

Rising Action

Definition of Rising Action

Rising action in a plot is a series of relevant incidents that create [suspense](#), interest, and tension in a [narrative](#). In literary works, a rising action includes all decisions, characters' flaws, and background circumstances that together create turns and twists leading to a [climax](#). We find it in novels, plays, and short stories. Rising action is one of the elements of plot, which begins immediately after its [exposition](#).

Examples of Rising Action in Literature

Example #1: *Revelation* (By Flannery O'Connor)

In her short story, *Revelation*, Flannery O'Connor has used a great deal of rising action. The moment when Mrs. Turpin comes into the waiting room, she becomes offended by the surroundings around her, considering herself higher than the homely and dirty-looking patients. We see a girl, Mary Grace, in a waiting room, in intense action showing her dislike towards Mrs. Turpin. She finally makes a physical attack on Mrs. Turpin by throwing a book at her. Mrs. Turpin consequently responds negatively, crying and showing anger.

Example #2: *The Hobbit* (By J. R. R. Tolkien)

The [conflict](#) begins in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, as Gandalf meets Bilbo and asks him to play the role of a burglar in the dwarves' expedition to recover the treasure of Thorin from Smaug. Rising action occurs as he agrees to act as a burglar during this adventure. His heroism begins merely by shouting to wake up Gandalf, who rescues the company from goblins, and then the action slowly intensifies when he finds the magic ring.

Gradually, Bilbo overcomes difficulties by killing a big spider, and establishes his potential as a hero and leader.

Example #3: *Anna Karenina* (By Leo Tolstoy)

Leo Tolstoy, in his novel *Anna Karenina*, draws two major stories. Rising action of the primary storyline begins when Vronsky starts having passionate feelings for Anna instead Kitty. Vronsky and Anna meet each other in the train station, and begin their secret relationship. The action further rises while their obsession turns into a love affair, and Anna decides to leave her son and husband, to live with Vronsky. The second storyline is about Kitty's refusal of the marriage proposal of Konstantin Levin. Further action rises as she moves back to the countryside in order to think about life, and faces inner conflict while considering her decision.

Example #4: *Twilight* (By Stephenie Meyer)

The rising action in Stephenie Meyer's novel *Twilight* occurs as the Cullen family plays a vampire baseball game where Bella is a spectator. During the play, some rogue vampires, including James, Laurent, and Victoria approach them. James smells Bella, and the action rises. James chases Bella while the Cullen family strives to defend her. This heightened action ultimately creates a huge climax that consequently brings many things to a head, leading to the end.

Example #5: *Evermore* (By Alyson Noel)

Alyson Noel has written a number of novel series, *Evermore* being the first among them. This novel follows the adventures of the leading [character](#), Ever, as well as a man named Damen, who helped her become an immortal. Throughout the novel, readers learn that Damen – the first immortal – fell in love with Ever centuries ago. His ex-wife, however, continues trying to kill Ever's incarnations in order to keep Damen apart from Ever. Her attempts in doing this develop the novel's rising action, which in turn strengthens the love story of Damen and Ever, and creates suspense towards their final combat with Drina.

Example #6: *Snow White* (By Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm)

In Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's novel, *Snow White*, the rising action occurs when the Queen's magic mirror warns her that she is no longer the fairest lady in the land; that, instead, it is now Snow White. Envious, the Queen orders her huntsman to take her stepdaughter Snow White away from the palace, into the forest, and secretly kill her. Fortunately, he cannot kill her, but leaves her in the forest, where seven tiny dwarfs find her. They bring her into their home, then another rising action occurs when the mirror tells the Queen that Snow White is still alive.

Function of Rising Action

The events of a rising action are generally very important, because the entire plot of a narrative depends upon these events for [setting](#) up the climax – a moment of ultimate excitement that eventually leads to a satisfactory [resolution](#). For instance, an author writes a love story in which a moment comes when characters decide whether to stay together or break up – thus, rising action sets a stage for this moment by building up dramatic situations or conflicts. It further adds a layer of complexity to the plot for developing characters and climax.