Literary Concept: Plot Arc

Activity Type: Read Aloud & Concept Mapping

Total activity time: 45 minutes

Place in lesson: Entire lesson

Expected student outcomes (objectives):
- Students apply understanding of narrative structure concepts
- Students practice listening and reading skills

How will students be assessed in this lesson:
- The teacher formatively assesses students' understanding of narrative structure through individual contributions to whole class discussion and through individual responses to leveled writing prompts

Place in curriculum: After students have been introduced to narrative structure concepts

Concepts addressed:

Common Core State Standards: ELA Grade 9-10	*Concept Card™ List*

Reading: Literature
 	
Key Ideas and Details
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3
  Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
 	
Craft and Structure
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5
  Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
 	
Speaking & Listening
 	
Comprehension and Collaboration:
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1
  Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
 	
   • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C
   Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
 	
   • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D
   Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
 	
Language
 	
Comprehension and Collaboration:
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6
  Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
	(black rectangle)
	• Character Development
	
	(red rectangle)
	• Climax
	• Falling Action
	• Rising Action
	• Resolution
	• Setting
	
	(optional black rectangle)
	• Foreshadowing
	
	(optional red rectangles)
	• Dream Sequence
	• Flashback
	• Plot Twist
	• Subplot
	
	(optional blanks)
	• → (3 green triangles)
	• ? (black triangle)

Concept Construxions®

Teachers for Learners®

Student Grouping: Whole Class

Materials:
- Concept Cards™ listed above
- Contruxion Site®
- Low odor, dry erase markers (for optional blank cards)
- Paper for students to create concept map and to respond to writing prompt

Bloom's Taxonomic Levels Addressed in this Lesson:
- Knowledge (whole lesson)
- Comprehension (whole lesson)
- Analysis (steps 4 & 6)
- Synthesis (step 5)

Lesson Differentiation:
- *GATE, RSP, Inclusion, High/Low Students:*
  - Create a seating chart so that when students engage in think-write-pair-share they are sitting in like-ability groups so that you can confer with specific students whom you target in advance (step 1b in outline)
  - Assign Concept Cards strategically to students according to their comprehension of narrative structure and general reading comprehension skills (step 2)
  - Assign Concept Cards strategically to students who have been struggling and whom you want to formatively assess and engage during this lesson (step 2)
  - Assign writing prompts strategically without indicating which are beginning, intermediate and advanced (step 6)

- *EL Students (SDAIE/SIOP connections):*
  - Align curriculum to state standards (whole lesson)
  - Utilize academic language (whole lesson)
  - Teach new concepts through reading, writing, speaking and listening (whole lesson)
  - Engage students actively through concept mapping (step 4)
  - Use cooperative learning (think-write-pair-share) (step 5)
  - Engage students in higher-order thinking (step 6)
  - Incorporate opportunities for differentiated instruction (steps 2 & 6)

Higher-level Questions to be utilized during the lesson:
- Summarize the events of the story (step 5)
- Predict future events in the story (step 5)
- Respond to writing prompts that correspond to different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (step 6)

Outline of Specific Lesson:

1) Prior to lesson,
   a. Select a text to read as a whole class; shorter texts are recommended to complete the activity in one period. Suggestions include short stories, fables, folktales, legends, myths, and allegories. You also can choose a synopsis of a longer story;
   b. Consider creating a seating chart so that students are paired strategically; create pairs of like ability so you can confer with students who need support, or create heterogeneous pairs so that students can support each other's understanding.

2) To **differentiate instruction**, consider the narrative structure of the piece you selected, and identify specific students you would like to target for understanding. Before giving activity instructions, strategically assign Concept Cards™, one each. An example is provided below:
   - *Beginning Understanding:* Setting
   - *Intermediate Understanding:* Climax, Resolution, Character Development
   - *Advanced Understanding:* Rising Action, Falling Action

3) Explain to the students that they will be engaging in a whole class read aloud. As the class reads the assigned text, individuals with Concept Cards should listen for the part of the story that correlates to their concept. At any point, these students can raise their hands and come to the Construxion Site® with their concept. Students with Concept Cards may elicit help from their peers to explain how they know they have reached this part of the text.

4) As Concept Cards are added to the site, cards can be moved to rearrange the plot arc. Again, students can elicit the help of their peers. (See Figures 1-3 for possible Construxion Site arrangements.)

5) Mid-way through the reading, pause for a **Think, Write, Pair, Share**; this is an excellent opportunity for students to **check for understanding** so that misunderstandings may be addressed. Prompt students to **summarize** using a **sentence frame** written on the board or on chart paper, such as: *In my own words, this is about _____.* In pairs, they should share their summaries and create a **prediction** together using a sentence frame also written on the board or on chart paper, such as: *I think _____ because _____.* Elicit from one or two students a summary and clarify any misunderstandings or questions. Elicit from one or two pairs a prediction.

6) At the completion of the read aloud, students respond to a writing prompt; this is a formative assessment. To **differentiate instruction**, use the following leveled prompts: these provide an opportunity for students with more advanced understanding to think more deeply about the topic.

   Beginning Understanding:
   Pick three words that describe the setting. Explain how the setting impacts the main character.

   Intermediate Understanding:
   Imagine that the setting were different in the story we just read. How would this change the main character's actions? What effect might this have on the plot?
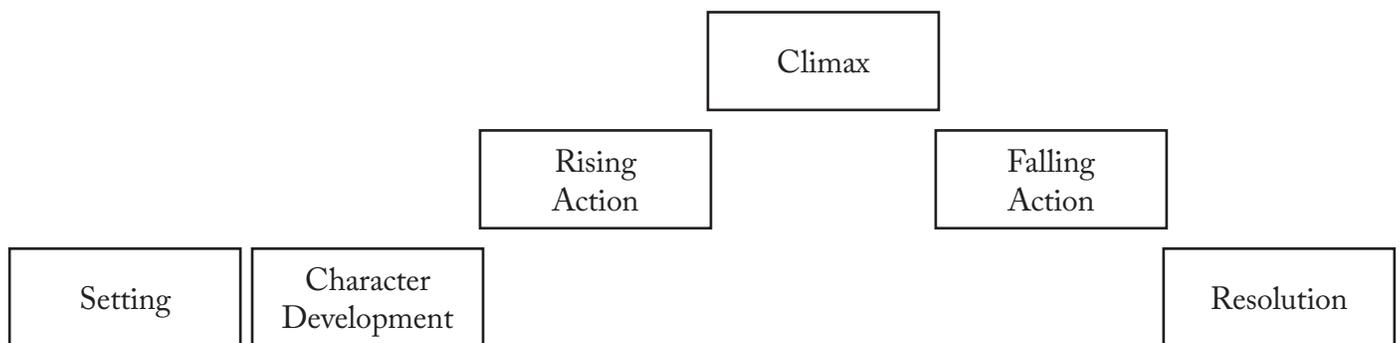
   Advanced Understanding:
   Compare the settings in two stories we have read. How does each setting influence the mood of each main character?

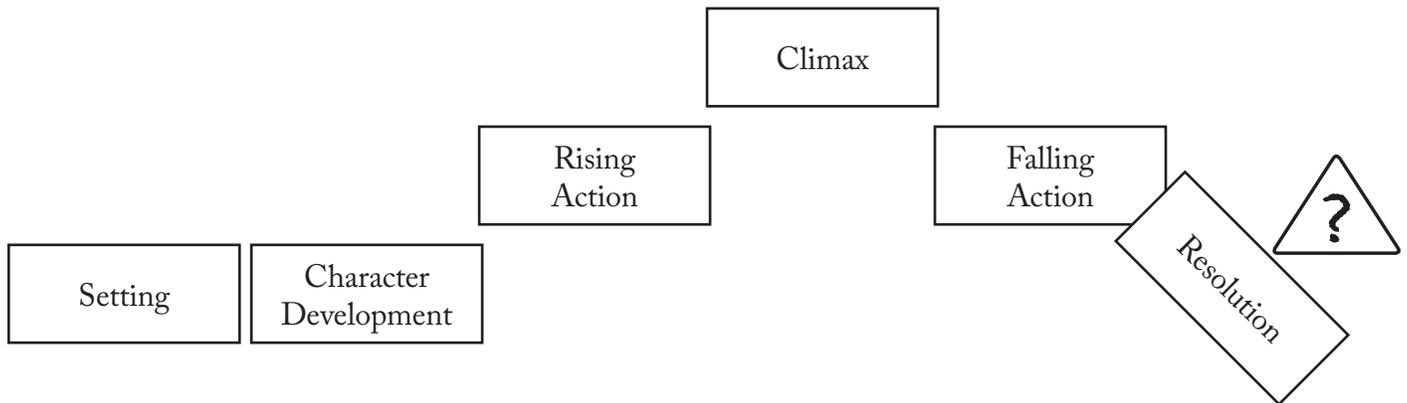**Suggestions for ongoing work with narrative structure:**

- Reconstruct the plot arc for future read-alouds, using the same Concept Cards™ or adding additional, new concepts (e.g. Plot Twist, Dream Sequence or Flashback)

- Have students reconstruct the plot arc for independent reading, as a way of sharing and explaining what they've read; this works well for sharing within book clubs too

- Have students use blank rectangles and dry erase markers to describe events that correspond with parts of a plot arc

- After students have read several texts with different narrative structures (e.g., Walter Dean Meyer's *Monster* as compared to Jack London's *Call of the Wild*) have half the class create a plot arc for one text on a Construxion Site® and the other half of the class create a plot arc for a different text on another Construxion Site for comparison

- Archive plot arcs that are particular to certain stories by drawing them on chart paper and posting them in the room for student reference

- Use plot arcs in the writing process when students create their own narratives; plot arcs can be used in the planning phase or for peer review

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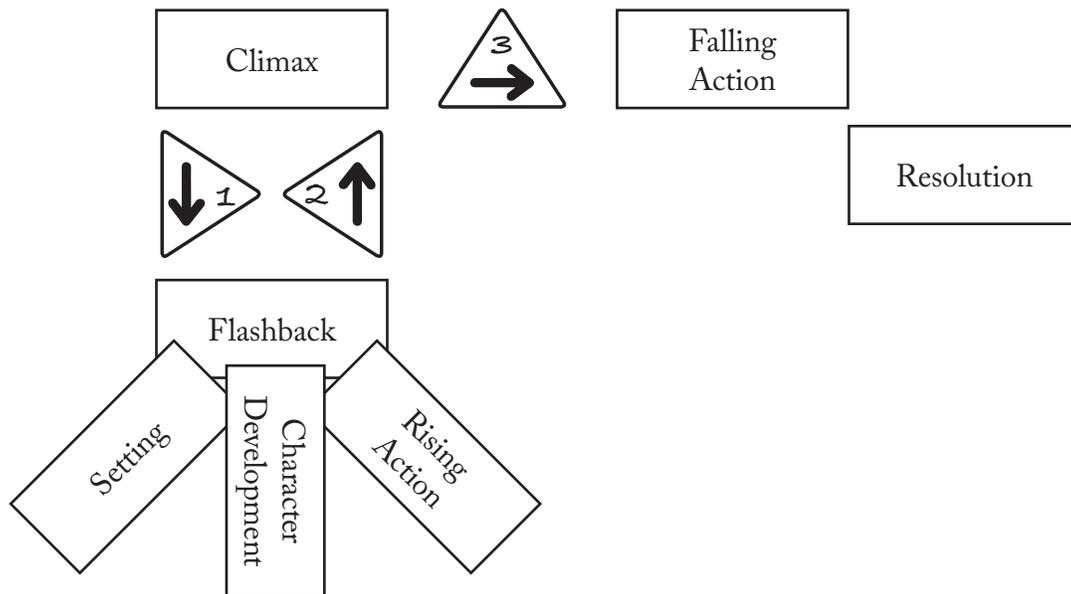### Figure 1: Possible Construxion Site Arrangement (traditional)

This arrangement reflects a traditional plot arc in which the *Character Development* and *Setting* are established initially; tension in the *Rising Action* increases towards a *Climax*; some of these conflicts are resolved in the Falling Action. The resolution represents the final outcome at the conclusion of the story. Jack London's *Call of the Wild* and most of the stories found in Mary and Charles' Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* follow this arc.

Figure 2: Possible Construxion Site Arrangement (non-traditional)

This arrangement reflects a non-traditional plot arc in which the tension in the *Rising Action* increases towards a *Climax* and then the story ends without a clear resolution, leaving the reader to infer what happens to the main character (e.g., Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon*). Use a blank triangle and write in a question mark to indicate an unclear resolution.

Figure 3: Possible Construxion Site Arrangement (non-traditional)

This arrangement reflects a non-traditional plot arc in which the story opens with a climactic event and then explains the preceding events through a flashback or through a narrative re-telling of the events (e.g., Walter Dean Meyer's *Monster*). Use blank triangles to write in arrows and numbers to indicate sequence.