**Elements of Fiction**

**A character is a person, animal, or object that an author creates to tell a story.** Characters can be real or make-believe. Just like you, characters have problems, wants, feelings, and thoughts.

The **protagonist** is the main character in fiction whose conflict starts the plot in motion. Most protagonists change in some important way by the end of the story. Readers usually identify in some way with the protagonist.

The **antagonist** is the character or force with which the protagonist conflicts.

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**Setting is a very important part of a story.** The setting tells when and where the story happens. It is the time period and place in which a story occurs.

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**The plot is what happens in the story.** The plot has to do with the main actions that carry the story along and keep you interested.

**The plot includes the following elements:**

* **exposition** - the characters and setting are introduced and the plot begins to unfold; the exposition generally occurs at the beginning of a story
* **rising action** – refers to the events before a climax
* **climax** - this is the point when the action reaches a turning point and interest and intensity reach their peak; the story’s climax usually involves an important decision, discovery, or event which influences the final outcome of the story
* **falling action** - refers to the events which occur after the climax
* **resolution** – (also called denouement) - the loose ends are tied up; a resolution does not necessarily indicate a “happy ending”

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**The theme or moral is the most important idea the reader gets from a story.** It may give a short lesson about life. It tells how the author feels about life or human nature.

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**Conflict** is a struggle or clash between opposing characters, forces, or emotions. There are two major types of conflict:

1. **External Conflict** - A character struggles against some outside force. External conflicts are described in general terms such as:

* man vs. nature (character vs. nature)
* man vs. society (character vs. society)
* man vs. man (character vs. character)

2. **Internal Conflict** - A character struggles with himself or herself and his or her opposing needs, desires, or emotions. Internal conflicts are also described in general terms:

* man vs. himself/herself (character vs. self)