

Freytag's Pyramid

Exposition

The exposition is the portion of a story that introduces important background information to the audience; information about the setting, events that happened before the main plot; characters' back stories, etc. You can do your exposition through dialogue, flashbacks, characters' thoughts, background details, news reports, or the narrator telling a back-story. Avoid info dump!

Rising Action

At the end of exposition, something happens that causes conflict. This is called the inciting incident. It incites the rest of the story and it's the start of rising action. In the rising action, a series of events build towards the point of greatest interest. It's a series of events that build up to the climax. These events are generally the most important parts of the story since the entire plot depends on them to set up the climax and ultimately the satisfactory resolution of the story itself.

Climax

The climax is the turning point which changes the main character's fate. If the story has a happy ending and things were going badly for the main character, the plot will begin to unfold in her favor, and she will often need to draw on hidden inner strengths. If the story has a sad ending, the opposite will happen, with things going from good to bad for the MC, maybe revealing his hidden weaknesses.

Falling action

During the falling action, the conflict in the story unravels, with the MC winning or losing against the situation or bad guy. The falling action may contain a moment of final suspense, in which the final outcome of the conflict is in doubt.

Denouement

The French word dénouement is derived from the word dénouer, "to untie", from nodus, Latin for "knot." It is the unravelling or untying of the complexities of a plot. Denouement includes events from the end of the falling action to the actual end of the narrative. Conflicts are resolved, there's a new normality for the characters and a sense that tension and anxiety have been released.