

Story Structure



Welcome, teachers!

Thank you for downloading this resource. In this packet, you will find a complete lesson plan including essential questions, vocabulary, a hook activity, a video lesson with an accompanying organizer, and activities on storytelling techniques aligned with the CCSS RL.4.5, RL.5.5, RL.6.5, and RL.6.6.

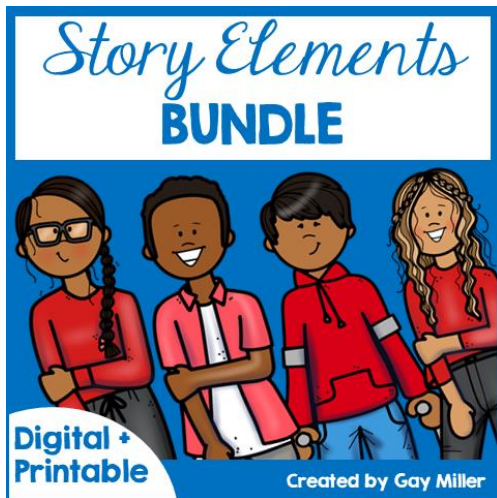
Be sure to check out the editable Google Slide version and the lesson videos on YouTube and Vimeo. You'll find links to those on the next page.

As a special bonus, I have included a booklet for mapping any novel at the end of this packet.

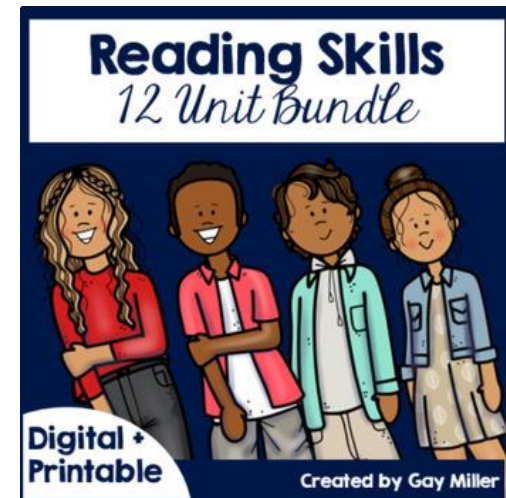
I hope you find this resource helpful for your classroom. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or feedback.

What's next?

Are you looking for some more interactive activities to add to your lesson plans? Look no further. These bundles are loaded with activities your students will love!



[Click here to check it out.](#)



[Click here to check it out.](#)

Links to the Digital Resources

[Google Slides](#)

[Lesson Video on YouTube](#)

[Lesson Video on Vimeo](#)



Storytelling Techniques

Essential Questions:

- How does a cliffhanger ending contribute to the reader's engagement and anticipation for the next part of the story?
- How does a plot twist enhance the reader's experience and challenge their expectations?
- Why do authors use flashbacks in a story, and how do they contribute to the reader's understanding of the plot and characters?
- In what ways does a flash-forward contribute to the storytelling, and how does it build anticipation and suspense?
- How does the use of parallel timelines in a story enhance the reader's understanding of multiple characters or settings and create a sense of connection or contrast between them?
- Why do authors incorporate foreshadowing in their stories, and how does it contribute to building anticipation and suspense?

Teaching Standard

Grade 4:

RL.4.5: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

Grade 5:

RL.5.5: Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

Grade 6:

RL.6.5: Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

RL.6.6: Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

While these standards may not explicitly mention specific storytelling techniques like cliffhangers, plot twists, flashbacks, flash-forwards, parallel timelines, or foreshadowing, they provide a foundation for understanding and analyzing a text's structural elements and overall structure. Through close reading and analysis, students can identify and discuss these storytelling techniques within the context of these standards.

Vocabulary:

cliff-hanger: a thrilling ending to a chapter or story that leaves the reader in suspense, wanting to know what happens next

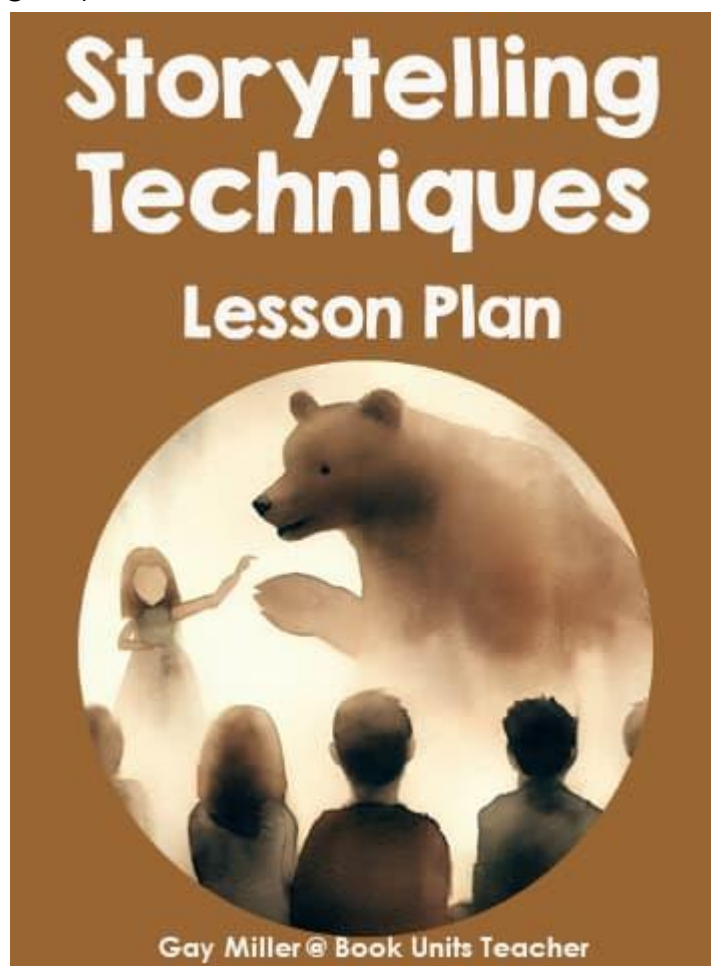
plot twist: a surprising and unexpected change or turn of events in the story that challenges the reader's assumptions or predictions


flashback: a scene or moment in a story that interrupts the current timeline to show an event that happened in the past, providing important background information

flash-forward: a scene or moment in a story that jumps ahead in time, showing events that will happen in the future

parallel timeline: When multiple storylines or timelines occur simultaneously, often involving different characters or settings that eventually intersect or overlap

foreshadowing: hints or clues that the author drops in the story to suggest or predict future events, building anticipation and creating suspense



Storytelling Techniques Lesson Plan			
Storytelling Techniques Storytelling techniques are methods or tricks writers use to make their stories more exciting and engaging. They help to create suspense, surprise, emotion, and meaning in the story. Some examples of storytelling techniques are:	cliff-hanger: a thrilling ending to a chapter or story that leaves the reader in _____, wanting to know what happens next. Example: _____ _____ _____	flashback: a scene or moment in a story that interrupts the current timeline to show an event that happened in the _____, providing important background information. Example: _____ _____ _____	parallel timeline: when multiple storylines or timelines occur simultaneously, often involving _____ characters or settings that eventually intersect or overlap. Example: _____ _____ _____
	plot twist: a surprising and unexpected change or _____ of events in the story that challenges the reader's assumptions or _____. Example: _____ _____ _____	flash-forward: a scene or moment in a story that jumps _____ in time, showing events that will happen in the _____. Example: _____ _____ _____	foreshadowing: hints or clues that the author drops in the story to suggest or _____ future events, building anticipation and creating suspense. Example: _____ _____ _____

Lesson Plan

Hook activity:

To introduce the topic of storytelling techniques, you can show students a short video clip that has a plot twist or a cliffhanger. Here is one suggest clip:

Toy Story 2 Movie Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNWSGRD5CzU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvWwvcUuNKs>

Discussion After Watching the Movie Trailer

Ask students if they spotted these storytelling techniques.

Answer:

Plot twist: The viewer expects Andy's mom or Buzz to rescue Woody, but instead, a stranger who knows his value as a rare toy kidnaps him. The kidnapping is a surprising and unexpected change in the story's direction.

Cliffhanger: The stranger puts Woody in a suitcase and walks away while Buzz and the other toys watch helplessly. Viewers want to know if and how Woody gets away from the stranger.

Activity #1 - Organizer [Found in the Student Packet]

Print out the organizer provided in the "Student Packet" section of this handout or online through Google Slides. Students will complete the organizer while watching the video lesson. The pages following the lesson plans illustrate how to fold these organizers for easy storage in an interactive notebook.

Three versions of this organizer are provided depending on the needs of your students.

- Students will write definitions and examples.
- Students will fill in key words in the definitions and write examples which are provided.
- The third copy of the organizer may be used as an answer key, for differentiated instruction, for students who were absent during instruction, or if you wish for the students to have the sentences already completed.

Activity #2 - Animated Short

Show the following animated shorts. After each film have students answer the questions found in the "Student Packet" to evaluate which storytelling technique(s) was used in each film. Multiple links are provided for each in case the owners remove their videos from the web.

"One Small Step" (7:40)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWd4mzGqQYo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYcpRSQ-irs>

"The Present" by Jacob Frey (4:18)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjqIU5FgsYc>

<https://vimeo.com/152985022>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XA0bB79oGc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcsiix8aDJA>

"If Anything Happens I Love You" by Will McCormack & Michael Govier [(3:21)

Warning: This film is about gun violence. The film shows sad parents with flashbacks of a happy time with their daughter. Sasha Sloan's song "Too Sad to Cry" helps tell the story. The film never shows what happens to the girl. She heads into the school and then the scene changes to the girl's cell phone with the text "If Anything Happens I Love You." Shadowy figures tell the emotions. Please watch this film before showing it to your students.]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kR3qqA4z438>

"The Passenger" (6:59)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGW0aQSgyxQ>

"Alma" (5:29)

<https://vimeo.com/4749536>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aw0uORumRts>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eGqt4aqtfw>

"The House of Small Cubes" (12:06)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0YSFvPTm2A>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50-fWCXvhAY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5hFnqqXB60>

"Destiny" (5:25)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEKLEeY_WeQ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsAySbcjWGk>

Activity #3 ~ Paragraph Sequencing Picture Story

Have students use the four picture cards found in the "Student Packet" to write paragraphs for each fictional sequence: flashback, foreshadowing, and chronological order. Look at the samples below.

Flashback

A flashback is a scene or moment in a story that interrupts the current timeline to show an event that happened in the past, providing necessary background information. To write a flashback, you need to:

- Use a transition word or phrase to signal that you are going back in time, such as "then," "before," "earlier," "when," etc.
- Describe the past event using sensory details, dialogue, and emotions.
- Use a transition word or phrase to signal that you are returning to the present, such as "now," "after," "later," "since then," etc.

Flashback



As Matt was riding his bike home from school, he was thinking about the weekend. He thought about going rock climbing. **Then he remembered what had happened the last time** he went climbing. Matt enjoyed the long strenuous climb up the side of the mountain. He was looking forward to reaching the top and just stretching out on his back to rest; however, when he looked over the topmost rock, he spotted a grizzly bear ~ a humongous grizzly bear. Instead of the nice rest, Matt had looked forward to, he scrambled back down the rock face and hightailed it home.

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is a hint or clue the author drops in the story to suggest or predict future events, building anticipation and creating suspense. To write foreshadowing, you need to:

Use subtle words or phrases that hint at what will happen later, such as “little did he know,” “if only she knew,” “soon he would regret,” etc.

- Use symbols, images, or objects that represent something else, such as
- Use symbols, images, or objects representing something else, such as a broken mirror, a black cat, a red rose, etc.
- Use foreshadowing sparingly and subtly so that it does not give away too much or make the story predictable.

Foreshadowing



Matt was quite an outdoorsman. Every weekend he went on one adventure. Today he was riding his bike home from school and thinking about the rock climbing trip he planned for tomorrow. **Matt would be shocked if he only knew what was in store for him on this trip.**

Chronological Order

Chronological order is the most common and straightforward way of organizing a story. It means that events are told in the order that they happened in time, from the beginning to the end. To write in chronological order, you need to:

- Use transition words or phrases to show the sequence of events, such as “first,” “next,” “then,” “after,” “finally,” etc.
- Use time words or phrases to show when events happened, such as “in the morning,” “at noon,” “on Monday,” “last week,” etc.
- Use clear and logical connections between events, showing how one event leads to another or causes another.

Chronological Order



Matt had his Saturday all planned out. **First**, he rode his bike over to Grandfather Mountain. **Once there**, he went rock climbing for a couple of hours. **Next**, he visited the animal habitats to observe the cougars, white-tailed deer, black bears, bald eagles, and river otters in their natural settings. Matt had a terrific day at Grandfather Mountain.

Follow-Up Activity

Provide students with one of the prompts and have them create storyboards to visually represent the storytelling techniques used. They can draw scenes, add dialogue, and label the methods used in each panel. This activity allows students to visually analyze and interpret the techniques while engaging their creativity.

In a small town, a young girl named Lily discovers an old diary hidden in her grandmother's attic. As she starts reading the journal, the story takes her back to a different era, where she uncovers a family secret that changes everything Lily thought she knew about her ancestors.

At a science fair, a group of friends presents their invention, a time-traveling machine. As they activate the device, they are transported to different periods, encountering unexpected challenges and unraveling a mystery that connects their lives across centuries.

In a bustling city, a shy artist named Alex discovers a magical paintbrush that brings his drawings to life. However, each creation starts to take on a life of its own, causing chaos and excitement in the city. Alex must find a way to regain control before his imaginative creations consume the town.

A group of friends go on a camping trip in a remote forest. As night falls, they gather around the campfire and share ghost stories. Little do they know, one of their stories is about to come to life, and they must band together to face their fears and solve the mystery haunting their campsite.

In a futuristic world where robots coexist with humans, a young inventor named Max creates an artificial intelligence companion named Aria. Together, they go on a thrilling adventure to save their city from an evil corporation that wants to control all technology. Along the way, they uncover surprising secrets about Aria's origin.

General Instructions for How to Create the Organizers



I love interactive notebooks. I have found students return again and again to their notebooks to find rules and examples. The only problem is foldable organizers take a lot of time to create. Because of this, I played around with paper to come up with a design that is quick and easy for students to make.



Note: The organizers in the photos are for demonstration purposes only. Not all are included in this unit.

PRINTABLE VERSION -- Organizers

Three versions of most organizers are offered: one with blanks where students write definitions and create examples; one with the definitions provided but with blank spaces for students to write in key words; and one with the answers provided. The third copy of the organizer may be used as an **answer key**, for differentiated instruction, for students who were absent during instruction, or if you wish for the students to have the organizers already completed.

STEP 1 - Print the organizers.

Print the organizers directly from this packet.



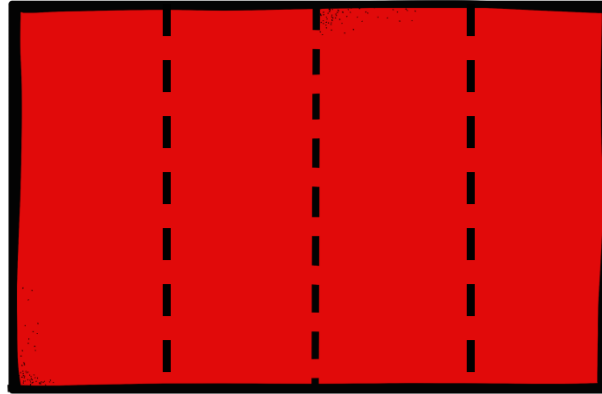
STEP 2 - Using the Organizers:

Have students watch the instructional video that goes with the organizer. Pause the video when instructed to do so. Have students complete the organizer. Next, have students watch the remainder of the video to check their answers. Many organizers ask students to give examples. Tell students that just because their examples don't match the video examples doesn't necessarily mean their examples are wrong.



STEP 3 - Fold the Organizer.

This organizer requires no cutting or coloring. I recommend telling students that they can color the blackline drawings at home if they wish to, but it is not necessary. The organizer folds like a fan. Make sure the first fold is under, so the definitions are on top and will be visible when flipping through the interactive notebook.



STEP 4 - Gluing the Organizer Flip the organizer over with the text box containing the definition face down. Have students place a single line of white school glue down the back right-hand side of the organizer. Glue the organizers two to a page (four to an open notebook). See photos on the next page.



Print


Pun

Fill in the blanks to complete the definition of pun.


A pun is a missing, the different possible of a word or the fact that there are words which alike but have meanings.

Example







A chicken farmer's favorite car is a coupe.



She had a photographic memory but never developed it.



Read the word or phrase in each sentence that makes it a pun. Under the sentence, write this word and then explain its two meanings.

 I am a baker because I knead the <u>dough</u> . Dough - _____ OR _____	 It's <u>pointless</u> to write with a broken pencil. Pointless - _____ OR _____	 What do you call a sleeping bull? ----- A <u>bulldozer</u> . Dozer - _____ OR _____
 I was struggling to figure out how lightning works when it <u>struck</u> me. Struck - _____ OR _____	 What was the reporter doing at the ice cream shop? ----- Getting the <u>scoop</u> . Scoop - _____ OR _____	 What do you get from a pampered cow? ----- <u>Spotted</u> milk. Spotted - _____ OR _____

© Gay Miller

Fan Fold

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Glue


Pun

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
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



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Hyperbole

Fill in the blanks to define hyperbole.

Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which _____ is used for emphasis or _____. It may be confused with a _____ because it often compares two items. The difference is that with a hyperbole the comparison is an _____.

Example



The fish I caught was so big that I couldn't get it inside the house.


Alliteration

Fill in the blanks to define alliteration.


Alliteration is when several words in a row begin with the _____. [You may have words in between alliterated words that don't start with the same _____ as long as they don't break the sound pattern.]

Examples

Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer rose rapidly into the air.



The snake slithers secretly across the sand.




Assonance

Fill in the blanks with words to show the definition of assonance.

Assonance is the repetition of _____ words. It is used to reinforce the meanings of words or to set the _____. It's the _____ that is important and not the _____ used.

Example

It beats _____ as it sweeps _____ as it cleans! - slogan for Hoover vacuum cleaners.





Onomatopoeia

Fill in the blanks with words to show the definition of onomatopoeia.

Onomatopoeia is the _____ of natural _____ or word form. These words help us form mental _____ about the _____ or _____ that are described.

Examples





Student Packet



Story Structure

Storytelling techniques are methods or tricks writers use to make their stories more exciting and engaging. They help to create suspense, surprise, emotion, and meaning in the story. Some examples of storytelling techniques are:



cliff-hanger: a thrilling

Example:

plot twist: a surprising and

Example:

flashback:

Example:

flash-forward: a scene or

Example:

parallel timeline:

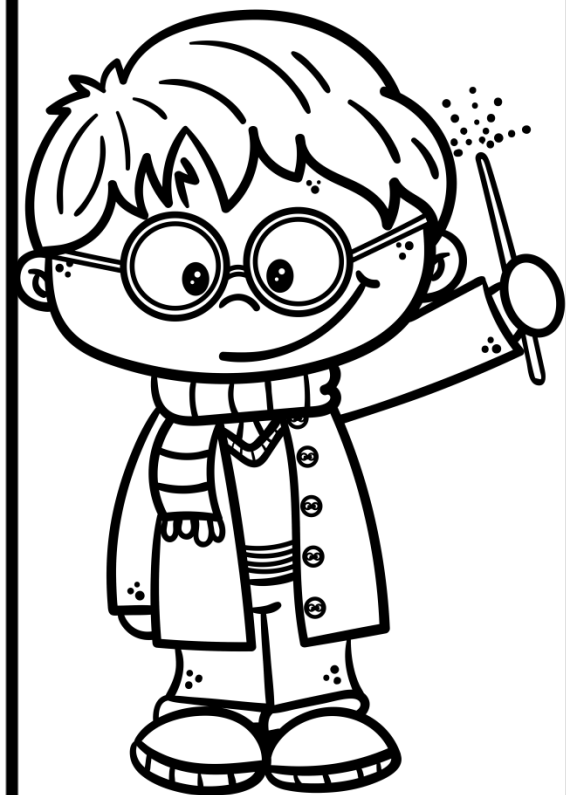
Example:

foreshadowing:

Example:

Story Structure

Storytelling techniques are methods or tricks writers use to make their stories more exciting and engaging. They help to create suspense, surprise, emotion, and meaning in the story. Some examples of storytelling techniques are:



cliff-hanger: a thrilling ending to a chapter or story that leaves the reader in

_____,
wanting to know what happens next

Example:

plot twist: a surprising and unexpected change or _____ of events in the story that challenges the reader's assumptions or

Example:

flashback: a scene or moment in a story that interrupts the current timeline to show an event that happened in the _____ providing important background information

Example:

flash-forward: a scene or moment in a story that jumps _____ in time, showing events that will happen in the _____

Example:

parallel timeline: when multiple storylines or timelines occur simultaneously, often involving _____ characters or settings that eventually _____ or overlap

Example:

foreshadowing: hints or clues that the author drops in the story to suggest or _____ future events, building anticipation and creating _____

Example:

Story Structure

Storytelling techniques are methods or tricks writers use to make their stories more exciting and engaging. They help to create suspense, surprise, emotion, and meaning in the story. Some examples of storytelling techniques are:



cliff-hanger: a thrilling ending to a chapter or story that leaves the reader in suspense, wanting to know what happens next

For example, in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, J.K. Rowling ends one chapter with Harry hearing a voice saying, "Kill this time...let me rip you...let me tear you..." and then seeing two large yellow eyes staring at him in the dark

plot twist: a surprising and unexpected change or turn of events in the story that challenges the reader's assumptions or predictions

For example, in *The Lion King*, Disney reveals that Scar is the one who killed Mufasa and lied to Simba about it.

flashback: a scene or moment in a story that interrupts the current timeline to show an event that happened in the past, providing important background information

For example, in *Finding Nemo*, Pixar shows a flashback of how Marlin lost his wife and most of his children to a barracuda attack, which explains why he is so overprotective of Nemo.

flash-forward: a scene or moment in a story that jumps ahead in time, showing events that will happen in the future

For example, in *The Hunger Games*, Suzanne Collins shows a flash-forward of Katniss and Peeta being interviewed by Caesar Flickerman before they enter the arena, foreshadowing their strategy of pretending to be star-crossed lovers.

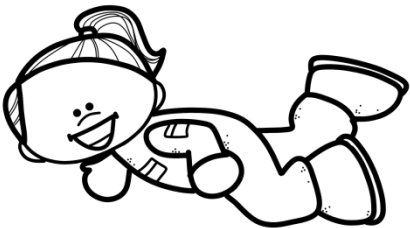
parallel timeline: when multiple storylines or timelines occur simultaneously, often involving different characters or settings that eventually intersect or overlap

For example, in *The Lord of the Rings*, J.R.R. Tolkien shows a parallel timeline of Frodo and Sam's journey to destroy the One Ring and Aragorn and Gandalf's journey to fight against Sauron's army.

foreshadowing: hints or clues that the author drops in the story to suggest or predict future events, building anticipation and creating suspense

For example, in *The Sixth Sense*, M. Night Shyamalan foreshadows that Bruce Willis's character is dead by showing him wearing the same clothes throughout the movie and never interacting with anyone except the boy who can see dead people.

One Small Step



What technique is used when the film shows a scene of the girl watching the moon landing on TV, and what does it reveal about the story?

- _____

Identify a scene representing a parallel timeline, and explain its significance.

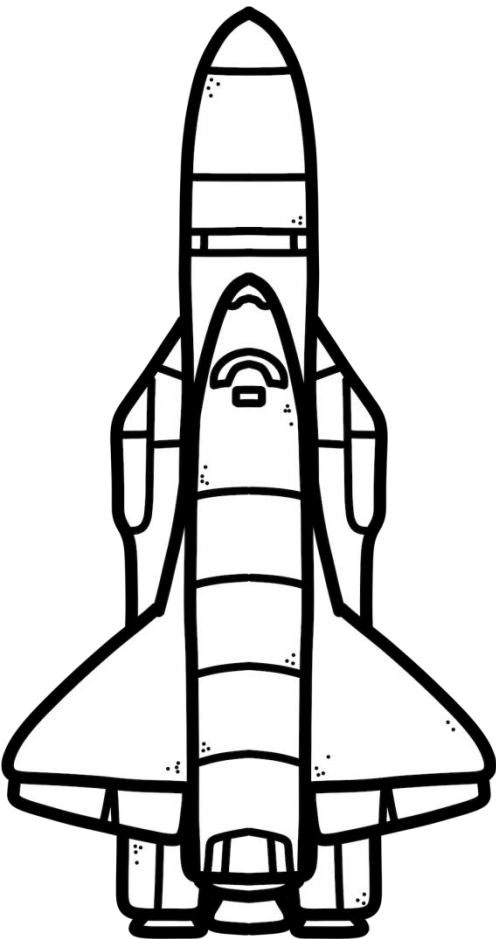
- _____

How does the parallel timeline technique help to show the girl's relationship with her father?

- _____

How many flash-forwards are there in the story?

- _____



Comparing Films

The Present

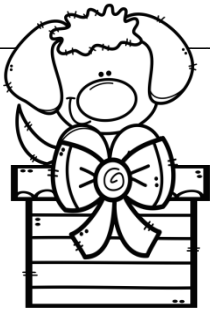
What is the technique's name that hints at something that will happen later in the story? _____

What is the technique's name that reveals a surprising or unexpected turn in the story? _____

How does the author use foreshadowing to hint at the boy's disability and the dog's condition?

How does the author foreshadow the dog's disability?

Describe the plot twist in the story and explain its impact.



If Anything Happens I Love You

What is the technique's name that leaves the viewer in suspense or uncertain about what will happen next? _____

What is the technique's name that shows a scene from the past that explains something in the present? _____

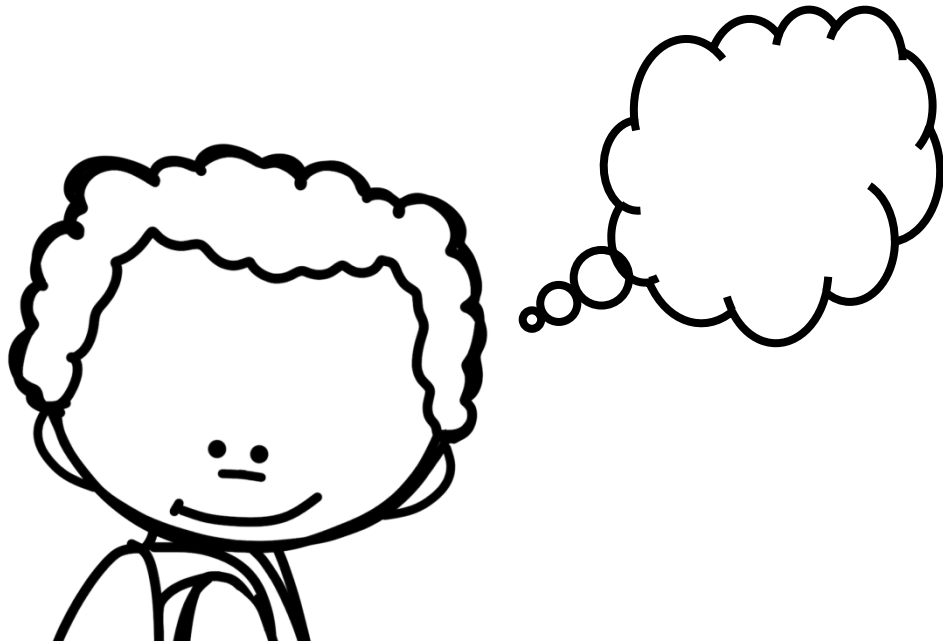
What technique creates a cliffhanger moment in the film, and what effect does it have on the viewer?

How does the film use flashbacks, and what do they reveal about the story?

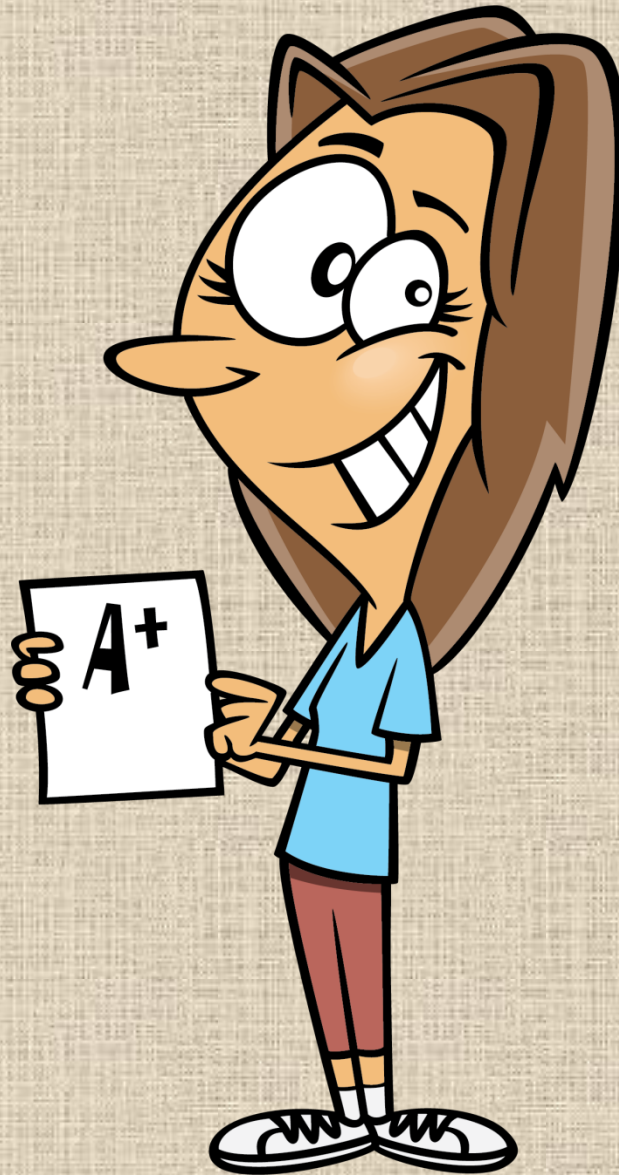


Comparing Films

Film	Storytelling Technique	Example	Effect
The Passenger			
Alma			
The House of Small Cubes			
Destiny			



Answer Key



One Small Step Answer Key



What technique is used when the film shows a scene of the girl watching the moon landing on TV, and what does it reveal about the story?

- Flash-forward. It reveals the girl's future aspirations and sets up the central conflict between her dream and her reality.

Identify a scene representing a parallel timeline, and explain its significance.

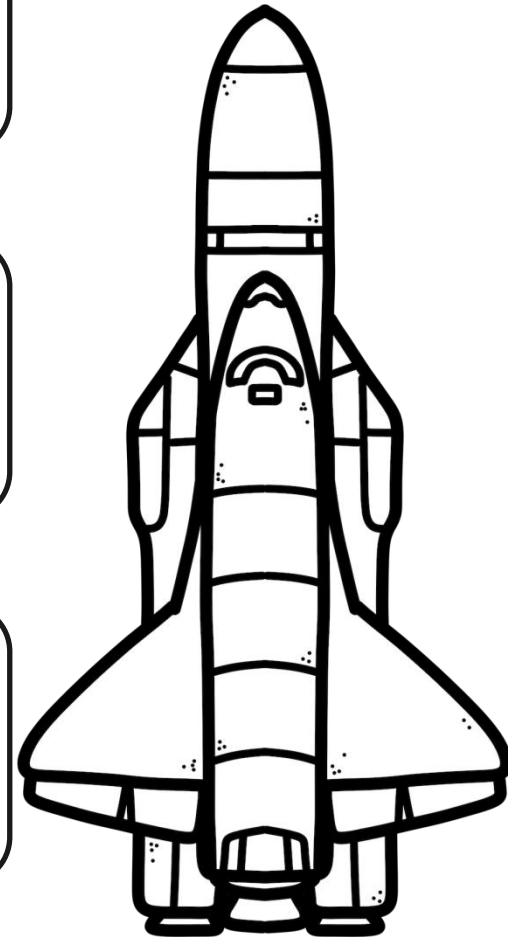
- The scene where the girl receives astronaut boots from her father. It shows the present when she works in the shop and the past when she celebrates her birthday with her father. It symbolizes her father's support and gives her hope.

How does the parallel timeline technique help to show the girl's relationship with her father?

- It shows how her father supports her dream and gives her a symbol of hope, how he teaches her work ethic and intelligence, and how she misses him after he dies.

How many flash-forwards are there in the story?

- Three: the opening scene, where she sees a poster of an astronaut school, and where she graduates from astronaut school and goes to space.



Comparing Films Answer Key

The Present

What is the technique's name that hints at something that will happen later in the story? **foreshadowing**

What is the technique's name that reveals a surprising or unexpected turn in the story? **plot twist**

How does the author use foreshadowing to hint at the boy's disability and the dog's condition?

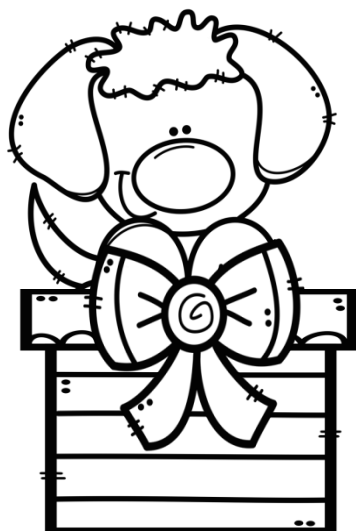
The author shows the boy playing video games with one hand, wearing long pants and socks, and avoiding going outside. The dog is seen wrapped in a box with a bow on his head, suggesting that he is hiding something.

How does the author foreshadow the dog's disability?

He shows him wrapped in a box with a bow on his head, suggesting he is hiding something.

Describe the plot twist in the story and explain its impact.

The plot twist occurs when the boy opens the box and sees the dog missing a leg. Initially, he reacts negatively, but the dog's persistence and playfulness change his perspective. The twist shows how the boy overcomes his bitterness and forms a bond with the dog.



If Anything Happens I Love You

What is the technique's name that leaves the viewer in suspense or uncertain about what will happen next? **cliffhanger**

What is the technique's name that shows a scene from the past that explains something in the present? **flashback**

What technique creates a cliffhanger moment in the film, and what effect does it have on the viewer?

The film creates a cliffhanger when the parents receive a text message saying, "If anything happens, I love you." It leaves the viewer wondering what happened to their daughter and generates a sense of suspense.

How does the film use flashbacks, and what do they reveal about the story?

The film uses flashbacks to show happy moments of the daughter's life and her tragic death in a school shooting. The flashbacks contrast the parents' present reality and reveal their loss and pain.



Comparing Films Answer Key

Film	Storytelling Technique	Example	Effect
The Passenger	Cliffhanger	The story ends with the man trapped in a tunnel with the creature.	It creates suspense and curiosity about what will happen next.
Alma	Plot Twist	The story reveals that the girl becomes a doll when she touches her replica in the toy store.	It surprises and shocks the viewer and challenges their assumptions and predictions.
The House of Small Cubes	Flashback	The story shows the old man's past life when he dives into each floor of his house.	It shows his emotions and memories and contrasts his present and past.
Destiny	Parallel Timeline	The story shows two timelines of a man and a woman destined to meet each other but separated by time and space.	It shows their connection and fate and how they influence each other's lives.

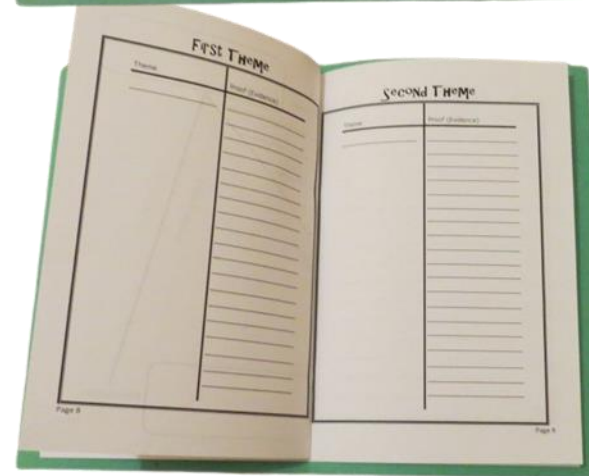
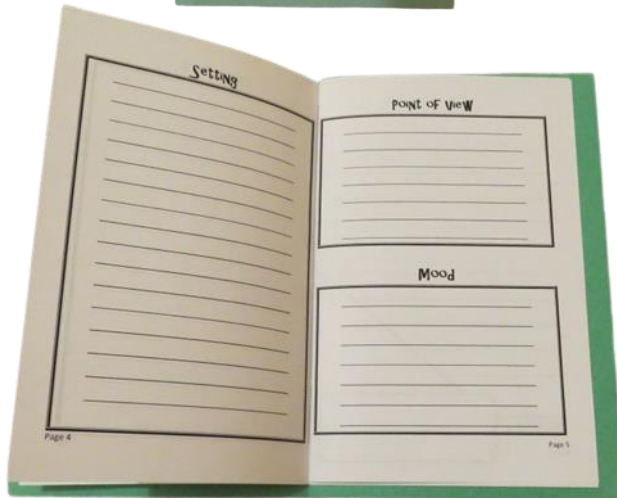
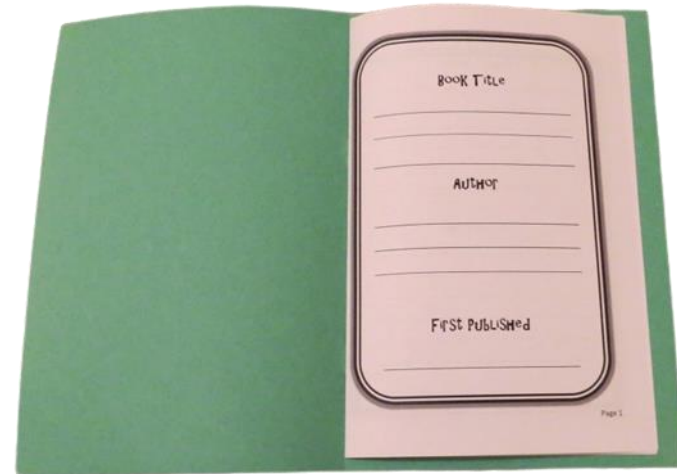
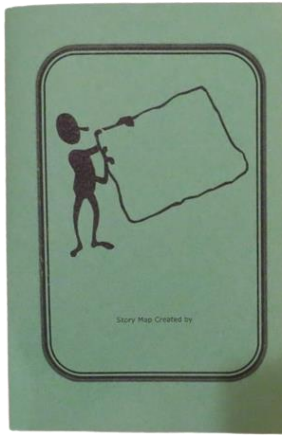
Bonus Resource



Story Elements Book

This story map booklet may be used to summarize any book.

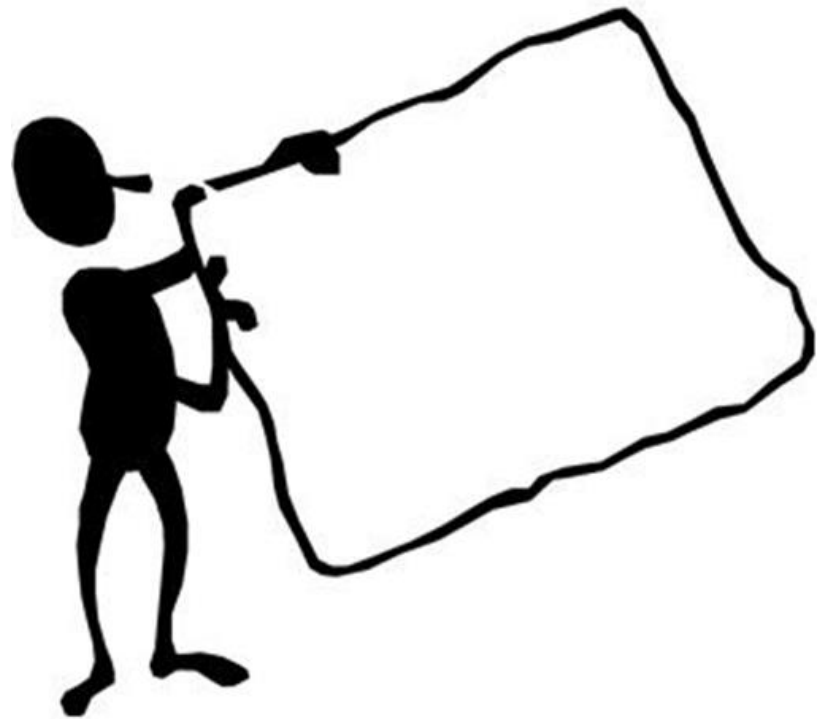
I recommend that you duplicate the cover onto construction paper or card stock. Standard construction paper is 9 by 12 inches which makes the cover a bit larger than the pages inside.



Your pages must be duplicated on the front and the back. I ran my pages front and back directly from the printer. This is a simple process with only three pages. Simply place the page that has been printed on one side back into the printer for the reverse side to be printed.

- Pages 12 & 1 front with Pages 2 & 11 back
- Pages 10 & 3 front with Pages 4 & 9 on back
- Pages 8 & 5 front with Pages 6 & 7 on back

Once you have printed your pages, fold all pages in half vertically (hamburger fold). Staple the pages together in the center to form the book.



Story Map Created by

[illegible]

Main Characters

Protagonist

Antagonist

SYMBOLISM

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a double-line border at the top and bottom of the page, and a single-line border on the left and right sides. The paper appears to be from a notebook or a set of legal pads.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a double-line border at the top and bottom of the page, and a single-line border on the left side. The right side of the page is open.

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a double-line border at the top and bottom of the page, and a single-line border on the left side. The right side of the page is open.

First Theme

Theme	Proof (Evidence)
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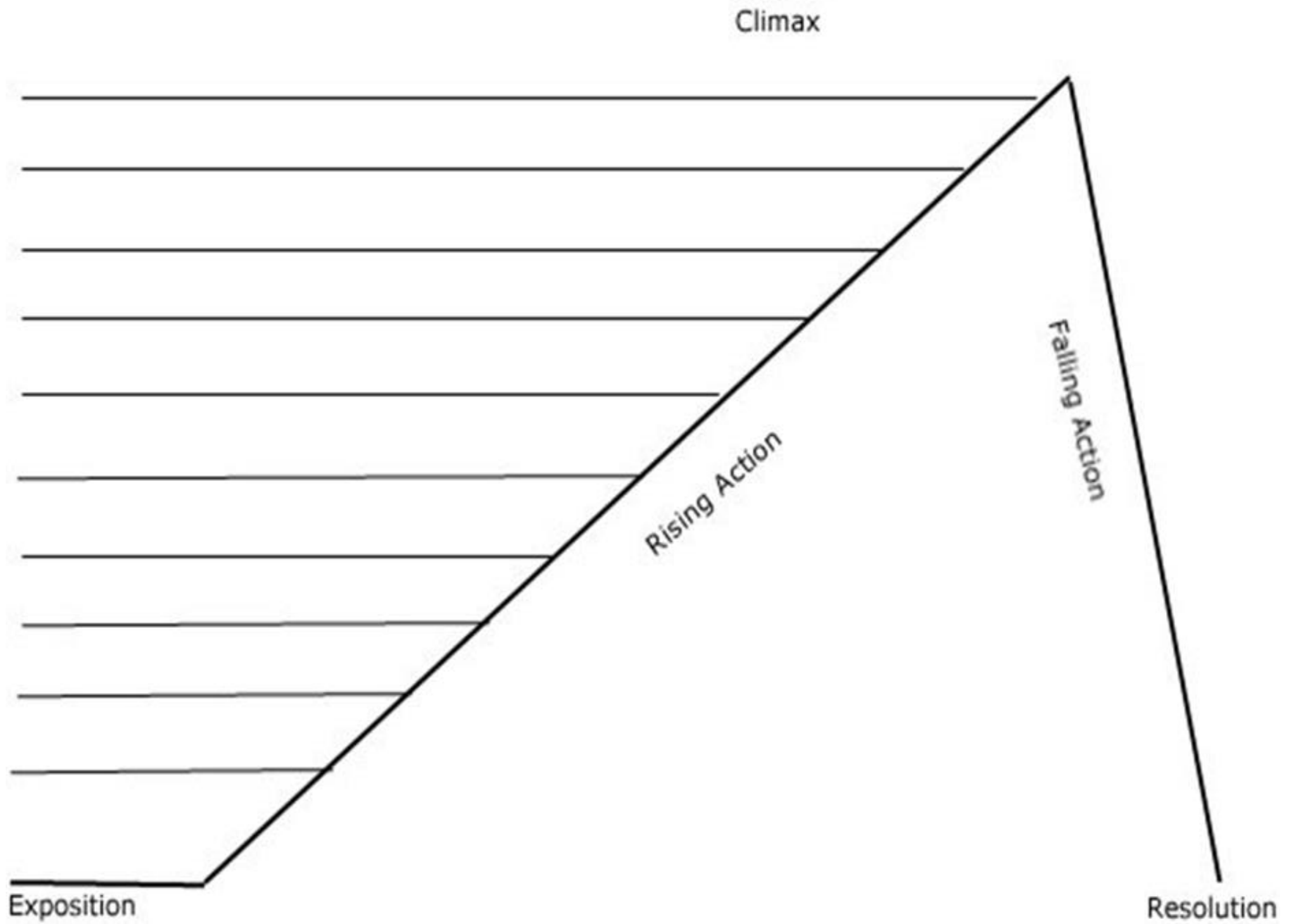
[illegible]

POINT OF VIEW

[illegible]

Mood


[illegible]




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Free Interactive Vocabulary Practice Game for Google Slides





Movable Tiles



Video Spinner





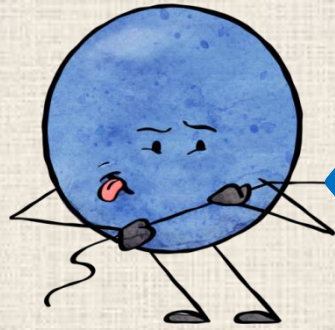
Play with any vocabulary list.

Gay Miller © Book Units Teacher



Credits

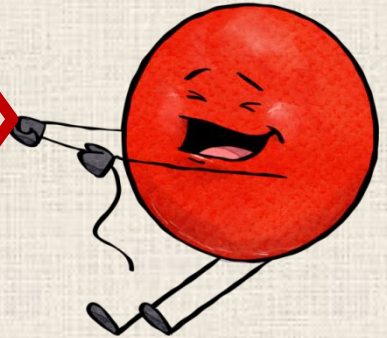




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