

Elements of a Story

What you need to know!



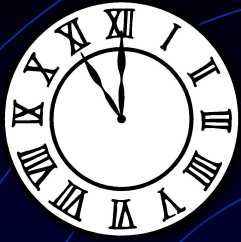
Story Elements

- Setting
- Plot
- Characters
- Conflict
- Theme



Setting

- Setting is the “**where and when**” of a story. It is the **time and place** during which the story takes place.



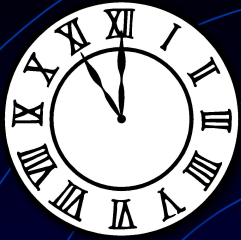
Setting

Time and place are where the action occurs

Details that describe:

- ✓ Time of day
- ✓ Time of year
- ✓ Time in history
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ Scenery
- ✓ Customs
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Dialects
- ✓ Weather





Setting

- A good author includes descriptions of the setting using the five senses...
- Sight
- Smell
- Taste
- Feel
- Sound



The Functions of a Setting

- To create a mood or atmosphere
- To show a reader a different way of life
- To make action seem more real
- To be the source of conflict or struggle
- To symbolize an idea

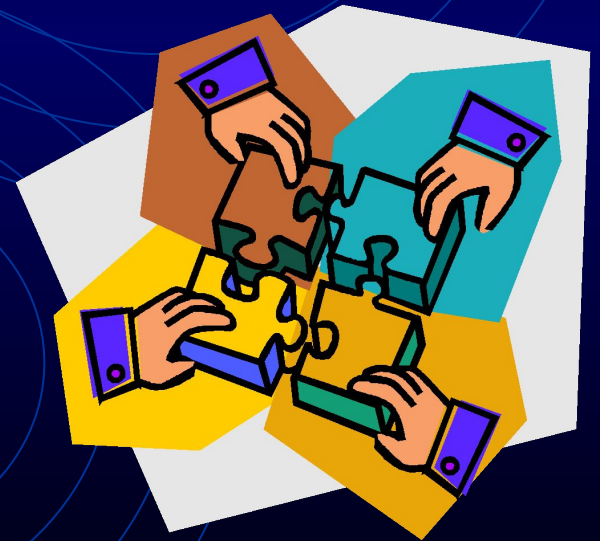


Mood

- **Mood** is the feeling that the author tries to convey throughout the story. The atmosphere or emotional condition created by the piece, within the setting. Does the author want the reader to be frightened or sad, or does the story make the reader laugh and think happy thoughts?
- To figure out mood, examine how you feel while reading the story. Often mood is conveyed by the story's setting.

Plot (definition)

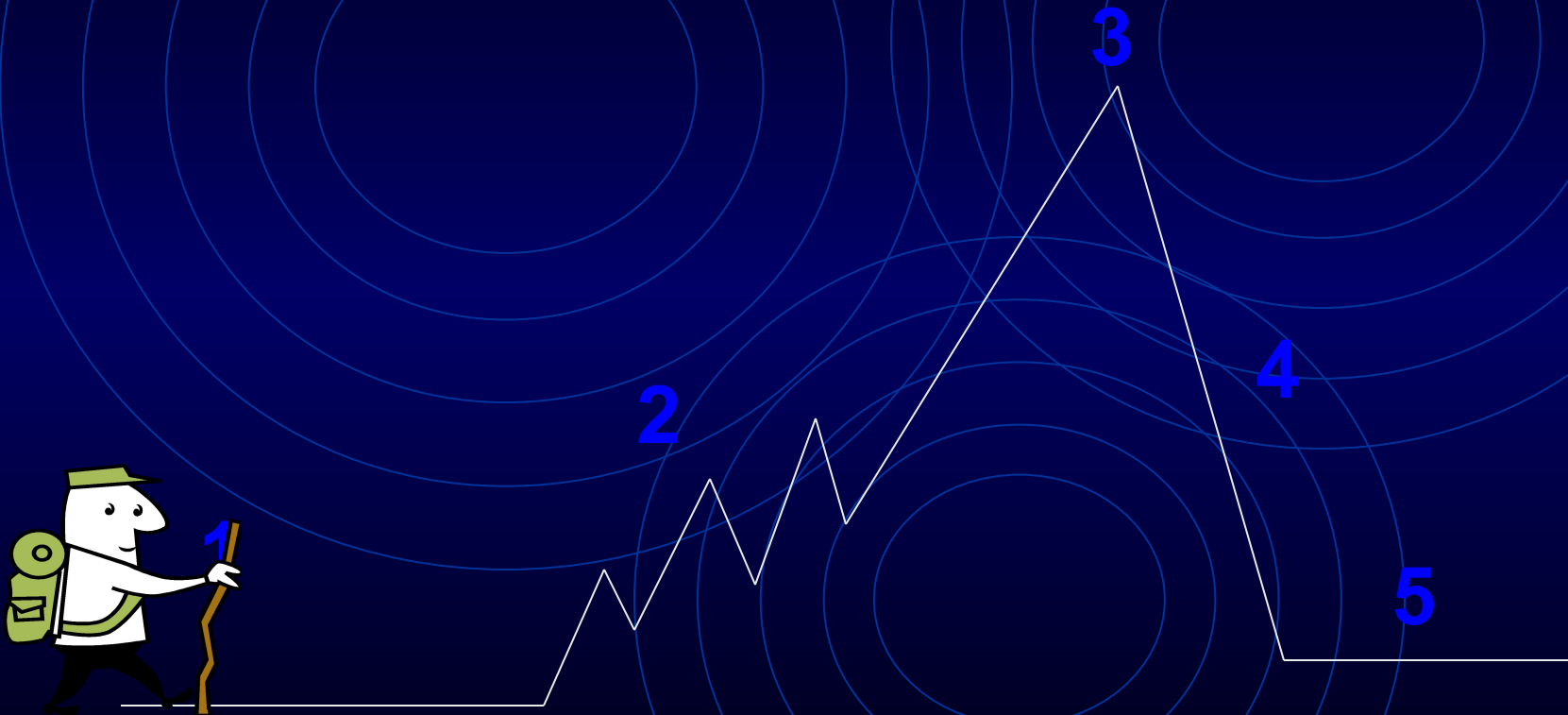
- Plot is the organized pattern or sequence of events that make up a story.
- Plot is the literary element that describes the structure of a story. It shows arrangement of events and actions within a story.



Parts of a Plot

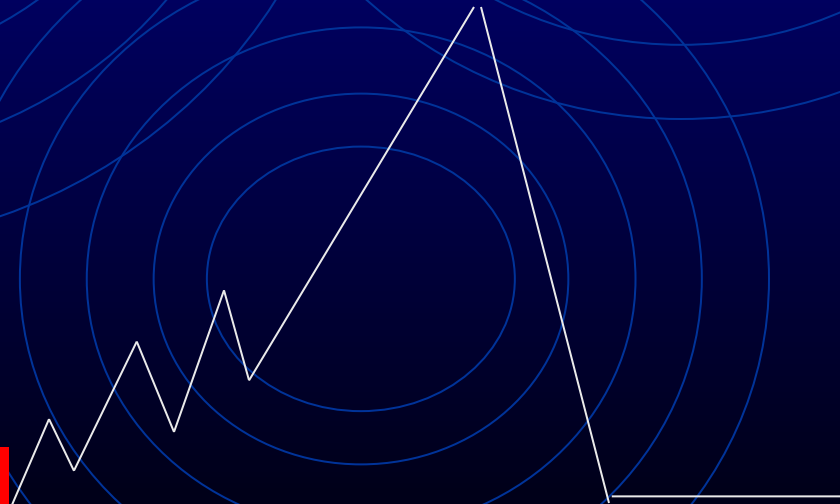
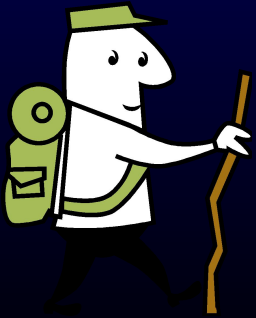
- Exposition - introduction; characters, setting and conflict (problem) are introduced
- Rising Action- events that occur as result of central conflict
- Climax- highest point of interest or suspense of a story
- Falling Action - tension eases; events show the results of how the main character begins to resolve the conflict
- Resolution- loose ends are tied up; the conflict is solved

Plot Diagram



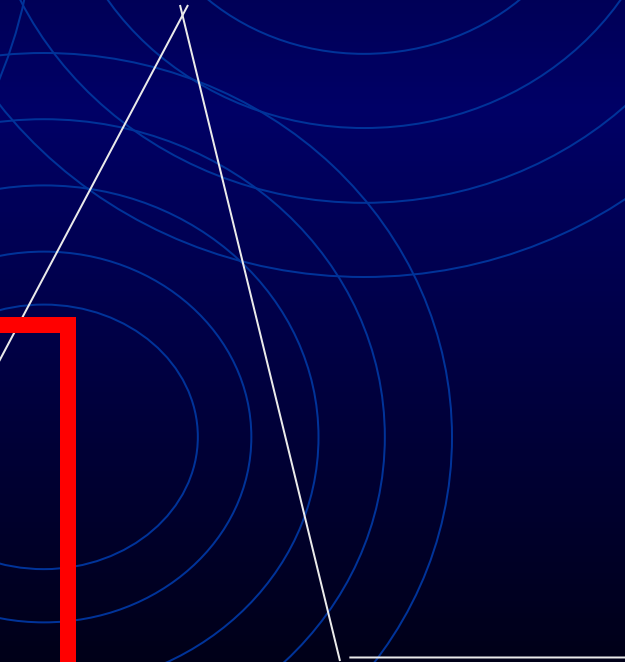
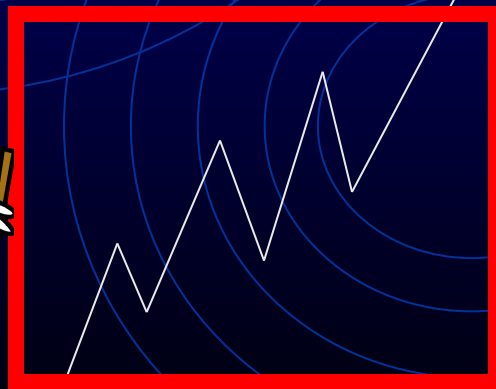
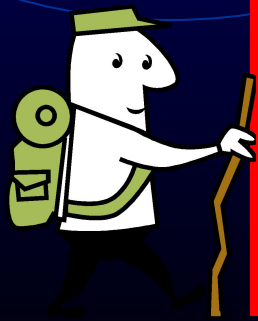
1. Exposition

- This usually occurs at the beginning of a short story. Here the characters are introduced. We also learn about the setting of the story. Most importantly, we are introduced to the main conflict (main problem).



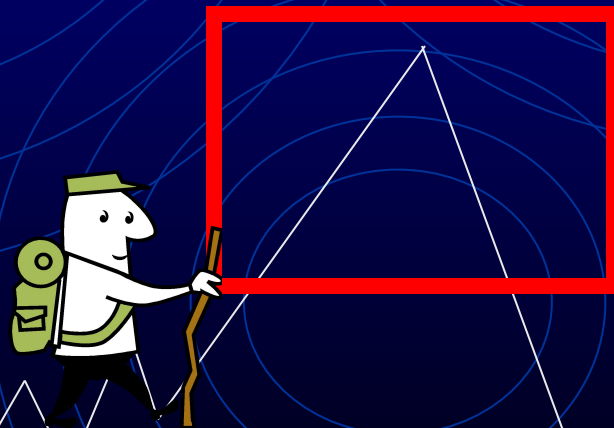
2. Rising Action

- This part of the story begins to develop the conflict(s). A building of interest or suspense occurs and leads to the climax. Complications arise



3. Climax

- **This is the turning point of the story. Usually the main character comes face to face with a conflict. The main character will change in some way. This is the most intense moment.**



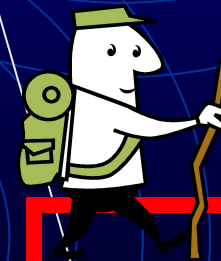
4. Falling Action

- Action that follows the climax and ultimately leads to the resolution



5. Resolution

- The conclusion; all loose ends are tied up.
- Either the character defeats the problem, learns to live with the problem, or the problem defeats the character.



Putting It All Together

1. Exposition

2. Rising Action

3. Climax

4. Falling Action

5. Resolution

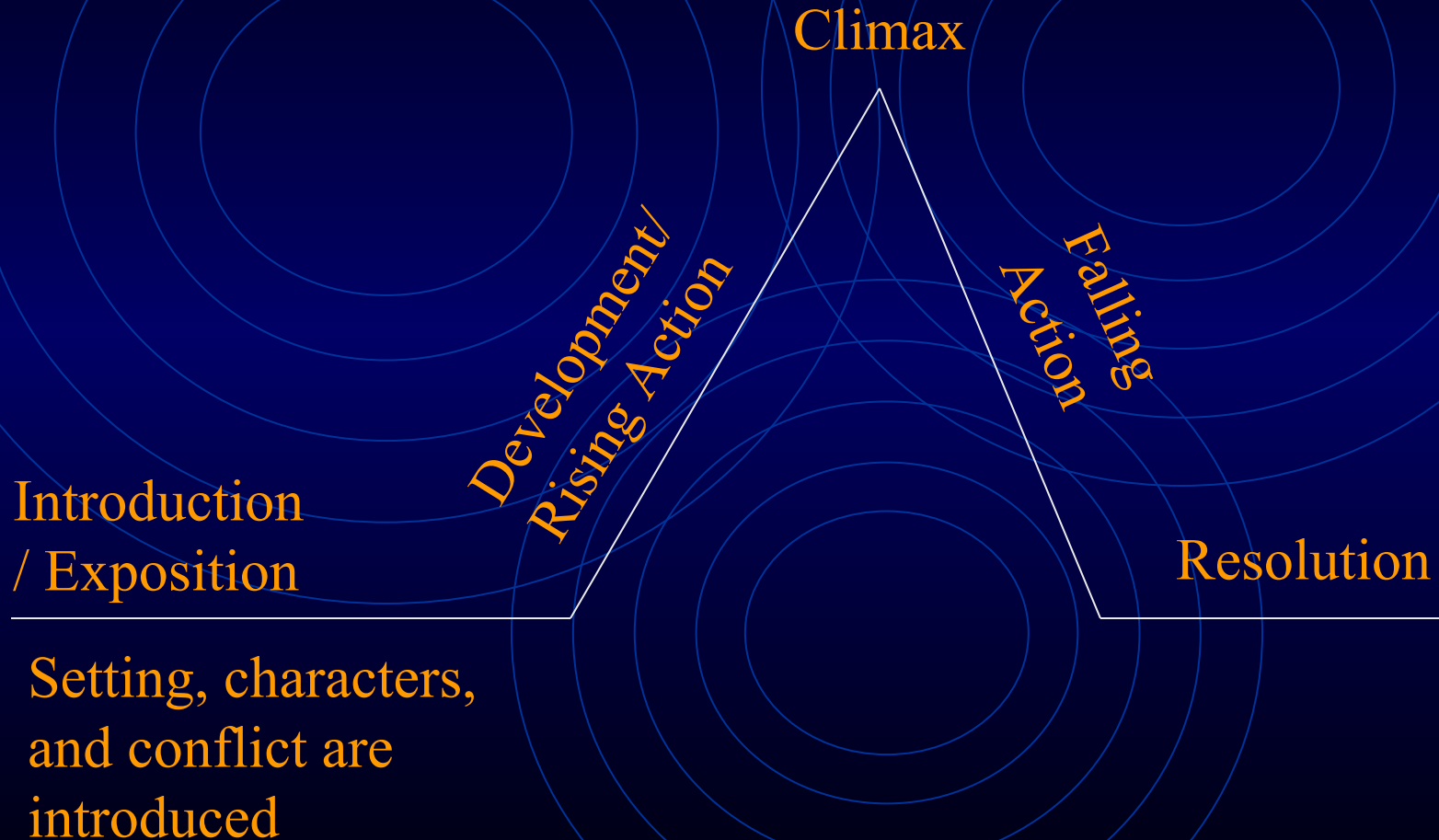
Beginning of
Story

Middle of Story

End of Story



Diagram of Plot



Characters

- people, animals, and imaginary creatures who take part in the action of a story



Central Character-central, or main characters, are the most important character in literary works.

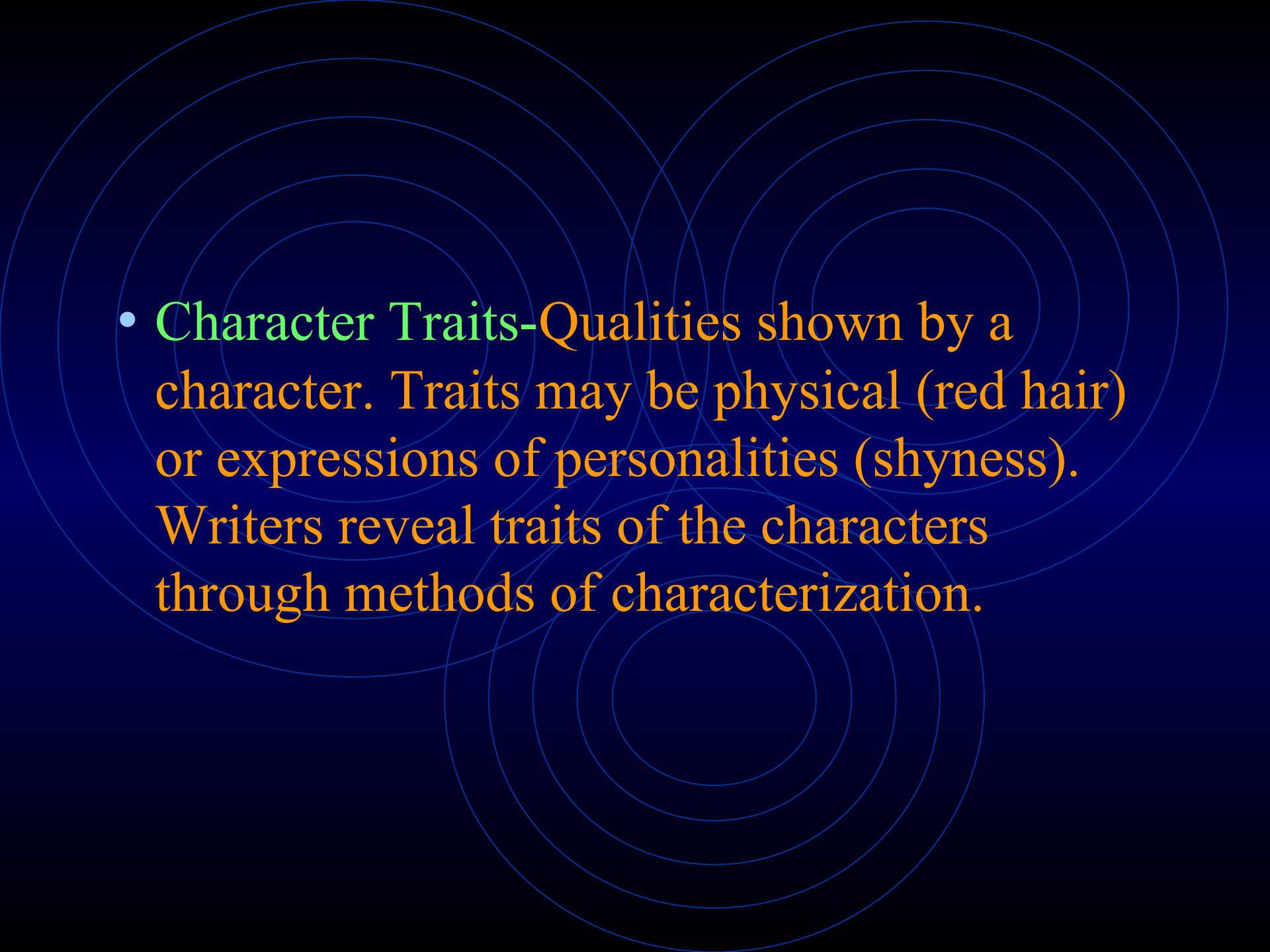
- **Minor Character**- The less important characters in a literary work. The story is not centered around them, but they help carry out the action in the story.

Characters

- Protagonist and antagonist are used to describe characters.
- The protagonist is the main character of the story involved in the main conflict. Usually undergoes changes throughout the story.
- The antagonist is the force in opposition of the protagonist. Usually another character but can be a force of nature, society, or an internal force.

Dynamic Character- One who undergoes changes as the plot unfolds. Changes occur because of the character's actions and experiences. Changes are usually internal and may be good or bad.

Static Character- One who remains the same throughout the story.

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- **Character Traits-Qualities** shown by a character. Traits may be physical (red hair) or expressions of personalities (shyness). Writers reveal traits of the characters through methods of characterization.

- **Direct Characterization-** The writer tells the audience what the personality of the character is.

Example: “The patient boy and quiet girl were both well mannered and did not disobey their mother.

- **Indirect Characterization-** The writer shows things that reveal the personality of a character. There are 5 different methods of indirect characterization:

Speech – What does the character say? How does the character speak?

Thoughts – What is revealed through the character's private thoughts and feelings?

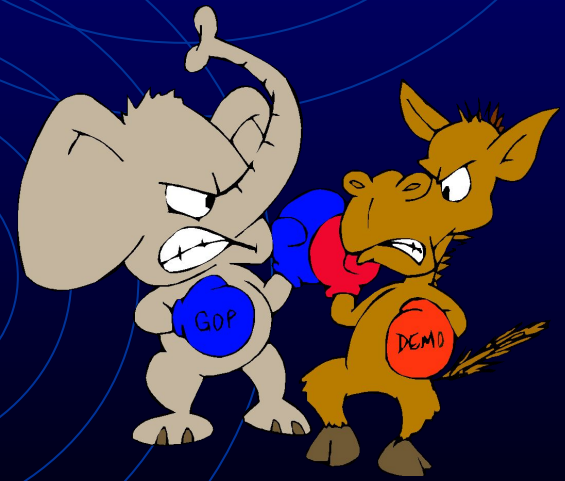
Effect on others- What is revealed through the character's effect on other people? How do the characters feel or behave in reaction to the character?

Actions- What does the character do/behavior?

Looks- What does the character look like?

Conflict

Conflict is the dramatic struggle between two forces in a story. Without conflict, there is no plot.



Conflict



- Conflict is a problem that must be solved; an issue between the protagonist and antagonist forces. It forms the basis of the plot.
- Conflicts can be external or internal
 - ✓ External conflict- outside force may be person, group, animal, nature, or a nonhuman obstacle
 - ✓ Internal conflict- takes place in a character's mind

Types of External Conflict

Character vs Character



Character vs Nature



Character vs Society



Character vs Fate



Type of Internal Conflict

Character vs. Self



Theme

- The theme is the **central message/life lesson** about life or people the author wants to get across through a literary work
- To discover the theme of a story, think big. What big message is the author trying to say about the world in which we live?
- What is this story telling me about how life works, or how people behave?

Signposts to help find theme

➤ **Contrasts & Contradictions**

➤ Opposite behavior from what is normal.

➤ Question: Why would the character act this way?

Tough Questions

A character asks themselves or another character a difficult question.

➤ Question: What does this make me wonder?

Aha Moment

When a character realizes something important.

Question: How might this realization change things?

Again and Again

When a character says or does something repeatedly.

Question: Why might the author bring this up again and again?

Words of Wisdom

When a character who is older/wiser gives advice.

Question: What is the life lesson and how might it change the character?

Memory Moment

When a character remembers something important or an important time in their past.

Question: Why might this memory be important?

The Theme is

- the practical lesson (moral) that we learn from a story after we read it. The lesson that teaches us what to do or how to behave after you have learned something from a story or something that has happened to you.

Example: The lesson or teaching of the story is be careful when you're offered something for nothing.

Special Techniques used in a Story

- **Suspense**- excitement, tension, curiosity
- **Foreshadowing**- hint or clue about what will happen in story
- **Flashback**- interrupts the normal sequence of events to tell about something that happened in the past
- **Symbolism** – use of specific objects or images to represent ideas
- **Personification** – when you make a thing, idea or animal do something only humans do
- **Surprise Ending** - conclusion that reader does not expect



Any questions?

