

**8KindsOfScenes**

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**On\_Implementing\_CaseBased\_Reasoning\_with\_Large\_Language\_Models.pdf**

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For a case-based reasoning / retrieval augmented generation project, I want to extract "scenes", "sequels" and other narrative segments from stories.

In Dwight Swain's scene/sequel theory, a "scene" is a narrative segment in which a character with a goal takes an action and meets disaster (or success, at the end of the story), and a "sequel" is a narrative segment in which a character facing disaster emotionally reacts, considers their options, and selects a new goal.

However, there are other kinds of narrative segments - introductions, backstory which can set the stage, epilogues, author commentary, and more.

What I would like to understand is the status of both cognitive scientific research and professional writing practice on narrative segments - what are scenes and sequels and other narrative segments, how are they defined in professional writing practice, what scientific evidence exists that these are real parts of stories, and what natural language understanding work has been done to programmatically extract them.

Thanks for the detailed setup! To thoroughly explore the cognitive science and professional writing perspectives on narrative segments (like scenes, sequels, and other parts such as backstory, intros, epilogues), could you clarify a few things to guide the research?

1. Are you mostly interested in fiction (e.g., novels, short stories), or would you like to include film, TV, and interactive media (like games)?
2. Should we prioritize cognitive psychology and narrative comprehension studies (e.g., Mandler, Graesser, etc.) or also include AI/NLP models for narrative segmentation?
3. Are you looking for an academic literature review or more of a synthesis that includes both practical writing advice and scientific findings?

Let me know so I can tailor this exactly to your goals.



Thanks! I am interested in:

- 1) Primarily narrative fiction like novels and short stories.
- 2) Please include both cognitive psychology / narrative comprehension studies as well as AI/NLP models.

3) I would like a synthesis that includes both practical writing advice and scientific findings, but leaning more towards an academic approach..

Great, I'll gather research and insights on narrative segments in fiction, focusing on the scene/sequel distinction and broader structures like backstory, introductions, and epilogues. I'll synthesize findings from both cognitive psychology and narrative comprehension research, as well as AI and NLP efforts to automatically segment or classify these parts of narrative fiction. I'll also incorporate professional writing perspectives where relevant to highlight how these concepts are defined and applied in practice. I'll let you know as soon as I have a comprehensive overview ready.



Narrative Segments in Fiction: Cognitive Science, Writing Practice, and NLP

## Narrative Segments in Fiction: Scenes, Sequels, and Other Structures

Fiction writers commonly think of stories as composed of distinct **narrative segments** or units, each serving a specific purpose. Classic craft advice (e.g. Dwight V. Swain's scene-sequel model) divides narrative flow into alternating segments of **"scene"** (action units) and **"sequel"** (reaction units)[codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com)[codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com). Beyond this, writers also recognize segments like **introductions** (or prologues) that set the stage, **backstory** passages that reveal history, **epilogues** that provide closure, and **author commentary** where the narrator or authorial voice steps outside the story. This report synthesizes how these segments are defined in professional writing practice, what cognitive research says about their psychological reality, and how AI/NLP research has attempted to automatically identify such segments in text.

## Narrative Segments in Professional Fiction Writing

**Scenes and Sequels (Swain's Theory):** In Swain's influential model from *Techniques of the Selling Writer* (1965), a **Scene** is a unit of dramatic action driven by a character's immediate goal, encountering conflict, and ending in some outcome or "disaster"[codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com). For example, a scene might show a detective pursuing a suspect (goal) but being thwarted by obstacles (conflict) until the suspect escapes (disaster). A **Sequel** follows to process the fallout: it portrays the character's emotional **reaction**, their **dilemma** or analysis of the situation, and a **decision** that sets up the next goal[codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com)[codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com). In essence, scenes are the "action" segments where events happen in real time, and sequels are the "reaction" segments that bridge between scenes by showing characters reflecting, regaining footing, and planning next actions. Writing instructors emphasize that alternating scene and sequel creates a natural ebb and flow in pacing [codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com)[codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com). Scenes carry the story's external plot forward with tension and momentum, while sequels develop character depth and allow readers to emotionally catch up [codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com)[codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com). This pattern is widely taught as a way to maintain logical cause-effect progression and reader engagement. For instance, novelist Randy Ingermanson notes that a scene propels the plot with conflict and a setback, and the sequel "connects scenes" by delving into the character's internal response (often structured as reaction, dilemma, decision leading into a new goal)[codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com)[codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com). Many contemporary authors use this

technique (consciously or intuitively) to ensure their narrative doesn't lag: the scene provides excitement or plot development, and the sequel provides context, meaning, or setup for the next turn [codyburleson.com](https://codyburleson.com). In practice, not every novel rigidly alternates these segments, but the scene–sequel terminology remains a popular framework in fiction craft literature for discussing how to balance *showing* versus *telling* and action versus exposition.

**Introductions and Prologues:** Most stories begin with some form of introduction that establishes context, setting, or tone. In novels, a **Prologue** is a dedicated opening section (separate from Chapter 1) that often presents background detail or an earlier story event that precedes the main narrative [cathleentownsend.com](https://cathleentownsend.com). It “establishes the context and gives background details, often some earlier story that ties into the main one” [cathleentownsend.com](https://cathleentownsend.com). For example, a thriller might open with a prologue depicting a crime in the past, before the main plot begins. Introductions set the stage by introducing the world, main characters, or a looming conflict. They often answer the who, where, and when of the story up front (what narrative theorists call the orientation or exposition). Good practice dictates that even if a prologue provides useful setup, the main story should still make sense without it [cathleentownsend.com](https://cathleentownsend.com). The introduction's goal is to hook the reader while orienting them – a balancing act between intrigue and clarity. In professional advice, authors are warned not to front-load too much exposition; rather, an effective introduction should smoothly weave in necessary background while piquing interest. For instance, a brief scene that shows the protagonist in their normal world can double as introduction by hinting at their status quo and setting, before the inciting incident disrupts it.

**Backstory and Flashbacks:** **Backstory** refers to any narrative material that reveals events and information from before the story's “present” timeline. This can be delivered via flashbacks (fully dramatized past scenes), narrative summary, dialogue (characters recalling the past), or exposition. In fiction craft, backstory is seen as vital for giving characters depth and motivations – “*who they have been and what they have done*” shapes “*who they are, what they want, and why they do what they do*” [janefriedman.com](https://janefriedman.com). Well-deployed backstory **brings characters to life**, making their actions more understandable and meaningful [janefriedman.com](https://janefriedman.com). However, writers are cautioned that backstory is a “power tool” to use carefully: too much too soon can slow pacing or sidetrack the main plot [janefriedman.com](https://janefriedman.com). The ideal is often to “**weave**” backstory **seamlessly into the narrative** rather than dumping it in large blocks [janefriedman.com](https://janefriedman.com). For example, a single line of dialogue (“You're late again,” one character says, with a sigh) can hint at a history between characters without a full flashback [janefriedman.com](https://janefriedman.com). Larger backstory segments might appear as flashbacks – distinct scenes that momentarily take the reader to a previous time to reveal crucial events. These are usually signaled clearly (through a chapter heading, a shift in verb tense, or a line break and wording that indicates a time jump) to avoid confusion. In summary, backstory segments enrich the narrative's context and emotional stakes, but they must be relevant and well-timed. Professional editors often advise that any backstory included should either heighten the reader's understanding of the current story conflict or build empathy for characters; otherwise it risks feeling extraneous.

**Epilogues (Aftermath and Resolution):** Many novels (and some short stories) end with an **Epilogue** – a final section that comes after the main climax and resolution. An epilogue typically steps forward in time or outward in perspective to show the aftermath of the story's events and give the reader closure [blog.reedsy.com](https://blog.reedsy.com). It is considered *part of the story* (usually told in the same narrative voice) but outside the main narrative arc's timeframe [blog.reedsy.com](https://blog.reedsy.com). For example, after the main conflict is resolved in the final chapter, an epilogue might show the protagonists a year

later, living out consequences or fulfilling dreams, thus tying up loose ends. The epilogue's purpose is often to answer lingering questions about characters' fates or to reinforce the story's theme with a last reflection [blog.reedsy.com](https://blog.reedsy.com/cathleentownsend.com) [cathleentownsend.com](https://cathleentownsend.com). Notably, an epilogue is distinct from an *afterword*; if the author steps in as themselves to comment directly to the reader, that is considered an afterword (a non-narrative commentary) rather than an epilogue [cathleentownsend.com](https://cathleentownsend.com). In fiction writing practice, epilogues are optional and should be concise. It's often said that if the story's final chapter already provides full closure, an epilogue may be unnecessary. But when used, epilogues can provide a "grace note" – a brief additional scene that lets readers savour the outcome or see the longer-term implications of the story [blog.reedsy.com](https://blog.reedsy.com). A famous example is the epilogue of the *Harry Potter* series, which jumps forward years to show the characters grown up; this isn't needed for the plot, but it offers emotional satisfaction by depicting life after the main adventure [cathleentownsend.com](https://cathleentownsend.com). Epilogues can also hint at a sequel or the future of a story world. As one writing guide puts it, an epilogue "ties up the story's central theme" or shows characters carrying on, giving the audience a cathartic release after the climax [blog.reedsy.com](https://blog.reedsy.com) [blog.reedsy.com](https://blog.reedsy.com).

**Author Commentary and Narratorial Intrusion:** Occasionally, a narrative will include segments where the **narrator or author voice steps outside the immediate story** to address the reader or comment on the events. This can be called **authorial commentary, narratorial commentary**, or an intrusion. Classic 19th-century novels (like those of George Eliot or Jane Austen) frequently contain passages where the narrator provides general observations or philosophical commentary, effectively speaking *about* the story rather than advancing the action. In narratology terms, this happens when the reader is pulled out of "story time" and into a direct communication with the narrator in the narrating moment [lunduniversity.lu.se](https://lunduniversity.lu.se). One scholar defines narratorial commentary as occurring "*when the reader is invited into a narration-now sphere... pulled away from the succession of events and addressed by the narrator*" [lunduniversity.lu.se](https://lunduniversity.lu.se). These segments often involve the narrator **generalizing about the story's events, addressing the reader explicitly ("dear reader," etc.), or reflecting on the moral and meaning of the narrative** [lunduniversity.lu.se](https://lunduniversity.lu.se). For example, in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, the omniscient narrator sometimes pauses the forward motion to meditate on a character's nature or to draw broader conclusions – those paragraphs are authorial commentary. In contemporary fiction, heavy-handed author intrusion is less common (as modern style favors showing action through characters' perspectives), but it still appears in certain styles, such as metafiction or humorous asides in which the storyteller's voice is part of the charm. Author commentary segments can serve to guide the reader's interpretation (what classical narratology calls "evaluation" – explaining why a story event is significant) [didattica.uniroma2.it](https://didattica.uniroma2.it). They might also inject the author's thematic message or foreshadow events. However, since they halt the story's forward momentum, they must be used judiciously. Writers are often advised that if they break the fourth wall or go on a narrative digression, it should either be very engaging in its own right or very brief. When done well, narratorial commentary can add richness and a sense of conversational storytelling or thematic depth; when done poorly, it can feel preachy or pull the reader out of the immersive experience.

## Cognitive Perspectives: Are These Segments "Real" in Narrative Comprehension?

From a cognitive science and psycholinguistic perspective, many of these narrative segments correspond to identifiable structures in how readers mentally process and remember stories. Research on **story schemas** and **event segmentation** suggests that readers naturally break

narratives into meaningful units during comprehension. In particular, the concept of a **scene** (a contiguous unit of action in one setting) aligns with what cognitive psychologists call an **event model** or episode in a story. According to the **Event Indexing Model** of narrative comprehension, readers track dimensions like time, space, characters, and causality; when there is a significant shift in one of these (say a change of location or a jump in time), readers recognize an **event boundary** and often need to update their mental model [link.springer.com](https://link.springer.com). Empirical studies have shown that at these boundaries (for example, the end of one scene and the start of another), reading times typically increase – presumably because the reader is performing extra processing to integrate or initiate a new situation model [link.springer.com](https://link.springer.com). In other words, **scenes as defined in writing (continuous action in one time/place) have cognitive reality**: when a scene ends or a new scene begins, readers detect the shift. They may pause (consciously or not) to absorb the change, and memory for information is organized around those event units. Indeed, memory experiments indicate that people have stronger associative recall for events within the same episode than across an event boundary, implying that the mind chunks information by scenes. So, the idea of a scene as a fundamental narrative unit is supported by how we process events in sequence.

Cognitively, **Swain's scene-sequel pattern** also has parallels in story comprehension theory. Early story schema research (often used in education and psychology) broke narratives into components such as *Setting*, *Initiating Event*, *Goal/Attempt*, *Outcome*, and *Reaction* [ualberta.ca](https://ualberta.ca). Notably, a full “episode” in story grammar terms consists of an initiating event that provokes a character goal, leading to attempts and an outcome, followed by the character’s reaction to that outcome [ualberta.ca](https://ualberta.ca). This is remarkably similar to the scene (goal → conflict/attempt → outcome) and sequel (reaction → dilemma → new goal) segmentation that writers use. For example, story grammar frameworks include an element called *Reaction* – “*how the character(s) feel or think about the outcome*” [ualberta.ca](https://ualberta.ca) – which is essentially what the sequel segment dramatizes. Experimental work with children and adults finds that including those elements (a clear outcome and subsequent reaction) makes a story feel more complete and satisfying [ualberta.ca](https://ualberta.ca). This suggests that our narrative cognition expects both the action and the follow-through. Thus, while an average reader might not label a passage a “sequel” explicitly, they intuitively register when the story is in reflection mode versus action mode, and both contribute to comprehension (the action creates suspense and questions; the reflection provides answers and emotional resolution, preparing for the next cycle).

The general “**introduction – body – conclusion**” structure of narratives also appears to be cognitively natural. Humans seem to expect a beginning that introduces context, a middle where events unfold, and an ending that wraps up. Cognitive psychologists Robertson and Pennebaker (2020) analyzed thousands of narratives and found consistent patterns: at the start of stories there’s a high frequency of “staging” language (articles, prepositions, etc.) that sets scenes and context, which then decreases as the plot progresses [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). This quantitative finding aligns with the intuitive role of an introduction or prologue – early in a story, writers spend more effort establishing the setting and characters (e.g. describing who/what/where). As the story moves into the middle, the language shifts toward more pronouns, action verbs, and emotional words as the **plot progresses and conflicts arise** [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). By the end, often there’s a resolution and possibly a reflective coda. Such internal structure is so common that even if a reader isn’t consciously aware of it, violations of it can feel “off.” For instance, if a story provided no orientation (dropping readers cold into complex action), readers often experience confusion; this reflects that our comprehension benefits from some kind of introduction segment to build a mental model of the story world. Similarly, readers expect stories to wind down after the climax – an abrupt



stop with no epilogue or resolution can feel emotionally unsatisfying (unless the ambiguity is intentional). **Epilogues**, therefore, cater to a cognitive desire for closure. Psychologically, an epilogue can reinforce the story's outcome in memory by explicitly stating consequences or the future state of characters, which can aid in consolidating the narrative's meaning.

When it comes to **author commentary or narratorial intrusion**, the cognitive effects are nuanced. On one hand, commentary segments can guide readers' understanding, as they often explicitly state themes or judgments that readers might otherwise infer. From the lens of discourse processing, these segments function as a higher-level narrative voice "talking about the story." In William Labov's analysis of oral narratives, for example, the *Evaluation* component serves to tell the listener why the story matters, often via commentary embedded in the narrative [thestudentroom.co.uk](http://thestudentroom.co.uk). Readers are capable of recognizing this shift in mode – brain imaging studies even suggest that different networks may activate when processing factual exposition or commentary versus immersing in events (with commentary engaging more abstract reasoning or autobiographical networks). However, frequent intrusions can also disrupt **narrative transportation**, the state of being mentally immersed in the story's world. Cognitive experiments on narrative engagement note that a consistent viewpoint and minimal extraneous asides tend to increase immersion and emotional response. Thus, when an author addresses the reader directly or steps back to philosophize, it can create a metacognitive moment: the reader becomes aware of the storytelling itself. This can reduce *suspension of disbelief* momentarily, but it might increase reflection or intellectual engagement. In sum, segments like author commentary are cognitively *real* in the sense that readers distinguish them from the main story events (often slowing down to interpret the commentary) and these segments serve functions like emphasizing the story's significance or the narrator's personality. The human mind is flexible in following these shifts, but they remain marked events in the reading experience (think of how you notice when a novel's narrator suddenly speaks in first person plural "we" to generalize – you step back and take note of the meaning).

Overall, cognitive research supports that many traditional narrative segments correspond to **meaningful processing units**. We mentally separate the **expositional beginning**, the sequence of **eventful scenes** (and likely their aftermaths), and the **wrap-up** of a story. We also detect changes in narrative mode (action vs. reflection vs. commentary) and use them to build a coherent representation of the story's structure. That said, not every reader consciously labels these segments, and real narratives often blend them (e.g. brief reflections within a scene). But the fact that theories from very different domains – fiction writing handbooks and cognitive psychology labs – converge on similar breakdowns (action vs. reaction, setting vs. event, etc.) shows that these narrative segments are not just arbitrary conventions: they resonate with how we make sense of stories.

## AI and NLP Research on Identifying Narrative Segments

Automatically detecting narrative segments like scenes, backstories, or commentary in text is a challenging task that has attracted interest in AI and natural language processing. Recent work in **computational narrative understanding** has begun to tackle the segmentation of fiction into meaningful parts, though with varying success. One focus has been on **scene segmentation** in novels and stories. In 2021, Zehe et al. introduced the task of automatically identifying scene boundaries in narrative text [aclanthology.org](http://aclanthology.org). They defined a **scene** in computational terms much like authors do: a segment where the time and place remain consistent and the characters present

are largely the same, representing a continuous piece of the story's action [aclanthology.org](https://aclanthology.org). To study this, they created an annotated corpus of scenes in German pulp fiction novels and found that human annotators could agree reasonably well on where scenes break (inter-annotator agreement ~0.7) [aclanthology.org](https://aclanthology.org). However, when they trained models (including a BERT-based neural network) to predict these scene breaks, the performance was quite modest – an F1 score around only 24% [aclanthology.org](https://aclanthology.org). This low score underscores the difficulty of the task: **scene boundaries are not marked explicitly in plain text** (unless an author uses chapter breaks or asterism markers), so an algorithm has to infer them from subtle cues like changes in tense, the introduction of a new setting, or shifts in characters and events. While topic segmentation algorithms (like TextTiling) exist, they aren't fully sufficient for scenes because a new scene isn't just a new topic; it's a new *situation* in the story. A scene change might occur even without a drastic topic change (e.g. the same plot thread continues, but hours later in a different location), which confuses purely topical segmentation. Researchers have explored features like temporal cues (time jumps), spatial indicators (location names), and character mentions to train machine learning models to spot scene transitions [aclanthology.org](https://aclanthology.org) [aclanthology.org](https://aclanthology.org). Progress is being made, but clearly, **robust scene extraction remains a hard problem**. The motivation for getting it right is strong: if NLP systems can break a long narrative into scenes automatically, it would help with tasks like summarization (summarize each scene then aggregate) or information retrieval from novels. It could also aid literary analysis at scale, like comparing the narrative pacing of different authors by looking at how many scenes they use and how long they are [aclanthology.org](https://aclanthology.org).

Beyond scenes, other narrative segments pose their own challenges for AI. **Detecting flashbacks or backstory segments**, for instance, requires temporal reasoning. Some research has looked at **event ordering** in narratives – identifying which events happen out of chronological order. If a system can detect that a passage's events occur prior to the main storyline (perhaps via past perfect verbs like “had done” or explicit year markers), it can flag that passage as a flashback or backstory. One example is work on *narrative timeline extraction*, where algorithms identify the temporal sequence of events despite the narrative ordering; these often must implicitly recognize backstory insertions. A 2021 study by Wu, Young, and Christie even developed a **cognitive model of flashbacks** to guide computational narrative generation [grafiati.com](https://grafiati.com). While that research was more about creating stories with flashbacks, the underlying models needed to distinguish segments that shift the reader to a past event (flashback) and then back to the present timeline. Similarly, detecting an **introduction or prologue** might rely on positional features (text at the very beginning before main chapters) or stylistic cues (a shift in narrator or a broad world overview tone). This is comparatively easier, especially if the prologue is explicitly labeled in the text. Some digital literary analysis projects have simply used the first chapter or any section titled “Prologue” to isolate the introduction segment in a novel for separate study.

**Epilogues** can be spotted in a similar way – often marked by the word “Epilogue” or by being a final section that is set apart. If not explicitly labeled, algorithms could potentially detect an epilogue by looking for a jump forward in time after the main climax, or a change in narrative focus. However, there hasn't been much need for a sophisticated model to detect epilogues specifically, as they are usually structurally obvious or author-indicated in novels.

A more subtle task is identifying **narratorial commentary or authorial intrusion** in text. This requires distinguishing the narrator's evaluative or general statements from normal plot narration. Potential NLP approaches include looking for direct address (second person “you” outside of dialogue, or phrases like “dear reader”), as well as shifts to present tense or a different style that

indicates the narrator is now speaking as a commentator. For example, if in the middle of a past-tense narrative a paragraph appears with present-tense philosophical musings, a model might learn to classify that as commentary. There hasn't been a dedicated large-scale project solely on narratorial commentary detection, but related work exists in sentiment and point-of-view analysis. For instance, detecting the narrator's subjective opinions (versus objective event description) could overlap with finding commentary segments. We see hints of this in computational narratology: researchers have explored **narrative levels** – which include frame narratives and embedded stories told by characters [aclanthology.org](#). In doing so, they sometimes must detect when the text switches from one narrative layer to another (e.g. from the main story to a story-within-the-story). This is analogous to detecting when the narrator steps out of the story layer to speak externally. One recent effort (Reiter et al. 2022) attempted to identify breaks between narrative levels (like transitions into letters, diary entries, or tales told by characters within a novel) [aclanthology.org](#). They found it to be a challenging task even for experts, let alone AI, underlining that **narrative segmentation beyond surface cues is a complex understanding problem** [aclanthology.org](#).

Another line of AI research has sought to label **plot structure** in narratives. For example, the ProppLearner corpus developed by Finlayson (2015) contains annotations of Russian fairy tale texts with the classic Proppian functions (like "Villainy occurs" or "Hero receives a magical aid") [aclanthology.org](#). While Propp's morphology of the folktale is a very specific schema, it effectively segments the narrative into functional units. Machine learning models have been trained to recognize these from text, essentially learning to classify segments of a fairy tale into categories like "task assigned" or "villain defeated." This is a form of narrative segment classification, albeit domain-specific. The results show moderate success in tightly constrained story domains, but applying similar techniques to modern free-form novels is far more difficult due to their diversity. Still, it demonstrates the principle that narrative segments (in this case, functional events in a plot) can be algorithmically detected with enough constraints and annotations.

We are also seeing early work in using NLP to recognize **high-level story phases** (like exposition, rising action, climax, resolution). For instance, computational analyses of movie scripts have tried to pinpoint the act breaks or the climax based on changes in sentiment or the frequency of certain words. One study on the "narrative arc" quantified patterns of "cognitive tension" (conflict) in stories and found a common shape that an algorithm might detect – low tension during setup, rising through the middle, and dropping after the climax [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](#). An AI looking for an introduction might find the segment of lowest tension and highest density of proper nouns (character and setting introductions) at the beginning, whereas an epilogue might manifest as a sudden drop in tension after the main conflict is resolved.

In summary, AI and NLP research have begun to chip away at the automatic understanding of narrative structure. **Scene extraction** is a defined task now, with datasets and baseline models [aclanthology.org](#). More complex segments like flashbacks, embedded stories, or commentary are recognized in theory, but robust automated classifiers for them are still largely in the research stage. The overarching challenge is that **understanding narrative segments requires a degree of semantic and sometimes pragmatic comprehension** – something AI struggles with beyond surface patterns. A model might catch that a certain paragraph has a lot of emotion words and comes after an action sequence, and thereby guess it's a sequel (reaction) segment. Or it might notice a paragraph is full of setting descriptions and realize it's exposition. But without true understanding of narrative context, these remain pattern-based guesses. As large language models



and narrative-focused algorithms improve, we can expect better tools that can label a novel's structure: marking which passages are plot action, which are character backstory, where the climax is, and so on. Such tools would be invaluable for editors, educators, and literary analysts – and indeed, for authors who want feedback on their pacing and structure. The research so far has made clear that while the concept of narrative segments is intuitive to us and backed by cognitive reality, teaching it to machines involves capturing subtle linguistic signals and world knowledge. Each year, however, brings us closer to AI that can read a story and map out its scenes, sequels, and other segments, illuminating the architecture that human readers sense implicitly.

### Sources:

- Swain's Scene & Sequel model and writing advice [codyburleson.com](http://codyburleson.com)
- Definitions of prologue and epilogue from writing references [cathleentownsend.com](http://cathleentownsend.com)
- Discussion of backstory in fiction writing [janefriedman.com](http://janefriedman.com)
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- Cognitive studies on event boundaries and reading comprehension [link.springer.com](http://link.springer.com)
- Story grammar components (episode structure) [ualberta.ca](http://ualberta.ca)
- Computational scene segmentation and challenges [aclanthology.org](http://aclanthology.org)
- Narrative level detection and related NLP tasks [aclanthology.org](http://aclanthology.org)



Sources



Let's drill in on the kinds of scenes there are. Let's use the following binomial (two-word) terminology to distinguish narrative theory scenes and Swain-style scenes.

- \* a narrative segment: a contiguous piece of a story, such as a sentence, paragraph, marked section, thematically unified section, or chapter.
- \* a narrative scene: a narrative segment where the time and place remain consistent and the characters present are largely the same, representing a continuous piece of the story's action
- \* a dramatic scene: a scene which forms a unit of dramatic action driven by a character's immediate goal, encountering conflict, and ending in some outcome or "disaster"
- \* a dramatic sequel: a scene which processes the fallout of a dramatic scene, portraying the character's emotional reaction, their dilemma or analysis of the situation, and a decision that sets up the next goal

Using this terminology, a dramatic scene and dramatic sequel are both types of narrative scene. Prologues, epilogues, and authorial insertions may also be narrative scenes, though some prologues and epilogues may be as long as a chapter, stretching the boundaries of narrative scenes and instead just being narrative segments.

Given these definitions and our earlier discussion, please list a comprehensive taxonomy of narrative scenes. For each give a two-or-three word name, a short description and definition, a list of traditional terms as used in cognitive science or writing practice, a list of corroborating references, and some illustrative examples, with references to the source of those examples.

Got it — and thank you for the precise terminology. The research tool I was using to structure long-term investigations is temporarily unavailable, but I can continue assembling the **taxonomy of narrative scenes** right here based on our shared definitions and prior synthesis.

Here's a draft **Taxonomy of Narrative Scenes**, organized into logical groups. Each entry includes:

- **Name** (two- or three-word)
- **Definition**
- **Traditional Terms**
- **References**
- **Example(s)**

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## 1. Dramatic Scene

**Definition:** A narrative scene in which a character pursues an immediate goal, meets conflict or resistance, and ends in success, failure, or disaster.

- **Traditional Terms:** Scene (Dwight Swain), Action Scene, Scene Unit
- **References:** Swain (1965); Ingermanson (2019); McKee (1997)
- **Example:** Frodo decides to leave the Shire in *The Fellowship of the Ring* — he plans to take the Ring to Rivendell, but is confronted by Nazgûl on the road (Tolkien, 1954).

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## 2. Dramatic Sequel

**Definition:** A narrative scene that processes the outcome of a dramatic scene, showing the character's emotional reaction, internal dilemma, and decision about their next goal.

- **Traditional Terms:** Sequel (Swain), Reaction Scene, Reflection-Decision Unit
- **References:** Swain (1965); Kress (2002); Mandler & Johnson (1977)
- **Example:** After Gandalf's fall in *Moria*, the Fellowship grieves, debates what to do next, and chooses to proceed toward Lothlórien (Tolkien, 1954).

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## 3. Framing Scene

**Definition:** A narrative scene that establishes the story's temporal, spatial, or thematic context before the main dramatic action begins.

- **Traditional Terms:** Introduction, Orientation (Labov), Prologue (if marked), Setup Scene
- **References:** Labov (1972); Swain (1965); Freytag's Exposition
- **Example:** The opening of *A Tale of Two Cities* ("It was the best of times...") — a narrated scene setting up the historical climate before introducing characters (Dickens, 1859).

## 4. Epilogue Scene

**Definition:** A narrative scene that occurs after the main plot resolution, often showing consequences, new equilibrium, or thematic closure.

- **Traditional Terms:** Epilogue, Aftermath, Coda
- **References:** Freytag (1863); Swain; Lukens (2007); story grammar closure studies
- **Example:** The "Nineteen Years Later" scene in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Rowling, 2007) showing characters settled into post-conflict life.

## 5. Flashback Scene

**Definition:** A self-contained scene depicting events from before the current timeline, embedded within the narrative for character or plot development.

- **Traditional Terms:** Analepsis, Flashback, Retrospective Scene
- **References:** Genette (1980); Mandler (1984); Wu et al. (2021)
- **Example:** Katniss's flashback to Peeta giving her bread in *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008), enriching their emotional dynamic.

## 6. Reflection Scene

**Definition:** A narrative scene devoted primarily to a character's introspective thought, often philosophical or thematic rather than goal-driven.

- **Traditional Terms:** Interior Monologue, Stream of Consciousness (when stylized), Sequel (subset)
- **References:** Swain; Bruner (1991); Zunshine (2006)
- **Example:** Clarissa Dalloway's wandering thoughts on life, aging, and death in *Mrs. Dalloway* (Woolf, 1925).

## 7. Authorial Commentary Scene

**Definition:** A scene where the narrator steps outside the story's immediate action to address the reader or reflect on the events.

- **Traditional Terms:** Narratorial Intrusion, Authorial Commentary, Evaluation (Labov)

- **References:** Genette (1980); Labov (1972); Booth (1961)
  - **Example:** In *Middlemarch*, George Eliot pauses to reflect on moral complexity: "If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life..." (Eliot, 1871).
- 

## 8. Reaction Scene

**Definition:** A short narrative scene primarily showing a character's emotional and physical response to an unexpected event, but without extended reflection or new decision.

- **Traditional Terms:** Beat Scene, Recovery Scene, Reaction Moment
  - **References:** Swain (1965); McKee (1997)
  - **Example:** When Sam realizes Frodo is gone at the end of *The Two Towers*, collapses, and then runs into the river — a reactive outburst, not full sequel (Tolkien, 1954).
- 

## 9. Climactic Scene

**Definition:** A high-intensity dramatic scene that represents the central turning point or culmination of the narrative arc.

- **Traditional Terms:** Climax, Crisis, Turning Point
  - **References:** Freytag; McKee; Mandler (1984)
  - **Example:** The final courtroom scene in *To Kill a Mockingbird* where Atticus defends Tom Robinson (Lee, 1960).
- 

## 10. Setup Scene

**Definition:** A scene introducing a major plot thread, character, or goal that becomes significant later.

- **Traditional Terms:** Foreshadowing Scene, Plot Seed, Planting Scene
  - **References:** McKee (1997); Field (2005); narrative schemata studies
  - **Example:** The first appearance of Boo Radley in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, planting narrative questions for later payoff (Lee, 1960).
- 

## 11. Scene-within-a-Scene

**Definition:** An embedded narrative scene where a character recounts or performs a story, event, or memory as its own dramatic unit.

- **Traditional Terms:** Frame Story Segment, Embedded Narrative, Narrated Flashback
  - **References:** Genette (1980); Ryan (1991)
  - **Example:** Scheherazade's tales in *One Thousand and One Nights*, or Bilbo's retelling of his past adventures in *The Lord of the Rings*.
-

## 12. Bridge Scene

**Definition:** A transitional narrative scene that connects two major story events or settings without major conflict or decision.

- **Traditional Terms:** Transition Scene, Scene Bridge, Linking Scene
- **References:** McKee (1997); Kress (2002)
- **Example:** The travel montage through the Mines of Moria in *The Fellowship of the Ring* — mainly bridging setting changes (Tolkien, 1954).

## 13. Discovery Scene

**Definition:** A dramatic scene focused on revelation of information that changes a character's understanding of the situation.

- **Traditional Terms:** Discovery, Recognition, Anagnorisis (Aristotle)
- **References:** Aristotle; Mandler (1984); narrative surprise studies
- **Example:** Luke learning Vader is his father in *The Empire Strikes Back* (Lucasfilm, 1980).

Would you like me to turn this into a tabular format or a PDF-style reference document? I can also keep going with more specialized scenes (e.g., suspense scenes, confrontation scenes, comic relief scenes).



Let's list more specialized scenes.

Great! Let's continue expanding the **taxonomy of narrative scenes** with more specialized types, especially those that frequently appear in storytelling across genres. These are still types of **narrative scenes**, and often subclasses of either dramatic scenes or dramatic sequels — but they serve distinct narrative or emotional purposes.

## 14. Suspense Scene

**Definition:** A dramatic scene structured to heighten tension by delaying or obscuring outcomes, often involving danger, uncertainty, or hidden information.

- **Traditional Terms:** Suspense, Ticking Clock, Cliffhanger Build-Up
- **References:** Alfred Hitchcock's theory of suspense (Truffaut, 1966); Mandler (1984); McKee (1997)
- **Example:** The scene in *Jurassic Park* where the children hide from the raptors in the kitchen — danger looms, but resolution is delayed (Crichton, 1990; Spielberg, 1993).

## 15. Confrontation Scene



**Definition:** A high-stakes dramatic scene where characters directly oppose one another's goals, often verbally or physically.

- **Traditional Terms:** Showdown, Confrontation, Argument Scene
- **References:** McKee (1997); Freytag's Climax; conflict analysis in narrative discourse
- **Example:** Elizabeth and Darcy's first major argument in *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813).

## 16. Reveal Scene

**Definition:** A scene where a key piece of information is uncovered, changing the reader's or character's understanding of events or motivations.

- **Traditional Terms:** Revelation, Turning Point, Exposition through Action
- **References:** Mandler (1984); Ryan (1991); Narrative surprise and plot twist studies
- **Example:** The "Soylent Green is people!" moment in *Soylent Green* (film, 1973), reframing the story's stakes.

## 17. Decision Scene

**Definition:** A sequel-like narrative scene focused on a character wrestling with options and ultimately making a meaningful, plot-advancing choice.

- **Traditional Terms:** Internal Conflict Scene, Choice Moment, Crisis of Will
- **References:** Swain (1965); Bruner (1991); Zunshine (2006)
- **Example:** Hamlet's soliloquy "To be or not to be" explores the dilemma of suicide vs. revenge (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ca. 1600).

## 18. Comic Relief Scene

**Definition:** A narrative scene inserted to release tension through humor, absurdity, or irony — often between heavier scenes.

- **Traditional Terms:** Comic Beat, Relief, Interlude
- **References:** Aristotle (Poetics); Campbell (1949); narrative pacing studies
- **Example:** Merry and Pippin raiding the food stores in *The Two Towers* film adaptation — moment of levity amidst war planning (Tolkien, 1954; Jackson, 2002).

## 19. Training Scene

**Definition:** A scene in which a character undergoes learning, practice, or self-improvement in preparation for future conflict or change.

- **Traditional Terms:** Montage (film), Training Sequence, Preparatory Scene
- **References:** Vogler (2007); McKee; Bruner

- **Example:** Mulan learning to fight during the “I’ll Make a Man Out of You” montage (*Mulan*, Disney, 1998).

## 20. Temptation Scene

**Definition:** A dramatic scene where a character faces a morally or emotionally seductive choice that would derail their goal or character arc.

- **Traditional Terms:** Test, Inner Conflict, Trial
- **References:** Campbell’s Hero’s Journey (“The Temptress” stage); Bruner; Jungian archetypes
- **Example:** Frodo tempted by the Ring’s power at Mount Doom (*The Return of the King*, Tolkien, 1955).

## 21. Romantic Scene

**Definition:** A narrative scene advancing a romantic subplot or relationship, involving emotional or physical intimacy.

- **Traditional Terms:** Love Scene, Affection Scene, Romantic Beat
- **References:** Romance narrative schema (Regis, 2003); Swain; McKee
- **Example:** Darcy’s letter and Elizabeth’s reflection in *Pride and Prejudice* — a romantic turning point (Austen, 1813).

## 22. Transformation Scene

**Definition:** A climactic or sequel-like scene where a character changes in a visible or meaningful way, marking growth or regression.

- **Traditional Terms:** Atonement, Character Shift, Catharsis Scene
- **References:** Freytag; McKee; Propp (Function 19: Recognition)
- **Example:** Scrooge waking up reborn after seeing the Ghosts in *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens, 1843).

## 23. Dream or Vision Scene

**Definition:** A narrative scene that suspends realism, depicting symbolic or subconscious content from a dream, vision, or hallucination.

- **Traditional Terms:** Vision, Dream Sequence, Allegorical Scene
- **References:** Jungian psychology; literary symbolism; dream cognition studies
- **Example:** Gregor Samsa awakening as a bug in *The Metamorphosis* (Kafka, 1915) blurs dream/reality boundaries.

## 24. Foreshadowing Scene

**Definition:** A subtle scene placed early in the story whose details later gain significance, hinting at coming events or themes.

- **Traditional Terms:** Planting Scene, Prophetic Scene, Chekhov's Gun
- **References:** Narrative causality theories; McKee; Field
- **Example:** The opening shot of *Citizen Kane* with "Rosebud" as foreshadowing — pays off only in the final scene.

## 25. Celebration Scene

**Definition:** A post-climax or midpoint scene in which characters experience joy, victory, or community, often before renewed conflict.

- **Traditional Terms:** Victory Scene, Feast Scene, Joyful Interlude
- **References:** Campbell (Hero's Return); structuralist narrative arc; Bruner
- **Example:** The medal ceremony in *Star Wars: A New Hope* — closure and triumph following the climax (Lucasfilm, 1977).

Would you like these organized hierarchically into a structured outline or a table (e.g., by function, tone, or act position)? I can also expand this taxonomy into an exportable format like a PDF or CSV for building a tagging system or narrative classifier.



Let's break this down into the attributes of a scene - we can imagine narrative scenes being described by their position in a story, their length, the characters, the setting, the time (present of the narrative, the past, or the future), the events or actions taken, the outcomes, the specific goals of the characters, the values that lie behind the character goals, the theme, the tone, and narrative techniques (first person versus third person, normal versus italics, etc). Some of these may be more important than other.

Please provide a taxonomy of the key attributes that can be used to define these narrative scenes. Again include a brief two-to-three word name, a short definition or description, any traditional terms, types of scenes that they appear in, types of scenes they do not appear in, references, and examples with references to their source.

Excellent — what you're outlining is the foundation for a **scene-typing schema**, useful for both human annotation and machine interpretation. Below is a draft **taxonomy of scene attributes**, each defined as a dimension along which a **narrative scene** (per your earlier terminology) can be described or categorized.

Each attribute includes:

- **Attribute Name** (2–3 words)
- **Definition/Description**
- **Traditional Terms** (from writing practice, cognitive science, or narratology)

- **Commonly Appears In**
  - **Rarely Appears In**
  - **References**
  - **Examples**
- 

## 1. Story Position

**Definition:** Where the scene appears within the overall structure of the story.

- **Traditional Terms:** Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Denouement (Freytag)
  - **Common In:** Framing, Climactic, Epilogue Scenes
  - **Rare In:** Flashbacks (may not fit linear progression)
  - **References:** Freytag (1863); McKee (1997); Labov (1972)
  - **Example:** The duel in *Hamilton* occurs in the falling action/denouement of the narrative (Miranda, 2015).
- 

## 2. Scene Length

**Definition:** The extent of the scene, usually measured in words, paragraphs, or minutes.

- **Traditional Terms:** Beat, Sequence, Chapter (as proxy for scene)
  - **Common In:** Dramatic, Training, Reflection Scenes
  - **Rare In:** Reaction Scenes (often short)
  - **References:** McKee (1997); Field (2005); Text segmentation studies
  - **Example:** The courtroom scene in *To Kill a Mockingbird* spans multiple chapters (Lee, 1960).
- 

## 3. Focal Characters

**Definition:** Characters who are central to the scene's action or perspective.

- **Traditional Terms:** Protagonist, Viewpoint Character
  - **Common In:** Dramatic, Confrontation, Romantic Scenes
  - **Rare In:** Authorial Commentary (may have no characters)
  - **References:** Booth (1961); Genette (1980)
  - **Example:** Clarissa Dalloway is the focal character in most scenes of *Mrs. Dalloway* (Woolf, 1925).
- 

## 4. Spatial Setting

**Definition:** The physical or imagined location in which the scene takes place.

- **Traditional Terms:** Milieu, Scene Setting, Location

- **Common In:** Flashbacks, Dramatic Scenes
  - **Rare In:** Authorial Commentary (abstract space)
  - **References:** Genette; Ryan (narrative worlds)
  - **Example:** The Mines of Moria in *The Fellowship of the Ring* host a complete narrative sequence (Tolkien, 1954).
- 

## 5. Temporal Frame

**Definition:** Whether the scene is set in the story's present, past (flashback), or future (flashforward).

- **Traditional Terms:** Analepsis (past), Prolepsis (future), Present
  - **Common In:** Flashbacks, Dream Scenes
  - **Rare In:** Dramatic Scenes (typically occur in narrative present)
  - **References:** Genette (1980); Bruner (1991)
  - **Example:** Harry's dream/vision of Voldemort is a mix of flashforward and vision (*Harry Potter*, Rowling).
- 

## 6. Narrative Perspective

**Definition:** The point of view from which the scene is told (e.g., first person, third person limited).

- **Traditional Terms:** Focalization, POV, Narrative Voice
  - **Common In:** Reflection, Dramatic, Commentary Scenes
  - **Rare In:** Epilogue (may shift POV)
  - **References:** Genette; Booth; Zunshine (2006)
  - **Example:** Nick Carraway's first-person narration in *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald, 1925).
- 

## 7. Character Goal

**Definition:** The immediate objective or desire driving the focal character's actions.

- **Traditional Terms:** Protagonist Goal, Motivation, Scene Goal (Swain)
  - **Common In:** Dramatic, Confrontation, Temptation Scenes
  - **Rare In:** Reflection, Commentary Scenes
  - **References:** Swain (1965); McKee (1997); Story grammar models
  - **Example:** Katniss's goal in the Reaping scene is to protect her sister (*Hunger Games*, Collins, 2008).
- 

## 8. Underlying Value

**Definition:** A deeper principle or moral belief underlying the character's goal or choice.

- **Traditional Terms:** Value Conflict, Ethical Stakes, Moral Theme



- **Common In:** Temptation, Transformation, Sequel Scenes
- **Rare In:** Comic Relief, Training Scenes
- **References:** Campbell (1949); McKee; Bruner (1991)
- **Example:** Frodo's mercy toward Gollum reflects underlying values of pity and compassion (*LOTR*, Tolkien).

## 9. Outcome or Result

**Definition:** The result of the scene's action — success, failure, reversal, or ambiguous consequence.

- **Traditional Terms:** Scene Ending, Result, Beat Outcome
- **Common In:** Dramatic, Climax, Discovery Scenes
- **Rare In:** Framing, Dream Scenes (often unresolved)
- **References:** Freytag; Swain; Polti's Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations
- **Example:** Hamlet's duel ends in fatal resolution (*Hamlet*, Shakespeare).

## 10. Emotional Tone

**Definition:** The emotional quality or mood conveyed — e.g., tense, joyful, tragic.

- **Traditional Terms:** Mood, Affect, Register
- **Common In:** All scene types — critical for interpretation
- **Rare In:** None (tone is always present, but may be flat)
- **References:** Narrative appraisal theory; discourse affect analysis
- **Example:** The eerie, hopeless tone in the final bunker scene of *Downfall* (film, 2004).

## 11. Thematic Function

**Definition:** How the scene reinforces or explores the story's central themes.

- **Traditional Terms:** Motif, Thematic Beat, Symbolic Scene
- **Common In:** Transformation, Authorial Commentary, Vision Scenes
- **Rare In:** Training, Bridge Scenes (may be plot-forwarding only)
- **References:** Bruner (1991); Campbell; McKee
- **Example:** "Rosebud" as the closing symbol of lost innocence in *Citizen Kane* (film, 1941).

## 12. Narrative Technique

**Definition:** The formal storytelling device or stylistic marker (e.g., italics, embedded narrative, unreliable narration).

- **Traditional Terms:** Frame Story, Metalepsis, Stream of Consciousness

- **Common In:** Authorial Commentary, Dream, Embedded Scenes
- **Rare In:** Conventional Dramatic Scenes
- **References:** Genette (1980); Rimmon-Kenan (2002); cognitive stylistics
- **Example:** Italicized inner monologue in *Mrs. Dalloway* (Woolf, 1925) marks introspection.

This taxonomy can be encoded for:

- **Manual analysis** of story structure
- **Training NLP models** for scene classification
- **Tagging pipelines** in RAG/CBR systems

Would you like this turned into a formal table or schema (e.g., for coding or JSON formats)? I can also propose a scene annotation template or scoring rubric if you're building an analysis tool.



Please propose a formal scene annotation template and/or scoring rubric that could help someone examine a narrative scene along these attributes and identify it as one of the types of narrative scenes that we have identified earlier in the document.

Absolutely — here's a **formal scene annotation template and scoring rubric** designed for human or semi-automated analysis of **narrative scenes**. This tool supports systematic annotation of scenes to:

- Record their key **attributes**
- Help **classify** them into types (e.g., Dramatic Scene, Flashback Scene)
- Support **case-based retrieval**, RAG, or narrative modeling applications



## SCENE ANNOTATION TEMPLATE

Each scene is annotated using the following structured form:

### Basic Metadata

Field	Description
<b>Scene ID</b>	Unique identifier (e.g., <b>CH3_Scene2</b> )
<b>Story Title</b>	Full title of the narrative work
<b>Author</b>	Author or source (e.g., Tolkien, Rowling)
<b>Start Position</b>	Start offset or reference (e.g., chapter/paragraph/sentence)
<b>End Position</b>	End offset or reference

### Attribute Grid

Each attribute is filled in with a label or score. Some are categorical, others scalar or free text.

Attribute	Type	Allowed Values / Format
Story Position	Categorical	Introduction / Rising Action / Climax / Falling Action / Epilogue
Scene Length	Integer	Word count or approximate range (e.g., Short / Medium / Long)
Focal Characters	List	Character names
Setting	Text	Place name or description
Temporal Frame	Categorical	Present / Past (Flashback) / Future / Unclear
Narrative Perspective	Categorical	First Person / Third Person Limited / Omniscient / Unreliable
Character Goal	Text	Describe character's goal or mark "None"
Underlying Value	Text	E.g., Justice, Survival, Love, Freedom (or "N/A")
Outcome	Categorical	Success / Failure / Partial / Unknown / No Outcome
Emotional Tone	Categorical	Tense / Tragic / Joyful / Calm / Reflective / Humorous
Thematic Function	Text	Theme(s) advanced, e.g., "Redemption", "Alienation"
Narrative Technique	Categorical	Italics / Frame Story / Dreamlike / Realist / Authorial Intrusion / None

## ✓ SCENE TYPE SCORING RUBRIC

Once the above is filled out, apply this rubric to classify the scene into **one or more narrative scene types**.

Each scene type has a set of attribute signatures — match the scene's attributes to these definitions. For automation, each category can be scored 0–3 (0 = no match, 3 = strong match).

### 🕒 Scene Type Mapping Matrix (Sample)

Scene Type	Required Attributes	Scoring Rule
Dramatic Scene	Character Goal (✓), Outcome ≠ "None", Emotional Tone ≠ Calm	≥ 2 = match
Dramatic Sequel	Outcome present in prior scene, Character Goal = None, Emotional Tone = Reflective	≥ 2 = match
Flashback Scene	Temporal Frame = Past, Perspective = Internal or third-person	≥ 2 = match
Framing Scene	Story Position = Introduction, Goal = None, Tone = Calm	≥ 2 = match
Authorial Commentary	Perspective = Omniscient or Intrusive, Technique = Authorial Intrusion	≥ 2 = match
Climactic Scene	Story Position = Climax, Outcome = Success/Failure, Tone = Tense/Tragic	≥ 2 = match
Comic Relief Scene	Tone = Humorous, Goal = Minor or N/A	≥ 2 = match
Dream/Vision Scene	Technique = Dreamlike or Frame, Setting = Abstract or Unreal	≥ 2 = match

You can extend this scoring rubric for:

- **Multilabel classification** (scenes can be Flashback + Dramatic)
- **Fuzzy membership** (use probabilities or weights)
- **Machine learning training** (input: attributes; target: scene type)

## Example Annotation (from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*)

Attribute	Annotation
Scene ID	CH9_Scene2
Story Title	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
Author	J.K. Rowling
Start Position	Chapter 9, Paragraph 5
End Position	Chapter 9, Paragraph 12
Story Position	Rising Action
Scene Length	~500 words
Focal Characters	Harry, Malfoy
Setting	Hogwarts, Trophy Room
Temporal Frame	Present
Narrative Perspective	Third Person Limited
Character Goal	Avoid Malfoy and Filch
Underlying Value	Courage, Secrecy
Outcome	Partial (avoids Filch but discovers 3rd floor)
Emotional Tone	Tense, Excited
Thematic Function	Discovery, Trust
Narrative Technique	None

### ✓ Scene Type Classification:

- **Dramatic Scene** = ✓✓✓ (Goal + Outcome + Tense tone)
- **Discovery Scene** = ✓✓ (Partial outcome reveals forbidden corridor)

Would you like this provided as:

- A **fillable template** (CSV / Google Sheet / Notion table)?
- A **Python-compatible schema** (for annotation or modeling)?
- An **interactive web-based annotation tool** (JS or React-based)?

Happy to help convert it to any format you need next!



A Python compatible schema would be great to get started, thank you!

Awesome! Below is a **Python-compatible schema** for representing and annotating narrative scenes using the taxonomy and rubric we've developed. This schema is designed to be:

- Easy to populate manually or programmatically

- Ready for use in data science workflows (e.g., Pandas DataFrames)
- Extensible for NLP or classification tasks

## ✓ Python-Compatible Scene Annotation Schema

python

```
from typing import List, Optional, Literal, Dict, Union

ScenePosition = Literal["Introduction", "Rising Action", "Climax", "Falling Action", "Epilogue"]
TemporalFrame = Literal["Present", "Past", "Future", "Unclear"]
Perspective = Literal["First Person", "Third Person Limited", "Omniscient", "Unreliable"]
Outcome = Literal["Success", "Failure", "Partial", "Unknown", "No Outcome"]
Tone = Literal["Tense", "Tragic", "Joyful", "Calm", "Reflective", "Humorous"]
Technique = Literal["Italics", "Frame Story", "Dreamlike", "Realist", "Authorial Intrusion", "None"]

class SceneAnnotation:
    def __init__(
        self,
        scene_id: str,
        story_title: str,
        author: str,
        start_pos: str,
        end_pos: str,
        story_position: ScenePosition,
        length_words: int,
        focal_characters: List[str],
        setting: str,
        temporal_frame: TemporalFrame,
        perspective: Perspective,
        character_goal: Optional[str],
        underlying_value: Optional[str],
        outcome: Outcome,
        tone: Tone,
        theme: Optional[str],
        technique: Technique,
        scene_types: Optional[List[str]] = None # e.g., ['Dramatic Scene', 'Discovery Scene']
    ):
        self.scene_id = scene_id
        self.story_title = story_title
        self.author = author
        self.start_pos = start_pos
        self.end_pos = end_pos
        self.story_position = story_position
        self.length_words = length_words
        self.focal_characters = focal_characters
        self.setting = setting
        self.temporal_frame = temporal_frame
        self.perspective = perspective
        self.character_goal = character_goal
        self.underlying_value = underlying_value
        self.outcome = outcome
        self.tone = tone
        self.theme = theme
        self.technique = technique
        self.scene_types = scene_types or []

    def to_dict(self) -> Dict[str, Union[str, int, List[str]]]:
        return {
            "scene_id": self.scene_id,
            "story_title": self.story_title,
            "author": self.author,
            "start_pos": self.start_pos,
            "end_pos": self.end_pos,
            "story_position": self.story_position,
            "length_words": self.length_words,
            "focal_characters": self.focal_characters,
            "setting": self.setting,
            "temporal_frame": self.temporal_frame,
```



```

        "perspective": self.perspective,
        "character_goal": self.character_goal,
        "underlying_value": self.underlying_value,
        "outcome": self.outcome,
        "tone": self.tone,
        "theme": self.theme,
        "technique": self.technique,
        "scene_types": self.scene_types,
    }

```

## Example Usage

```

python

scene = SceneAnnotation(
    scene_id="HP1_CH9_S2",
    story_title="Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone",
    author="J.K. Rowling",
    start_pos="Chapter 9, Paragraph 5",
    end_pos="Chapter 9, Paragraph 12",
    story_position="Rising Action",
    length_words=500,
    focal_characters=["Harry", "Malfoy"],
    setting="Trophy Room, Hogwarts",
    temporal_frame="Present",
    perspective="Third Person Limited",
    character_goal="Avoid being caught by Filch",
    underlying_value="Courage",
    outcome="Partial",
    tone="Tense",
    theme="Discovery, Friendship",
    technique="None",
    scene_types=["Dramatic Scene", "Discovery Scene"]
)

# Convert to dictionary for use in Pandas or JSON
scene_dict = scene.to_dict()

```

## Optional: Convert to DataFrame

```

python

import pandas as pd

scenes = [scene.to_dict() for scene in [scene]] # add more scenes to the list
df = pd.DataFrame(scenes)

```

Would you like a starter notebook or script that reads this schema and auto-classifies scene types based on scoring rules (e.g., using heuristics from our earlier rubric)?



I'd be interested in your ideas about an interactive web-based annotation tool (JS or React-based).

Awesome! Designing an **interactive web-based annotation tool** can really streamline scene analysis — especially if you're annotating a corpus of stories or training models to recognize narrative structure. Here's a concept sketch for such a tool, including:

# Concept: Narrative Scene Annotator (Web App)

## Purpose:

An intuitive, browser-based interface for annotating narrative scenes with attributes (e.g. character goal, tone, setting) and automatically suggesting or assigning scene types (like “Dramatic Scene” or “Flashback Scene”).

## CORE FEATURES

### 1. Text Viewer / Scene Selector

- Load a story and display its text in paragraphs, sections, or chapters.
- Highlight/select narrative segments (scenes).
- Option to auto-split text using sentence boundaries or paragraph breaks.

### 2. Scene Annotation Panel

Displays once a scene is selected:

Attribute	UI Widget
Story Position	Dropdown
Length Estimate	Auto-filled (word count)
Focal Characters	Multi-select chips
Setting	Text field with autocomplete
Temporal Frame	Radio buttons
Perspective	Dropdown
Character Goal	Free text
Underlying Value	Tag-style entry
Outcome	Dropdown
Emotional Tone	Dropdown w/ emojis
Theme	Free text
Technique	Multi-select checklist
Scene Types	Auto-suggested, user-confirmed

### 3. Scene-Type Scoring Assistant

- Based on your rubric: suggests likely scene types.
- Visually scores match strength (e.g. green bar for Dramatic Scene: 3/3).
- Allows user override.

### 4. Corpus Management

- Import/export JSON or CSV.
- Browse all scenes in a table view.
- Filter by character, scene type, tone, etc.

## TECH STACK

Layer	Stack Suggestion
Frontend UI	React + TypeScript
UI Components	<a href="#">shadcn/ui</a> or MUI / Tailwind
State Management	Zustand or Redux Toolkit
Text Highlighting	<b>react-mark</b> or <b>react-virtualized</b>
Backend (Optional)	Firebase / Express / Supabase
Storage	LocalStorage / IndexedDB / File Export
Auth (Optional)	Google / GitHub login

## LAYOUT MOCKUP (in words)

```
pgsql


|-----|
| Story Viewer (left 60%) | Scene Panel |
|-----|
| Select text to annotate | [Character Goal] |
| [Scene is highlighted] | [Dropdowns] |
| | [Tone/Theme] |
| | [Scene Type ✓] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Save | Next | Back | Export JSON | Settings |
|-----|
```

## 🌟 BONUS FEATURES

- **Keyboard Shortcuts** for fast tagging (e.g. "g" = Goal, "o" = Outcome)
- **Dark Mode**
- **Scene Timeline View** – visualize scene types over story progression
- **Collaboration** (add reviewer comments per scene)
- **LLM Integration** – Ask GPT to suggest likely goal/outcome/scene type from text

## ✅ MVP: What You Can Build Quickly

Here's a **minimal viable version** you could build or prototype:

-  Load a text story

- ☒ Select a paragraph range
- ☒ Fill out a form with dropdowns and inputs
- ☒ Autocomplete character names
- ☒ Display type suggestions from scoring logic
- ☒ Export as JSON for use in Python scripts

Would you like:

- A starter **React + Tailwind + Shadcn** codebase scaffold?
- A **wireframe mockup** of the UI in image form?
- A minimal HTML + JS version without any build tools (for demos)?
- Or a hosted demo to try?

Let me know your preferred level of detail — and whether you want to build this solo or collaborate on it!



Next, please show quick reference tables, the first listing the taxonomy of the narrative scenes types we have identified, then listing the taxonomy of narrative scene attributes.

Absolutely! Below are clean, concise **quick reference tables** for the:

1. ☒ **Narrative Scene Types**
2. 🕒 **Narrative Scene Attributes**

These are great for use in annotation guides, UIs, or printed reference sheets.

## ☒ Quick Reference: Narrative Scene Types

Scene Type	Description	Related Terms
<b>Dramatic Scene</b>	Character pursues goal, meets conflict, and the outcome defines the scene.	Action scene, goal-conflict-disaster
<b>Dramatic Sequel</b>	Follows a dramatic scene; shows reaction, dilemma, and new decision.	Sequel, reflection-decision unit
<b>Framing Scene</b>	Establishes setting, context, or tone before main plot begins.	Prologue, introduction
<b>Epilogue Scene</b>	Provides closure or long-term consequences after main resolution.	Epilogue, coda, denouement
<b>Flashback Scene</b>	Depicts events from the past to inform the current narrative.	Analepsis, retrospective scene
<b>Reflection Scene</b>	Centers on internal thought or emotional processing.	Interior monologue, introspection

Scene Type	Description	Related Terms
<b>Authorial Commentary</b>	Narrator addresses reader or comments on the story itself.	Narratorial intrusion, evaluation
<b>Reaction Scene</b>	Immediate emotional/physical response to a dramatic event.	Beat scene, aftermath
<b>Climactic Scene</b>	Highest tension; critical decision or event turns the story.	Climax, showdown
<b>Setup Scene</b>	Plants characters, motives, or items important for later plot.	Planting scene, foreshadowing
<b>Scene-within-Scene</b>	An embedded story or flashback narrated within a scene.	Frame story, embedded narrative
<b>Bridge Scene</b>	Connects major events; minimal tension, transitional.	Linking scene, transition
<b>Discovery Scene</b>	Reveals key information that changes the story's direction.	Recognition, turning point
<b>Suspense Scene</b>	Delays resolution, emphasizing uncertainty and tension.	Ticking clock, cliffhanger
<b>Confrontation Scene</b>	Characters directly clash in pursuit of conflicting goals.	Argument, showdown
<b>Reveal Scene</b>	Uncovers hidden truths, motives, or twists.	Revelation, plot twist
<b>Decision Scene</b>	Focuses on character making a significant choice.	Dilemma, crisis of will
<b>Comic Relief Scene</b>	Injects humor or absurdity to release tension.	Comic beat, levity scene
<b>Training Scene</b>	Shows characters practicing or preparing for future conflict.	Montage, preparation
<b>Temptation Scene</b>	Character faces morally or emotionally charged choice.	Test, seduction, inner conflict
<b>Romantic Scene</b>	Advances emotional or physical intimacy between characters.	Love scene, romantic beat
<b>Transformation Scene</b>	Character undergoes personal or moral change.	Atonement, growth scene
<b>Dream/Vision Scene</b>	Depicts symbolic or surreal internal narrative.	Dream sequence, allegory
<b>Foreshadowing Scene</b>	Hints at later developments, often subtly.	Prophetic scene, Chekhov's gun
<b>Celebration Scene</b>	Moment of victory, peace, or joy post-conflict.	Feast scene, triumph moment

## Quick Reference: Narrative Scene Attributes

Attribute	Description	Value Types
<b>Story Position</b>	Scene's place in story arc.	Introduction / Rising Action / Climax...
<b>Scene Length</b>	Word count or length classification.	Short / Medium / Long
<b>Focal Characters</b>	Characters involved or viewed through.	List of names
<b>Setting</b>	Where the scene takes place.	Textual description
<b>Temporal Frame</b>	Time relative to story present.	Present / Past / Future / Unclear
<b>Perspective</b>	Narrator's viewpoint.	First Person / Third Person Limited...
<b>Character Goal</b>	What the focal character wants in the scene.	Free text
<b>Underlying Value</b>	Deeper principle behind the goal.	Free text (e.g., Freedom, Loyalty)



Attribute	Description	Value Types
<b>Outcome</b>	Result of the character's action(s).	Success / Failure / Partial / None
<b>Emotional Tone</b>	Mood or emotional feel of the scene.	Tense / Joyful / Tragic / Reflective...
<b>Thematic Function</b>	Contribution to story's core themes.	Free text (e.g., Power, Redemption)
<b>Narrative Technique</b>	Formal or stylistic device used.	Italics / Frame / Intrusion / None...

Would you like me to export these tables as Markdown, CSV, or formatted PDFs? I can also integrate these into the Python schema or use them to seed a frontend prototype.



Thank you! Please export these tables as formatted PDFs.

Here is your formatted PDF containing quick reference tables for both the taxonomy of narrative scene types and scene attributes:

 [Download Narrative Scene Quick Reference PDF](#)

Let me know if you'd like a printable version, color formatting, or integration into a digital annotation tool!



Thank you, but that's a bit hard to read in portrait orientation as the text often extends past the boxes. Can you make it landscape orientation with a print-friendly format?

Here is the updated, print-friendly version of the quick reference tables in **landscape orientation** for better readability:

 [Download Landscape Narrative Scene Quick Reference PDF](#)

Let me know if you'd like color coding, section highlights, or a version formatted for booklet printing.



Okay, that unfortunately still has the same width columns and the longer text overwrites itself, making the overall document partially illegible. Can you output this as a .csv format file for processing in another program?

Here is the quick reference data exported as a CSV file, ideal for processing in Excel, Google Sheets, or other programs:

 [Download Narrative Scene Quick Reference CSV](#)

Let me know if you'd like separate files per table, Markdown format, or an importable JSON version!



Let's look at the narrative scene types, and define them by looking at where their attributes differ. If two narrative scene types have essentially the same narrative attributes, or share essentially the same purpose, perhaps they should be grouped into one narrative scene type, or one should be identified as a subclass of the other. This would enable us to focus on a smaller set of canonical narrative scene types, each of which might have specialized subtypes.

Please review the narrative scene types and attempt to consolidate them into canonical scene types with their list of specializations. For each canonical narrative scene type, list its name, key attributes, and purpose, along with a list of specialized types and how they differ in purpose, usage, or specialization of attributes.

Based on a synthesis of the narrative segment types you've developed and insights from the scientific and narrative theory literature in your project files, here is a proposed **consolidated taxonomy of canonical narrative scene types**, organized by shared attributes and narrative purpose. Each canonical type is paired with a list of specialized subtypes, along with their key defining differences.

## Canonical Narrative Scene Types and Their Specializations

Canonical Scene Type	Purpose	Key Attributes	Specializations
<b>Orientation Scene</b>	Introduces world, characters, or context	First occurrence, stable setting, often omniscient POV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prologue</li> <li>- Expository Scene</li> <li>- Flashback Scene</li> </ul>
<b>Dramatic Scene</b>	Depicts an active goal-driven conflict and its outcome	Goal → Conflict → Outcome, unified time/place/characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action Scene</li> <li>- Confrontation Scene</li> <li>- Crisis Scene</li> </ul>
<b>Dramatic Sequel</b>	Processes aftermath of a dramatic scene; sets up next goal	Reaction → Dilemma → Decision; introspective tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflective Scene</li> <li>- Planning Scene</li> <li>- Regret Scene</li> </ul>
<b>Reorientation Scene</b>	Transitions or reframes between major arcs or locations	Shift in POV, time, place, or goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bridge Scene</li> <li>- Recovery Scene</li> <li>- Return Scene</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Scene</b>	Comments on or distills lessons, values, or changes	Narrative summary or authorial voice, evaluative language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moral Scene</li> <li>- Epilogue</li> <li>- Coda</li> </ul>
<b>Exclusionary Scene</b>	Breaks narrative plane, includes non-diegetic or meta info	Authorial asides, commentary, direct address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meta-Narrative Scene</li> <li>- Editorial Interlude</li> <li>- Foreshadowing Aside</li> </ul>

## Scene Type Differentiation by Attribute Patterns

The consolidation of specialized scene types into canonical ones rests on patterns in **scene attributes**, including:

- **Temporal Position:** Early (Orientation), Mid (Dramatic), Post-Climax (Evaluation)
- **Narrative Function:** Set-up, Conflict, Reflection, Transition, Moralizing
- **Tone:** Neutral/Informative (Orientation), Tense/Active (Dramatic), Introspective (Sequel), Detached (Evaluation)
- **Narrative Voice:** Embedded (character-level) vs. Authorial (narrator-level)
- **Continuity:** Stable vs. Disrupted space/time/characters

These dimensions were referenced in your earlier schema design and annotations across files like “Story Analysis and Extraction” and the LCATS-related technical reports<sup>Feasibility and Impleme...</sup>.

## Usage Guidance

To label a narrative segment:

1. **Start with canonical type** based on time/place/character unity and narrative purpose.
2. **Identify specialization** based on tone, function, or structural role in plot (e.g. is the sequel a flashback?).
3. **Fallback to attribute analysis** if ambiguous, prioritizing goal-driven action (dramatic scene) vs. introspection (sequel) vs. exposition (orientation).

This structure supports automated classification and CBR-style indexing for tools like LCATS, enabling both retrieval and adaptation based on scene roles and transitions.

Would you like me to generate a visual taxonomy chart, a JSON schema for automation, or integration with your annotation tool next?



Are there differences in formal content or typical usage between Orientation Scenes and Reorientation scenes other than their position?

Yes, **Orientation Scenes** and **Reorientation Scenes** differ in **both formal content and typical usage**, beyond mere position in the narrative. Here's a structured comparison:

## Orientation vs. Reorientation Scenes

Feature	Orientation Scene	Reorientation Scene
<b>Narrative Function</b>	Establishes initial context: characters, setting, time, tone, or worldview	Helps the reader "catch up" or adjust after a transition (e.g., time jump, perspective shift, goal change)
<b>Typical Position</b>	Near the beginning of a story, act, or major arc	Anywhere mid-story, especially after significant plot shifts or disorientation
<b>Cognitive Role</b>	Builds initial mental model of the story world; helps reader infer genre, stakes, norms	Repairs or updates the reader's mental model after disruption; reinforces story coherence

Feature	Orientation Scene	Reorientation Scene
<b>Common Structures</b>	Descriptive exposition, character introductions, setting the "rules" of the world	Transitional narration, travel scenes, time skips, change-of-goal monologues, returning-home scenes
<b>Narrative Techniques</b>	Omniscient narration, "once upon a time" motifs, steady tone	Diegetic or reflective narration, changes in tense or voice, marked shifts in narrative pacing
<b>Scene Attributes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Static setting</li> <li>- New character focus</li> <li>- Often no goal yet</li> <li>- Low tension</li> <li>- Time: Present or past</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changing setting or time</li> <li>- Known character(s) in a new mode</li> <li>- New goal or orientation</li> <li>- Time: Jump forward/back</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap With</b>	Prologues, Setup scenes, Worldbuilding scenes	Bridge scenes, Return scenes, Aftermath transitions, Point-of-view shifts
<b>Examples</b>	<i>The Hobbit</i> : "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit..." (Tolkien)	<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> : After Gandalf's fall, the group enters Lothlórien—new tone, new pacing, new threat

## Cognitive Insight

- **Orientation** initiates schema formation.
- **Reorientation** triggers schema revision or realignment — often needed after surprise, action, or off-screen developments.

## Implications for Annotation and Modeling

In LCATS or CBR systems:

- **Orientation scenes** help model **initial states** and **preconditions** for cases.
- **Reorientation scenes** often **signal goal updates, state resets, or boundary events** (e.g. story acts, failures, or shifts in character agency).

Would you like a flowchart or decision tree to help differentiate them in automated or human annotation workflows?



Thank you. Let's look more closely at narrative scenes. We started with these two definitions:

\* a narrative segment: a contiguous piece of a story, such as a sentence, paragraph, marked section, thematically unified section, or chapter.

\* a narrative scene: a narrative segment where the time and place remain consistent and the characters present are largely the same, representing a continuous piece of the story's action

but expanded our vocabulary as we identified different types of narrative scenes and their attributes. Based on what we have discovered, can we refine the definitions of narrative scene and

narrative segment to outline more formal criteria which might be used to determine whether a given contiguous narrative segment is a narrative scene or not?





Absolutely — based on your refined vocabulary and our exploration of **scene types** and **scene attributes**, we can now propose **formalized criteria** that differentiate a **narrative scene** from a broader **narrative segment**. This is essential for human annotation, training machine learning models, and building structured narrative case libraries (e.g. in LCATS).

## Refined Definitions and Criteria

### ◆ Narrative Segment (Refined Definition)

A **narrative segment** is any contiguous stretch of text within a story, such as a sentence, paragraph, or thematically grouped section (e.g., chapter), that can be analyzed as a unit based on structure, content, or function.

#### Minimal Formal Criteria:

-  Contiguous text in the same story.
-  Can be demarcated by structural (chapter/paragraph), functional (e.g., event group), or thematic boundaries.
-  No requirement of internal temporal or spatial consistency.
-  No requirement for action or character focus.

#### Examples:

- A paragraph of description, a full flashback chapter, a block of dialogue, a character monologue, an aside to the reader.

### ◆ Narrative Scene (Refined Definition)

A **narrative scene** is a narrative segment in which events unfold in a continuous **temporal** and **spatial frame**, involving a stable set of **focal characters**, forming a coherent narrative **situation** (e.g., action, reaction, or reflection) that contributes causally or thematically to the larger story arc.

**Formal Criteria** — a narrative segment is a **scene** if it meets most or all of the following:

Criterion	Requirement
<b>Temporal Unity</b>	Time flows continuously (no internal time skips or flashbacks).
<b>Spatial Unity</b>	Location remains fixed or smoothly continuous (e.g., walking and talking).
<b>Character Stability</b>	Same focal character(s) remain present throughout; no major viewpoint shift.
<b>Situational Coherence</b>	Scene forms a unified narrative situation (goal, reaction, revelation, etc.).
<b>Causal Boundedness</b>	Scene has internal causal coherence (X leads to Y); may begin or end a beat.
<b>Perspective Consistency</b>	Point of view remains consistent (e.g., same narrator or internal focalizer).

Criterion	Requirement
Event Integrity	Contains one or more narrative events, either enacted or described.

### Optional or Secondary Indicators:

- May begin or end with a marked transition in time, space, or action.
- May contain embedded segments (e.g., flashbacks or dialogue), but these should be bounded or framed.

## Summary: Segment vs. Scene

	Narrative Segment	Narrative Scene
Definition	Contiguous story unit	Contiguous story unit with unified time, place, characters
Required Elements	None	Temporal + spatial unity, stable characters, events
Function	Any: description, summary, quote	Typically dramatizes action, reaction, or revelation
Examples	Paragraph of exposition, aside	A duel, a decision moment, a dream, a chase
Use in LCATS/CBR	May host metadata or wrap a scene	Basis for case extraction: goal + action + outcome

## Practical Scene Determination Heuristic

If you're evaluating a segment and asking “**is this a scene?**”, check:

- Does **time progress** continuously inside this segment?
- Does it take place in **one general location** (or transition smoothly)?
- Do the **same characters** participate throughout?
- Does something **happen or change** in this segment?
- Would splitting this unit create **confusion** or lose coherence?

If **yes to  $\geq 4$**  of these, you're likely dealing with a **narrative scene**.

Would you like this turned into:

- A decision tree or flowchart for annotators?
- A schema-compatible rule for an LLM classification system?
- A test suite for evaluating automatic scene extraction?



First, let's start with a schema-compatible rule for an LLM classification system.

Great! Here's a schema-compatible rule for an **LLM-based narrative scene classifier**, designed to help the model decide whether a given **narrative segment** qualifies as a **narrative scene** under your refined definition.

## Schema-Compatible Rule: `is_narrative_scene(segment)`

```
json
{
  "function": "is_narrative_scene",
  "input": {
    "segment": "string (contiguous passage of narrative text)"
  },
  "output": {
    "is_scene": "boolean",
    "reasoning": "string (short rationale)",
    "attributes": {
      "temporal_unity": "boolean",
      "spatial_unity": "boolean",
      "character_stability": "boolean",
      "situational_coherence": "boolean",
      "perspective_consistency": "boolean",
      "event_integrity": "boolean"
    },
    "scene_type_hint": "string (optional, e.g., 'Dramatic Scene', 'Sequel', 'Flashback')"
  }
}
```

## Rule Description (for Prompt or Model Guidance)

### Prompt template:

Given the following narrative segment, determine whether it qualifies as a *narrative scene*, defined as a contiguous story unit in which time, place, and characters remain stable, a coherent situation unfolds, and one or more events occur.

Please assess the following attributes as **true** or **false**:

- **temporal\_unity**: Does time flow continuously in this segment?
- **spatial\_unity**: Does the location remain stable or smoothly transition without a break?
- **character\_stability**: Are the same focal characters present throughout?
- **situational\_coherence**: Does the segment form a unified narrative situation (e.g., pursuit, reflection, discovery)?
- **perspective\_consistency**: Is the narrative perspective consistent?
- **event\_integrity**: Do meaningful narrative events occur?

Then return a boolean **is\_scene** flag based on whether **at least four** of these attributes are true, and explain your reasoning. Optionally, suggest a **scene\_type\_hint** if appropriate (e.g., "Dramatic Scene", "Sequel", "Dream Scene").

## Example Output



```
json

{
  "is_scene": true,
  "reasoning": "The segment shows a continuous sequence of actions (escape from jail) occurring in one place with the same character, from the same perspective. Time and space are continuous, and the character has a clear goal.",
  "attributes": {
    "temporal_unity": true,
    "spatial_unity": true,
    "character_stability": true,
    "situational_coherence": true,
    "perspective_consistency": true,
    "event_integrity": true
  },
  "scene_type_hint": "Dramatic Scene"
}
```

Would you like me to implement this in a Python function for prompt engineering, or package it for use in a labeling tool like Label Studio or Prodigy?



Yes, please package it in Python

Your schema-compatible Python function has been implemented and tested. You can download the example output here:

 [Download narrative\\_scene\\_classification\\_example.json](#)

Let me know if you'd like a batch-processing version for multiple segments or integration with a Jupyter notebook!



Okay, the output of what you just gave me is a json file. Can you show how to use this in Python?

Certainly! Here's a **simple Python example** showing how to use the `is_narrative_scene` function with a narrative segment and write (or read) the output as a `.json` file.

## ✓ 1. Define and Use the Function

```
python

from typing import Dict, Any
import json

# --- Function definition ---
def is_narrative_scene(segment: str, attribute_flags: Dict[str, bool], scene_type_hint: str = "") -> Dict[str, Any]:
    true_count = sum(attribute_flags.values())
    is_scene = true_count >= 4

    reasoning_parts = []
    for key, value in attribute_flags.items():
        reasoning_parts.append(f"{key.replace('_', ' ').capitalize()}: {'✓' if value else 'x'}")
```

```

reasoning = (
    f"The segment {'meets' if is_scene else 'does not meet'} the threshold for being a
narrative scene "
    f"(>= 4 criteria met).\n" + " | ".join(reasoning_parts)
)

return {
    "is_scene": is_scene,
    "reasoning": reasoning,
    "attributes": attribute_flags,
    "scene_type_hint": scene_type_hint or "Unknown"
}

# --- Example usage ---
example_segment = "The hero arrives at the fortress just as the sun sets and challenges the
enemy commander."
example_flags = {
    "temporal_unity": True,
    "spatial_unity": True,
    "character_stability": True,
    "situational_coherence": True,
    "perspective_consistency": True,
    "event_integrity": True
}

scene_data = is_narrative_scene(example_segment, example_flags, scene_type_hint="Climactic
Scene")

```

## ✓ 2. Write to JSON File

```

python

# Save to JSON
with open("scene_analysis_output.json", "w") as f:
    json.dump(scene_data, f, indent=2)

print("Scene data written to scene_analysis_output.json")

```

## ✓ 3. Read from JSON File Later

```

python

# Load JSON back in
with open("scene_analysis_output.json", "r") as f:
    loaded_data = json.load(f)

print("Loaded scene analysis:")
print(loaded_data)

```

## Summary

- You define a dictionary of flags for scene attributes.
- The `is_narrative_scene()` function returns structured results.
- You can write those results to disk as a `.json` file.
- You can later read the file for use in filtering, labeling, or visualization workflows.

Would you like this converted into a notebook or CLI tool for processing batches of scene segments from a story?



Let's focus on how to get those scene segments. Assume I have the text of a narrative provided by my corpus. These stories are of format Story:

```
class Story:
```

```
    """
```

```
    A simple Python class to hold a story with fields:
```

- name (str): The title or name of the story
- body (str): The full text of the story
- metadata (dict): A dictionary containing metadata about the story

```
    """
```

```
    # additional class definition omitted
```

so we can get just the full strings text from an `example_story` via `example_story.body`. If it is more convenient just to use strings for this API than `Story` we can do that.

Given a story represented as a string, we would like to extract the narrative scenes. Recall our narrative scene definition:

A narrative scene is a narrative segment in which events unfold in a continuous temporal and spatial frame, involving a stable set of focal characters, forming a coherent narrative situation (e.g., action, reaction, or reflection) that contributes causally or thematically to the larger story arc.

What we want to do is create a program in Python, likely calling some kind of LLM or other text library, that takes an input story represented as a string and returns a list of annotated narrative segments including, at a minimum, some kind of start or end markers for each scene and a rationale for whether the segment is indeed a scene, and optionally the full scene text. It should be possible from the output whether the entire story was broken into scenes or not.

It looks like the `openai` Python library isn't available in this environment, but I can still show you how to use it locally or in your project.

## ✓ Installation

First, install the OpenAI library (if you haven't already):

```
bash
```

```
pip install openai
```

## ✓ Full Local Usage Example

```
python

import openai
import json

openai.api_key = "your-openai-api-key"

def extract_narrative_scenes(story_text: str, model: str = "gpt-4") -> list:
    system_prompt = (
        "You are a narrative analyst. Identify narrative scenes in a story. "
        "A narrative scene has continuous time, location, characters, and a coherent situation. "
        "For each candidate scene, return:\n"
        "- start_index\n- end_index\n- scene_text\n- is_scene (true/false)\n- reasoning"
    )

    user_prompt = (
        f"STORY:\n\n{story_text}\n\n"
        "Output a JSON list of dictionaries with the keys: start_index, end_index, scene_text, "
        "is_scene, reasoning."
    )

    response = openai.ChatCompletion.create(
        model=model,
        messages=[
            {"role": "system", "content": system_prompt},
            {"role": "user", "content": user_prompt}
        ],
        temperature=0.3
    )

    try:
        raw = response["choices"][0]["message"]["content"]
        scenes = json.loads(raw) if raw.strip().startswith("[") else eval(raw, {"__builtins__":
None}, {})
        return scenes
    except Exception as e:
        print("Failed to parse output:", e)
        print("Raw output was:\n", raw)
        return []

# Example use:
# story = open("story.txt").read()
# results = extract_narrative_scenes(story)
# for s in results:
#     print(s["start_index"], s["end_index"], s["reasoning"])
```

## Notes:

- You should feed relatively short stories or truncate very long texts.
- If the story is long, you can first segment it (e.g., by paragraph or chapter) and then run this function chunk-by-chunk.
- You can extend the function to validate that the full story is covered by non-overlapping segments.

Would you like a helper function that breaks long stories into overlapping chunks for processing before calling the LLM?