

What do we mean by “structure”?

Structure is all to do with how a particular text you read, or write, is put together. Before any writer begins actually writing their narrative, they need to consider the structure that it will follow. The most basic elements of a text’s structure are:

- plot
- setting
- theme

Typically, we associate structure with the order in which the narrative takes place – this is most commonly: beginning (B), middle (M), end (E). However, writers often use a range of structural techniques in order to make their narratives more “interesting” for the reader – you can use these on your own writing too.

Linear vs. Non-Linear

Events that take place in B/M/E are known as a **linear** structure. Sometimes, the events do not always go in this order (i.e. end at the beginning). This is known as **non-linear** structure.

Exposition

The exposition of a narrative will typically:

- provide important **background information**
- **introduce** key characters, settings and plot details
- **establish** prior plot events.

Rising Action

The rising action of a narrative will typically:

- **develop** from the conflict
- include a series of events that **build** to the ‘main’ event – the climax
- **escalate** the plot events
- **increase** tension.

Climax

The climax of a narrative will typically:

- be the **point** that the rising action has been leading up to
- be where the tension of the narrative is at its **highest**.

Falling Action

The falling action of a narrative will typically:

- **de-escalate** the events of the narrative
- **reduce** tension
- **lead** towards the resolution.

Denouement

The denouement of a narrative will typically:

- **follow** from the resolution
- **provide** the final outcome
- **conclude** all aspects of the plot.

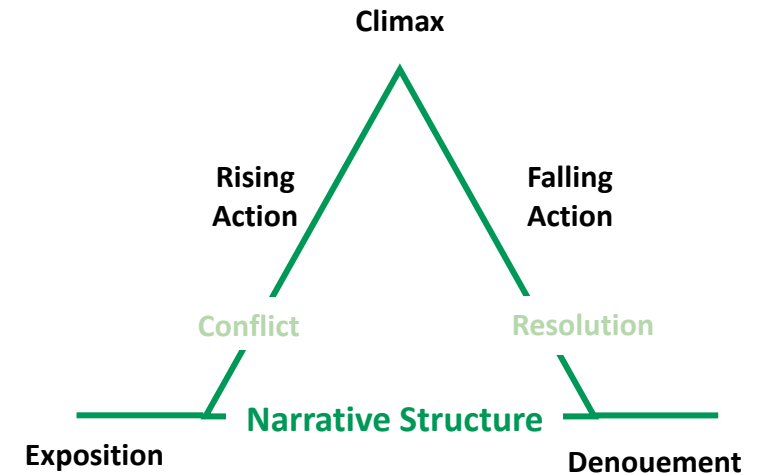
Narrative Structure

We can plot the order of events in a narrative into the beginning, middle and end.

These terms are more technically known by the following:

- beginning - the **Exposition**
- middle - the **Climax**
- ending - the **Denouement**

A narrative will also include **Rising Action**. These are the events that lead up to the **Climax** as well as **Falling Action**, the events that happen as a result of the **Climax** and lead to the **Denouement**.



Conflict and Resolution

In order to support the general structure of a narrative, a plot will also include a **Conflict** and a **Resolution**. The conflict will be the “inciting incident” that is essentially the problem/issue from which the rising action will stem. The resolution will follow the climax (where the issues are addressed) and seeks to “resolve” the initial conflict of the plot.



KS3 Spine
Structure

In order to make a narrative “interesting” for a reader, writers often use a range of additional structural techniques:

Foreshadowing

This technique hints or suggests a future event may happen. It is often used by writers in order to signal a warning of later plot events.

Analepsis

More commonly known as a flashback, writers use analepsis in order to portray a previous event or possibly a memory that informs the plot.

Prolepsis

More commonly known as a flash forward, writers use prolepsis to foreshadow and represent the events of the future, beyond the plot.

Pathetic Fallacy

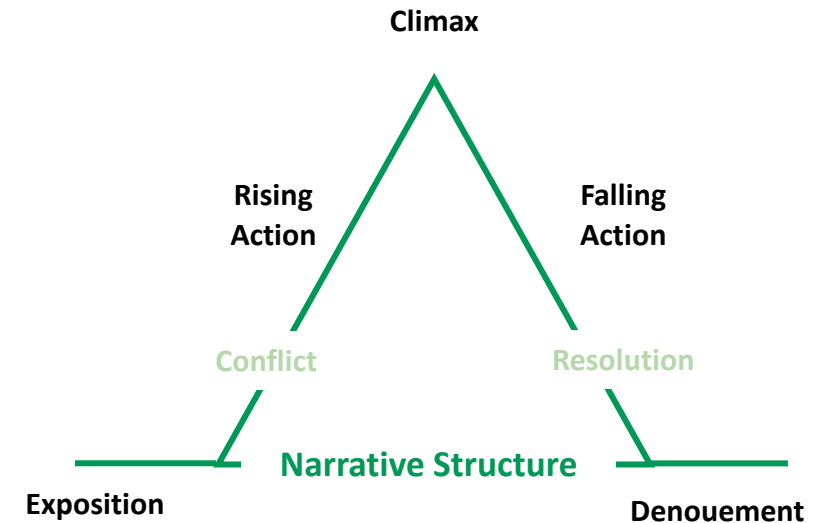
Used to signify atmospheric changes in a text, pathetic fallacy is when the weather and nature in a particular setting represents the character’s mood and/or emotions.

Activities

1. Using the narrative structure template, determine the structure of a well-known fairy tale by plotting out the details. You could use: *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* or *Hansel and Gretel*.
2. Imagine you are rewriting your chosen fairy tale from Question One – plot it out using a non-linear structure.
3. Summarise each stage of the narrative structure process in no more than ten words (Exposition/Conflict/Rising Action/Climax/Falling Action/Resolution/Denouement).
4. Provide exemplar openings for two of the different types of hooks (see above explanation of hooks).
5. Use the pathetic fallacy to represent the following: i) an angry person ii) a happy person iii) a lonely person.

Hook

Writers immediately engage us by using different types of ‘hooks’ to open their narratives. These include:
a puzzling hook leading the reader to raise immediate questions
an atmospheric hook vivid use of description and depiction of setting
a direct speech hook establishes a sense of action and urgency from the outset
a subtle hook minimal information is shared heightening the curiosity of the reader.



KS3 Spine Structure

Quick Questions

- What are the technical terms for “beginning”, “middle” and “end”?
- In which stage of a narrative is the problem/issue introduced?
- At which point in a narrative is the plot’s tension at its highest?
- What name is given to a narrative structure that does not follow chronological order?
- Which techniques are used to warn of a possible event later in the narrative?
- What is the opposite of analepsis?
- What type of hook uses detailed descriptions and imagery?
- What is the purpose of a “subtle hook”?
- How is weather used in pathetic fallacy?