

Short Stories

Narration: The telling of a story

Story: The whole arc of what happens

Plot: Includes what happens, but also deals with how and why events unfold the way they do

Ordering the Plot:

Chronological: Beginning at the beginning, and going straight through to the end

Flashback: An intentional break in chronological sequence in which the narration switches to past events

Flash forward: Another intentional break in chronological order, but one in which the narration switches to future events

Foreshadowing: Warns or suggests to readers what lies ahead

Point of View: refers to perspective, position, or the vantage point from which a story is told

First Person: “I,” “me,” “we,” or “us”

Second person: “you”

Third person: “he,” “she,” “it,” or “they”

First person narrator: when the person telling the story (the narrator) is a character who witnesses or is involved in the action and uses “I”- We see everything in the story through the narrator’s eyes, and rely only on the narrator’s perceptions.

An **unreliable first-person narrator** is a character who tells the story but whose version *makes interpretations* of what is happening; a reader can *sometimes see more* than such narrators do.

Third person narrator:

Omniscient: a narrator who seems to know everything, including what every character is thinking. The narrator in *Story of an Hour* knows what Mrs. Mallard and all the other characters are thinking.

Limited point of view: a narrator who takes only a single person’s perspective and does not claim to know the thoughts of the other characters.

Objective or fly-on-the wall narrator: reports only on the outward action of the story and does not know what any of the characters are thinking.

Characterization: description of character through gestures, actions, dialogue; helps to support the plot.

Stereotypes: standardized portrayals of particular ethnic, professional, social or personality types; they are often oversimplified and prejudicial.

Protagonist: the main character; the one who is most prominent

Frequently, there is conflict between this character and an **antagonist**, a character who opposes the protagonist.

Dialogue: spoken words between characters

The dialogue provides the reader with the **key conflict** or struggle between ideas, characters, or groups, which is important to the story

Tragedy: involves an unavoidable fall in the protagonist's fortunes, and often ends in death.

Setting: time and place where a story happens.

Tone: the particular human voice behind the words; the illusion of a person narrating or speaking the lines

Irony: the narrator means the opposite of what he or she is actually saying

Theme: the subject or idea dramatized in a literary work, the idea framing the story

Motif: a recognizable, recurrent theme

Symbol: words writers can use to represent ideas or states of mind; a word or object that stands for something else: when sunshine suggests nothing more than a pleasant day or the need for shade, it is **literal**. When the sun coming from behind the clouds suggests the end of a gloomy time in someone's life, it is **symbolic**, or **figurative**.

Metaphor: a figure of speech based on an unspoken or implied comparison.

Simile: a comparison that is made using *like* or *as*

The **narrator** can begin the story **in medias re**, in the middle of the action, and rely on **retrospective narration**, a later retelling that fills in the earlier parts of the story.

Twist: element of a **plot** deliberately placed to keep readers in suspense

Exposition: information presented by the author or narrator that helps explain the characters and their circumstances. Too much can get in the way of the action, but we usually need some to understand the situation and the characters.

Conflict: the struggle between ideas, persons, or groups that are essential to narrative.

Prologue: an introduction to the central action.

Action: the primary event or occurrence in a work.

Juxtaposition: a "compare and contrast" exercise between two texts or narratives: comparing the "bridges" between ideas in the two narratives; and contrasting, or specifying the differences between the two.