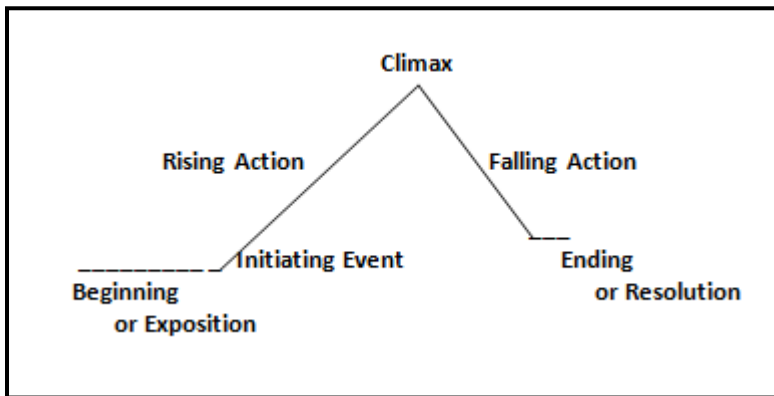


Diagram of Plot Structure



Forces in Conflict with the Protagonist

Conflict: the struggle the main character experiences against some type of force.

External Conflicts (Forces)

individual vs. individual
individual vs. nature
individual vs. society
individual vs. technology
individual vs. supernatural

Internal Conflict (Force)

individual vs. self



Elements of Plot Structure

<http://www.learner.org/interactives/story/setting.html>

Beginning/Exposition: The opening of the story usually provides background information on the characters and setting. It introduces the main characters, gives details that help to establish the setting, and may also explain what happened before the story began.

Initiating Event: Either an idea or an action introduces a central conflict/problem and sets plot events into motion. As a result of the initiating event, the protagonist (main character) faces a problem or is working toward a goal. The initiating event may occur at the end of the exposition or may have occurred before the opening of the story.

Rising Action: The main character (protagonist) reacts to the initiating event by taking steps to achieve a goal or resolve a problem. A force, however, is in conflict with the character. Each step taken is accompanied by an outcome, the success or failure of the protagonist's attempt. The character reacts to each complication and makes several attempts through the rising action to reach the goal or resolve the problem. Some attempts may fail and others may be successful.

Climax: The climax occurs at the turning point which is usually the most suspenseful or emotional moment of the story. The climax is reached when the protagonist takes the last step to resolve a conflict or reach a goal. The result of this step or action is the turning point. The turning point begins to lead the reader to the final outcome or resolution of the conflict.

Falling Action: The action falls immediately after the turning point. Events that occur in the falling action are the after-effects or consequences of the climax. Actions and dialogue lead the reader to the story's logical conclusion.

Ending/Resolution/Conclusion: The story ends in a situation that has evolved from the protagonist's success or failure to achieve the goal or eliminate the problem. The reader understands how the conflict has brought the story to its ending.

Special Plot Techniques

Foreshadowing: The author's use of clues, hints, or information suggesting events that will occur later in the plot. Sometimes things like weather are used. A storm cloud on the horizon could suggest danger ahead. At other times characters may talk about the future or a character may even make a prediction as a means of foreshadowing later events.

Flashback: The author's interruption of the sequential plot events to return to an earlier event. This past event is represented as if it is happening in real time. The author uses a flashback to provide important background information to help the reader understand the present situation in the story narrative.