

Literary Forms & Genres: How They Affect Meaning

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Learn the literature meaning and understand genre and form. See examples of different types of literature, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

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Literature Meaning

What is literature? The definition of **literature** broadly encompasses written works used to transmit culture. However, literature is not always limited to the written word. The literature meaning can include stories told in the oral tradition and visual literature, such as drama that is intended to be performed before an audience. In addition, literature can be classified into different forms. The term **form** refers to the writing's structure or organization. Each literary form can be divided into smaller categories, known as **genres**. Each genre shares numerous unifying characteristics.

Different Types of Literature

Literature can be classified into different forms or types. Each form shares organizational characteristics and conventions. Several commonly recognized different types of literature are:

- nonfiction prose
- fiction prose
- poetry
- drama
- folktale

Each of these forms will be explored in more detail below.

Understanding Form, Genre, and Meaning in Literature

An active reader selects books by asking questions such as:

- What kind of book is this?
- What is this book about?
- How will I experience this book?

The literary classifications of form, genre, and meaning help readers anticipate the content of a text. The table displays specific definitions for each term.

Classification	Definition	Examples
Form	a classification of writing based on the organization and structure of the text	fiction prose, nonfiction prose, poetry, drama, folktale
Genre	a subcategory of form; a classification of writings with similar style, topics, and characteristics	mystery, fantasy, biography, science fiction
Meaning	synonymous with theme; the message an author intends to deliver to an audience	Love conquers fear; friendship requires loyalty

One analogy for form and genre is that of a tree. If literature is the forest, a literary form is like the roots and trunk of a tree. The literary genres are the branches because they are a part of the trunk (or form) but have individual differences.

Forms of Literature

Their writing style and content can classify forms of literature. This section will examine the commonly used classifications of nonfiction prose, fiction prose, poetry, and drama, along with their associated genres. In addition, it examines the folktale, which is a part of literature's oral tradition.



Libraries often shelve books according to their genres (such as biography and mystery), which are subsets of their literary forms (such as nonfiction prose and fiction prose).

Nonfiction Prose

Nonfiction prose is factual writing written in non-metrical language. The style and prose indicate language that would be similar to spoken or conversational language, rather than language that relies on rhythm, meter, or other poetic devices. The nonfiction form can include opinion-based writing that deals with real-life issues. Some genres within nonfiction prose include:

- **Biography:** The true story of an individual's life, written by another person.
- **Autobiography:** An individual's recount of their own life.
- **Memoir:** A text in which an individual recounts their own experiences as a means to share a message or theme.
- **Academic texts:** School textbooks, such as science, history, math, and philosophy.
- **Journalism:** Event reporting, such as newspapers, periodicals, and online news platforms.
- **Self-help:** Texts intended to explain ways to improve one's life.
- **How-to/Instructional:** Any text that explains how to perform an action, from instructional pamphlets to full-length books.
- **Travel Writing:** Travel guides, pamphlets, and guidebooks.
- **Philosophy/Religion:** Writing discussing people's thoughts, beliefs, and philosophies.
- **Narratives:** Factual accounts of real events intended to preserve information.
- **Persuasive Writing:** Editorials, essays, articles, and other works intended to convince the audience of an opinion or course of action.
- **Children's picture books:** Books written for children using simple language and pictures to teach basic concepts.

Each of these genres consists of nonfiction prose.

Fiction Prose

Fiction prose is a style of writing that consists of non-metrical language. Unlike nonfiction prose, however, fiction prose is invented by the author rather than reflecting factual events, people, or circumstances. Fiction is most commonly found in either short stories or novel lengths.

- **Mystery:** A crime occurs, and a detective solves the crime.
- **Romance:** A story focused on a love connection.
- **Science fiction:** A story based on futuristic technology, science, societal structures, space travel, or alternate realities.
- **Fantasy:** A story centered in an imagined world, often including magical events, creatures, and places.
- **Fables:** A story intended to teach a lesson, often employing talking animals.

- **Fairy tales:** A children's story related to fantasy.
- **Historical fiction:** An invented story set in an identifiable historical time and place intended to portray historical details accurately.
- **Horror:** A story written to frighten the reader, sometimes involving a mystery.
- **Realistic fiction:** A story with characters, places, and events that could occur in everyday life but not based on actual occurrences.
- **Adventure:** Characters embark on a quest, overcome challenges, and perform daring acts.
- **Classics:** Books that have been read and loved for many years and are still considered essential reading.
- **Children's picture books:** Stories for children accompanied by pictures on every page.
- **Graphic novels:** Longer stories presented in comic-book format with drawings and visual dialogue.

Fiction prose represents a large portion of entertainment reading material available in libraries and bookstores.

Poetry

Poetry is a literary form that employs meter, rhythm, and figurative language. Some poetry rhymes, while other poetry does not. Poetry is often printed differently on a page than nonfiction and fiction prose. Literary devices such as **alliteration**, **metaphor**, **simile**, **assonance**, **dissonance**, **hyperbole**, and **personification** are also common in poetry. Some genres of poetry include:

- **Epic:** a long narrative poem about the adventures of an ancient hero
- **Blank verse:** unrhymed poetry written with a strict meter, often iambic pentameter
- **Sonnet:** a poem with 14 lines and a regulated rhyme pattern; two rhyme patterns are the Shakespearean sonnet and the Petrarchan sonnet
- **Hymn:** a religious poem, often meant to be sung
- **Elegy:** a poem about death or loss
- **Lyric:** poetry focused on feelings or emotions; many songs use lyric poetry
- **Ode:** a tribute poem focused on a person, place, or object
- **Haiku:** a three-line poem (five syllables/seven syllables/five syllables) that originated in Japan
- **Pastoral poetry:** poems about nature, landscapes, or rural life with examples as far back as Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome
- **Verse novel:** a novel that tells a story through a series of poems; the poems may be of different styles

Poetry is a diverse form with many faces.



Drama

Drama is a form of literature intended to be performed for an audience. As such, drama can combine both poetry and prose and may also include stage direction and dialogue prefaced by the character's name who will speak the dialogue. Four main categories or genres of drama are:

- **Comedy:** intended to induce laughter through either fun or satire
- **Tragedy:** deals with heavier themes; characters often have a weakness or flaw that leads to their downfall
- **Tragicomedy:** a play that combines humorous and tragic elements

Drama is one of the major forms of literature. Four genres of drama are comedy, tragedy, tragicomedy, and melodrama.

- **Melodrama:** a play that tells a story using hyperbole and aims to evoke strong emotion

Other types of drama are morality plays, mysteries, interactive plays, and plays that aim to highlight social issues.

Folktale

By definition, **folktales** are stories passed down through cultures using the oral tradition. Folktales become incorporated into rhymes, songs, books, and plays. Folktales are related to fairytales, myths, and fables. Most cultures have a set of folktales that are familiar to people of that culture, and some folktales have parallels in more than one cultural tradition.

Lesson Summary

Literature is a body of work that is used to transmit culture. Much of literature is written, but literature can also include oral tradition and visual literature (such as plays). Literature can be classified by **form**, which is the organization and structure of the literature. Literary forms can be broken down into **genres**, subcategories that share similar styles, topics, and characteristics. Writing is sometimes further classified by **meaning**, which is the author's message.

Major forms of literature are:

- **Nonfiction prose:** Factual literature written in non-metrical language. Genres include biography, autobiography, memoir, academic texts, journalism, self-help, how-to/instructional, travel writing, philosophy/religion, narratives, persuasive writing, and children's picture books.
- **Fiction prose:** Invented stories written in non-metrical language. Genres include mystery, romance, science fiction, fantasy, fables, fairy tales, historical fiction, horror, realistic fiction, adventure, classics, children's picture books, and graphic novels.

- **Poetry:** Employs meter, rhythm, and figurative language. Genres include epic, blank verse, sonnet, hymn, elegy, lyric, ode, haiku, pastoral poetry, and verse novels.
- **Drama:** A literary form intended to be performed for an audience. The four main genres are comedy, tragedy, tragicomedy, and melodrama.
- **Folktales:** Stories passed down through a specific culture using the oral tradition.

Classifying literature by form and genre helps readers to select reading material and understand the available reading options.

Video Transcript

Form, Genre, and Meaning

Have you ever thought of literature as a great big happy family? It might seem like a strange image, but it is quite effective for describing the relationships between form, genre, and meaning. In this lesson, we're going to meet some of the members of the literary family tree and see how they function in the literary world.

First, let's define some terms. The **form** of a piece of writing is simply its structure, how it is constructed and organized. Literary forms are like the roots of the literary family tree. Genres, in turn, are like the branches of the family tree. A **genre** is a specific style or category of writing. Genres make use of the various literary forms as foundations from which to stretch out in many directions of expression. Forms and genres join with content to create the meaning of a piece of writing. **Meaning** is basically the writer's message to the reader. Writers choose various forms and genres to help them express their meaning. For instance, a poem about the tragedy of the Civil War would send a very different message than a nonfiction history book.

Major Literary Forms

Now let's meet some of the members of the literary family tree. We'll begin at the roots with the four major literary forms: nonfiction prose, fiction prose, poetry, and drama.

Nonfiction prose is literature that is written in ordinary, non-metrical language and communicates facts or opinions about reality. Every time you read a science textbook or a how-to article, you are reading nonfiction prose. Nonfiction meanings are usually pretty straightforward because the writer's primary purpose is to convey information or persuade readers.

Fiction prose is also written in ordinary, non-metrical language, but it is the product of the writer's imagination. You've probably been reading novels and short stories for years; if so, you already know a lot about fiction prose. The meaning of fictional works can stretch all the way from obscure and difficult to clear and direct.

Poetry, on the other hand, uses metrical language with lots of rhythm and rhyme to create word pictures. Poetry employs all kinds of word play, figurative language, and imagery to send its messages, which are often rather obscure and need to be dug out with some effort on the part

of the reader.

Drama combines elements of prose and poetry into plays that are usually intended to be performed on stage. Drama joins monologues and dialogues by characters with stage directions and occasionally narrative sections that explain the action. Like poetry, drama can feature hidden meanings and messages that take some work to decipher.

These four literary forms are like the roots of the literary family tree, and they branch off into many different genres. We can't meet all these genres within the scope of this lesson, but we'll look at a few of the most common for each literary form.

Nonfiction Genres

You probably already know many genres of nonfiction prose. Some of the most common include biographies, autobiographies, history texts, science books, how-to manuals, dictionaries, encyclopedias, argumentative essays, self-help books, law volumes, newspapers, and pamphlets. They all present information and/or try to persuade the reader to adopt a particular point of view.

Fiction Genres

You are also probably well aware of many of the genres of fiction prose. Remember those fairy tales and fables you heard as a child? They represent fiction genres. Whenever you visit your favorite bookstore or library, you certainly notice that the books are organized into categories like mystery, historical fiction, fantasy, science fiction, horror, adventure, romance, and classics. These are all fiction genres, too.

Poetry Genres

The genres of poetry might be a bit more unfamiliar to you. This section will introduce you to a few of the most common.

- Epics are long poems that tell the action-packed stories of great heroes.
- Elegies are thoughtful, sad poems that reflect on someone's death.
- Lyrics tend to be quite short poems and focus on the speaker's emotions.
- Sonnets are 14 lines long and follow strict patterns of rhyme.
- Odes are formal poems that usually celebrate someone or something.
- Hymns offer praise to God.

Drama Genres

Finally, let's meet a few of the primary genres of drama. Plays may be comedies with much humor and happy endings or tragedies, which are much more serious and usually don't end on a positive note. Some drama combines elements of the two to create tragicomedies. Still other

plays are farces that are silly, fast-paced comedies; morality plays that deal with ethical questions of right and wrong; mystery plays that present dramatized Bible stories; or problem plays that wrestle with social issues.

Lesson Summary

Now that you've become acquainted with so many members of the literary family tree, let's review. The **form** of a piece of writing is simply its structure, how it is constructed and organized. Literary forms are like the roots of the literary family tree. A **genre**, which is a specific style or category of writing, is like a branch of the family tree. Forms and genres join with content to create a text's **meaning**, which is the writer's message to the reader.

There are four major literary forms. **Nonfiction prose** is literature that is written in ordinary, non-metrical language and communicates facts or opinions about reality. Its meaning is usually pretty straightforward, as it is designed to inform and/or persuade. **Fiction prose** is also written in ordinary, non-metrical language but is the product of the writer's imagination. Its meaning can stretch all the way from obscure and difficult to clear and direct.

Poetry uses the metrical language of rhythm and rhyme as well as word play, figurative language, and imagery to send its messages, which are often rather obscure and require some effort from the reader to understand. **Drama** combines elements of prose and poetry into plays that are usually intended to be performed on stage. It joins monologues and dialogues by characters with stage directions and can feature obscure meanings.

We've also explored several genres that branch off of each of these literary forms, including history texts and how-to manuals for nonfiction prose; mysteries and romances for fiction prose; epics and lyrics for poetry; and tragedies and comedies for drama.

Have you enjoyed climbing through the literary family tree? Next time you pick up a piece of literature, take a moment to think about which root and which branch of the tree you are about to read.

Learning Outcomes

Thoroughly explore the topics above in order to subsequently:

- Point out the relationship between form, genre, and meaning
- Name and describe the four main literary forms
- Discuss the major genres of literature



Literary Forms & Genres: How They Affect Meaning - Quiz

1. What is the primary purpose of literature?

- To entertain readers
- To transmit culture
- To teach lessons
- To make money

2. Which of the following is NOT a form of literature?

- Drama
- Poetry
- Biography
- Folktale

3. What does the term "genre" refer to?

- The message an author wants to convey
- The organization and structure of the text
- A subcategory of form with similar style and topics
- The oral tradition of storytelling

4. How are books in libraries often shelved?

- By author's name
- By publication date
- By their genres
- By their popularity

5. Which of the following is a genre of nonfiction prose?

- Mystery
- Romance
- Biography



6. What is the difference between fiction and nonfiction prose?

- Fiction is factual; nonfiction is invented
- Fiction is invented; nonfiction is factual
- Fiction uses poetic devices; nonfiction doesn't
- Fiction is always longer than nonfiction

7. Which of the following is NOT a genre of poetry?

- Elegy
- Mystery
- Sonnet
- Haiku

8. What is the primary purpose of drama?

- To be read silently
- To be performed for an audience
- To be written in poetic form
- To be passed down orally

9. What are folktales primarily associated with?

- Written tradition
- Oral tradition
- Visual literature
- Modern storytelling

10. Which of the following is a characteristic of a tragedy in drama?

- Induces laughter
- Characters have a flaw leading to their downfall
- Combines humorous and tragic elements

11. Which literary form employs meter and rhythm?

- Nonfiction prose
- Fiction prose
- Poetry
- Drama

12. Which of the following is a genre of fiction prose?

- Journalism
- Mystery
- Biography
- How-to/Instructional

13. What does the term "form" in literature refer to?

- The author's message
- The organization and structure of the text
- A subcategory with similar style and topics
- The oral tradition of storytelling

14. Which of the following is NOT a genre of drama?

- Comedy
- Tragedy
- Mystery
- Melodrama

15. What is the primary difference between a biography and an autobiography?

- Biography is fictional; autobiography is factual
- Biography is written by the person it's about; autobiography is written by someone else
- Biography is written by someone else; autobiography is written by the person it's about

16. Which of the following best describes "meaning" in literature?

- The organization and structure of the text
- A subcategory of form
- The message an author intends to deliver
- The oral tradition of storytelling

17. What is the main characteristic of nonfiction prose?

- It is invented by the author
- It is written in metrical language
- It is factual writing
- It is always written in first person

18. Lyrics, odes, and epics are genres of which literary form?

- Nonfiction prose
- Poetry
- Drama
- Fiction prose

19. How is a literary form different from genre?

- Genre is the general structure of a piece of writing, while the literary form is the particular style within a genre.
- Literary form is the general structure of a piece of writing, while the genre is the particular style within a form.
- They're essentially the same.
- They're both general structures of a piece of writing, but there are more genres than literary forms.

20. If you're experiencing a piece of fiction that's being performed on stage, joining monologues and dialogues by characters with stage directions, then what kind of fiction are you experiencing?

- Nonfiction prose
- Fiction prose
- Drama

21. Mysteries, fantasies, fairy tales, and romances are genres of which literary form?

- Drama
- Nonfiction prose
- Fiction prose
- Poetry
- None of these

22. Which literary form is written in ordinary, non-metrical language and communicates facts or opinions about reality?

- Drama
- Fiction prose
- Genre
- Nonfiction prose
- Poetry

Literary Forms & Genres: How They Affect Meaning - Quiz- Test results

1. What is the primary purpose of literature?

- 1. To entertain readers
- 2. To transmit culture
- 3. To teach lessons
- 4. To make money



2. Which of the following is NOT a form of literature?

- 1. Drama
- 2. Poetry
- 3. Biography
- 4. Folktale



3. What does the term "genre" refer to?

- 1. The message an author wants to convey
- 2. The organization and structure of the text
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4. How are books in libraries often shelved?

- 1. By author's name
- 2. By publication date



4. By their popularity

5. Which of the following is a genre of nonfiction prose?

1. Mystery

2. Romance

3. Biography 

4. Fantasy

6. What is the difference between fiction and nonfiction prose?

1. Fiction is factual; nonfiction is invented


2. Fiction is invented; nonfiction is factual 

3. Fiction uses poetic devices; nonfiction doesn't

4. Fiction is always longer than nonfiction

7. Which of the following is NOT a genre of poetry?

1. Elegy

2. Mystery 

3. Sonnet

4. Haiku

8. What is the primary purpose of drama?

1. To be read silently

2. To be performed for an audience 

3. To be written in poetic form

4. To be passed down orally

9. What are folktales primarily associated with?

1. Written tradition



- 3. Visual literature
- 4. Modern storytelling

10. Which of the following is a characteristic of a tragedy in drama?

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- 2. Characters have a flaw leading to their downfall
- 3. Combines humorous and tragic elements
- 4. Uses hyperbole to evoke strong emotion

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- 1. Nonfiction prose
- 2. Fiction prose
- 3. Poetry
- 4. Drama

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- 1. Journalism
- 2. Mystery
- 3. Biography
- 4. How-to/Instructional

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- 2. The organization and structure of the text
- 3. A subcategory with similar style and topics
- 4. The oral tradition of storytelling

14. Which of the following is NOT a genre of drama?



2. Tragedy

3. Mystery

4. Melodrama

15. What is the primary difference between a biography and an autobiography?

1. Biography is fictional; autobiography is factual

2. Biography is written by the person it's about; autobiography is written by someone else

3. Biography is written by someone else; autobiography is written by the person it's about

4. There is no difference

16. Which of the following best describes "meaning" in literature?

1. The organization and structure of the text

2. A subcategory of form

3. The message an author intends to deliver

4. The oral tradition of storytelling

17. What is the main characteristic of nonfiction prose?

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2. It is written in metrical language

3. It is factual writing

4. It is always written in first person

18. Lyrics, odes, and epics are genres of which literary form?

1. Nonfiction prose


2. Poetry

3. Drama

4. Fiction prose



1. Genre is the general structure of a piece of writing, while the literary form is the particular style within a genre.

2. Literary form is the general structure of a piece of writing, while the genre is the particular style within a form. 

3. They're essentially the same.

4. They're both general structures of a piece of writing, but there are more genres than literary forms.

20. If you're experiencing a piece of fiction that's being performed on stage, joining monologues and dialogues by characters with stage directions, then what kind of fiction are you experiencing?

1. Nonfiction prose

2. Fiction prose


3. Drama 

4. Genre

21. Mysteries, fantasies, fairy tales, and romances are genres of which literary form?

1. Drama

2. Nonfiction prose

3. Fiction prose 

4. Poetry

5. None of these

22. Which literary form is written in ordinary, non-metrical language and communicates facts or opinions about reality?

1. Drama

2. Fiction prose

3. Genre

4. Nonfiction prose 

5. Poetry

What is Plot? - Examples & Definition

Contributors: Meagan Ruby Wagner, Ann Casano

What is plot? Learn the definition and typical structure of a plot, explore plot examples in literature and film, and understand the different types of plot.

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- What is Plot?
- Plot Structure
- Plot Examples in Literature and Film
- Types of Plot



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What is Plot?

The **plot** of any literary text is essentially just what happens. It is the action, the conflict, the events that take place. It is the answer to the question, "What happened?" Plot also includes the reasons why events take place (think characters' motivations and/or backstories) and the cause and effect relationships between events.

Plot Structure

Most of the time, plot follows a developmental pattern known as **Freytag's pyramid**: it starts with exposition, then rising action, next the climax, then falling action, and finally the resolution. It looks like this:

- The **exposition** could also be called the introduction; it is the part of the story where characters and setting are introduced, and the stage is set. In the movie *The Lion King*, this would be the first several minutes when the animals are gathering on the savannah, Simba is presented, and the viewer gets the first glimpse of the conflict between Mufasa and Scar. In a murder mystery, this would be the part where the key characters are introduced, but before the murder has taken place.
- The **rising action** portion of the story is when the conflict develops between the main character (also called the protagonist), and the villain or antagonist. Throughout the rising action portion of the story, the tension is rising. Using the *Lion King* example, the rising action would be everything that takes place between the exposition and Simba returning to Pride Rock (the elephant graveyard, the wildebeests, Timon and Pumba, Hakuna Matata, etc.). In a murder mystery, this would begin with the murder, and include all the investigating that takes place while the murder is being solved.
- The **climax** is the point in the plot that the whole story has been leading up to; in *The Lion King*, the climax is when Simba returns to Pride Rock and defeats Scar. In a murder mystery, this would be the part of the story where the detective (amateur or professional) reveals the killer.
- The **falling action** includes the events that take place following the climax. The **resolution/denouement** is how the primary conflict is (wait for it...) resolved. In *The Lion King*, this is the part of the film where Simba reunites with Sarabi and takes his rightful place as king. In a murder mystery, this would be the part where the detective explains how they solved the case. Typically, the falling action and resolution are comparatively shorter than the other parts of the plot.

Plot Examples in Literature and Film

To further explain each of these elements of plot, let's examine a few more well known books and movies and identify each of the components of Freytag's plot development model.

We'll start with *Star Wars* (Episode IV, *A New Hope*).

The exposition in each of the *Star Wars* films would be the very beginning of the movie, dubbed by fans the opening crawl, where yellow text scrolls upward across the screen giving viewers a summary of pertinent characters and prior events, thus setting the stage for the action to begin. The rising action gets started right off the bat, with Leia recording her message ("Help us, Obi Wan Kenobi! You're our only hope!") and sending the droids off to find the long lost Jedi. The rising action continues throughout most of the film as Luke Skywalker is trained in the ways of the force, learns about Darth Vader, and joins forces with Han Solo. The climax of the film is the



scene where Luke is flying just above the surface of the Death Star, dodging shots from Darth Vader, and shoots a carefully aimed torpedo to destroy the

Death Star. The falling action and resolution of the plot are the last couple minutes, after the Death Star has been destroyed, when Luke and Han and Chewy are awarded medals for saving the galaxy.

Darth Vader



Wizard of Oz

To use another well known example, in *The Wizard of Oz*, the first several minutes of the film where everything is in black and white are the exposition. When the tornado comes and carries Dorothy and Toto off to the land of Oz, the rising action begins. The tension in the film is twofold: Dorothy and Toto need to return to Kansas, and they have accidentally killed the Witch of the East, thus incurring the wrath of the Wicked Witch of the West. The rising action continues as Dorothy and Toto run from the Wicked Witch of the West and follow the Yellow Brick Road on their search for the Wizard. Along the way they meet Scarecrow, The Tin Man, and The Cowardly Lion. The climax of the film is when Dorothy throws water on the Wicked Witch and defeats her, and when Dorothy and friends learn that the Wizard is just a regular man behind a curtain. In the falling action, Dorothy returns to Kansas with the Wizard via hot air balloon and is reunited with her family in Kansas, thus resolving the primary conflicts in the film.

Types of Plot

Plot structures can vary slightly, and not every book or movie will follow Freytag's pyramid exactly, but it is a good model for analyzing and examining plot. There are also several common themes in plot. Some of the more common ones include the following:

- Coming of age (*Stand By Me*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Dead Poets Society*, etc.)
- Quest (*The Hobbit*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *National Treasure*, etc.)
- Comedy (*Dumb and Dumber*, anything by David Sedaris, etc.)
- Tragedy (*Antigone*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Anna Karanina*, etc.)

Lesson Summary

The **plot** is what happens in a story

- Plot includes the tension and conflict in a story.
- Most of the time, the plot follows a model called Freytag's pyramid, which consists of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution/denouement.
- **Exposition** is the introduction to a story; characters and set are introduced, and the stage is set.
- **Rising action** includes all the events between the onset of the conflict and the climax of the story; rising action is typically the lengthiest part of the story.

- The **climax** is the point at which the tension breaks; it is the part of the story where the reader finds themselves holding their breath.
- The **falling action** is the events that take place after the climax. The falling action is typically very short.
- The **resolution/denouement** is how the primary conflict(s) in a text are resolved.
- Common plot themes include the quest, coming of age stories, comedies, and tragedies. There can be overlap between these themes.

What is Plot?

1. What is the plot of a literary text?

- The setting of the story
- The main character's thoughts
- The action and events that take place
- The moral of the story

2. Which of the following is NOT a part of Freytag's pyramid?

- Introduction
- Reaction
- Climax
- Resolution

3. In "The Lion King," when is the exposition?

- When Simba defeats Scar
- When Simba returns to Pride Rock
- When the animals gather on the savannah
- During the song "Hakuna Matata"

4. What is the climax of a story?

- The introduction of characters
- The point leading up to the main event
- The main event or turning point
- The conclusion of the story

5. In a murder mystery, when would the climax typically occur?

- When the murder takes place
- During the investigation
- When the detective reveals the killer

6. Which of the following best describes the exposition of a story?

- The main event of the story
- The introduction of characters and setting
- The events leading up to the climax
- The conclusion of the story

7. In "Star Wars (Episode IV, A New Hope)," what is the climax?

- The opening crawl
- Leia recording her message
- Luke destroying the Death Star
- Luke receiving a medal

8. In "The Wizard of Oz," when does the rising action begin?

- When Dorothy is in black and white
- When the tornado takes Dorothy to Oz
- When Dorothy defeats the Wicked Witch
- When Dorothy returns to Kansas

9. What is the primary conflict in "The Wizard of Oz"?

- Dorothy's house landing on the Witch of the East
- Dorothy and Toto's need to return to Kansas
- The Wizard being a regular man
- The Wicked Witch of the West chasing Dorothy

10. Which of the following is NOT a common theme in plot?

- Quest
- Comedy
- Setting

11. What is the falling action in a story?

- The introduction of characters
- The events leading up to the climax
- The main event or turning point
- The events that take place after the climax

12. Which part of Freytag's pyramid is typically the shortest?

- Exposition
- Rising action
- Climax
- Falling action

13. What does the resolution/denouement of a story indicate?

- The introduction of the story
- The main event of the story
- How the primary conflict is resolved
- The events leading up to the climax

14. Which of the following is a common plot theme?

- Setting
- Quest
- Dialogue
- Character development

15. In which part of the plot would the tension typically be the highest?

- Exposition
- Rising action
- Climax

16. What is the primary purpose of the exposition in a story?

- To resolve the conflict
- To introduce the climax
- To introduce characters and set the stage
- To conclude the story

17. Most generally speaking, what is the purpose of a plot built with a number of events?

- To create a more interesting plot.
- To introduce the protagonist's strengths.
- To make the reader feel bad for the protagonist.
- To build tension for the protagonist(s) to reach the climax.

18. In the old legend of Tristan and Isolde, the two meet and fall in love. At one point, Tristan gains Isolde's hand in marriage - but it's for his king, not himself. When Isolde marries the king, things can not get much worse for the romantic couple. What act of a 3-part plot structure would this be considered?

- Equilibrium
- Disequilibrium
- Resolution
- Antagonist

19. How many acts are there in a traditional film plot?

- Five
- Four
- One
- Two
- Three

20. The end of a plot is called what?

- Causality
- Climax

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The denouement/resolution

The state of disequilibrium

What is Plot?

1. What is the plot of a literary text?

- The setting of the story
- The main character's thoughts
- The action and events that take place
- The moral of the story

2. Which of the following is NOT a part of Freytag's pyramid?

- Introduction
- Reaction
- Climax
- Resolution

3. In "The Lion King," when is the exposition?

- When Simba defeats Scar
- When Simba returns to Pride Rock
- When the animals gather on the savannah
- During the song "Hakuna Matata"

4. What is the climax of a story?

- The introduction of characters
- The point leading up to the main event
- The main event or turning point
- The conclusion of the story

5. In a murder mystery, when would the climax typically occur?

- When the murder takes place
- During the investigation
- When the detective reveals the killer

6. Which of the following best describes the exposition of a story?

- The main event of the story
- The introduction of characters and setting
- The events leading up to the climax
- The conclusion of the story

7. In "Star Wars (Episode IV, A New Hope)," what is the climax?

- The opening crawl
- Leia recording her message
- Luke destroying the Death Star
- Luke receiving a medal

8. In "The Wizard of Oz," when does the rising action begin?

- When Dorothy is in black and white
- When the tornado takes Dorothy to Oz
- When Dorothy defeats the Wicked Witch
- When Dorothy returns to Kansas

9. What is the primary conflict in "The Wizard of Oz"?

- Dorothy's house landing on the Witch of the East
- Dorothy and Toto's need to return to Kansas
- The Wizard being a regular man
- The Wicked Witch of the West chasing Dorothy

10. Which of the following is NOT a common theme in plot?

- Quest
- Comedy
- Setting

11. What is the falling action in a story?

- The introduction of characters
- The events leading up to the climax
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