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**Elements of Short Stories**

1. **Plot** – sequence of events or incidents that make up a story.
   1. **Exposition** – designed to arouse reader’s interest; background is provided.
   2. **Conflict** – struggle between opposing forces (protagonist vs. antagonist)
      1. **Person vs. Person** – *external* struggle between two or more individuals.
      2. **Person vs. themselves** – *internal* struggle concerning emotion and decision.
      3. **Person vs. nature** – *external* struggle between person and an element of nature or the environment.
   3. **Rising action** – complication or development of the conflict.
   4. **Climax** – turning point of the story; point of most intense interest.
   5. **Falling action** – (denouement) events that lead to resolution.
   6. **Resolution** – outcome of the conflict.

# Parts of a Typical Plot



1. **Character** – is generally the central or focal element in a story.
   1. **Four types of characterization** – techniques the writer uses to develop a character.
      1. Physical description.
      2. Speech and actions of the character.
      3. Direct comment from the narrator.
      4. Speech and other actions of other characters.
   2. **Four types of characters** –
      1. **Round** – complex or presented in detail.
      2. **Dynamic** – developing and learning in the course of the story.
      3. **Flat** – characterized by one or two traits.
      4. **Static** – unchanged from the story’s beginning to end.
2. **Themes of literature / Analyzing characters**
   1. **Motivation** – cause of / reason for actions.
   2. **Behavior** – actions of the character.
   3. **Consequences** – results of actions.
   4. **Responsibility** – moral, legal, or mental accountability.
   5. **Expectations** – what the reader expects.
3. **Mood**
   1. **Setting** – the time and place in which the story is taking place, including factors such as weather and social customs.
   2. **Atmosphere** – the mood to feeling which pervades the story.
4. **Point of view**
   1. **First person** – one character tells the story in the first person. The reader sees and knows only as much as the narrator. Often an unreliable narrator and innocent character.
   2. **Third Person** – an outsider narrator tells the story.
      1. **Omniscient** – the author tells the story using the third person. Author knows all of what is done, said, felt, and thought by the characters. Knows everything about all of the characters, may reveal the motivations, thoughts, and feelings of the characters, and gives the reader information.
      2. **Limited omniscient** – author tell the story from the third person, but limits observations of thoughts and feelings to one character; the author presents the story from this character’s eyes. The author may choose to tell the story through one character or a group of characters’ eyes.
      3. **Objective** – the author is like a movie camera that moves around freely recording objects. However, the author offers no comments on the characters or their actions. Readers are not told the thoughts or feelings of the characters. Presents the action and the character’s speech, without comment or emotion. The reader has to interpret them and uncover their meaning.
5. **Figurative language**
   1. **Simile** – comparison using *like* or *as*.
   2. **Metaphor** – comparison using *is* or a form of *is*.
   3. **Personification** – attributing humanlike qualities to inanimate things.

**Literary Devices**

**What are *short stories*?**

The short story is a piece of prose fiction, usually under 10,000 words, which can be read in one sitting.

**Alliteration**

* The repetition of the same initial consonant sound in two or more consecutive or closely associated words
* Ex: The Wicked Witch of the West went her own way.  The “W” sound is highlighted and repeated throughout the scene.

**Allusion**

* A reference to a person or event in literature, mythology, or history assumed to be known to the reader.

**Ambiguity**

* The multiple meanings, either intentional or unintentional, of a word, phrase, sentence, or passage.

**Anecdote**

* A brief, simple narration of an incident.

**Analogy**

* Comparison that assumes that two objects or events that are alike in one respect will be alike in another.

**Atmosphere**

* The mood established by events, places, or situations
* Ex. ‘Tis better cold, and I am sick at heart”

**Colloquialism**

* Informal conversation language

**Comic Relief**

* A humorous scene or speech in a serious drama which is meant to provide relief from emotional intensity and, by contrast, to heighten the seriousness of the story (i.e. the porter scene in *Macbeth*)

**Diction**

* Author’s choice of words

**Euphemism**

* A gentler, more politically correct way of saying something that could be offensive or upsetting.
* Ex. “Passed away” rather than “dead”

**Euphony**

* Phrases and words that are noted for possessing an extensive degree of notable loveliness or melody in the sound they create.
* Ex. It has been said that the phrase “cellar door” is reportedly the most pleasant sounding phrase in the English language. The phrase is said to depict the highest degree of euphony, and is said to be especially notable when spoken in the British accent.

**Foil**

* A secondary character that contrasts and parallels the main character in the story.

**Hyperbole**

* Exaggeration used not to deceive, but for humorous or dramatic effect.
* Ex. I am so tired I cannot walk another inch.
* Ex. I’m so sleepy I might fall asleep.
* Ex. She nearly died laughing

**Imagery**

* The author uses words and phrases to create “mental images” for the reader.
* Imagery helps the reader to visualize more realistically the author’s writings.
* The term used to describe words or phrases that appeal to the five senses.

**Irony**

* A mode of expression, through words (verbal irony) or events (situational irony), that creates a reality different from (and usually the opposite of) appearance or expectation.
* A writer may:
  + Say the opposite of what he means,
  + Create a reversal between expectation and its fulfillment,
  + Give the audience knowledge that a character lacks, making the character's words have meaning to the audience not perceived by the character.
* Three types of irony:
  + **Dramatic Irony:** A situation in which the audience knows of present or future circumstances that a character does not
  + **Situational Irony:** When there is a inconsistency between results and actual results
  + **Verbal Irony:** When a speaker says one thing but actually means something else. (i.e. sarcasm)

**Juxtaposition**

* Placing words or ideas side by side for contrast

**Metaphor**

* An implied comparison between two unlike things (without using the words *like* or *as)*.
* Ex. He’s a dream.

**Motif**

* Any element, subject, idea or concept that is constantly present through the entire body of literature.
* Using a motif refers to the repetition of a specific theme dominating the literary work.
* Motifs are very noticeable and play a significant role in defining the nature of the story, the course of events and the very fabric of the literary piece.
* Ex. In many famed fairytales, the motif of a ‘handsome prince’ falling in love with a ‘damsel in distress’ and the two being bothered by a wicked step mother, evil witch or beast and finally conquering all to live ‘happily ever after’ is a common motif.

**Onomatopoeia**

* Words whose very sound is very close to the sound they are meant to depict.
* Words such as grunt, huff, buzz and snap are words whose pronunciation sounds very similar to the actual sounds these words represent. In literature such words are useful in creating a stronger mental image. For instance, sentences such as “the whispering of the forest trees” or “the hum of a thousand bees” or “the click of the door in the nighttime” create vivid mental images.

**Oxymoron**

* The joining of two terms that would otherwise seem contradictory (i.e. death in life, loving hate, pleasing pains, jumbo shrimp, hells angels, an open secret, found missing, seriously funny)

**Paradox**

* A paradox that seems on the face of it to be logically contradictory or absurd, yet turns out to be interpretable in a way that actually makes good sense
* Ex. From car racing: one has to be slow to go fast

**Pathetic Fallacy**

* This occurs when events in the natural world imitate the inner state of a character or reflects the mood of a scene.
* Ex. raining outside when there is sadness

**Pathos**

* That which arouses pity – characters that arouse a feeling of pathos are usually young, innocent, and undeserving of their fate.

**Personification**

* A literary device in which human qualities or actions are attributed to inanimate objects.
* Ex. The dancing flowers

**Pun**

* A play on words that are either identical in sounds (homonyms) or very similar in sound, but are sharply diverse in meaning.
* Although many puns are humorous, they often have serious literary uses

**Rhetorical Question**

* Questions used to involve the reader

**Simile**

* The practice of drawing parallels or comparisons between two unrelated and dissimilar things, people, beings, places and concepts.
* Similes are marked by the use of the words ‘as’ or ‘such as’ or ‘like’.
* Ex. He is like a mouse in front of the teacher.
* Ex. My pimple is as big as Mount Everest.

**Soliloquy**

* A speech in which a character is alone with her or his private thoughts; it tells the audience what the character is thinking

**Symbol**

* A symbol is literary device that contains several layers of meaning, often concealed at first sight, and is representative of several other aspects, concepts or traits than those that are visible in the literal translation alone.
* A symbol is an object or action that means something more than its literal meaning.
* Ex. The phrase “a new dawn” does not talk only about the actual beginning of a new day but also signifies a new start, a fresh chance to begin and the end of a previous tiring time.

**Thesis**

* The writer’s argument or position

**Tone**

* Writer’s attitude towards his subjects and/or audiences