



Unit One

The Elements of a
Short Story

The Purpose of Storytelling

- To hand down collective wisdom to the young
- Entertainment
- The truth it reveals
- Provides vicarious experience

Concerns

- Society is losing its storytelling heritage.
- We no longer take joy in language.
- We are losing not only our ability to tell stories well, but also our ability to communicate ideas and images through words and sentences.



Plot


Definition: The “framework” of the story; it is the arrangement of related events that makes the story hang together.

Parts of Plot

1. Basic situation/ exposition
2. Complication
3. Climax-the most tense or exciting moment in the story, when something happens to decide the outcome of the conflict. The moment that brings about a change in the situation or in the main character or in both.
4. Falling action
5. Resolution/Denouement- “untying the knot”

Conflicts

1. External
 - a. Person against person
 - b. Person against nature
 - c. Person against machine
 - d. Person against society
 - e. Person against supernatural beings



2. **Internal**-occurs when a character struggles against some personal quality that is causing trouble. The character struggling with a bully might really be struggling between the will to win and the temptation to give up and submit to the bully's mockery.

Foreshadowing-

- Refers to clues about what is going to happen as the story unfolds.

Suspense-

- The uncertainty or anxiety we feel about what is going to happen next in a story.



Character:

The Story's Actors




Methods of revealing character

1. **Direct characterization-**
we do not have to figure out what a character's personality is like; the writer tells us directly.



2. **Indirect characterization-**

we have to exercise our own judgment, putting clues together to figure out what a character is like-just as we do in real life when we are getting to know someone.

- 
- a. Appearance
 - b. Speech
 - c. Private thoughts
 - d. Effect on other characters
 - e. Actions



Protagonist

- The main character/s. As a rule, the story's action begins when this main character wants something and sets out to get it.




Antagonist

The character or force that comes into conflict with the protagonist.



Classifications of Character

1. **Static** character-one who does **not** change much in the course of a story.
2. **Dynamic** character-changes in some important way as a result of the story's action.

- 
3. **Flat** characters-have only one or two personality traits. One-dimensional.
 4. **Round** characters-are complex and multi-faceted, like real people.
 5. **Stock** characters-fit our preconceived notions about a “type.”



They have lost their individuality; there are dozens just like them on the shelf.

MOTIVATION

One of the ways a writer rounds out a character is to show us what motivates, or moves, that person to act as he or she does.



Irony and Satire:

The might of the Word

- **Verbal Irony**-when we say one thing but mean the opposite
- **Situational Irony**-describes an occurrence that is not just surprising, it is the opposite of what we expected. (King Midas)
- **Dramatic Irony**-when the audience knows what is in store for a character, but the character does not know. Often used on stage. (*Romeo and Juliet*)



Two kinds of Ironic Writers

- 1. Some storytellers arrange the characters' fates to mock all their plans. (When an old prospector finds a secret lode of gold, an avalanche buries him and the gold. In this ironic world, humans, however ambitious and fortunate, have no control over an uncaring destiny.)

Continued...



Second type of ironic writer

- 2. The author creates a world in which the characters' dreams and quests do come true, but they may not live happily ever after.



Satire

- Ridicule for the purpose of change.
- Writing that uses humor or wit to ridicule that vices or follies of people or societies to bring about improvement. Satire uses devices such as exaggeration, understatement, and irony. Luisa Valenzuela's short story "The Censors" is a satire of repressive government.