

SHORT STORIES: PLOT & CONFLICT

Short stories (and most other pieces of fictional writing) include similar parts. The two most important parts that *must* be included are:

PLOT: The main events that make up the story, organized by the **beginning, middle** and **end**.

a) **Introduction** - The beginning of the story where the characters and the setting is revealed. During the introduction the conflict is also introduced.

b) **Rising Action** - This is where the events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is developed (events between the introduction and climax).

c) **Climax** - This is the highest point of interest and the turning point of the story. The reader wonders what will happen next; will the conflict be resolved or not?

d) **Falling action** - The events and complications begin to get resolved. The reader knows what has happened next and if the conflict was resolved or not (events between climax and denouement).

e) **Resolution** - This is the final outcome or untangling of events in the story.

CONFLICT: The central problem of the story. The problem of the story keeps the plot moving. There are four main categories for conflict:

1) **Character vs. Character** (physical) - The leading character struggles with his physical strength against other men, forces of nature, or animals.

2) **Character vs. Circumstances** (classical) - The leading character struggles against fate, or the circumstances of life facing him/her.

3) **Character vs. Society** (social) - The leading character struggles against ideas, practices, or customs of other people.

4) **Character vs. Himself/Herself** (psychological) - The leading character struggles with himself/herself; with his/her own soul, ideas of right or wrong, physical limitations, choices, etc.