



# What Are Literary Elements?

By Patti Hutchison

climax	first-person	interesting	interest
final	read	sequence	third-person
dialog	finding	exposition	writing
written	resolution	crime	clues
omniscient	reading		

**Directions:** Fill in each blank with the word that best completes the reading comprehension.

What are these literary elements your teacher is talking about? Sure, you enjoy (1) \_\_\_\_\_. But have you really taken time to think more deeply about the things you (2) \_\_\_\_\_? Authors use literary elements to make their writing more interesting. Teachers use them as starting points for analyzing and discussing the literature students read.

You have probably heard of these literary elements: setting, plot, characterization, conflict, point of view, theme, and tone. But what do these really mean?

Setting is the time and place of the story. The author might come right out and state the exact time and place. Or he might give the reader (3) \_\_\_\_\_. For example, he may describe how people dress or what kind of transportation they use in order to tell the time period of the story. He might describe a city or country setting and tell about the weather to give clues about the place. It is important to know the setting in order to understand the story.

The plot is the events in the story. Authors give the plot in many ways. They may give events in a sequential order. Or they may use flashbacks to go backwards and forwards in time. Like a good (4) \_\_\_\_\_ scene show, there may be several plot lines going on at the same time.

No matter what (5) \_\_\_\_\_ the events are written in, the plot contains the same elements. They include exposition, rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the (6) \_\_\_\_\_. What does all that mean?

The (7) \_\_\_\_\_ is the introduction. The characters are introduced, and information about the problem is given. The rising action leads up to the (8) \_\_\_\_\_, which is the turning point in the story. This is where the reader feels the most emotion. It is usually the most exciting part of the story. The falling action leads to the resolution, which is the conclusion of the story.

The author introduces us to the personalities in the story through characterization. The main character is the hero of the story, also called the protagonist. The author also tells us about other characters and their relationship to the main character. One of these is usually an antagonist. This is a person who goes against the protagonist. The characterization of a story helps the reader to understand other elements of the story, such as plot, conflict, and theme.

The conflict of the story is the main problem. It usually involves the main character. There are two types of conflict, external and internal. External conflicts involve the main character and another person. Or there may be problems between the main character and society, nature, or a machine. Internal conflicts are battles between the character and his thoughts or feelings. He may have to make an important decision or come to terms with a decision he has already made. Conflicts give the story (9) \_\_\_\_\_ and help us to understand the characters, plot, and theme.

A story's point of view deals with who is telling the story. There are two types of point of view. These are (10) \_\_\_\_\_ and third-person. In first person point of view, a character tells the story. This is shown by the use of the pronoun "I" throughout the story. This person tells what he observes and feels.

There are three types of third-person point of view. In (11) \_\_\_\_\_ (12) \_\_\_\_\_ point of view, the person telling the story knows all about the ideas and feelings of all the characters. In limited third-person point of view, the narrator knows only the feelings of one of the characters. Using third-person objective point of view, the narrator gives only observations about what is happening. He does not know the feelings of the characters, only what they see.

The theme is the main idea of the story. It involves the author's reason for (13) \_\_\_\_\_ the piece. He may have (14) \_\_\_\_\_ it to entertain the reader or teach her a lesson. Stories can have many themes.

(15) \_\_\_\_\_ the theme of a story often requires a lot of thought.

The (16) \_\_\_\_\_ element is tone. The tone of the story is the author's feeling about the subject of the story. It may be serious, playful, or take many other forms. Tone often goes hand in hand with the theme of the piece. An author can show tone through the (17) \_\_\_\_\_ of the characters, among other ways. Tone gives the emotion to the story and often contributes to how the reader feels while she is reading the piece.

Literary elements work together to make the story (18) \_\_\_\_\_ to the reader. They help the reader to understand the story and relate to it. Knowing what these elements are will help you to be able to analyze and discuss the literature you read.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

## What Are Literary Elements?

<p>1. The setting of the story includes:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Where the story takes place</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B When the story takes place</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Both A and B</p>	<p>2. Name the five elements of plot.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>3. The hero of story is also called the:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Protagonist</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Climax</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Setting</p>	<p>4. Point of view deals with:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Where and when the story takes place</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B The rising action of the story</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Who is telling the story</p>
<p>5. The main idea or author's purpose in writing the story is the:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Climax</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Theme</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Point of view</p>	<p>6. What is the tone of the story?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>