

Plot Development



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What is Plot Development?

This refers to how the plot **develops from the central problem to the problem's resolution and the aftermath.** It unfolds through the following aspects.

- Conflict
- Tension
- Climax/Anti-climax
- Denouement

Conflict

Conflict refers to the **problem around which the story is centred**.

- It comes at the **beginning of the story**, as the story depends on it to unfold.
- Do **not** mistake conflict for **arguments or disagreements** between characters with this conflict. Conflict as a **literary aspect** is different.
- This can be **internal** (coming from within the character) or **external** (coming from external forces)

Tension

- This is the suspense that is the **result of the conflict**, which means you cannot have tension before conflict has been established.
- In stories, you do not get one tension point, but **numerous tension points keep building until the highest point of tension.**

Climax

- This is the point when the initial **conflict is resolved** – it could be the problem being solved or the main character deciding how to handle the problem.
- At this point there should be no tension.

Anti-climax

We talk of this when the **conflict is not resolved**.

Here is an example:

A man who sets off looking for his adoptive parents, in order for them to tell him who his biological parents are. After tracking them across the provinces he arrives at the place his adoptive parents are supposed to be only to find that they died some years ago. The story ends with the man sitting in a bus on the way home.

In such a story there is an anti-climax because the man's problem is not solved.

At this point tension still remains, because there is no resolution or solution.

Denouement

- This is the **aftermath**.
- It is used as a way of **concluding** the story in a **neat manner**.
- At this point there is **no tension**.

An Example:

“And they lived happily ever after.”