Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Fetbroth

**Elements of a Story**

Most works of fiction (short stories, novels, and plays) include the following elements:

1. **Setting**
2. **Character**
3. **Point of View**
4. **Plot**
5. **Conflict**
6. **Theme**

Writers use these elements like artists use paint: with a plan and a purpose, in order to pass on an idea to the reader. Every piece of information the writer gives us about setting, character, point of view, plot, conflict, and theme has a purpose. As readers, we can analyze these elements to better understand what messages and ideas the writer is trying to convey to us.

**MCEN00198_0000[1]Setting**

The setting of a story is the environment or situation in which the action of the story takes place. Setting includes the following:

1. **Place/Geographical Location:** Where does the story take place? In what country, state, region, building, room, etc?
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
2. **Time:** When is the story taking place? In what historical period, year, time of day, etc?
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
3. **Climate/Weather Conditions:** What’s the weather like? Is it rainy, sunny, stormy, cold, sweltering hot, etc?
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
4. **Social Circumstance:** What is the social situation of the characters in their daily life? What is their economic situation (are they wealthy, or poor?)? What culture or ethnicity do they represent? Do they demonstrate language or traditions that are associated with a certain group, place, or time?
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
5. **Mood or Atmosphere:** What feeling is created at the beginning of the story, in the middle, and at the end?  Is it bright and cheerful, dark and frightening, or something else?
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**Character**

There are two meanings for the word character:

1. **A person who plays a part in a work of fiction.**

Fiction texts are not true; they are made up.

1. **Protagonist:** The main character; all major events are important to this character.

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. **Antagonist:** The person(s) who is against the main character.

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. **The qualities, personality, or characteristics of a person.** The author creates these qualities by giving the reader many types of information about the character:
2. **Physical appearance** including age, size, dress, etc.

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. **Personal identity** including ethnicity, religion, language, culture, family, friends, special skills, interests, hobbies, profession
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
2. **Background experiences** such as important events the character has lived through, actions they have taken or not taken, decisions made or not made, challenges they have faced, etc. that occurred before the action of the story
   * *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
3. **What he/she says**

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. **What he/she thinks, feels, or dreams**

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. **What others say about him/her and how others react to him/her**

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

Characters are…

1. **Individual:** unique, many-sided, and complex personalities.
2. **Developing:** dynamic and changing, for better or worse, through the story.
3. **Static Types:** have one or two characteristics that never change and are emphasized, sometimes as stereotypes e.g. brilliant detective, drunk, scrooge, cruel stepmother, etc.

**Point of View**

Point of view (POV) is the perspective or angle from which the story is told. There are several types of point of view:

1. **First Person:** The story is told by only one of the characters in the story (using pronouns I, me, we, etc).  The reader sees the story only through this one person's eyes as he/she experiences it and only knows what he/she knows or feels.

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. **Omniscient:** The story is told in a way that the thoughts, feelings, and actions of many characters are known. The reader can “see everything” and knows more than any of the individual characters. Omniscient narration is done in third person (using pronouns they, she, he, it, etc).

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. **Limited Omniscient:** Narration is done in the third person (using pronouns they, she, he, it, etc), but the reader does not know “everything” – instead, we know only what the character knows and what the author allows him/her to tell us. We can see the thoughts and feelings of characters if the author chooses to reveal them to us.

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

MCj04357410000[1]

**Plot**

The plot is the sequence of events (what happens) in a work of fiction.  The plot has a beginning, middle, and end. There are five essential parts of plot:

1. **Introduction:** The beginning of the story where the characters and the setting are introduced to the audience/reader.
2. **Rising Action:** The events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed.
3. **Climax:** The highest point of interest and the turning point of the story.  The main character 1) receives new information, 2) accepts or realizes this information (but does not necessarily agree with it), and 3) acts on this information by making a choice that will determine whether or not he/she gains his/her objective. The reader (and often the characters too) wonders what will happen next; will the conflict be resolved or not?
4. **Falling action:** The events and complications begin to resolve themselves.  The reader knows what has happened next and if the conflict was resolved or not.
5. **Resolution:** This is the final outcome or untangling of events in the story.

**MCj04357890000[1]Conflict**

Every story has some sort of conflict, or problem, that ties the events of the story together. A conflict does not have to be just arguments or physical fights; rather, it can be any form of struggle that faces the main character. There may be only one central struggle, or many minor ones. Conflicts can fall into two categories and several sub-categories:

1. **External Conflict:** A struggle with a force outside one's own self and often outside of one’s own control. For instance, a struggle with an enemy, the law, or an exploding time bomb.
   1. **Person vs. Person (Physical/Emotional):** The leading character struggles with his/her physical or emotional strength against other individuals.

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
  1. **Person vs. Nature (Physical):** The leading character struggles with his/her physical or emotional strength against forces of nature such as weather, animals, harsh conditions.
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
  1. **Person vs. Circumstances (Classical):** The leading character struggles against fate, or the circumstances of life facing him/her.
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
  1. **Person vs. Society (Social):** The leading character struggles against ideas, practices, or customs of a society or culture.
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. **Internal Conflict:** A struggle inside one's own self and mind, heart, or personality. For instance, when a person must make some decision, overcome pain, resist something they want, etc.
   1. **Person vs. Himself/Herself (Psychological):** The leading character struggles with himself/herself; with his/her own soul, ideas of right or wrong, physical limitations, choices, etc.

* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

MCj02872010000[1]**Theme**

A theme in a piece of fiction is a key idea that runs throughout the story and is revealed as an insight by the end. It is the author's underlying message, meaning, or main idea that he/she is trying to convey.  The theme may be the author's thoughts about a topic or view of human nature.  Note that a theme is not simply a person, place, or thing (e.g. “shoes” is not a theme), but it may be an idea or insight about a person, place, or thing (e.g. “shoes are important to a happy life”). The title of the short story usually points to what the writer is saying and he/she may use various figures of speech to emphasize his/her theme, such as: symbol, allusion, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or irony.

Note: Since many themes are recurring through time in literature, film, art, and life, there are often corny little phrases that summarize – and often simplify – them. For the purpose of literary analysis in school or college, **do not use the corny phrase! Rather, put themes in more sophisticated and complex academic language.**

Some simple examples of common themes from literature, TV, and film are:

* Things are not always as they appear to be
* Being in love can make us blind to our lover’s faults
* Believe in yourself even when there seems to be no hope left
* People are afraid of change
* Stereotypes can ruin lives by causing people to loose their own identity and leading to prejudice
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
* *ex. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*