

anachronic narrative

relates to the order of events in a story; indicates the disruption of the natural chronology (flashback and flash-forward)

antagonist

the opponent of the hero or heroine (protagonist) in a narrative text

authorial narrative situation

the story is told by an overt narrator who is not present as a character in the story and usually omniscient; in addition to narrating the story, s/he often comments on the action and the characters

character conception

the composition of a character; we differentiate between flat characters (with only a few character traits) and round characters (large, complex selection of character traits)

character constellation

refers to the relationships between characters and their attitudes towards one another

characters

the agents in a story, usually classified according to their complexity (flat or round characters) and their roles within the plot (protagonist, antagonist, witness, helper, confidant etc.)

chronological narrative

the narrated events occur in the same sequence as in their temporal chronology

closed ending

form of conveying information at the end of narrative texts which generally comprises the resolution of all conflicts

covert narrator

narrator who is not present as a speaker and recounts the action in a detached manner

description

narrative mode in which the narrator introduces a character or describes a setting

discourse

structure of the narrative; complementary term to story: 'story' refers to the 'what', 'discourse' to the 'how' of a narrative

experiencing I

the former self of a narrating I, presented as a character in the fictional world

fictional world

the world represented in a narrative text, which is subject to its own rules and laws

figural narrative situation

one of the typical narrative situations; the story is presented by a covert narrator and through the eyes of one or more characters who function as focalisers

first-person narrative situation

one of the typical narrative situations; events are related by a 'narrating I', who takes part in the action in the fictional world as a character or 'experiencing I'

flashback

relates to the order of events; a sequence of a narrative that goes back in time to show what happened earlier in the story

flash-forward

relates to the order of events; a sequence of a narrative that recounts a future event of the story

flat character

a one-dimensional character who has few individual characteristics

focalisation

refers to the perception of the fictional world; includes internal processes such as thinking, feeling and remembering

focaliser

centre of orientation from whose perspective the fictional world is perceived; to find out who the focaliser is, one has to answer the questions
who sees?
who feels?
who remembers?

inside view

the representation of a character's mental processes, e.g. his or her thoughts, feelings, perceptions, dreams, memories, visions

minor character

character who supports the main characters according to his/her role within the plot (e.g. antagonist, witness, helper, confidant)

narrating I

the present self of a narrator in the first-person narrative situation

narrative mode

the way in which textual elements are presented; we differentiate between report, description, comment and direct speech

narrative situation

refers to the way in which events are narrated; there are three 'narrative situations': authorial narrative situation, figural narrative situation, first-person narrative situation

narrator

fictional textual speaker who narrates a story; answer to the question 'who is speaking?'

omniscient narrator

has the privilege of knowing everything about both the characters' thoughts and feelings and the course of the action, and of being present at different places at the same time. This usually excludes first-person narrators

open ending

form of conveying information at the end of a text which does not offer final solutions

order


refers to the possibilities of organising the temporal sequence of events (flashback, flash-forward)

overt narrator

concrete, individualised narrator who is clearly recognisable as a speaker, who may analyse and evaluate the characters and events, offer personal comments and directly address the reader




plot



refers to the structure of the action, i.e. the causal and temporal sequence of events; complementary term to 'story'




protagonist



main character whose plans and intentions are often blocked by an antagonist




report



a factual, frequently temporally compressed account of events by the narrator




round character



a multidimensional character displaying a complex selection of character traits that change as the action progresses




setting



refers to the specific location of an event in space and/or time



story



(1) sequence of events in their 'natural' temporal chronology; complementary term to 'plot'; (2) totality of elements that constitute the level of fictional action; complementary term to 'discourse' ('story' refers to the 'what', 'discourse' to the 'how' of a narrative)