

FIVE ELEMENTS OF PLOT CONFLICT

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The plot structure, also called the dramatic structure, of a story, novel or script includes the events that make up the idea of the writing. These are often laid out as a series of beginning, middle and end details and include five basic elements as well as a conflict. Conflict is necessary to the plot of any story, novel or script, and comes in two types: internal or external, and four kinds: man vs. man, man vs. circumstances, man vs. society and man vs. self. The idea of a plot containing these five elements first originated in 1863 in the "Technique of the Drama" by Gustav Freytag, who was building on the ideas of Aristotle from "The Poetics."

1. Introduction or Exposition

The introduction is where the basic characters and plot elements such as setting are revealed. In most cases the major conflict of the story, novel or script is also hinted at in the introduction, though smaller conflicts in the plot may be introduced later. In a shorter work, the introduction happens within the first few paragraphs, while in a longer work such as a novel it will happen within the first few chapters. The narrative hook or point in the story where the author truly catches the reader's attention, is often presented within the introduction.

2. Rising Action

Taking place within the first third of a story, novel or script, the rising action is also the part of the work where the problem or conflict central to the plot is truly introduced. The main characters have been established and events begin to get complicated for them. They may take actions against the conflict though it will probably not be solved yet. This element of the plot is where excitement, tension and crisis are encountered.

3. Climax

The climax is the turning point of a story, novel or script. It is the moment where it seems like the main character is in danger or could even possibly fail at resolving the conflict. Depending on the kind of conflict being faced (man vs. man, man vs. self, etc.) the actions at this point in the work can be either physical or mental.

4. Falling Action

Taking place after the climax, the falling action includes events that will help to fully resolve the conflict. The results of actions that the main character has taken are presented as well as the results of decisions that have been made, whether good or bad for the character.

5. Resolution

The end of a story, novel or script includes the last plot element -- the resolution. It is here that loose ends are tied up, conflicts are concluded, outcomes are revealed, and a happy or sad ending takes place. As many of the final actions have already taken place, a resolution can be made up of a just a summary of where the main character will end up in the future, instead of including any more active events.