

Story Elements

A fictional passage is a work of literature which focuses on characters, events, and other story elements imagined by the author.

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a story, understand story details, make connections among story details, and construct meaning from the text. To aid reading comprehension, the student and parents should use a story from the textbook, or a section from a book the teacher has assigned to discuss the student's reading assignments.

Before reading, the student should become familiar with the following elements:

Plot is the action of a story which consists of five different components.

Exposition: any relevant details that occurred before the story actually began

Rising action: the central part of a story, which includes various events and problems as they start to arise; it leads to the climax

Climax: the turning point of action in a story when the most exciting events occur

Falling action: the part of a story where the actions and problems begin coming to a closure

Resolution: the closing of a story when the problems are solved and the story comes to an end

Characterization is the technique authors use to make their characters come to life. This is achieved through the author's direct or indirect description of the character, the characters' dialogue or thoughts about him/herself, other character's dialogue or thoughts about the main character, or events from within the story.

Conflict in a story is the problem in a story. There are five basic types of conflict:

Character vs. Character: a character has a problem with one or more of the other characters

Character vs. Self: a character has a problem with him/herself either internally or externally

Character vs. Nature: a character is in conflict with some element of nature— tornado, extreme heat, floods

Character vs. Society: a character is in conflict with society— tradition, law, community

Character vs. Machine/Technology: a character is in conflict with any type of mechanism or technology— computers, automobiles, telephones

Dialogue is the talking or conversation that occurs between characters in a story.

Setting is the time and place in which the story takes place.

Literary elements are devices authors use to enhance their works.

Symbolism: when an object or idea stands for something else in a story

Foreshadowing: used in stories to give clues to coming events

Flashback: the technique of shifting from the present to an earlier time in order to present other details

Personification: a figure of speech used to give human qualities to nonhuman objects— The wind whispered through the trees

Onomatopoeia: the use of words which suggest their meaning— buzz, purr

Alliteration: the repetition of the initial sounds in neighboring words— The breeze of spring blew by briskly

Assonance: the repetition in words of similar vowel sounds— The mad hatter had rabbit over for tea

Hyperbole: an intentionally exaggerated figure of speech— He is the worst dancer in the world

Allusion: when an author directly or indirectly refers to another text in his/her own writing

Since the student may have difficulty retaining all of the important information, extra help engaging with reading materials may be necessary. One way to prompt such interaction is to have the student process reading beyond the literal level.

Practice

The students should create a bookmark for the completed reading. The bookmark should suggest an overall summary of the text's plot. Characterization of the characters from the story should also be explained. Story elements should be included to explain the overall theme, or moral, of the story. The main conflict of the story should be presented on the end of the bookmark. After completing the reading of the story, the student should reveal how the conflict was resolved on the back of the bookmark. He or she can then suggest an alternative resolution, or ending for the story. Overall, the bookmark should display understanding of the reading and show creativity.