

#9341

PARTS OF A STORY

CLEARVUE/eav

1999

Grade Levels: 4-7

20 minutes

1 Instructional Graphic Enclosed



DESCRIPTION

Uses four familiar children's stories to illustrate the essential components of a good story: characters, setting, plot, and theme. Useful for reading and analyzing a story and also when writing one.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Language Arts: Reading

- Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
 - Benchmark: Understands the basic concept of plot (e.g., main problem, conflict, resolution, cause-and-effect)
 - Benchmark: Understands elements of character development in literary works (e.g., differences between main and minor characters; stereotypical characters as opposed to fully developed characters; changes that characters undergo; the importance of a character's actions, motives, and appearance to plot and theme)
 - Benchmark: Understands point of view in a literary text (e.g., first and third person, limited and omniscient, subjective and objective)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To define four major story elements: *character, setting, plot, and theme*.
2. To compare and contrast how story elements are used in a variety of literary works.
3. To distinguish between "main" and "supporting" characters.
4. To explain how setting contributes to the mood of a story, providing specific examples.
5. To outline three main plot components—problem, resolution, and character development—as they unfold in a literary work.
6. To analyze story elements to interpret the theme of a given work.

VOCABULARY

1. antagonist
2. character
3. development
4. characters
5. character traits
6. climax
7. description
8. dialogue
9. falling action
10. fable

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|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 11. figment | 23. point of view |
| 12. first-person | 24. protagonist |
| 13. hero | 25. Reconstruction |
| 14. literary analysis | 26. resolution |
| 15. main characters | 27. rising action |
| 16. Mathis, Sharon Bell | 28. setting |
| 17. motive | 29. supporting characters |
| 18. narration | 30. suspense |
| 19. novel | 31. theme |
| 20. personification | 32. third-person |
| 21. plot | 33. tone |
| 22. problem | |



BEFORE SHOWING

Have students describe a story which they have recently read and enjoyed. Who was the story about? What happened? How did it end? Did the situation of the character(s) change by the end of the story? Then ask students to describe a story which they have recently seen—perhaps a play, a television show, or a movie. Ask them similar questions about the second work. Explain to the class that these questions are central to all stories, regardless of the medium in which they are created.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. What materials does a writer use to build a good story?
2. Name the two kinds of characters. Do main characters have to be human? Give two examples of nonhuman main characters from the program. Ask students to discuss all characters introduced in the program. Which is their favorite? Which one is most like them? What character traits are most helpful to creating a good story?
3. Who are the main characters in *Runaway Ralph*? Compare the personalities of Ralph and Garfield. What lessons could each character learn from the other? In the scene with Ralph and the bellhop, what do we learn about Ralph?
4. What is *setting*? Contrast the settings of *The Hundred Penny Box* and *The Red Balloon*. What kind of mood does each create?
5. Explain *plot* and define its three main parts. Which of the characters presented in the program did not face the problem of the story? What was the resolution? Ask students to give an example of a character who successfully faced a problem.
6. What is *theme*? How can a reader discover the theme of a story?

Applications and Activities

1. Show the video *Runaway Ralph* to the class. Ask students to choose a specific scene from the program and describe how it shows the four main story elements. How is the story realistic? How is it funny? Conduct an open discussion, emphasizing the skill of relating specific details from the program to support answers.
2. Have students view the entire program of *The Hundred Penny Box*. Name specific elements or moments of the story that help establish its mood. How does the feeling of the story compare to *Runaway Ralph*? How would the story change if Michael were a mouse like

Ralph? Have students choose a scene from the program and re-imagine it: change the characters, but keep the theme, or keep the characters, but change the mood. Ask them to write their new story and share the results with the class.

3. Review vocabulary by completing the matching exercise. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.)

SUMMARY

Professional moviemakers, stage directors, and fiction writers all ask the same question: What makes a story successful? Like a building or a home, the best stories are made of the best parts. But where a builder uses concrete, lumber, shingles and nails, a writer uses different kinds of parts. The main parts of a story are character, setting, plot, and theme.

There are two kinds of characters. *Main characters* are involved in all the important actions in the story. *Supporting characters* help us learn about the main characters. *Setting* tells where the story takes place. *Plot* is what happens in the story. There are three stages to plot: the problem, the resolution, and character development. *Character development* is how the main characters learn and grow as a result of facing the problem. This is closely related to *theme*, which might be described as the meaning of the story.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Mythology in Literary Culture #9315
- Universal Themes in Literature #9467



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **WHAT MAKES A GOOD SHORT STORY?**

<http://www.learner.org/exhibits/literature/>

Enter the door to journey through a classic short story! Solve a mystery while exploring the story's literary elements. Along the way, click on the parchment icon to explore point of view, to know what is involved in character development, and other terms.

- **ABSOLUTELY WHOOTIE STORIES TO GROW BY**

<http://hazel.forest.net/whootie/default.html>

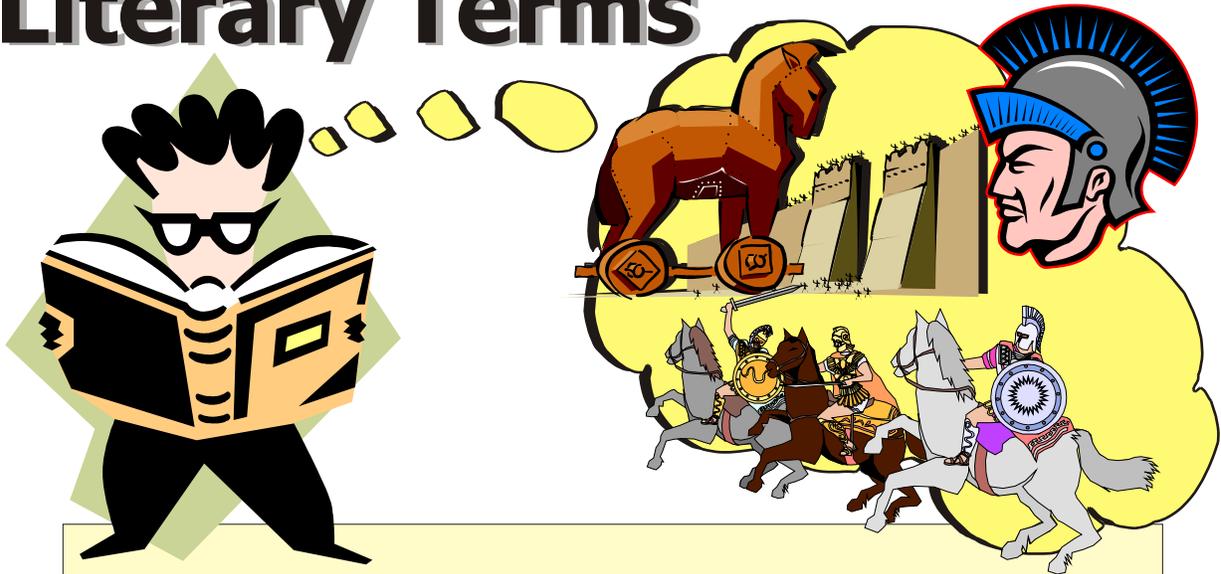
Click on the castle for folk tales from around the world. Enter in your age, kind of story, and read. Contains a section for parents and teachers.

INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS

- LITERARY TERMS



Literary Terms



Directions: Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right. Write the correct letter in the blank before each word.

- ___ 1. supporting characters
- ___ 2. plot
- ___ 3. character development
- ___ 4. setting
- ___ 5. main characters
- ___ 6. resolution
- ___ 7. characters
- ___ 8. problem

- A. The conflict in a story that the main character or characters must face
- B. The characters who are involved in the important actions in the story
- C. The time and place of a story; where and when the story takes place
- D. The people in a story; may also be animals that show a human personality
- E. How the problem in the story is resolved
- F. Minor characters who help us learn about the main characters
- G. The way a character learns and grows as a result of his or her experiences in the story
- H. The sequence of events that shows what happens in a story