

PARAGRAPHS

When the pen symbol is displayed, students should take notes from all the slide.



When the pen symbol is displayed, as a smaller purple icon then students need only take notes from that section in a box.



Writing A Short Story



By R.A.Patterson.2011

By the end of this unit you will know how to:

1. write a synopsis of your story.
2. use different genres for effect.
3. write a clear plot for your story
4. be able to describe settings,
5. include appropriate dialogue,
6. show distinct characters.
7. write for a specific audience.
8. edit your story for correct punctuation spelling and grammar.

Synopsis

Explanation:

A synopsis is a very brief summary of what your story is about. It is usually less than 100 words. It does not need to provide details such as names or background. A synopsis is not a blurb written to sell the story idea. It is written to show a story can be written.

Example:

An old mean man who hates life is visited by a series of ghosts on the eve of a festival. These ghosts show him that his soul is in danger. He realises that he must become a good person if he is to be saved. The next day, when the festival begins, the old man shows everyone through good deeds that he is a changed man.

Effect:

- Demonstrates the story's main idea and shows how it will end.
- Ensures that the student/writer, teacher/publisher agree to the story including its ending.

Synopsis

Exercise 1.

Think of a movie you have seen or a book that you have read, try writing a synopsis for it.

Do not write more than 100 words and provide an ending.

Exercise 2.

Write a synopsis for your own story.

- Do not to add details such as names of people or places.
- Do not worry about being original or exiting.
- Make sure that your story has a problem and an ending.
- Do not change it later. If you do, it will cause you to become less confident and more confused.

Genre

Explanation:

- A genre is a way that stories are classified into types. The genre of a story will be shown by the use of keywords and descriptions associated with themes such as western horror, romance, or science fiction.
- We call the words associated with a genre jargon. Each genre has its own jargon. A story of the medical genre for example would use words familiar to those in the medical profession like doctors. A writer will need to learn the words associated with the chosen genre and use them in their story.
- Genres can be mixed. You could have a comedy/romance or horror/fantasy.
- Genre is used to portray emotions and feelings. Genre's help the writer 'paint a picture' of the story.
- A synopsis can fit any genre.

Effect:

The Genre of the story helps the reader connect with the feelings, and mood of the story.

LITERARY GENRES

Action
Adventure
Alternative History
Children's
Comedic
Conspiracy
Crime & Decadent
Disaster
Exploration
Fables

Fantasy
Gothic
Historical
Horror
Legal
Medical
Mystery
Noir (dark & sinister)
Psychological
Religious

Romance
Science Fantasy
Science Fiction
Sports
Spy
Supernatural
Thriller/Suspense
War
Westerns

Genre

Exercise

Choose an interesting genre.

Homework 1.

Research your genre.

Once you have chosen your genre you need to make a list of about 20 jargon words for that genre. These words can include types of creatures, devices, colours, sounds, textures, objects, and places that go with the genre.

Example: For a western genre.

Civil War, Pistol, Stetson hat, cows, gunfight, sheriff, saloon, brown, wood, dust, leather, high noon, quick draw, undertaker, boot hill, chain gang, cigar, cattle rustling, dance hall, apache, reservation, gold mine.

Setting

Explanation:

The story's setting is where and when the story happens. Aim to have your story in the most interesting place and time you can think of. If your story is set in a school for example then have it set in Cairo, or near an expensive ski-resort, or a tough school in the middle of Los Angeles. A setting also includes when it is set. Your story does not need to be set in the current day. It could be set during World War 2 or in ancient Egypt or in the far future on another planet. It might be set on an island.

Example:

My story is set in a huge old hospital near a fishing village in Canada during the 1920's

Effect:

- Provides an interesting location for your story.
- Helps readers become more engaged with your story.
- Can provide a sense of place and realism to your story.

Setting

Example:

Synopsis:

A young boy wins a ticket to a show. He loses the ticket and goes through many adventures trying to find it. Finally, he gets to go to the show, but he realises that already he was having a great adventure in living life.

Synopsis with setting:

A young boy, who lives in Beirut, Lebanon in 1965, wins a ticket to the premier film release of *Al Seba Wal Jamal* (The Young and The Beautiful). While heading to the Rivoli Cinema He loses the ticket and...



The Rivoli.

Setting

Exercise

Choose an interesting time and place for your story.

Homework 1.

Research your setting.

1. Try using an encyclopaedia, Wikipedia, Google, and Google Earth.
2. Take notes about your setting's:
 - sounds, smells, and sights
 - nearby landmarks, events and festivals.
 - history, climate, landscape, food customs clothing.
3. Draw an image associated with your setting, it could be a landscape or a map.

Story Map

Setting

Characters

Problem

Solution

Ending



Story Map

Exercise

Draw a story map of your own and fill it in.

- **Setting:** Where does your story happen?
- **Characters:** Who is in your story?
- **Problem:** What is the danger they face?
- **Solution:** How do the characters get over the problem?
- **Ending:** How does your story finish?

Setting

Characters

Problem

Solution

Ending

Background

Explanation:

A background is what is happening beyond the story and around the story. The background is what is happening in the big picture. The background could be during a thunderstorm, a drought, a war, a rock concert, a festival, a holy day, when someone famous visits, during a relatives funeral, wedding or engagement. It could be during an important moment in history or in a person's life such as their birthday.

Example:

My story happens a week after the birth of a little sister so all the adults are more concerned about that to pay any attention to the main characters. In the news there is a lot of talk about someone who is setting fires to the trees in local parks. It is in the middle of summer and a heatwave.

Effect:

To add colour and texture to a story, to provide decoration and detail.

Exercise

Choose a background for your story and write it down describing the details.

- Although you do not need to change your synopsis, a good writer will think of a background that complements (helps) their story.
- If your story is going to have a chase then your background might be a festival, if there will be a big confrontation the background could be an approaching storm that builds as the tension rises in the story.
- The background can reflect the synopsis.

Plot Glossary

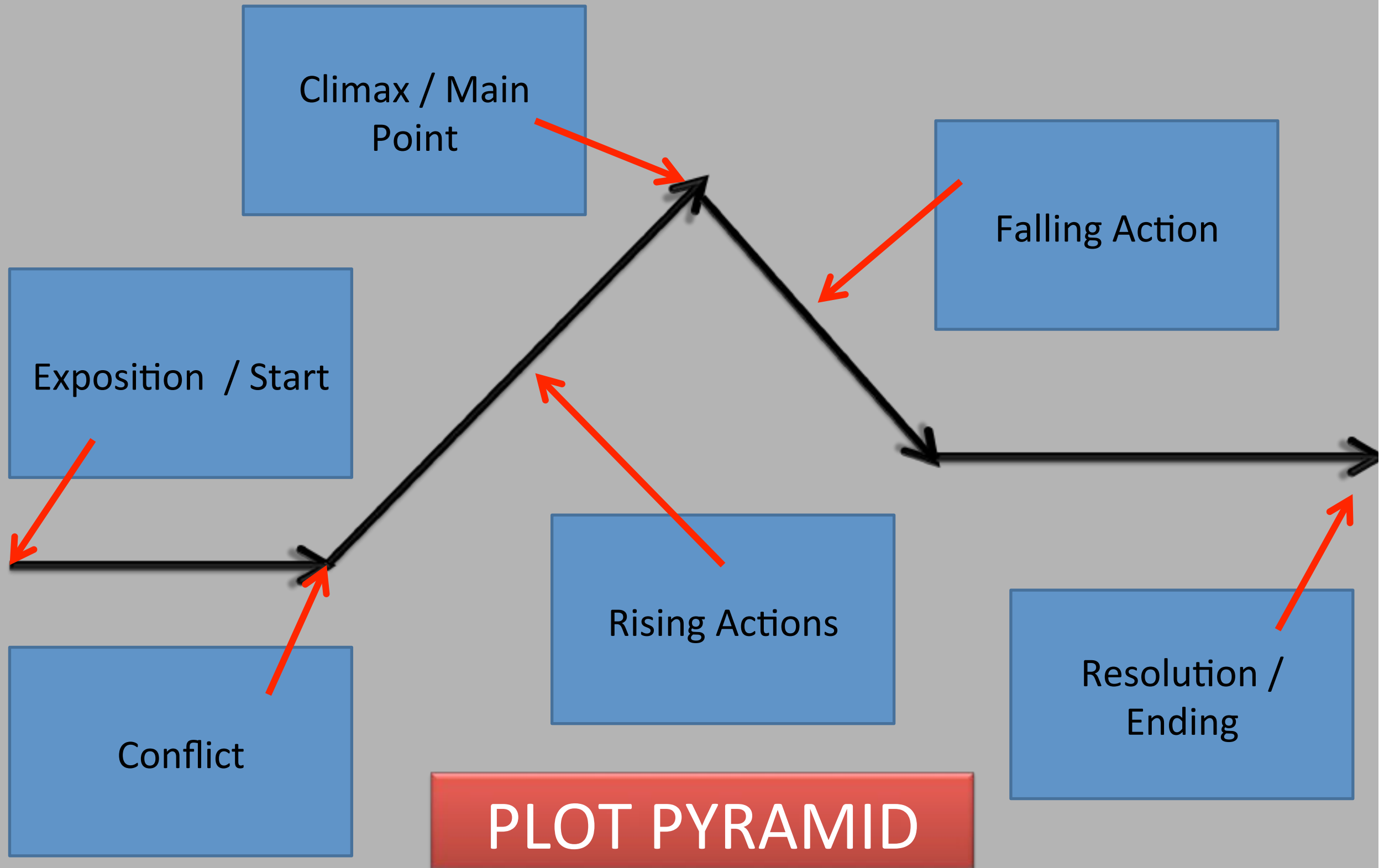


- **conflict:** The basic tension, problem, or challenge that moves the story.
- **rising action:** Parts of a story in which the drama intensifies, rising toward the climax
- **climax:** Most dramatic and important, usually the turning point of the story
- **falling action:** These happen after the climax, when the tension drops and the conflict is removed.

Explanation:

A story begins with **conflict**. As the character experiences complications called **rising actions** they are caught more deeply in the problem. This conflict reaches a **climax**, after which the conflict is overcome, and the **falling actions** leads quickly to the story's end. Things have changed at the **resolution**, either in the character or the situation.

RISING INTEREST



PLOT PYRAMID

RISING INTEREST



The king ant fights the family's son and the son wins.

One sunny day a family go on a picnic.

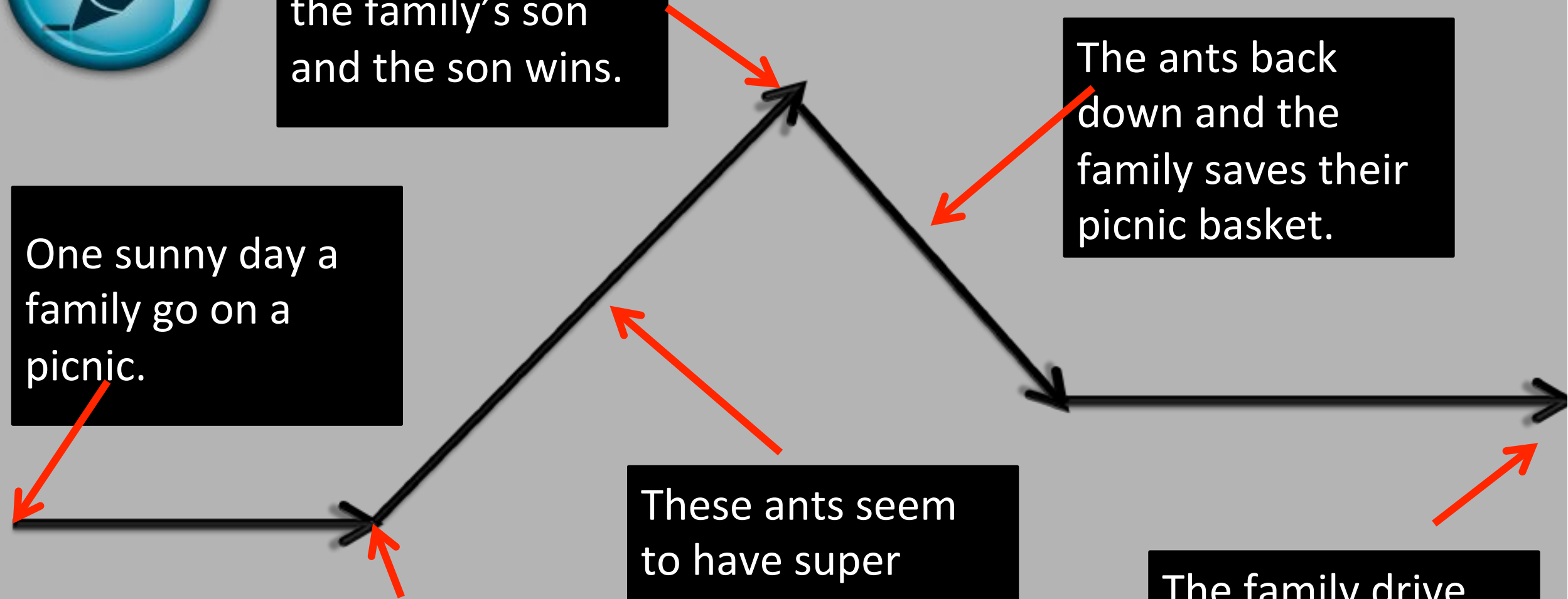
The family are bothered by ants.

These ants seem to have super strength and speed.

The ants back down and the family saves their picnic basket.

The family drive way promising to bring insect killer next time.

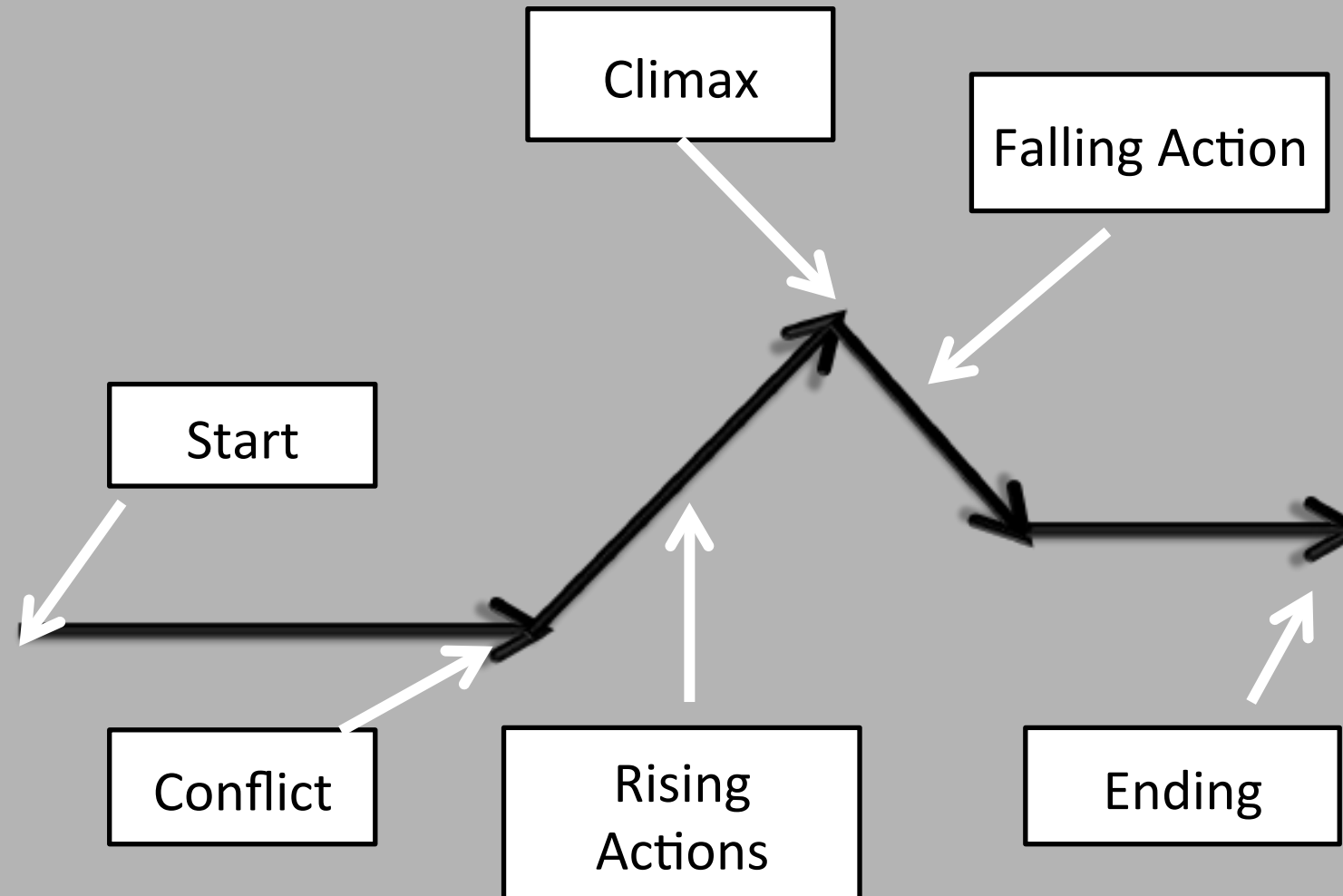
PLOT EXAMPLE



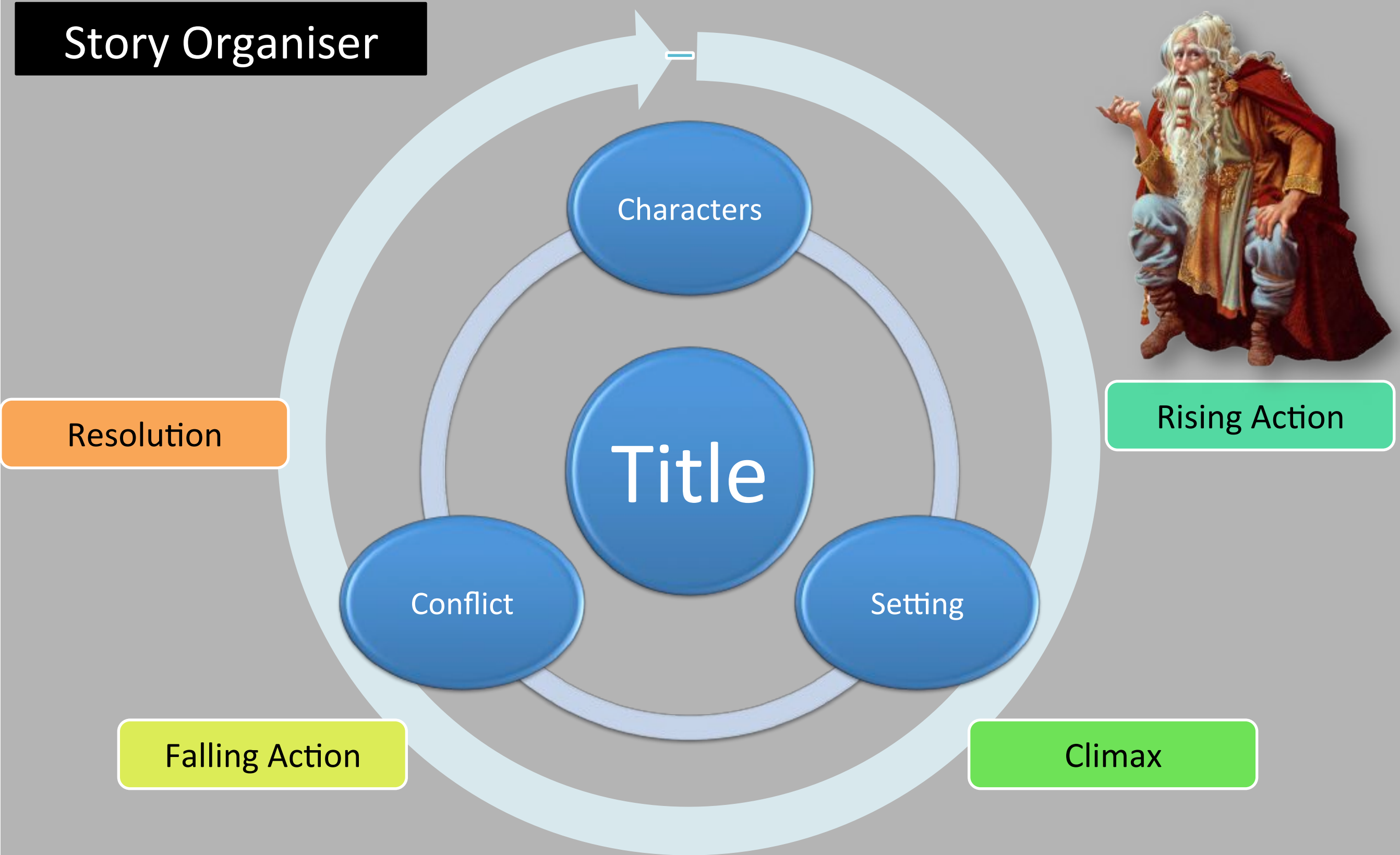
Plot Pyramid

Exercise

Draw your own plot pyramid on your synopsis and fill in the boxes.



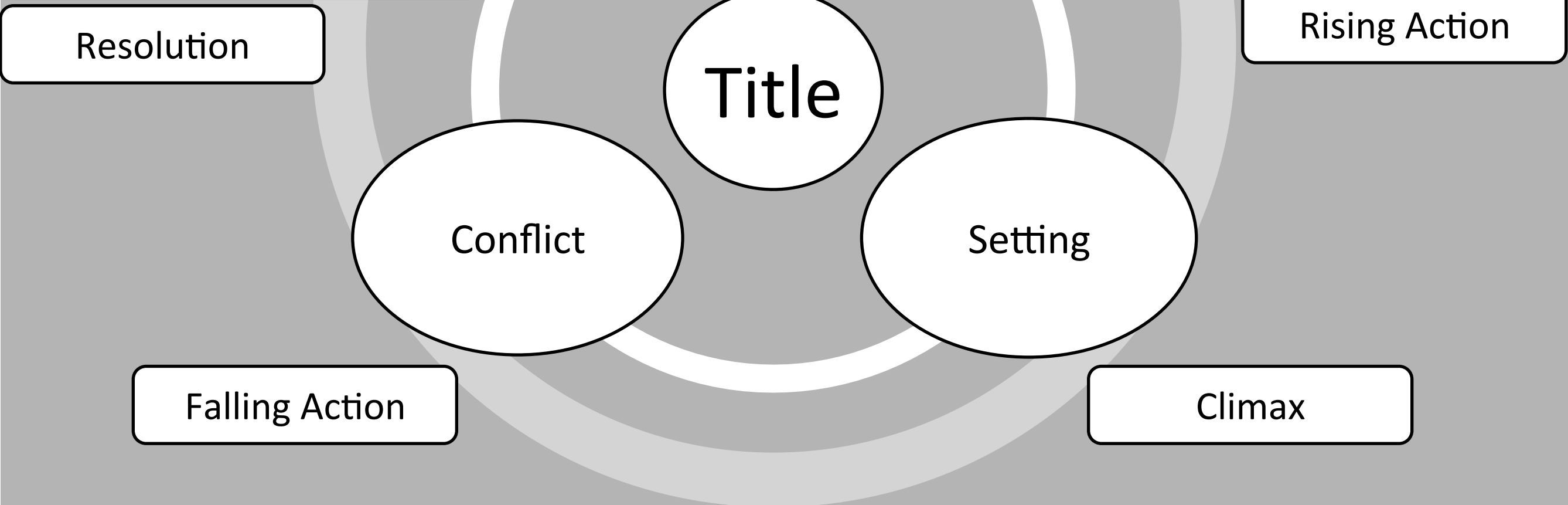
Story Organiser



Exercise

Story Organiser

Draw your own story organiser and fill in the boxes. Use the keywords to make your title.



Character Name

Explanation:

- Unlike a full novel a short story usually focuses on just two or three characters. Most other characters have very little detail.
- When choosing names for characters have their names easy to remember and if possible reflect their personality
- Try to have them sound different from each other to avoid confusion.
- Nicknames are a great way to make characters interesting and they can reflect their personalities.

Example:

Shorty, Greasy, Mouth, Fingers, Beaker, Eyes, Stinky, Shades, Smasher, Doozy and Daddy Long Legs, and Western.

Effect:

For readers to be able to identify and remember different character in a story.

Exercise

- Choose names for your main characters.
- Since you are writing a short story do not choose more than three names.
- Other characters can be referred to by their job or relationship to the main characters; e.g. The science teacher, Slim's mum, The café lady.

Character Traits

Explanation:

- Character traits are usually obvious easily seen attributes of the character.
- Traits are mostly unusually habits, manners or attributes.
- They can include what characters wear, how they dress, favourite sayings, way of speaking, walking, eating. Their likes or dislikes: nicknames, phobias, affiliations or obsessions.
- In a short story usually one or two characters will have obvious traits.

Example:

Kim Careful is an honest and happy person, she loves to wear large floppy hats, but hates mice. She has very long hair that she careful to look after. She always carries a big expensive hair brush in her handbag.

Effect:

- Traits helps the reader identify and remember the characters
- Traits make the reader easily understand character's actions and motivation

Character Traits

Example

adventurous, afraid, ambitious, arrogant, bad, bold, bossy, brainy, brave, brilliant, calm, careful, careless, charming, cheerful, childish, cowardly, cruel, curious, demanding, depressed, dishonest, eager, easy-going, energetic, evil, faithful, fearless, foolish, friendly, funny, gentle, giving, gloomy, graceful, greedy, guilty, happy, healthy, helpful, honest, hopeful, imaginative, impatient, impolite, innocent, inventive, intelligent, jealous, kind, lazy, lonely, loving, loyal, lucky, mature, mean, mysterious, nervous, nice, noisy, obedient, peaceful, pleasant, polite, poor, proud, quiet, responsible, rough, rowdy, rude, sad, scared, selfish, serious, shy, silly, sly, smart, sneaky, spoiled, strange, sweet, talented, thoughtful, thoughtless, trusting, trustworthy, unfriendly, unhappy, upset, warm, weak, wicked, wise, worried, zany.

Character Trait Chart

Loud

- Is in trouble for yelling in a restaurant.

Trait

- Revealed By

Trait

- Revealed By



Character Traits

Exercise

- Create traits for three of your main characters by copying the Character Trait Chart for each character and filling out the boxes.
- By the finish, you should have details of 3 traits for each of your characters.

Trait

• Revealed By

Trait

• Revealed By

Trait

• Revealed By

Character Map

Actions:
What they do.

Says: motto
about life.

Feelings:
mood and
attitude.

Appears:
dress &
manner.



Exercise

Character Map

- Create and fill out Character Maps for three main characters from your story.

Actions

Says

Feelings

Appears

PLOT TWIST

Explanation:

This is an unexpected and surprising ending to a story. Introducing a twist does not mean changing the end given in your synopsis it is instead leading the reader to believe until near the stories end that what they expect will happen is different to the actual ending. Twists make your story more memorable, creative and inventive.

Example:

Kim Careful is an honest and happy person, she loves to wear large floppy hats, but hates mice. She has very long hair that she careful to look after. She always carries a big expensive hair brush in her handbag.

Effect:

Increases reader's surprise interest and enjoyment of the story. It is used to avoid dull and clichéd stories.

Plot Twist

Example:

Synopsis.

The son of a taxi driver hates his father and tries to gain a college degree so that he can lead a separate life. The son becomes a doctor but after years in a hospital he realises that all along he wanted to drive taxis like his father. He gets his licence and one of his passengers later becomes his wife.

The twist is that the son first thinks that the woman taxi passenger is a criminal who has just escaped prison. He thinks this because she resembles a description given on the radio of the criminal. The driver worries that she will take him hostage. After some tense moments he discovers that she is in fact a dentist and not the wanted criminal

Exercise

- Write a plot twist for your story.
- Remember the twist does not change your story. It is your task to make your readers not expect the end that you have already decided on in your synopsis.
- You should implant the idea in the reader's mind that the ending in your synopsis is very unlikely or near impossible.

Point of View

Explanation:

Point of view refers to the source of the narrative voice. The story teller can be placed as.

1st person.

Is usually identifiable by the use of the pronoun "I," Here, a character, usually the protagonist (hero), tells the story.

2nd person.

This is used when the main character is referred to by the second-person pronoun "you".

3rd person.

Occurs when the narrator does not take part in the story. 3rd person narrators can usually give information from anywhere, including the thoughts and feelings of any of the characters. This all-knowing point of view allows the narrator to roam freely in the story's setting.

Exercise

- You are to experiment with point of view.
- Write a paragraph on an event in your short story on the 1st person.
- Rewrite the paragraph two more times. In the 2nd and then the 3rd person.
- Once finished, have your partner read your paragraphs and get feedback from them on which one they felt was the most well written and interesting.

Description

Describing things helps readers see, hear, taste, smell and feel the world within your story. These can include.



- Imagery of sight – the soft glow of a new moon
- Imagery of sound - the soft hiss of skis
- Imagery of smell - the smell of spilled coffee
- Imagery of touch - bare feet on a hot footpath
- Imagery of taste - the strong too sweet smell of overripe bananas

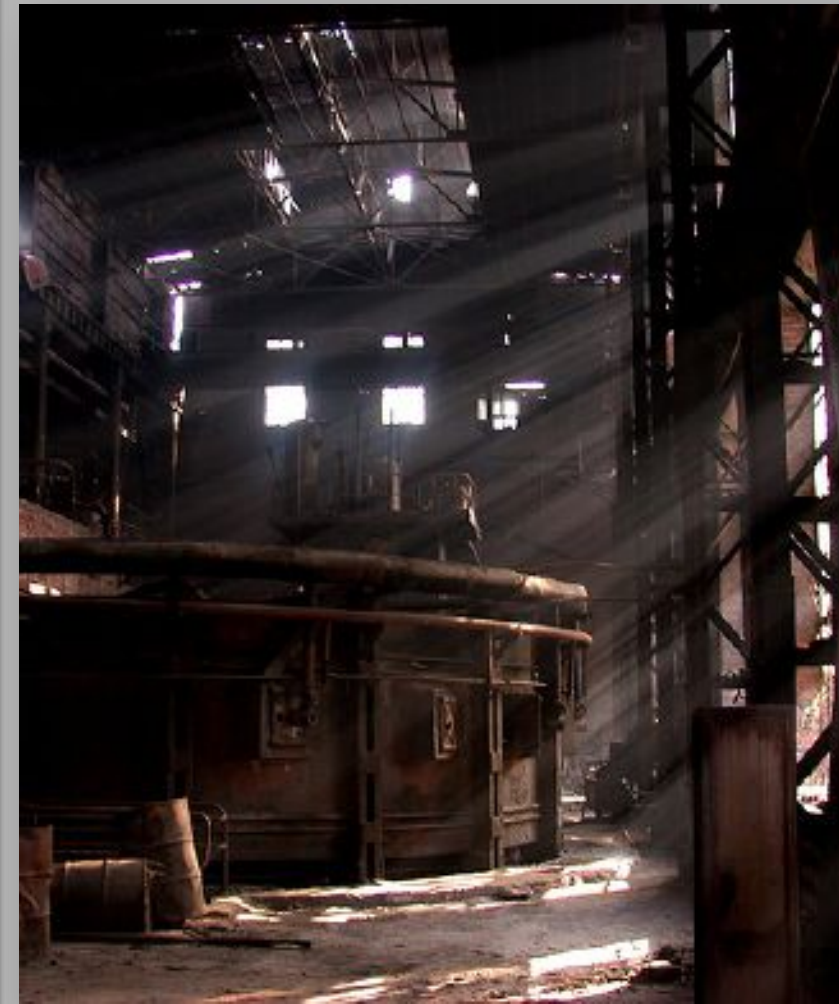
Example for what is

Description & Genre

Abandoned Factory: Genre: Crime.

Seen Broken windows, crates, machines not working, rats.

He saw broken windows that looked like they had been smashed with a hammer. Old crates, that might have carried some illegal drugs, were lying around. Some machines probably used to make something dangerous were scattered about like thrown away people. Rats hung about in gangs at the dark corners.



Description & Genre

Example for what is heard.

Construction Site: Genre Crime.

I heard the strange **painful** creaking of wood and crying of wind. There was the **threatening** sound of birds hovering and swinging chains smashing against the walls like a whip of some **fiend**. I noticed the noise of distant traffic that sounded like **machine guns firing**. An aircraft buzzed overhead like a **police** chopper scanning the area for **drugs**. A train's whistle could be heard fading like the steps of a fleeing **criminal**. Far away there was an **angry** dog barking, probably **threatening** some **intruder**. I heard the many paws of **rats sneaking** about - surrounding me.



Example for what is felt.

Description & Genre

At a Party: Genre Crime:

My drink felt cold like touching the hand of a **corpse**. The floor vibrated with the beat of music like the way a **man trembles** in the interview room of the local **cop shop**. There were people touching in the way that **dirty** people **crush** me on a crowded train or with the crowd of a football match, the kind that can easily turn **violent**.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a tropical jungle. In the upper half, a waterfall cascades down a rocky ledge, surrounded by dense green foliage. The lower half of the image is filled with vibrant pink flowers, possibly bougainvillea, with green leaves interspersed among them. The overall scene is bright and colorful, suggesting a lush, humid environment.

Description

Example of all the senses:

Strange colourful birds soared into the air over the jungle. They squawked in a panicked way. Down below in a burnt clearing thick black smoke was vomiting its fuel into the blue sky. In the crash the plane shook badly, and it was a miracle that Kevin and Jasmine had survived. Kevin could taste dried blood on his lip, and smell leaking oil. Being the older and stronger of the two, Kevin helped Jasmine to her feet and very carefully they scrambled through and out of the twisted wreckage.

Description

Example:

see

hear

feel

taste

Strange colourful birds soared into the air over the jungle. They squawked in a panicked way. Down below in a burnt clearing thick black smoke was vomiting its fuel into the blue sky. In the crash the plane shook badly, and it was a miracle that Kevin and Jasmine had survived. Kevin could taste dried blood on his lip, and smell leaking oil. Being the older and stronger of the two, Kevin helped Jasmine to her feet and very carefully they scrambled through and out of the twisted wreckage.

smell

- Write a 100 or more word description for a place in your story.
1. Make sure you write to your genre. (have words match the genre)
 2. Remember to include sounds, sights, sensations and movement.
 3. If you finish you might want to write a description on other things such as a character or an event.

Dialogue

1. Dialogue is when the characters speak in the story.
2. It can be the thoughts of one character or be a conversation between characters.
3. It should be detailed with actions.
4. Reveal characters' relationships to one another.
5. Move the story forward.
6. Increase the tension.



Example:

Susan looked away sadly out the window that held a view of the foggy bay, “Charles is out there somewhere,” she sighed, “but he won’t give himself up so easily.”

Dialogue Example

"What's the capital of Spain?" Jerry asked, pausing over his crossword puzzle.

Susan looked up from her book and rolled her eyes. "Madrid, duh."

"Why are you so sarcastic all the time?" Jerry slammed his pencil on the table. He looked like he was going to cry. "I don't think I can take much more of this." The phone rang, and Jerry picked it up. "Hello?"

There was a moment of silence on the other end. "Is this Jerry Simmons?" a male voice asked.

"Yeah. Who is this?"

The man paused. Jerry could hear him take a deep breath. "Jerry, my name is Dave. I'm your brother"

"If this is a prank, it isn't funny," Jerry said. "My family died a long time ago."

Dialogue

- Write down a conversation to include in your story.
 1. The conversation can be from any part of your story's plot.
 2. The conversation does not have to be between the main characters but try to have at least one of your main characters in it.
 3. Remember that when the focus switches from one character to another to write on a new line.
 4. Remember have your character do things as they talk which connect to their character traits.

Exercise

- You are now ready to write the rough draft for your story.
- Make sure your draft includes dialogue and description.
- Keep to the correct verb tense.
(Do not change from the past to the present without reason)
- Keep to the correct viewpoint.
(Do not switch from 1st to 3rd person without planning.)
- If you find your story is too short, try writing a description of another location in your story, or including more dialogue with conversations between the main characters.

Rough Draft

- Write the rough draft for your story.
- Make sure your draft includes dialogue and description.
- Keep to the correct verb tense.
(Do not change from the past to the present without reason)
- Keep to the correct viewpoint.
(Do not switch from 1st to 3rd person without planning.)
- If you find your story is too short, try writing a description of another location in your story, or including more dialogue with conversations between the main characters.

"Fatty!" the crowd of boys yelled at me as I struggled with my locker combination. I didn't need to look up, I knew exactly who it was. Bouncer Bruce and the rest of his little herd had zeroed in on me the first day of school and ever since then they had teased me unmercifully. I was well aware that I had gained weight in the summer and I had already been humiliated to start my first day of middle school with my newly grown curves and awkward rolls growing around my belly. I had hoped that no one would notice, but leave it up to Bouncer in his new found popularity to make sure that everyone noticed.

Bouncer was your typical middle school boy. He was shorter than almost all the girls were and he had light brown hair fashioned in a low maintenance bowl cut. You could almost always find him wearing a shirt flashing the phrase "BLANK is life, the rest are just details." You can fill in that blank with any sport you can imagine because this kid had them all. Suddenly this year all the girls decided he was the new hot ticket, they all drooled over him, but he had absolutely no interest in them what so ever. This only made the girls chatter about him and doodle his name on their lockers with even more flourishes. Once all the boys saw the way the girls reacted to Bouncer, they all couldn't wait to be just like him. Every move he made, they all would follow.

After the crowd of boys had passed, and I finally got my locker open, I drudged to math. I hated this class more than any other, not because of the subject, I was actually quite good at math, but because of our seating arrangement. You see the first day of school the teacher set out our places and it just so happened I was placed right next to Bouncer . Each day in the class was torture. I quickly learned not to answer questions out loud and certainly not to ask them, because Bouncer never failed to harass me about it

On my way down the very crowded hall I began to feel very strange. Nothing looked right to me, I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Everyone was moving this way and that, I felt confused and....

STORY CHECKLIST:

1. Write a 100 word synopsis/**summary**.
2. Choose a **genre**.
3. Choose a **setting**.
4. Choose a **background**.
5. **Research** setting and background.
6. Write a **description** of setting.
7. Choose **main characters** (no more than 3)
8. Choose character **traits**.
9. Choose character **names**.
10. Choose character **motivation**. (what drives them, what they want)
11. Choose **conflict**
12. Decide upon **resolution**. (ending)
13. Choose **twist**
14. Decide create **plot** graph noting plot events (rising action, climax, falling action etc..)
15. Decide on point of **view** (1st, 2nd or 3rd person. I, we, they)
16. Write **dialogue**.
17. Write draft.
18. Have someone **proofread** draft for **feedback**
19. **Edit** draft.
20. Decide on final **title**.
21. Write **good copy**.