

English and American LITERATURE

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1. **Introductory Course.**
The Theory of Literature
2. **English Literature**
3. **American Literature**

Formal GOAL

To introduce students to a variety of literary works

To help students to learn to read literary works closely, looking at both their form and content and their (historical , cultural and social contexts)

Informal GOAL

To define worthwhile literary works/ literature

worthwhile vs. worthless

worthwhile literature

creates a lasting impression



may be provocative, beautiful,
uncanny, meaningful,
reverberating long after
the reading ends

worthless literature

leaves your head the moment you finish it



once you finish reading
immediately start thinking about
more important things

worthwhile literature

stretches the readers' imagination



We like to use our imagination!

worthless literature

does not stretch your imagination



predictable, stale,
easily anticipated, nothing new.

worthwhile literature

presents an aesthetically pleasing experience



We may be stunned by the work's
“beauty”, its handsome language
and interesting structure

worthless literature

does not strike the reader as beautiful in any way

worthwhile vs. worthless

worthwhile

- ▶ Creates a lasting impression
- ▶ Stretches the readers' imagination
- ▶ Presents an aesthetically pleasing experience

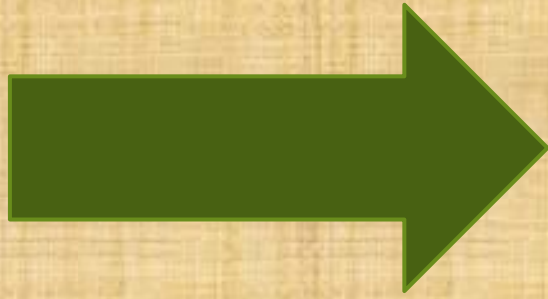
worthless

- ▶ Leaves your head the moment you stop reading
- ▶ Does not stretch imagination
- ▶ Does not strike as beautiful in any way

Fiction



1. Plot
2. Setting
3. Characterization
4. Theme
5. Point of View
6. Symbolism
7. Style



1. Plot

2. Setting

3. Characterization

4. Theme

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6. Symbolism

7. Style

Plot refers to the sequence of events which give focus to a story and which shape the action.

It is a plan which gives direction to the story.

Plot

=

story line

=

plotline

=

narrative structure

Plot is a guiding principle for the author and an ordering control for the reader

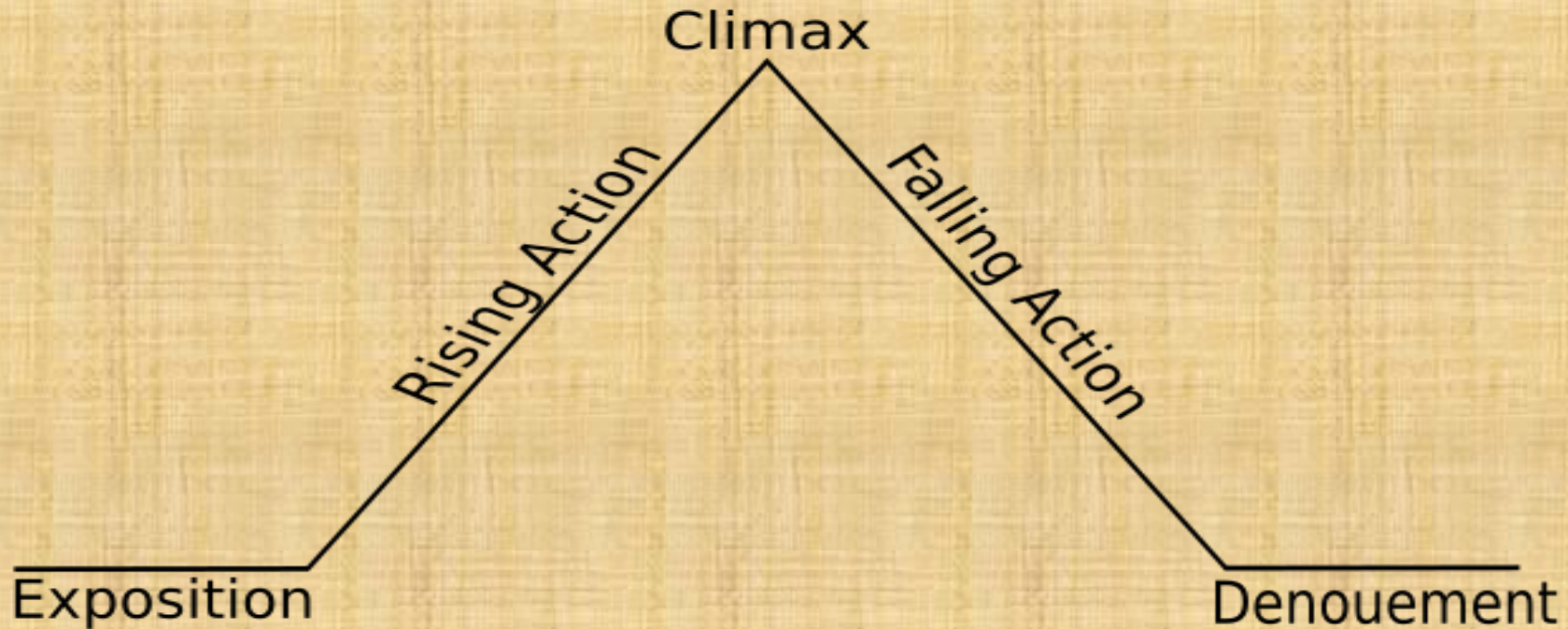
A plot in a story can take a number of forms

- ➡ 1) traditional straightline plot
- ➡ 2) modern plot techniques

Traditional straightline plot

moves chronologically from
beginning to end as things happen
one after another

Traditional straightline plot



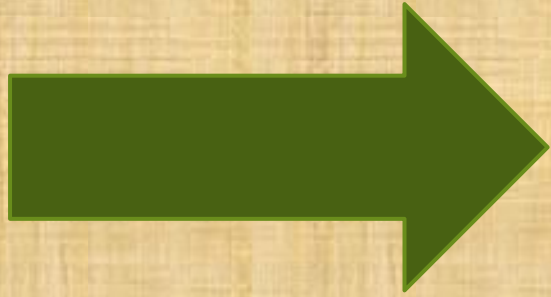
Picture 1 Freytag's pyramid

Modern plot techniques

which may move forward and back through the storyline as a story progresses instead of strictly from beginning to end

Modern plot techniques

flashback *and* *foreshadowing*



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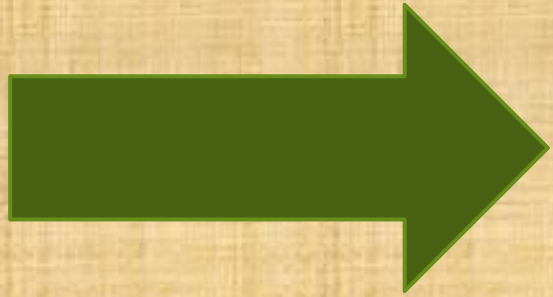
Setting

refers to the *where* and the *when* of a literary work



time and place

!!!!!! *The setting provides the context of the story*

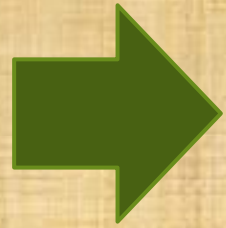


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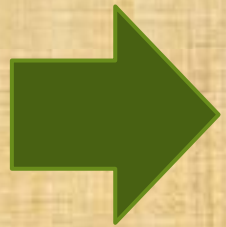
Characterization

is the process by which a writer
brings the characters
in a story to life

Characters



*According to the number of traits
a character possesses*



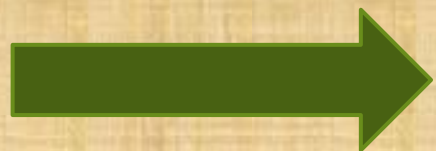
*According to the development of these traits
in the process of a story*

According to the number of traits a character possesses



flat

*(can be summed up by one or two traits
and a brief sentence)*



round

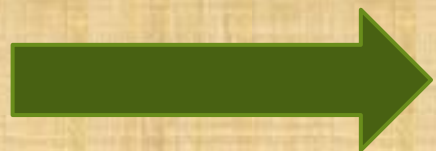
*(are many-sided, with conflicting
impulses and many traits - both good
and bad)*

According to the development of characters in the process of a story



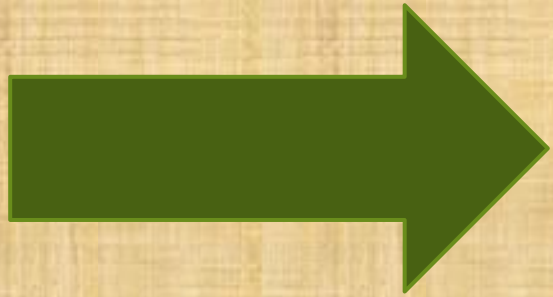
static

(remaining the same throughout the whole story)



dynamic

(growing and changing in the course of the story)

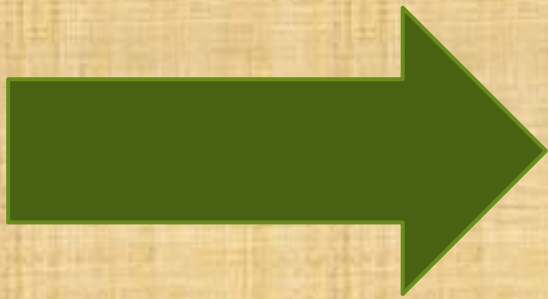


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Theme

is its meaning, its central insight,
concept, controlling idea

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Point of View

is the way a story is told



the perspective / angle of vision
from which the events are narrated



sometimes the author tells the story
sometimes the characters do

sometimes the narrator knows all
about everything
sometimes the narrator is limited
in her/his knowledge





➔ Who is telling the story?

➔ How much is the character able to know?

most intimate

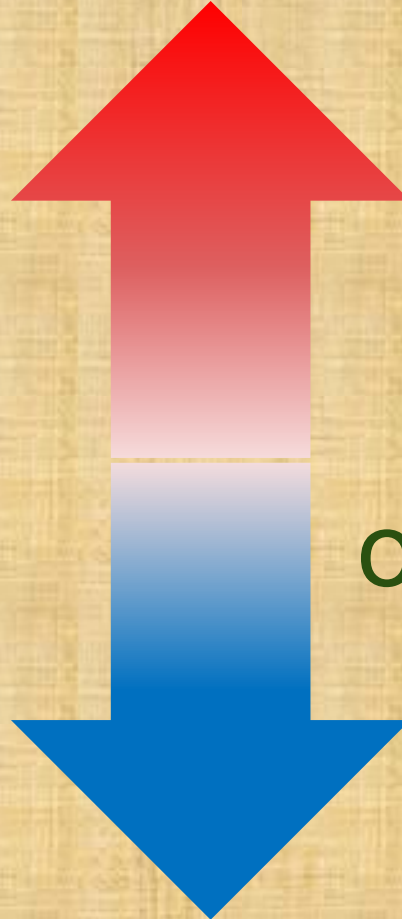
1st person narrator

3rd person narrator

omniscient narrator

objective narrator

most removed



1st person narrator - “I”

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graph TD; A[1st person narrator - “I”] --> B[the author writes from inside of the characters as a participant in the story]; B --> C["(we know and see everything this one character knows and see)"]
```

the author writes from inside of the characters as a participant in the story

(we know and see everything this one character knows and see)

3rd person narrator - “s/he”

the author becomes a non-participant,
moving to the side of and seeing into only
one character

*(it's as if the writer is sitting on the shoulder
of one character- his vision is limited to just
What that character knows and sees)*

omniscient narrator



the author is a non-participant again,
but is able to see into and have unlimited
knowledge about any or all of the characters

*(the author can roam anywhere, see anything,
and comment and interpret events at will)*

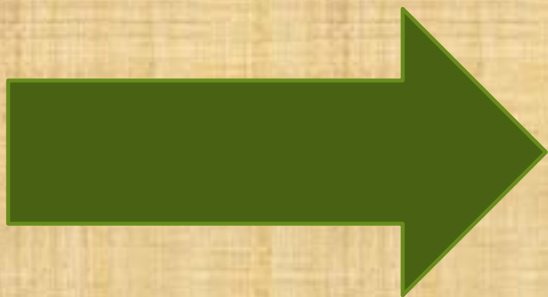
objective narrator

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graph TD; A[objective narrator] --> B[the author writes from the objective perspective]; B --> C["(the writer disappears entirely and becomes a spectator)"]
```

the author writes from the
objective perspective

*(the writer disappears entirely and becomes
a spectator)*

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A symbol

a sign, an image, an object
(something concrete)



which represents an idea, a concept
(something abstract)

Traditional symbols



Literary symbols



Poetry

*Poets try to say the most
in the fewest words*

(S.Lyne)

Poetry is different from two other literary genres because of its compression of thought, its conventions of meter and rhythm, reliance on the line as a formal unit, and its emphasis on sound.