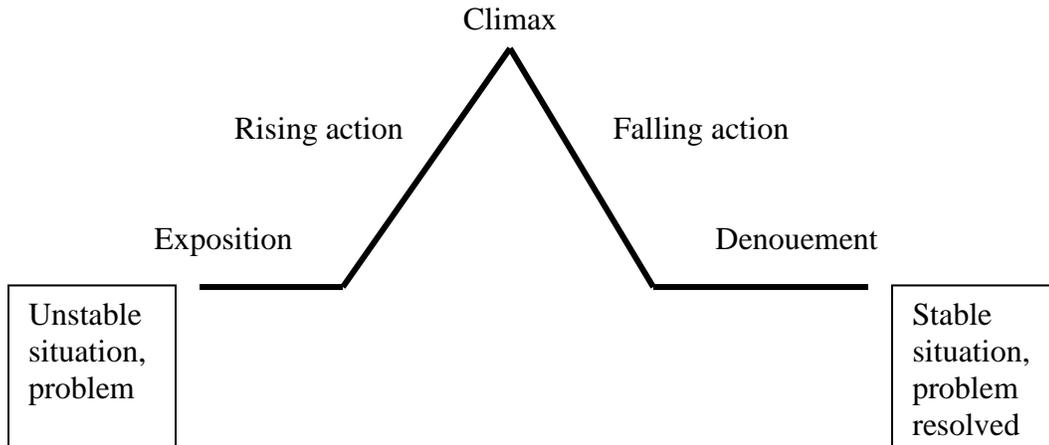


SEVEN LITERARY ELEMENTS USED TO ANALYZE LITERATURE

1. PLOT



Primary questions to ask yourself about what you've read: What happens in the story? How are the events connected to one another? What is the conflict? Is it internal or external? Who has the problem?

2. CHARACTERS

Who are the people? How do you describe each person? How do you know?

Direct characterization: The writer clearly tells the reader about the character.

Indirect characterization: The reader must learn about the character through his/her actions and thoughts.

How does a character change or develop? What does the character learn? Is there an *epiphany*—a sudden striking understanding?

3. SETTING

Where?

When?

Social Setting?

4. POINT OF VIEW

First person or third person: Does the storyteller use “I,” or “he/she/they” when telling the story (rarely second person “you”)

Omniscient or limited: Can we tell what *all* the characters are thinking (omniscient), or only the main character (limited)? Whose mind do we get into? Is the narrator reliable?

5. IRONY

- Verbal (a form of sarcasm)
 - Situational (a soldier survives an entire war only to be killed in a bus accident when he gets home)
 - Dramatic (most important) when the audience/reader knows more than the characters. (can be a source of comedy)
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6. SYMBOLISM

Not quite the same as metaphor (symbols are broader, less clearly defined)

A concrete object or event that suggests a deeper meaning

- Public
 - Private
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7. THEME

Subject: what is this really about?

Theme: what does it say about this subject? (Example: theme from “The Gift of the Magi” can be that love cannot be bought or sold)

Theme goes beyond this work and is about life in general

Subject can be a single word or phrase: love

A theme must be a complete sentence