

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

1. A character
2. No
3. When the plot changes, we discover how a character reacts.
4. No
5. The things a character does can reveal what he thinks and feels.
6. Yes
7. False
8. False. Forster introduced flat and round characters.
9. False
10. Janet takes action. She is adventurous, commanding, and not afraid of snakes. Harry is fearful and does not like snakes.

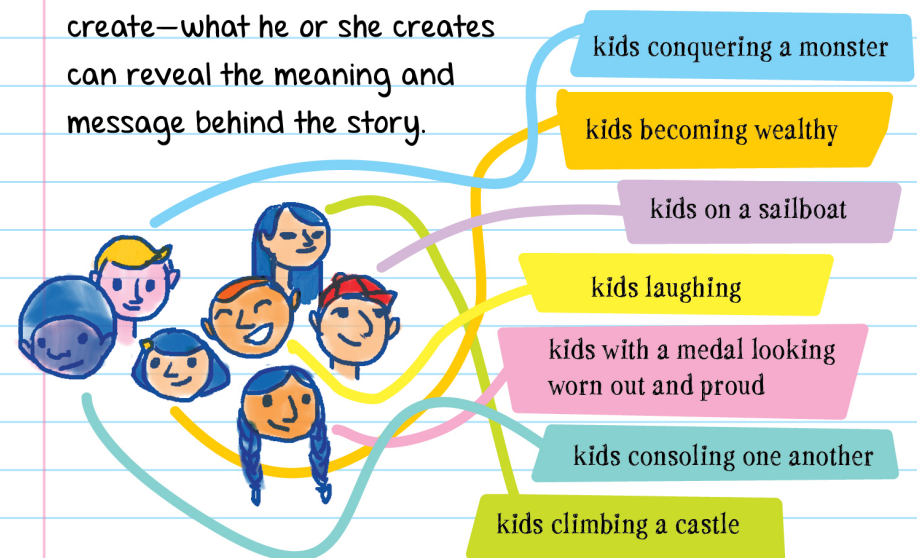
#10 has more than one correct answer.

Chapter 19

PLOT

WHAT IS PLOT?

The plot, or the sequence of events in a story, creates action. The actions in a story build **DRAMA**. All that action and drama usually works toward a **RESOLUTION**. When an author creates a plot, he or she is creating a chain reaction—there are causes and effects to the action. There are an infinite number of **PLOT LINES** that an author can create—what he or she creates can reveal the meaning and message behind the story.



Almost all plots follow this basic sequence, which was first described by the German novelist and playwright **GUSTAV FREYTAG** and is sometimes described as **FREYTAG'S PYRAMID**.



DRAMA

the way events work together to create excitement in a story

RESOLUTION

part of a story where the problems are resolved

PLOTLINE

the main path that a story takes

1. **EXPOSITION:** The author sets the scene and explains what's going on.

2. **RISING ACTION:** a series of crises that lead to the climax



3. **CLIMAX:** the most exciting moment of a story, where both people and events change



4. **FALLING ACTION:** the events that follow the climax



5. **RESOLUTION:** the conclusion, in which all the tensions of the plot are resolved



PLOT the sequence of events in a story that together create action and build drama

Climax

the most exciting moment of a story, where both people and events change

Rising Action

a series of crises that lead to the climax

Falling Action

the events that follow the climax

FREYTAG'S PYRAMID

Exposition

The author sets the scene and explains what's going on.

Resolution

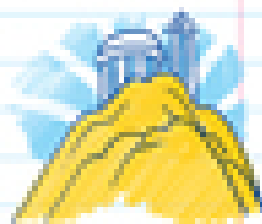
the conclusion, in which all the tensions of the plot are resolved

CLASSIC PLOTS

There are all kinds of plots, but there are some big patterns you'll see over and over again. Classic plots are stories that have the same basic sequence of events and appear in many stories throughout history.

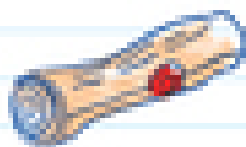
Classic plots can come from:

MYTHS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



TRADITIONAL STORIES, such as fairy tales and folktales like the ones collected by the Brothers Grimm or invented by Hans Christian Andersen.

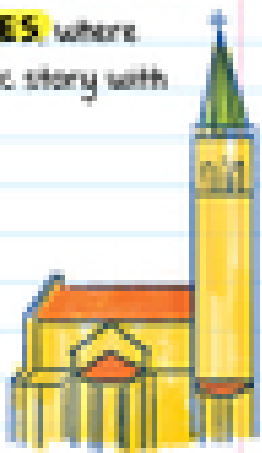
RELIGIOUS NOVELS FROM SACRED TEXTS



Other sources, like **MARLBOROUGH NOVELS**, **ADVENTURES**, or **ROMANCES**, where many authors tell the same basic story with different details.

EXAMPLE:

A plot about the children from warring families who happen to fall in love has been repeated



Traditional version: **ROMEO AND JULIET** is a play by William Shakespeare set in medieval Verona and Mantua in Italy.

Modern version:

WEST SIDE STORY is an American musical based on **ROMEO AND JULIET**. Instead of the star-crossed lovers being torn between warring Italian families, they're torn between warring New York City gangs.



EXAMPLE:

The plot about a brave upstart who stands up to a much stronger enemy and wins has repeated:

Religious version: In the biblical story of David and Goliath, David, a young Israelite, stands up to the giant Goliath. Using only a slingshot and a stone, he brings him down.



Modern version: In the movie **MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON**, a young congressman stands up to much more powerful politicians and defeats them.

EXAMPLE:

The plot about an artist who creates an image of a woman and then falls in love with the image he made has been revised:

Mythological version: In Ovid's poem **METAMORPHOSES**, a sculptor falls in love with a statue he carved.



Modern version: In the musical **MY FAIR LADY**, a rich man helps a young lady from the streets become his ideal of the perfect woman, then falls in love with her.

HOW AN AUTHOR CREATES A PLOT

An author composes a plot piece by piece with **SCENES**. Scenes make up the story, including all the pieces of plot: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

You can chart the plot of a story you read (or build your own story) by creating a **PLOT DIAGRAM** (similar to the plot pyramid), and sometimes called **STORYBOARDING**.

A plot diagram shows the plot of a story, scene by scene or plot section by plot section.

ONE SCENE OF THE STORY IS TOLD IN A PICTURE

SCENE

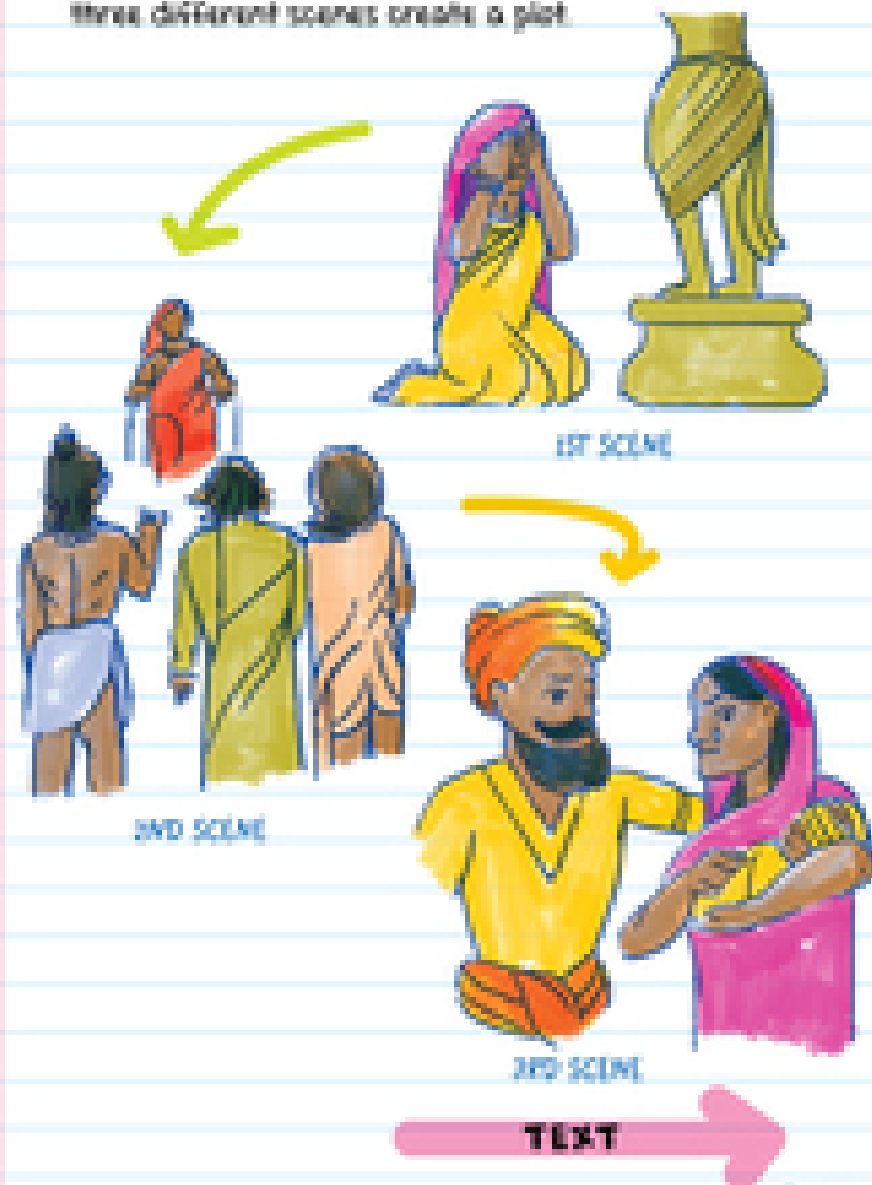
an individual event in a story

STORYBOARDING

creating a series of drawings that represent a plot

EXAMPLE:

An Indian fairy tale, retold by Joseph Jacobs, shows how three different scenes create a plot.



1ST SCENE

2ND SCENE

3RD SCENE

TEXT

ONCE THERE LIVED a great Raja, whose name was Salabhan, and he had a Queen, by name Lona, who, though she wept and prayed at many a shrine, had never a child to gladden her eyes. After a long time, however, a son was promised to her.

Queen Lona returned to the palace, and when the time for the birth of the promised son drew nigh, she inquired of three Jogis who came begging to her gate, what the child's fate would be, and the youngest of them answered and said, "Oh, Queen! the child will be a boy, and he will live to be a great man. But for twelve years you must not look upon his face, for if either you or his father see it before the twelve years are past, you will surely die! This is what you must do, as soon as the child is born you must send him away to a cellar underneath the ground, and never let him see the light of day for twelve years. After they are over, he may come forth, bathe in the river, put on new clothes, and visit you. His name shall be Raja Rasala, and he shall be known far and wide."

So, when a fair young Prince was in due time born into the world, his parents hid him away in an underground palace, with nurses, and servants, and everything else a King's son might desire.

In the FIRST scene, the queen prays at a shrine for a son. From the sentences, we can see that the queen doesn't have a son, wants a son, and a son is promised to her. This propels the plot forward by setting up the conflict of the story: The queen wants a son and doesn't have one.

PEOPLE WHO ARE MADE AT ROGA

In the SECOND scene, the queen meets with Jogis (or jogs) at the palace gate. They make a prediction that she will die if she sees her son during his first 12 years and give her instructions on how to avoid this fate. This propels the story forward by ensuring that there is conflict after the child is born, because the king and queen can't just have a normal life with him.

In the LAST scene, the young prince is born and hidden away. He is put in an underground palace with servants. This propels the story forward by building curiosity, and possible conflict over what in the world will happen when the young prince comes out of hiding.