Elements of Short Stories

1. **Plot** – sequence of events or incidents that make up a story.
   1. **Exposition/ Introduction** – designed to arouse reader’s interest; background is provided.
   2. **Conflict** – struggle between opposing forces (protagonist vs. antagonist)
      1. **Person vs. Person** – *external* struggle between two or more individuals.
      2. **Person vs. themselves** – *internal* struggle concerning emotion and decision.
      3. **Person vs. nature** – *external* struggle between person and an element of nature or the environment.
   3. **Rising action** – complication or development of the conflict.
   4. **Climax** – turning point of the story; point of most intense interest.
   5. **Falling action** – (denouement) events that lead to resolution.
   6. **Resolution** – outcome of the conflict.

# Parts of a Typical Plot



1. **Character** – is generally the central or focal element in a story.
   1. **Types of characterization** – the process by which the writer reveals the personality of a character.
      1. **Direct Characterization** – tells the audience what the personality of the character is.

*Example*: “The patient boy and quiet girl were both well-mannered and did not disobey their mother.”

*Explanation*: The author is directly telling the audience the personality of these two children. The boy is “patient” and the girl is “quiet.”

* + 1. **Indirect Characterization** – shows things that reveal the personality of a character. There are five different methods of indirect characterization:

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| --- | --- |
| **S**peech | What does the character say? How does the character speak? |
| **T**houghts | What is revealed through the character’s private thoughts and feelings? |
| **E**ffect on others | What is revealed through the character’s effect on other people? How do other character feel or behave in reaction to the character |
| **A**ctions | What does the character do? How does the character behave? |
| **L**ooks | What does the character look like? How does the character dress? |

* 1. **Five types of characters** –
     1. **Round** – complex or presented in detail.
     2. **Dynamic** – developing and learning in the course of the story.
     3. **Flat** – characterized by one or two traits.
     4. **Static** – unchanged from the story’s beginning to end.
     5. **Stock (Stereotype)** – fictional character based on a literary or social stereotype.
     6. **Character Foil** – a character whose behavior, attitudes or opinions contrast with those of the protagonist in order to help us better understand the main character.

1. **Themes of literature / Analyzing characters**
   1. **Motivation** – cause of / reason for actions.
   2. **Behavior** – actions of the character.
   3. **Consequences** – results of actions.
   4. **Responsibility** – moral, legal, or mental accountability.
   5. **Expectations** – what the reader expects.
2. **Mood**
   1. **Setting** – the time and place in which the story is taking place, including factors such as weather and social customs.
   2. **Atmosphere** – the mood or feeling which pervades the story.
3. **Suspense** – the quality of a story that makes the reader uncertain about the outcome.
   1. **Flashback** – a scene in a piece of literature that interrupts the action to show an event that happened earlier.
   2. **Foreshadowing** – an indication of something that may happen later in the story.
4. **Point of view** – the vantage point from which a story is seen or told.
   1. **Omniscient** – the author tells the story using the third person. The author knows all of what is done, said, felt, and thought by the characters.
   2. **Limited omniscient** – author tell the story from the third person, but limits observations of thoughts and feelings to one character; the author presents the story from this character’s eyes.
   3. **First person** – one character tells his/ her story directly to the reader. The reader sees and knows only as much as the narrator.
   4. **Third person** – someone outside the story tells it, referring to the main characters as “he” or “she”
   5. **Objective** – the author is like a movie camera that moves around freely recording objects. However, the author offers no comments on the characters or their actions. Readers are not told the thoughts or feelings of the characters.
5. **Figurative language** – understood meaning
   1. **Simile** – comparison using *like* or *as*.
   2. **Metaphor** – comparison using *is* or a form of *is*.
      1. Implied metaphor
      2. Extended metaphor
   3. **Personification** – attributing humanlike qualities to inanimate things.