

# Story Pyramid: Analyzing Stories

## Words You Need to Know

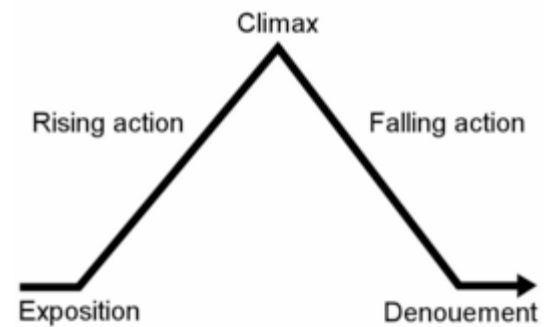
**Conflict:** a problem that occurs in the story

**Setting:** time and place where the story occurs

**Tragedy:** a story ending in death and sadness

**Analyze:** to look at something very closely.

Most stories have the following parts: exposition (inciting incident), rising action, climax (turning point), falling action, and denouement (resolution). This pyramid is used to show how stories move; it is a graphic plot chart. Sometimes a story can be more complicated than this pyramid, but most stories fit perfectly into the pyramid.



Let's look at each part of the pyramid...

**Exposition (inciting incident):** The exposition is like the set-up of the story. The background information that is needed to understand the story is provided, such as the main character, the setting, the basic conflict, and so forth.

The exposition ends with the **inciting moment**, which is the one incident in the story without which there would be no story. The inciting moment sets the rest of the story in motion.

**Rising Action:** Rising action is a series of events and actions that move the story to a climax. During rising action, the basic conflict is complicated by secondary conflicts (obstacles and challenges that frustrate the main character's attempt to reach their goal).

**Climax (turning point):** The climax is the turning point in the story. After the climax everything changes. In most stories, things will have gone badly for the main character up to this point; after the climax, things will begin to go well for him or her. However, if the story is a tragedy, the opposite will happen after the climax: things that have been going good for the main character begin to go bad.

**Falling Action:** During the falling action, the conflict unravels with the main character either winning or losing. The falling action **might** contain a *moment of final suspense*, during which the final outcome of the conflict is in doubt.

**Denouement:** The story ends with the denouement, also called the resolution. In most stories, the denouement has the main character in a better position than at the beginning of the story. However, tragedies end with death and sadness, in which the main character is worse off than at the beginning of the story.