

Elements of Plot

Structure and Elements

What is Plot?

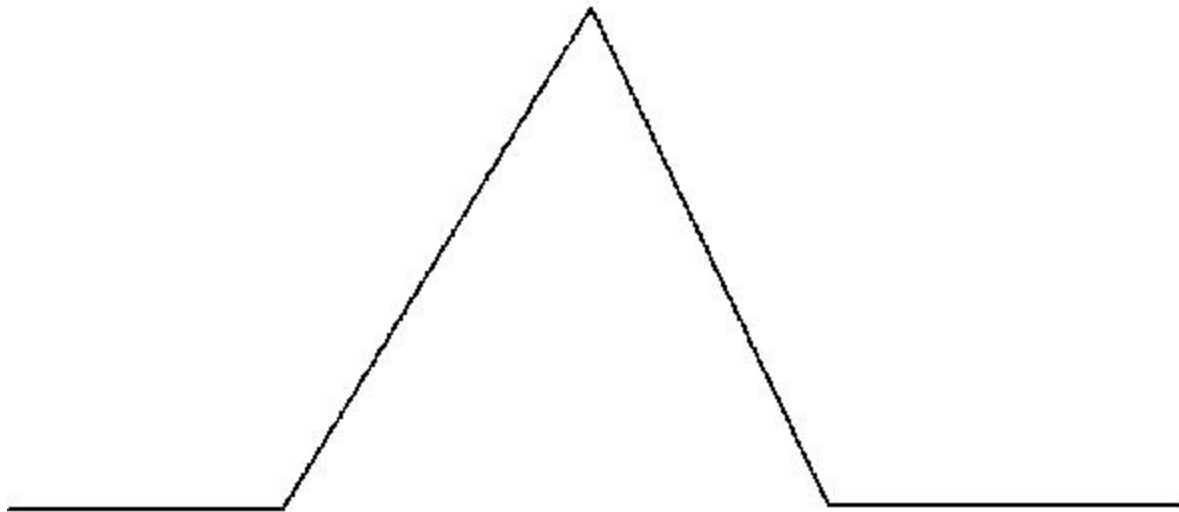


Fig. 1

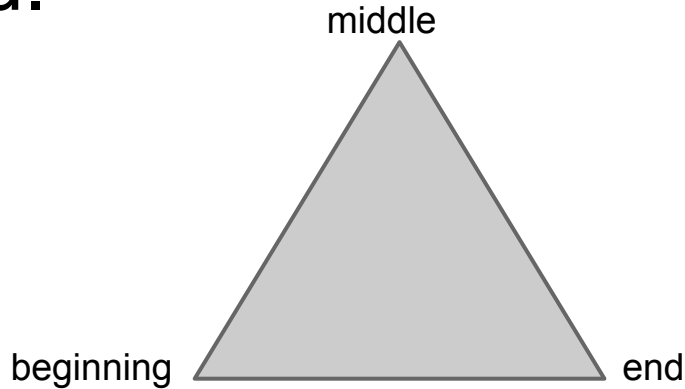
Plot is...

Plot is the order of events that make up a story.

The plot of a story is **a series of interconnected events** in which every occurrence has a **specific purpose**. A plot is all about **establishing connections, suggesting causes, and showing**

Aristotle's Unified Plot

Aristotle described the basic triangle-shaped plot structure, which has a beginning, middle, and end.



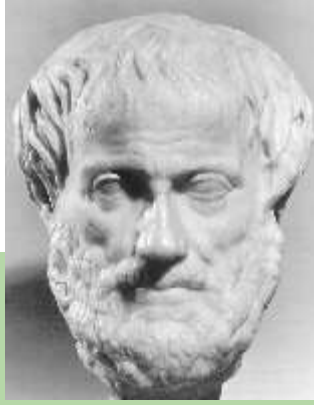


Fig.2

PLOT is
CHARACTER revealed by
ACTION.

--Aristotle, 350 BCE

FYI

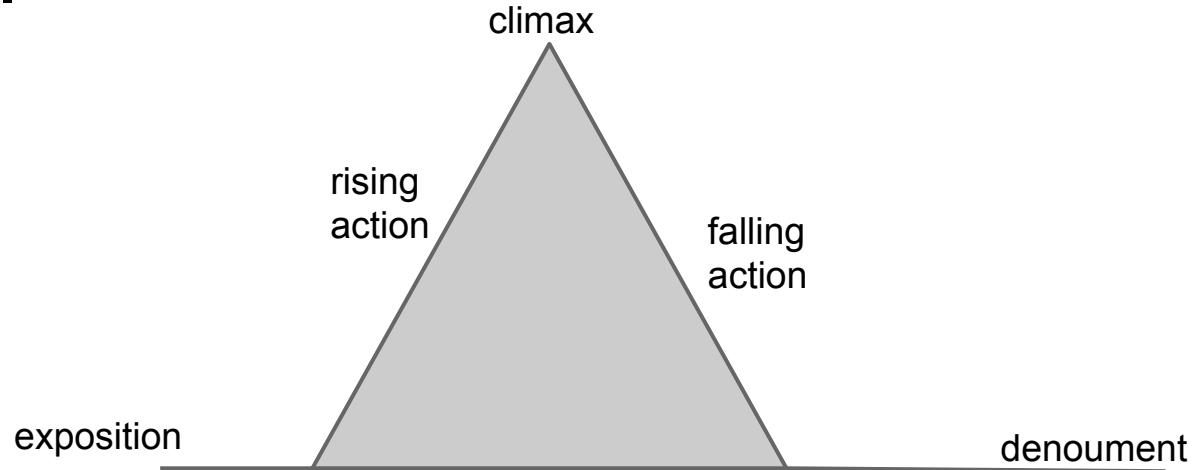
Gustav Freytag was a 19th-century German playwright and novelist who saw common patterns in the plots of stories and novels and developed a diagram to analyze them.



Fig. 3

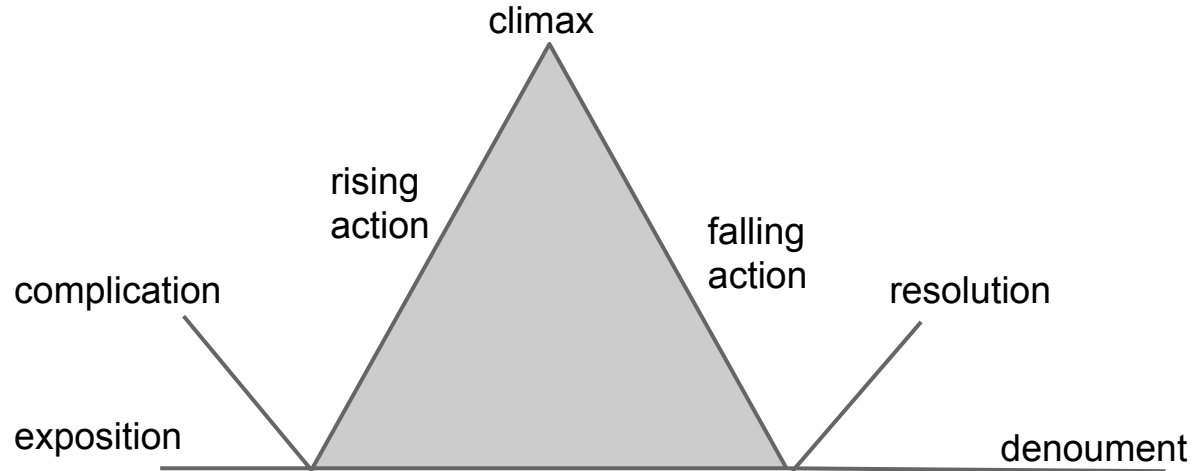
Freytag's Pyramid

Freytag modified Aristotle's pyramid by adding rising action and falling action, making it a five-part design.



Freytag's Pyramid

The plot of a story can be mapped using Freytag's elements of plot:



Elements of Plot

Exposition sets the scene. The writer introduces the characters and setting, providing description and background.

Complication, sometimes called the inciting incident, is a single event that begins the major conflict.

Rising Action builds during the story and gets more exciting.

Climax is the moment of greatest tension in the story. Children call this the most exciting part. In *Charlotte's Web*, the climax is when the pig survives.

Elements of Plot, continued

Falling Action happens as a result of the climax and we know that the story will soon end.

Resolution is when the character solves the main problem/conflict or someone solves it for him or her.

Denouement (French: the action of untying): is the series of events that follow the plot's climax. It is the opposite of the exposition, in that any remaining questions or mysteries that remain after the resolution are solved by the characters or explained by the author. Sometimes the author leaves us to think about the theme or future possibilities for the characters.

*And they
all lived
happily
ever after.*

5 Types of Plot structure

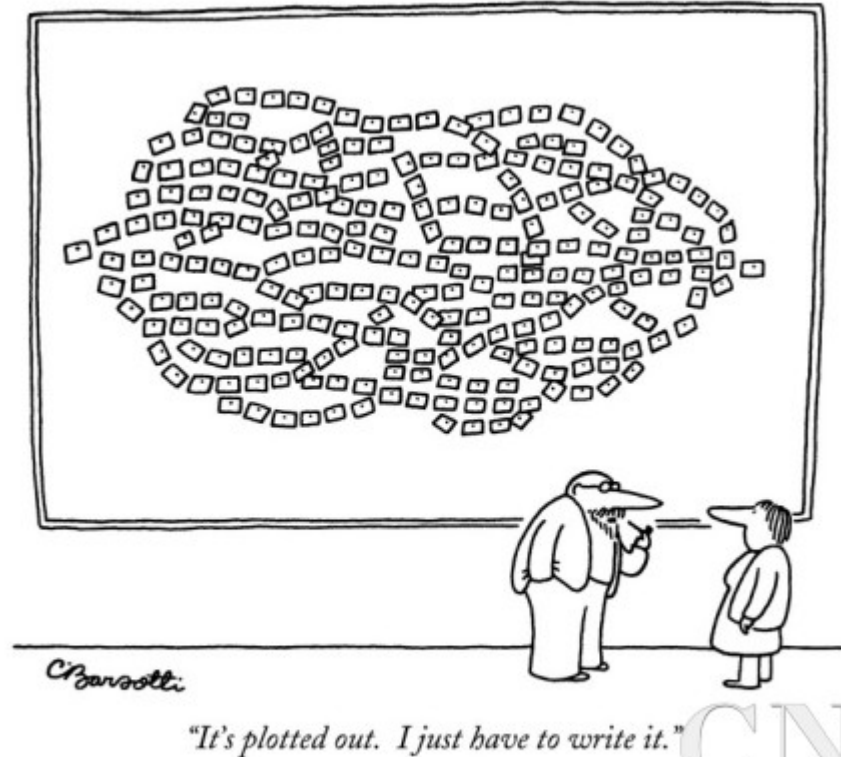
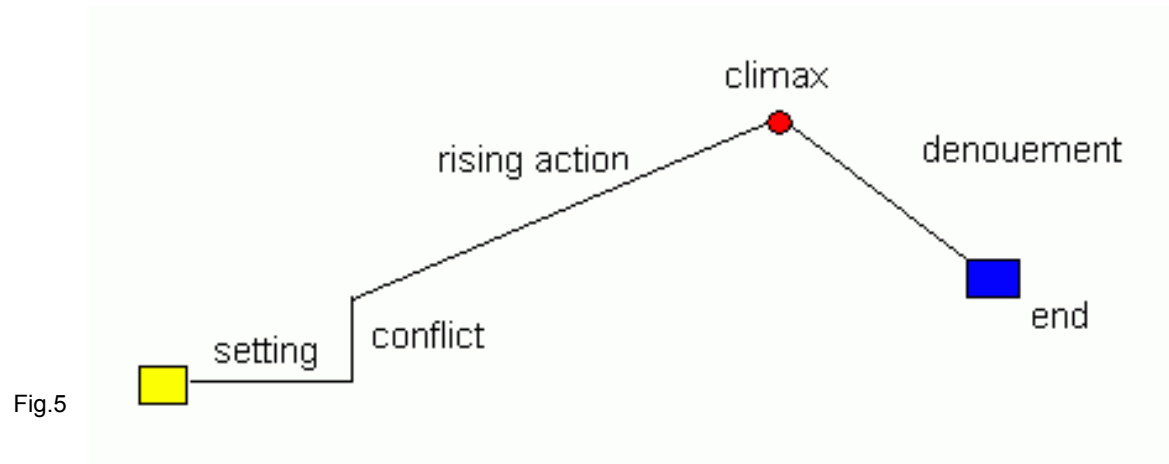


Fig.4

1. Progressive plot

This is a chronological structure which first establishes the setting and conflict, then follows the rising action through to a climax (the peak of the action and turning point), and concludes with a denouement.



2. Episodic Plot

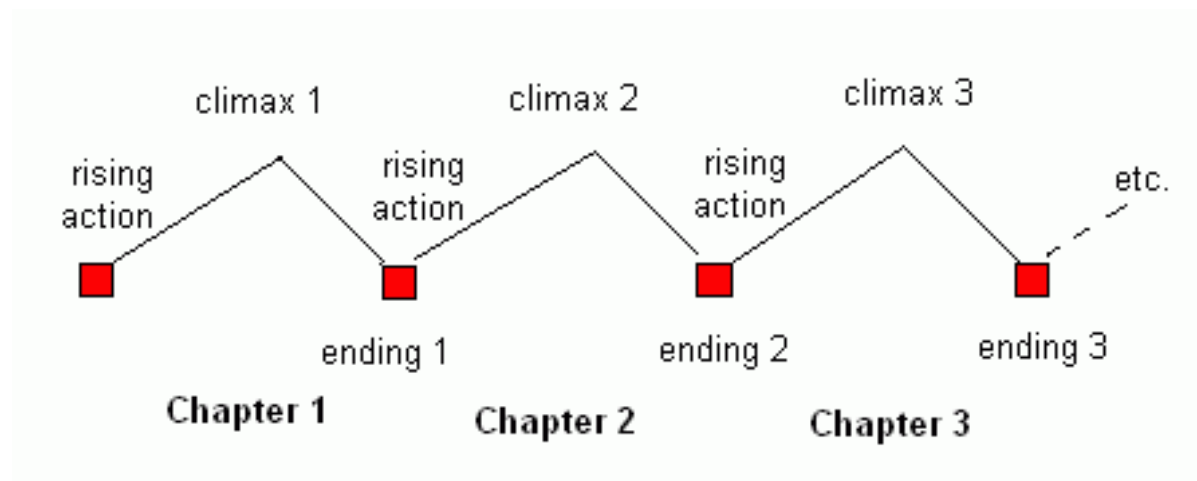
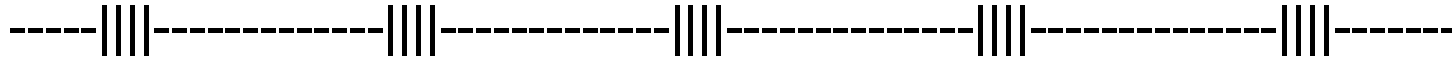


Fig. 6

3. Parallel Plot



Plot line for main character1



Plot line for main character 2

Each main character has a separate but related story line that merges in the end.

Each segment of the story moves the plot forward in time. An occasional scene may overlap in time, but the general movement should be forward.

Parallel Plot, cont.

In a parallel plot, the characters might start out together and separate to follow their own paths, or they may not connect until the end. Their story lines are related and the climax occurs when the two (or more) come together at the end.

Parallel plots may have more than two main characters. Once each main character is introduced, the writer then returns to the first character and repeats the cycle.

Additional examples: School reunions, earthquakes and other natural disasters.

4. Flashback (or flash forward)

This structure conveys information about events that occurred earlier. It permits authors to begin the story in the midst of the action but later fill in the background for full understanding of the present events. Flashbacks can occur more than once and in different parts of a story. Remember, *To Kill a Mockingbird* begins at the end!

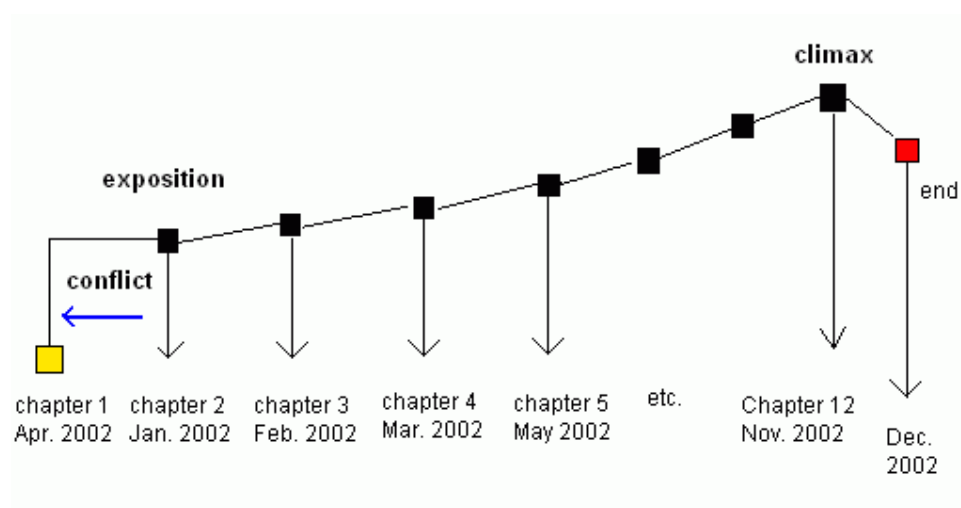


Fig. 7

5. Concentric Circles

Virginia Woolf's novels often center on a character and their perceptions of the world, rather than following a traditional linear path.

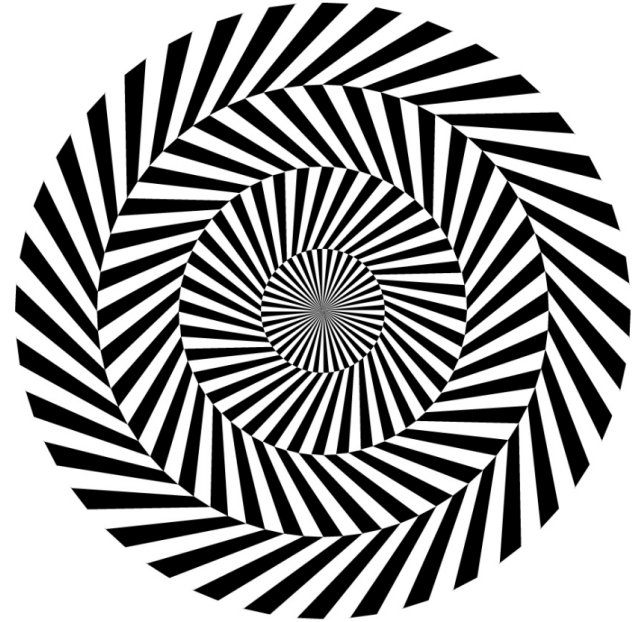


Fig. 8

Image Sources

Fig. 1 http://pad3.whstatic.com/images/f/fb/Witch's_hat_485.jpg

Fig. 2 <http://www.philosophypages.com/vy/aris1.jpg>

Fig. 3 http://www.amv-wangen.org/images/freytag_web.jpg

Fig. 4 http://www.condenaststore.com/-sp/lt-s-plotted-out-I-just-have-to-write-it-New-Yorker-Cartoon-Prints_i8542726_.htm

Fig. 5-7 http://www2.nkfust.edu.tw/~emchen/CLit/study_elements.htm

Fig. 8 <http://grasshoppermind.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/op-art-circular-chevrons.jpg?w=917>