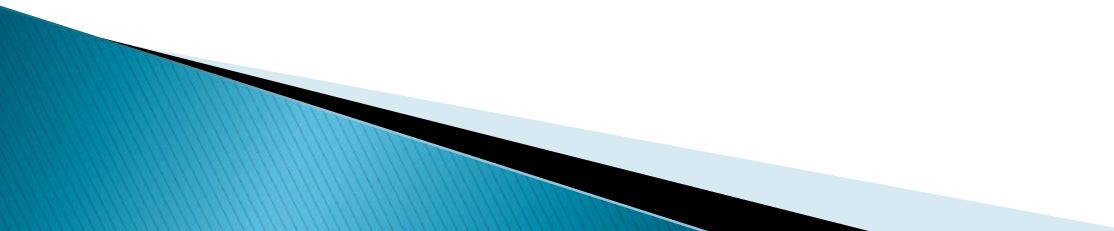


What is Fiction?

Fiction is writing that comes from the author's imagination. It is intended mainly to **entertain** or to **provide a new concept**. More specifically, fiction is an imaginative form of narrative.

Although the word *fiction* is derived from the Latin *fictum*, "**to form, create**", works of fiction need not be entirely imaginary and may include real people, places, and events. Fiction may be **written** or **oral** or may be presented as a **film** or in **theater** or on **radio** or **television**.



- ▶ Why do people read **Fiction**?

- 1 – Enjoyment


- 2 – Understanding

- ▶ Fiction is nearly divided into:

- 1 – **Commercial Fiction**: written for a wide popular use. E.g. sympathetic hero faced with obstacles that he finally overcomes to achieve his goal.

- 2 – **Quality Fiction**: written with a more serious artistic intent – more original – sometimes experimental and seeks to be interpretive.



- ▶ Fiction may be classified into two broad categories:
 - 1 – Literature of escape
 - 2 – Literature of interpretation
 - ▶ **Escape Literature**: is written **purely for entertainment** – to help us pass the time enjoyably.
 - Takes us away from the real world – enables us temporarily to forget our troubles
 - **Target**: only pleasure
 - Provides a surface appearance of everyday realities
 - Escape writers are like inventors who create a plan for our entertainment.
 - ▶ Dangers of **escape literature**:
 - 1 – It may leave us with superficial attitudes toward life.
 - 2 – It may distort our view of reality and give us false ideas and false expectations.
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- ▶ **Interpretative Literature**: is written to **broaden, deepen, and sharpen** our **awareness of life**.
 - Takes us through the imagination, deeper into the real world – **enables us to understand our troubles**.
 - **Target**: pleasure and understanding
 - Illuminates some aspect of human life or behavior
 - Interpretative writers are discoverers: they take us out into the midst of life.

► **Readers of Fiction** are divided into:

1 – **Mature Readers**: take deeper pleasure in fiction that deals significantly with life.

2 – **Immature Readers**: seek only escape. They have certain expectations:

1 – A sympathetic hero/heroine (character)

2 – A plot in which something exciting is always happening and in which there is a strong element of suspense

3 – A happy ending that sends the reader away undisturbed and optimistic about the world

4 – A theme that confirms the reader's already-held opinions of the world.



► Types of Fiction:

1– **Short story**: (at least 2,000 words but under 7,500 words. (5–25 pages)

2– **Novella**: A work of at least 17,500 words but under 50,000 words. (60–170 pages)

3– **Novel**: A work of 50,000 words or more. (about 170+ pages)

► Elements of Fiction:

1– Plot

2– Setting

3– Character

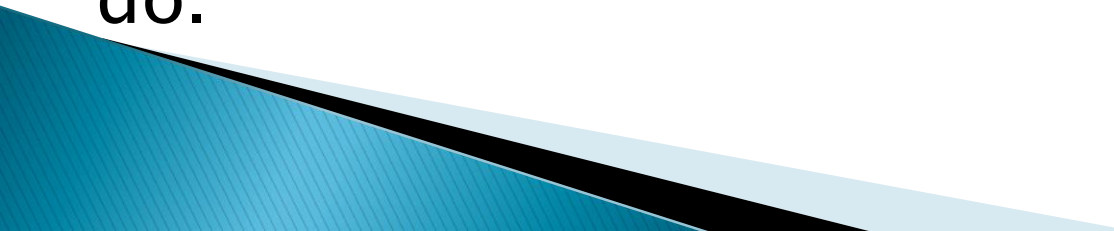
4– Point of view / narrator

5– Theme

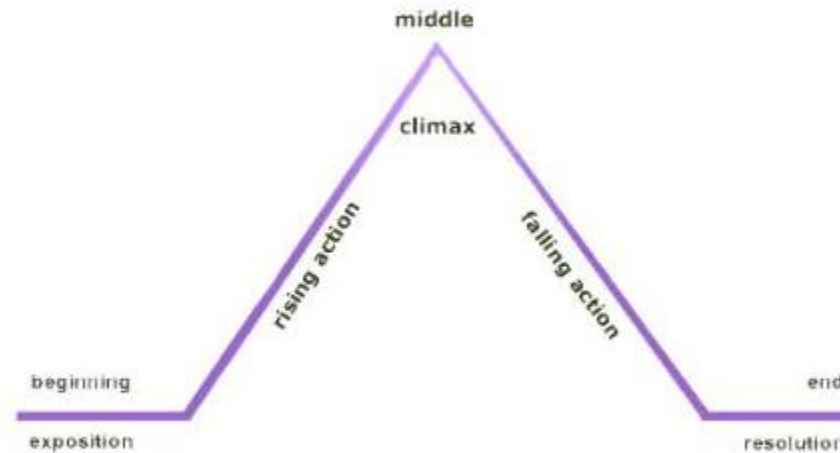
6– Symbol



Plot

- ▶ **Plot** is the **sequence** of related **events** or **actions** of a story which is presented in a **significant order** to give the story a particular focus.
 - Like a map is to a journey, so is a plot to a story.
 - ▶ Also known as the **storyline**, the plot includes what characters say or think; what they do; however, it does not analyze what happens.
 - ▶ Discussions of plot include not just what happens, but also how and why things happen the way they do.
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Plot



Plot is the literary element that describes the structure of a story. It shows arrangement of events and actions within a story.

Plot Components

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 situation before the action starts

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

Elements of Storyline/Plot

- ▶ **Exposition**: The start of the story. The way things are before the action starts.
 - ▶ **Rising Action**: The series of **conflicts** and crisis in the story that lead to the climax.
 - ▶ **Climax**: The turning point. The most intense moment (either mentally or in action).
 - ▶ **Falling Action**: All of the action which follows the Climax.
 - ▶ **Resolution**: Conclusion or ending of the story.
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- ▶ **Conflict**: a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills.

There are **four types** of conflicts:

- 1 – Person against person
- 2 – Person against society
- 3 – Person against environment
- 4 – Person against himself

- ▶ **Characteristics** of Plot:

- 1 – **Artistic unity**: no irrelevant details.
- 2 – **Plot manipulation**: twist or unjustified turn.

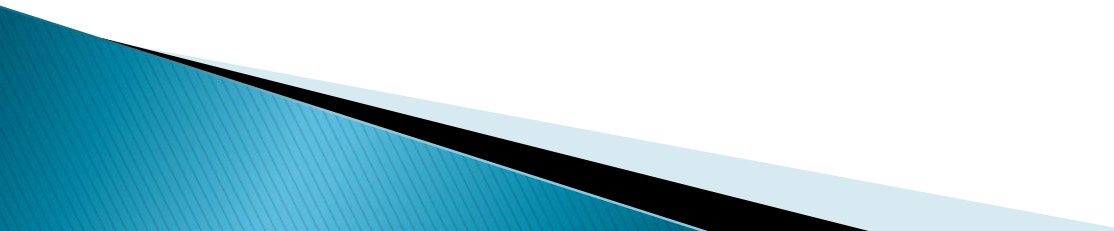
► Endings of a Plot:

- 1 – **Happy Ending**: Everything ends well for the protagonist – often used in **commercial fiction**.
- 2 – **Unhappy Ending**: Most instances in life do not have pleasant ends, so **literary fiction** that tries to imitate life is more apt to have an unhappy conclusion. These endings force the reader to contemplate the complexities of life.
- 3 – **Indeterminate Ending**: No definitive ending is reached. This leaves the reader to ponder the many issues raised through the story without being given a clear solution. (Open-ending)

Setting

Setting is the time, place, and period in which the action (plot) takes place. It can establish the atmosphere of a work by enacting the character's mood.

Settings can bring out the significance of actions. They can match characters' mood and indicate a new stage in the movement of the plot. Settings also indicate the characters' situations and show authors' outlook.



Character

- ▶ A **character** is a participant in the story and is usually a person, but may be any personal identity, or thing whose existence originates from a fictional work or performance. The people (animals, things, etc. presented as people) appearing in a literary work.
- ▶ **Types of Characters:**
 - 1– **Round Character:** convincing, true to life.
 - 2– **Flat Character:** stereotyped, shallow, often symbolic.
 - 3– **Dynamic Character:** undergoes some type of change whether in personality, outlook, or character in the story. (Developing character)
 - 4– **Static Character:** does not change in the course of the story.

► **Characters** are divided into:

1– **Protagonist**: the central character of the story and therefore responsible for achieving the story's objective. (main character)

2– **Antagonist**: the character that stands in opposition to the protagonist. (villain)

3– **Supporting character**: A character that plays a part in the plot, but is not major

4– **Minor character**: a character playing a very minor part in the story.

► **Methods of Characterization:**

1 – **Direct Characterization:** Authors **tell** us directly by exposition or analysis, what the characters are like, or have someone else in the story tell us what they are like.

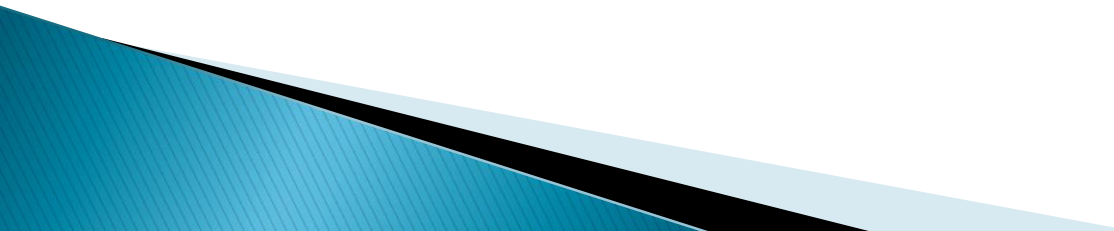
2 – **Indirect Characterization:** Authors **show** us the characters through:

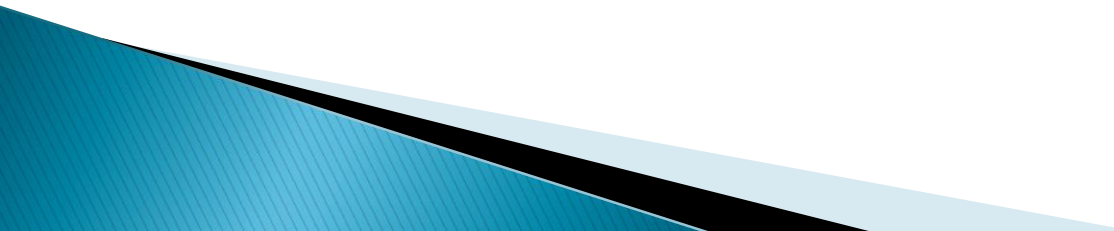
- their thoughts, words, and actions
- their physical appearance
- the comments of other characters

Point of View / Narrator

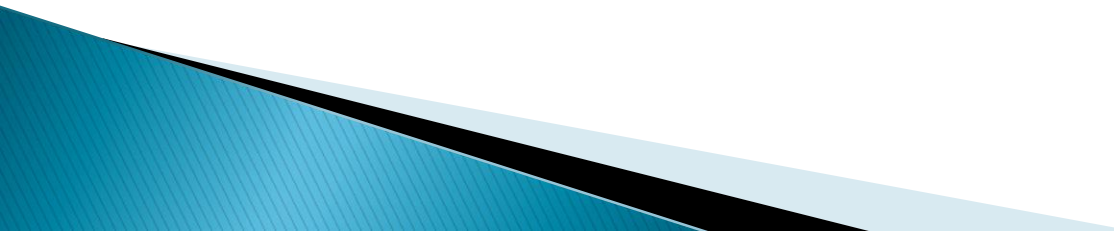
- ▶ **Point of View**: is the perspective from which the story is told. *Who is telling the story? How do we know what happened?*
- ▶ The **four basic points** of view are:
 - 1– **Omniscient**: Author is telling the story with full knowledge of character's feeling, thoughts, and actions.
 - 2– **Limited Omniscient**: Third person, told from the viewpoint of a character in the story. (Limited knowledge).
 - 3– **First Person**: First person, told from the view of one of the characters using the pronoun "I". (protagonist or antagonist).
 - 4– **Objective (Dramatic)**: like a camera, narrator can not comment, interpret, or enter the character's mind, but only state what is seen and heard.

Theme

- ▶ The **theme** of the story is simply the central idea or concept of a piece of **fiction**. It usually contains some insight into the human condition – telling something about humans and life.
 - ▶ 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 related themes, or there may be two or more central themes.
 - ▶ Themes could be stated directly or implied by the events and actions in the story.
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- ▶ Some stories **do not** have themes such as horror stories which target to scare. However, themes exist when:
 - 1 – an author wants to reveal truth about life
 - 2 – an author introduces an idea of life that the story illustrates.
 - ▶ Themes **exist** in all **interpretive fiction**, but only in some **escape fiction**. In **interpretive fiction**, the theme is the **purpose** of the story.
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► **Principles** of expressing the **theme**:

- 1– Expressed in the form of a statement.
 - 2– Stated as an generalization about life.
 - 3– Should not make the overview larger than is justified by the terms of the story, e.g. using words like *all*, *every*, and *always*.
 - 4– Should express the central and unifying concept of the story.
 - 5– Maybe expressed in more than one way.
 - 6– Should avoid expressing the theme with familiar sayings, such as “**Never judge a book by its cover.**”
- 

Symbol

- ▶ A **symbol** represents an idea, quality, or concept larger than itself. Symbols have literal meanings in the story, but suggest and represent other meanings.
- ▶ **Examples of symbols:**
 - A journey can symbolize life.
 - Black can represent evil or death.
 - A lion could be a symbol of courage.

► Readers should **observe** the following **cautions** to **recognize symbols**:

- 1– The story must provide a clue that a detail is taken symbolically. Symbols signal their existence by *emphasis*, *repetition*, or *position*.
- 2– The meaning of a literary symbol must be established and supported by the entire context of the story. (**inside** *not* **outside** of the story)
- 3– To be called a symbol, the item must suggest a meaning different in *kind* from its literal meaning. *e.g.* a rose represents beauty not flowers.
- 4– A symbol may have *more* than one meaning. *e.g.* white may symbolize innocence and purity.

Other Elements of Fiction

- ▶ **Irony**: difference between what is expected and reality. Three kinds of irony:
 - 1 – **Verbal irony**: when a character uses statements with underlying meanings to contrast with its literal meanings. Writers rely on audience's intelligence for discerning hidden meanings they intend to convey. Examples:
 - “Soft like a brick”
 - “Clear like dirt”
 - “Saying “Oh, fantastic!” when the situation is actually very poor”


Other Elements of Fiction

2– Dramatic Irony: the contrast between what a character says and what the reader knows to be true.
Examples:

- Two people are engaged to be married but the audience knows that the man is planning to run away with another woman.
- In a scary movie, the character walks into a house and the audience knows the killer is in the house.
- In *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo finds Juliet in deep and drugged slumber, assumes her dead, kills himself ignorantly before Juliet wakes up, discovers her dead lover and kills herself.

Other Elements of Fiction

3– **Irony of situation / Situational irony**: occurs when the expected outcome does not happen. This is also called an irony of events. The outcome can be serious or humorous. Examples:

- A fire station burns down
 - The police station gets robbed
 - A man who needed of medical assistance is run over by the ambulance.
 - Someone buys a gun to protect himself, but the same gun is used by another individual to injure him. One would expect that the gun would keep him safe, but it has actually caused him injury.
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Other Elements of Fiction

- ▶ **Style**: a writer's distinct way of writing. The total of the qualities that distinguish one author's writing from another's. It is not so much *what* is written, but *how* it is written. Style in fiction refers to language rules used to construct the story. A fiction writer may control speech, sentence structure, phrasing, dialogue, and other aspects of language to create style or mood.

- ▶ **Structure**: the way time moves through a novel.
 - 1 – **Chronological**: starts at the beginning and moves through time.
 - 2 – **Flashback**: starts in the present and then goes back to the past.
 - 3 – **Panel**: same story told from different points of view.
 - 4 – **Circular**: starts in the present, flashes back to the past, and returns to the present at the conclusion.
 - ▶ **Foreshadowing**: early clues about what will happen later in a piece of fiction.
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