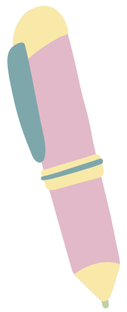
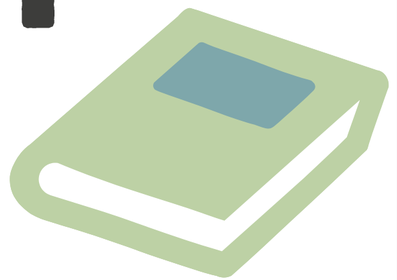
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SHORT STORIES





CHARACTER, SETTING & PLOT

CHARACTER

There are 2 meanings for the word CHARACTER:

1: the person in a work of fiction

2: the characteristics of a person

PROTAGONIST VS. ANTAGONIST

Protagonist - The central character to the story with all major events having some importance to this person. This character is usually the HERO

Antagonist - The opposer of the main character
usually the VILLAIN

CHARACTERISTICS OF A PERSON

Characterization is the information the author gives the reader about the characters themselves. The author may reveal a character in several ways:

a) his/her PHYSICAL appearance
b) what he/she says, thinks, feels and dreams
c) what he/she does or does not do
d) what others say about him/her and how others react to him/her

Video mentioned:
Indirect characterization
and
Direct characterization

Direct versus Indirect characterization https://youtu.be/-ZnD0AGqQ7I

TYPES OF CHARACTER

Characters are:

1. Individual - round, many sided and complex personalities.

2. Developing - dynamic, many sided personalities that change, for better or worse by the end of the story.

3. Static - stereotype, have one or two characteristics that never change and are emphasized e.g. brilliant detective, drunk, scrooge, cruel stepmother, etc.

SETTING

Time and Place

THE TIME AND LOCATION IN WHICH A STORY TAKES PLACE IS CALLED THE SETTING.

For some stories the setting is very important, while for others it is not.

EXAMPLE 1

a) Place - Geographical location. Where is the action of the story taking place?

EXAMPLE 2

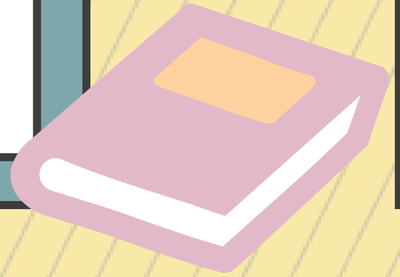
b) Time - When is the story taking place? (historical period, time of day, year, etc)

EXAMPLE 3

c) Weather Conditions - Is it rainy, sunny, stormy, etc?

EXAMPLE 4

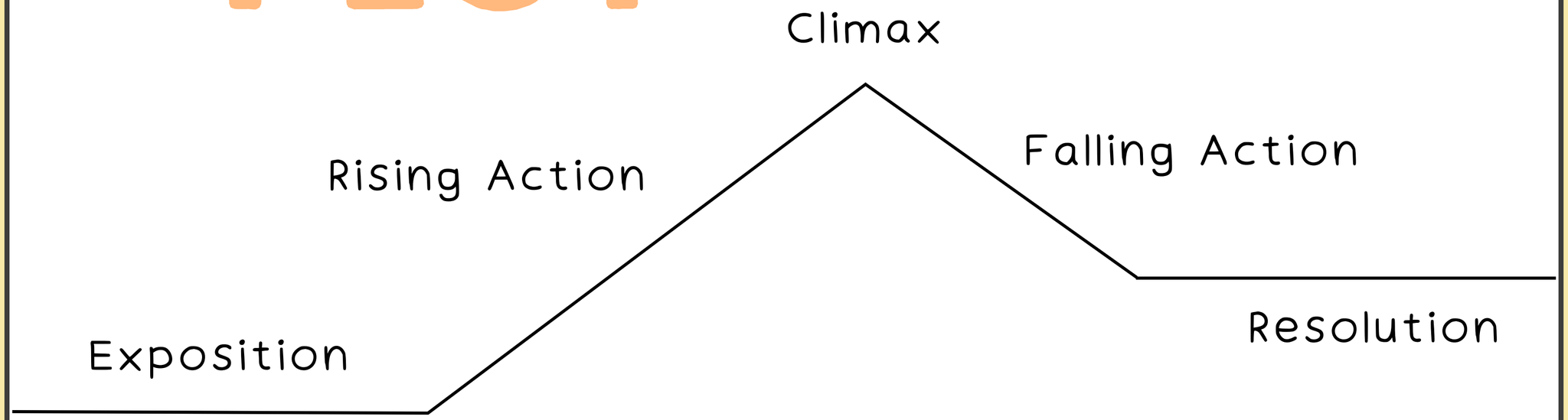
d) Social Conditions - What is the daily life of the characters like?



EXAMPLE 5

e) Mood or Atmosphere - What feeling is created at the beginning of the story? Is it bright and cheerful or dark and frightening?

PLOT


Climax
Rising Action
Falling Action
Exposition
Resolution

INTRODUCTION/ EXPOSITION

Once upon a time...

The beginning of the story where the characters and the setting is revealed

RISING ACTION

This is where the EVENTS in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed

TYPES OF CONFLICT

PERSON VS PERSON (PHYSICAL)

The leading character struggles with their physical strength against other men, forces of nature, or animals.

PERSON VS CIRCUMSTANCES (CLASSICAL)

The leading character struggles against fate, or the circumstances of life facing them.

PERSON VS SOCIETY (SOCIAL)

The leading character struggles against ideas, practices, or customs of other people.

PERSON VS SELF (PSYCHOLOGICAL)

The leading character struggles with themself; with their own soul, ideas of right or wrong, physical limitations, choices, etc.

CLIMAX

This is the highest point of interest and the turning point of the story. The reader wonders What will happen next?

FALLING ACTION

The events and complications begin to resolve themselves. The reader KNOWS what has happened next and if the conflict was resolved or not.

CONCLUSION/ RESOLUTION

This is the final outcome or untangling of events in the story.

THEME (MESSAGE/MORAL)

The theme in a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight.

It is the author's underlying meaning or main idea that they are trying to convey.

The theme may be the author's thoughts about a topic or view of human nature. The title of the short story usually points to what the writer is saying and he may use various figures of speech to emphasize his theme, such as: symbol, allusion, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or irony.

THEME should not be one word .

Some simple examples of common themes from literature, TV, and film are:

- Things are not always as they appear to be

NOT:

- Love is blind
- Believe in yourself
- People are afraid of change
- Don't judge a book by its cover

COMMON THEMES

Man struggles against human nature: Man is always at battle with human nature, whether the drives described are sexual, material or against the aging process itself.

Man struggles against societal pressure: ManKind is always struggling to determine if societal pressure is best for living. Characters who know how society says they should live, but feel society's dictation is contrary to what makes them happy.

Man struggles to understand divinity: ManKind tries to understand and make peace with God, but satisfaction is elusive and difficult.

Crime does not pay: A popular theme played out in books throughout time is the concept that honesty is honored and criminals will eventually be caught.

COMMON THEMES

Overcoming adversity: Many books laud characters who accept a tough situation and turn it into triumph

Friendship is dependent on sacrifice: This is the idea that you can't have friends if you don't act like a friend.

The importance of family: Sacrifices for family are honored and explored, as are the family bonds that survive adversity.

COMMON THEMES

Just when you think life is finally going to be easy, something bad happens to balance it all out.

Love is the worthiest of pursuits: Many writers assert the idea that love conquers all, appealing to the romantic side of us.

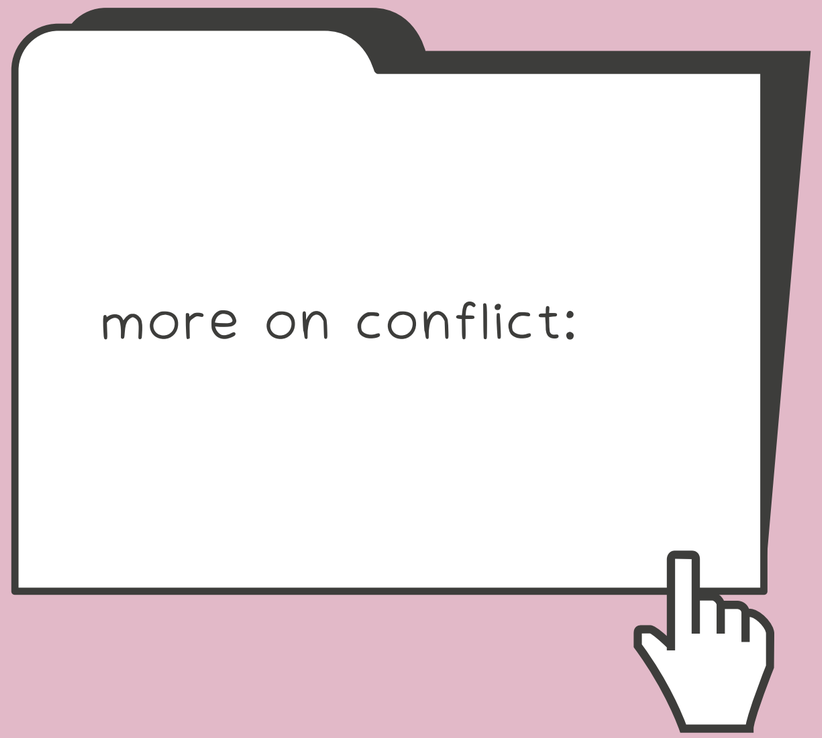
Death is part of the life cycle: Literary works with this theme show how death and life and intricately connected.

Sacrifices bring reward: Sacrifices and hard work pay off in the end, despite the challenges along the way.

COMMON THEMES

Human beings all have the same needs: book after book asserts that rich or poor, educated or dumb, all human beings need love and other basic needs met.

All choices have consequences: This is the idea that for every choice characters make there are consequences. These consequences can be either positive or negative and will affect the character's lives.

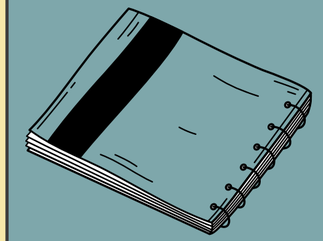

more on conflict:

Person vs Self

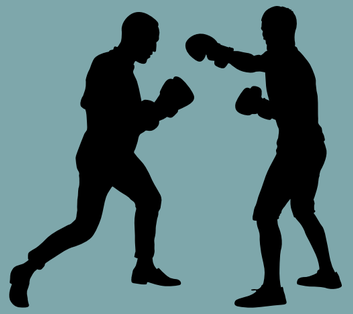
Person vs Society

TYPES OF CONFLICT

Person vs Nature



Person vs Supernatural



Person vs Person

Person vs Technology

INTERVAL VS EXTERNAL

INTERNAL

A conflict within someone which CANNOT be seen

Internal = INside

ex:

- deciding whether to do something or not
- choosing the kind of person you want to be

EXTERNAL

A conflict outside of the self which CAN be seen

External = Exterior

ex:

- fighting physically/ verbally with someone
- a shark attacking a person