## I'm not a robot



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Are you a student who's ever been assigned to write a summary of a book or a film but found yourself unsure of where to start? Or perhaps you're a teacher looking for effective ways to teach summary writing in your classroom? In either case, understanding what a plot summary is and how to write one is important. Initially, a plot summary is a
concise, focused presentation of the main events and themes of a narrative, whether it's a novel, a movie, or any other form of storytelling. JOIN OUR LEARNING HUB AI Essay Writer AI Detector Plagchecker Paraphraser Summarizer Citation Generator A plot summary is much more than just a simple retelling of a story. It's a carefully crafted,
concise synopsis that captures the heart of a narrative. This text captures the main events, characters, and their interactions into a digestible format, which enables readers to grasp the core essence of the story without having to dive into many details. For students, a plot summary is a way to better comprehension and analysis that allows them to
understand the plot, be aware of character motivations, and identify the central themes and conflicts that drive the narrative forward. One of the key characteristics of a plot summary is its brevity. Unlike a detailed analysis or a complex retelling, a plot summary focuses only on the most necessary elements of the story. It strips away extraneous
details and subplots, talking about the main arc that defines the plot. This focused approach makes plot summary is its neutrality. A well-crafted summary maintains an objective tone and avoids personal opinions or interpretations.
It presents the facts of the story as they are and allows readers to form their judgments and analyses based on the short information given. Plot summaries are versatile and can be applied to a wide range of narrative forms. Whether it's the detailed storyline of a novel, the fast-paced action of a film, or the factual recounting of a non-fiction work, a
plot summary serves as a universal tool for capturing the key points of any story. This adaptability makes plot summary is to provide a concise overview of a story's plot, making it easier for readers or
viewers to identify the main events and themes. However, they're also handy tools in school and even in the workspace. In an educational setting, plot summaries help students get the gist of a story. They break down complicated tales into easy-to-digest bits, so you can grasp the main ideas. This makes it easier to dive deep into the text and
understand things like themes, character growth, and the story's arc. Plus, plot summaries are great for sharpening your analytical skills. They teach students to take a big chunk of information and boil it down to the essentials. This skill is key for analyzing literature and comes in handy in lots of different situations where clear communication is
important. Plot summaries also serve as reference tools in discussions and presentations. They provide a quick and accessible overview of a story. In turn, students and teachers get to engage in meaningful dialogue without getting bogged down in the never-ending details. It's hard to disagree that this efficiency is particularly beneficial in classroom
settings, where time is limited, and the focus is on critical thinking and discussion. And, during exams, having a plot summary in your back pocket can really help. It gives you a clear way to remember and organize the main points of a story, helping you craft solid answers that stand out. Now, for teachers, plot summaries are basic elements for
classroom activities and discussions. They serve as a starting point for exploring themes, characters, and literary devices, which helps professors and other educators to design lessons that are both engaging and informative. Beyond the classroom, plot summaries have practical applications in various fields, such as publishing, where they are used in
book jackets and marketing materials to entice potential readers. In the film and television industry, plot summary is a multi-step process that requires attention to detail and a good
understanding of the story. Sorry, but you can't create a good summary without reading the full text first, but there is a way to make that whole thing much easier. Here's a breakdown of each stage, with examples to help illustrate the progress made at each step: The prewriting stage is all about preparation. Begin by diving into the story, whether
that means reading a book or watching a movie. As you go through the plot, take detailed notes on the main events, characters, and themes. Try to identify the key moments that define the beginning, middle, and end of the plot. For example If you're summarizing "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone", you might note The beginning: Harry discovers
he's a wizard; The middle: His arrival and adventures at Hogwarts; The end: The confrontation with Voldemort. Once you've gathered your notes, it's time to start drafting your summary with, "In J.K. Rowling's 'Harry Potter' summary with an introduction that sets the scene and introduces the main characters. For instance Start your "Harry Potter" summary with, "In J.K. Rowling's 'Harry Potter' summary with an introduce the main characters. For instance Start your "Harry Potter" summary with, "In J.K. Rowling's 'Harry Potter' summary with an introduce the main characters. For instance Start your "Harry Potter" summary with an introduce the main characters.
Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,' young Harry Potter discovers his magical heritage and begins his first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry." Then, proceed to summarize the plot in chronological order, focusing on the key events that move the story forward. Make sure to include the climax and resolution of the story, such as Harry's
confrontation with Voldemort and the securing of the Sorcerer's Stone. The final stage is all about polishing your summary. Read through your draft and revise it for clarity and conciseness. Check that you've accurately captured the main ideas of the plot without including personal opinions or unnecessary details. For example Revise a sentence like
"Harry, who is brave and kind, defeats the evil Voldemort" to "Harry defeats Voldemort." Keep the focus on the plot rather than character analysis. Once you're satisfied with your summary, give it a final proofread to keep it well-written and engaging. By following these steps and using the examples as a guide, you can write a great plot summary that
captures the essence of the story and engages your readers. Example 1: "On the Road" by Jack Kerouac Image: nytimes.com "On the Road" is a novel that chronicles the cross-country adventures of Sal Paradise and his friend Dean Moriarty. The story begins in New York, where Sal, an aspiring writer, meets Dean, a charismatic ex-con. Together, they
embark on a journey across America, seeking freedom and experiencing the vibrant cultures of the late 1940s. Along the way, they encounter a diverse cast of characters, each adding depth to their quest and the impermanence of their
youthful aspirations. Example 2: "Dune: Part One" (2021) Image: medium.com "Dune: Part One" is a sci-fi epic set in a distant future where noble houses vie for control of the desert planet Arrakis, the only source of a valuable substance called spice. The story follows Paul Atreides, a young nobleman whose family is entrusted with the stewardship of
Arrakis. As political intrigue and betrayal unfold, Paul is thrust into a journey of survival and self-discovery. He must navigate the treacherous landscape of Arrakis, ally with its native Fremen, setting the stage for the next chapter in the saga.
Plot summaries play a significant role in the studying process and help students to grasp the main events and themes of a story quickly. They are necessary tools for teachers, providing a foundation for classroom discussions and analytical skills
By following the steps outlined in this guide, you can learn to write effective plot summaries. Opt out or Contact us anytime. See our Privacy Notice Follow us on Reddit for more insights and updates. In order to continue enjoying our site, we ask that you confirm your identity as a human. Thank you very much for your cooperation. Plot summary
instructions This help page is a how-to guide. It explains concepts or processes used by the Wikipedia community. It is not one of Wikipedia community. It is not one of Wikipedia community. It is not one of Wikipedia guideline, but Wikipedia: Manual of Style/Writing about fiction is. Whenever
possible, the guidelines should be followed. Furthermore, policy states that a plot summary should not swamp an article about a work of fiction typically includes, but should never be limited to, a summary should be
thorough yet concise, distilling a large amount of information into a brief and accessible format. ShortcutWP:PLOTSUMNOT A plot summary is not meant to reproduce the experience of reading or watching the work. In fact, readers might be here because they
didn't understand the original. Just repeating what they have already seen or read is unlikely to help them. Do not attempt to re-create the emotional impact of the work through the plot summary. Wikipedia is not a substitute for the original.[1] ShortcutsWP:PLOTTENSE The plot is usually placed in a self-contained section
(designated by == Plot == or sometimes == Synopsis ==). By convention, story plots are written in the present tense, matching the way that the story is experienced.[2] If it makes the plot easier to explain, events can be reordered.[3] A backstory can be mentioned before the point at which it is revealed in the
narrative, or an in medias res opening scene of a film might not be mentioned at the beginning of the plot summary. If the story begins in", "the story begins in a non-chronological narrative, out-of-universe language such as "the story begins in", "the story begins in", "the story begins in ", "t
section should usually avoid commentary. Anything that is not a straightforward description of the plot must be supported by a reliable secondary source. ShortcutsWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARIZEWP:PLOTSUMMARizeWP:PLOTSUMMARizeWP:PLOTSUMMARizeWP:PLOTSUMMARizeWP:Plotsummarizewp: Plotsummarizewp: Plotsummarize
similar process—you take a long work, and you cut out as much as possible. The question is, what do you cut? The basic structure of many narrative plots includes a lengthy middle section during which characters repeatedly get in and out of trouble on their way to the climactic encounter. Although such events may be exciting to read or watch, they
often clutter a plot summary with excessive and repetitive detail. Cutting less important ones can make the plot summary tighter and easier to understand. Identify the significant story beats; often, briefly stating that the plot progresses from situation A to B rather than delineating how it gets there, i.e. skipping to the results of a sequence or even
entire subplot, is a practical rule of thumb for staying at an efficient high-level overview. Necessary detail, however, must be maintained. A summary of Odyssey as "Odyssey as "Odyssey as the men who were trying to take over his
kingdom" would be too superficial for understanding the work's impact and commentary. On the other hand, the Odyssey contains various scenes where people recount myths to each other which have little importance to the main plot, and thus might be skipped entirely. The three basic elements of a story are plot, characters, and themes. Anything
that is not necessary for a reader's understanding of these three elements should not be included in the summary. ShortcutMOS:PLOTLENGTH There is no universal set length for a plot summary, though it should not be excessively long. Well-written plot summaries describe the major events in the work, linking them together while minimizing the
less-important scenes. The Manual of Style provides general guidance on length, with allowances for exceptions. The Film style guideline specifies a maximum of 200 words for entries in episode lists and up to 400 words for standalone episode
articles. The Video game style guideline advises no more than approximately 700 words. While longer descriptions may appear to provide more information, a concise summary can highlight the most important plot elements. By focusing attention on the larger structures of the plot and leaving out unnecessary trivial detail, a shorter summary can
often help the reader to better understand the work. At some point, a plot summary is likely to be edited by someone else; editors do not own their golden prose. At the same time, changes should be closely monitored. Well-meaning editors may be unaware of prior discussions or conventions regarding plot summary length. Plot bloat is thus a serious
problem. However, plot expansions should not be summarily reverted without explanation. Consider what changes might be worth keeping. For especially large or complex fictional works, certain elements may be split off into additional articles per WP:SS. Such related articles should be clearly cross-linked so that readers can understand the full
context and impact of the work. Such an article may have what amounts to a different kind of plot summary. For instance, an article on Hamlet the play would just summarize Prince Hamlet's tragic
downfall as he pursues revenge against his uncle Claudius", and then summarize the events that contribute to that tragic downfall, using all the same guidelines you would in general. Main page: Wikipedia: Spoilers By the nature of being an encyclopedia covering works of fiction, Wikipedia contains spoilers. Nothing should be hidden from the reader
in order to avoid ruining the surprise, nor should a spoiler warning be displayed. ShortcutWP:PLOTCITE Further information: WP:PLOTSOURCE Citations may or may not appear in a plot summary. The work of fiction itself is the primary source, and doesn't usually need to be cited for simple plot details. Secondary sources are needed for
commentary, but that generally shouldn't appear in a plot summary. Inline citations are required when directly quoting from the work. For consolidated articles, discussing a work published or broadcast in a serial form, a citation to the individual issue or episode is appropriate. Let's go through an example: Little Red Riding Hood. The first thing we
should ask is "What is Little Red Riding Hood about?" If you had one sentence to describe what it's about—not summarize it, just describe it—what would you say? Probably something like "Little Red Riding Hood is the story of a young girl's encounter with a dangerous wolf in the woods." This short summary would generally go in the lead of the
article. Now that we have that, the next step is to figure out what the parts of that claim are that we're going to have to explain. There are three major ones—there's a young girl, a dangerous wolf, and an encounter. We're going to have to explain what all of those are. We should start, probably, with the young girl, a dangerous wolf, and an encounter. We're going to have to explain what all of those are.
description and in the story. What is there to know about the young girl? Well, we'll want to know her name, what she's doing. So perhaps we'd continue "The girl, Little Red Riding Hood, is described as 'a dear little girl who was loved by everyone who looked at her.' She begins the story by trying to take some food to her ailing
grandmother in the woods." This is good for a couple of reasons—the brief quote from the text serves to provide good evidence that the summary is being honest, and gives a good sense of her character. The basic premise of the story is described. The only problem is that the name of the girl might be a bit confusing—"Little Red Riding Hood" is an
odd name. We don't want to have things in the summary that will make the reader feel that they don't know what's going on. So perhaps we should rephrase: "The girl, called Little Red Riding Hood because of the clothes she wears, is described ..." These few words quickly clear up a source of confusion. Let's move on. We've already got the girl. Now
he wants—he wants to eat Little Red Riding Hood (which happens to be a pretty good description of what he's like, too). Now all we need is a description of the encounter are. Obviously the highlight is the "My, what big teeth you have" sequence in the grandmother's house.
But as with Red Riding Hood's name, if we just drop the conflict in the house in without context it will just confuse people. So we're going to have to unpack it a bit. On the other hand, we don't need to know? We'll need to know how the wolf gets
grandmother's house, having tricked her into revealing her destination and into stopping to pick flowers, giving the wolf time to get there first and capture her grandmother." What we've done here is clearly flagged the encounter in the house as the climax of the story, then gone back and filled in how we got there. Now all that remains is to play out
the encounter. Here, since we're describing a pretty short portion of the story, we should probably just be chronological. "The wolf, dressed in the grandmother's clothing, lures Red Riding Hood closer. Red Riding Hood grows suspicious, noting that the wolf does not look like her grandmother, remarking "Oh, what big eyes you have" and "Oh, what
eyes you have dialog is an iconic moment of the story, and this encounter is one of the major events of the story. Simply put, this scene is a vital piece of information about the overall work. All the same, we have attempted to be concise—we've given only two examples of Red Riding Hood's questions, and only one of the Wolf's answers before
jumping to the big one, the teeth. Are we done? Well, no; we've still got a major part of our short summary unfulfilled—we've got some of the encounter, but the encounter is "She is saved when a woodcutter happens by the cottage and
hears the wolf, charges in, and kills the wolf to rescue her and her grandmother." The woodcutter is really a bit of a deus ex machina to clear up the ending, and all we really need him for is to make the reader understand that we've come to the end of the encounter. And at that point we've got it—we have all of the elements we laid out in our first
sentence explained. The reader knows who the girl and the wolf are, and knows how their encounter plays out. So what does that give us? Little Red Riding Hood for the clothes she wears, is described as "a dear little girl who was loved
by everyone who looked at her". She begins the story by trying to take some food to her ailing grandmother in the woods. She is noticed by a wolf in the forest, who wishes to eat her. The wolf's plans come to a head when he encounters Red Riding Hood in her grandmother's house, having tricked her into revealing her destination and into stopping to
pick flowers, giving the wolf time to get there first and capture her grandmother. The wolf, dressed in the grandmother, remarking "Oh, what big eyes you have" and "Oh, what large ears you have." The wolf explains all
of these things tenderly, noting that the eyes are so she can see Red Riding Hood better, until 
argument could be had here about what to include: Should we have mentioned "The better to eat you with"? Is everything clear? Does only including two of the many endings. Some sourced discussion and expansion of this
part would help generalize the plot summary. However, these sorts of things are where collaborative editing and discussion come into play. Wikipedia: Manual of Style (writing about fiction) What Wikipedia: How to streamline a plot summary
 ^ As emotionally moving as the end of Hamlet is, the final fight does not need to be described in exquisite detail that attempts to re-create every emotional beat of the story, as it unfolds, there is now, and hence a past and a future, so
whether some event mentioned in the story is past, present, or future changes as the story progresses; the entire description is presented as if the story's now is a continuous present, or future changes as the story progresses; the entire description is presented as if the story is past, present, or future changes as the story progresses; the entire description is presented as if the story is past, present, or future changes as the story progresses; the entire description is presented as if the story is past, present in the story is past, present, or future changes as the story progresses; the entire description is present in the story is past, present in the story is past, present in the story progresses; the entire description is present in the story progresses; the entire description is present in the story progresses.
stories are presented nonlinearly, and much of the experience is based on untangling the plot. For the purpose of an encyclopedia, we do not want to add to mystery—we want to explain it. For something like Memento, where the original order is there for a dramatic reason, we might note that the story is structured in a particular way, and we'll
surely want to explain what parts of the story are treated as big revelations. Retrieved from "What is plot? Here's a quick and simple definition: Plot is the sequence of interconnected events within the story of a play, novel, film, epic, or other narrative literary work. More than simply an account of what happened, plot reveals the cause-and-effect
relationships between the events that occur. Some additional key details about plot: The plot of a story explains not just what happens, but how and why the major events of the story take place. Plot is a key element of novels, plays, most works of nonfiction, and many (though not all) poems. Since ancient times, writers have worked to create theories that occur.
that can help categorize different types of plot structures. Plot Pronounciation Here's how to pronounce plot: plant The Difference Between Plot and Story Perhaps the best way to say what a plot is would be to compare it to a story. The two terms are closely related to one another, and as a result, many people often use the terms interchangeably—but
they're actually different. A story is a series of events; it tells us what happened. A plot, on the other hand, tells us how the events are connected to one another and why the story unfolded in the way that it did. In Aspects of the Novel, E.M. Forster uses the following examples to distinguish between story and plot: "The king died, and then the queen
died" is a story. "The king died, and then the queen died, no one knew why, until it was discovered that it was through grief at the death of the king." This is a plot with a mystery in it. Therefore, when examining a plot, it's helpful to
look for events that change the direction of the story and consider how one event leads to another. The Structure of a Plot For nearly as long as there have been people who have tried to analyze and describe the structure of plots. Below we describe two of the most well-known attempts to articulate the general
structure of plot. Freytag's Pyramid One of the first and most influential people to create a framework for analyzing plots was 19th-century German writer Gustav Freytag, who argued that all plots can be broken down into five stages: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and dénouement. Freytag originally developed this theory as a way of
describing the plots of plays at a time when most plays were divided into five acts, but his five-layered "pyramid" can also be used to analyze the plots of other kinds of stories, including novels, short stories, films, and television shows. Exposition is the first section of the plots of other kinds of stories, including novels, short stories, films, and television shows.
information, including characters and their relationships to one another, the setting (or time and place) of events, and any other relevant ideas, details, or historical context. In a five-act play, the exposition typically occurs in the first act. The rising action begins with the "inciting incident" or "complication"—an event that creates a problem or conflict
for the characters, setting in motion a series of increasingly significant events. Some critics describe the rising action as the most important part of the plot because the climax and outcome of the story would not take place over the course of act two
and perhaps part of act three. The climax of a plot is the story's central turning point, which the exposition and the rising action have all been leading up to. The climax is the moment with the greatest tension or conflict. Though the climax is also sometimes called the crisis, it is not necessarily a negative event. In a tragedy, the climax will result in an
unhappy ending; but in a comedy, the climax usually makes it clear that the story will have a happy ending. In a five-act play, the climax usually takes place at the end of the third act. Whereas the rising action is the series of events that follow the climax, ending with the resolution, an
event that indicates that the story is reaching its end. In a five-act play, the falling action usually takes place over the course of the fourth act, ending with the resolution. Dénouement is a French word meaning "outcome." In literary theory, it refers to the part of the plot which ties up loose ends and reveals the final consequences of the events of the
story. During the dénouement, the author resolves any final or outstanding questions about the characters' fates, and may even reveal a little bit about the characters' futures after the resolution of the story. In a five-act play, the dénouement takes place in the fifth act. While Freytag's pyramid is very handy, not every work of literature fits neatly into
its structure. In fact, many modernist and post-modern writers intentionally subvert the standard narrative and plot structure that Freytag's pyramid represents. Booker outlines an overarching "meta-plot" which he argues can be used to describe the plot
structure of almost every story. Like Freytag's pyramid, Booker's meta-plot has five stages: The anticipation stage, in which the hero overcomes a series of minor challenges and gains a sense of confidence and invincibility; The frustration stage, in which the hero overcomes a series of minor challenges and gains a sense of confidence and invincibility; The frustration stage, in which the hero overcomes a series of minor challenges and gains a sense of confidence and invincibility; The frustration stage, in which the hero overcomes a series of minor challenges and gains a sense of confidence and invincibility; The frustration stage, in which the hero overcomes a series of minor challenges and gains a sense of confidence and invincibility; The frustration stage, in which the hero overcomes a series of minor challenges and gains a sense of confidence and invincibility; The frustration stage, in which the hero overcomes a series of minor challenges and gains a sense of confidence and invincibility; The frustration stage, in which the hero overcomes a series of minor challenges and gains a sense of confidence and invincibility; The frustration stage, in which the hero overcomes a series of minor challenges and gains a sense of confidence and invincibility.
villain of the story; The nightmare stage, in which the hero fears they will be unable to overcome their enemy; The resolution, in which the hero finally triumphs. Of course, like Freytag's Pyramid, Booker's meta-plot isn't actually a fool-proof way of describing the structure of every plot, but rather an attempt to describe structural elements that many
(if not most) plots have in common. Types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots, many scholars and critics have attempted to describe the different types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots, many scholars and critics have attempted to describe the different types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots, many scholars and critics have attempted to describe the different types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots, many scholars and critics have attempted to describe the different types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots, many scholars and critics have attempted to describe the different types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots, many scholars and critics have attempted to describe the different types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots and critics have attempted to describe the different types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plot In addition to analyzing the general structure of plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to describe the different types of Plots are attempted to the different types of Plots are attempted to the different types of Plots are attempted to 
plot types can be further subdivided into the following seven categories. Booker himself borrows most of these definitions of plot types from much earlier writers, such as Aristotle. Here's a closer look at each of the seven types: Comedy: In a comedy, characters face a series of increasingly absurd challenges, conflicts, and misunderstandings,
culminating in a moment of revelation, when the confusion of the early part of the plot is resolved and the plot act as obstacles to a happy romantic relationship, but the conflicts are resolved and the plot ends with an orderly conclusion (and often a wedding). A Midsummer Night's
Dream, When Harry Met Sally, and Pride and Prejudice are all examples of comedies. Tragedy: The plot of a tragedy follows a tragic hero—a likable, well-respected, morally upstanding character who has a tragic hero becomes aware or
his mistake (this realization is called anagnorisis), his happy life is destroyed. This reversal of fate (known as peripeteia) leads to the plot's tragic ending and, frequently, the hero's death. Booker's tragic plot is based on Aristotle's theory of tragedy, which in turn was based on patterns in classical drama and epic poetry. Antigone, Hamlet, and The
Great Gatsby are all examples of tragedies. Rebirth: In stories with a rebirth plot, one character flaw. Through an act of love, another character helps the imprisoned by a dark force, enchantment, or character flaw. Many stories of rebirth
allude to Jesus Christ or other religious figures who sacrificed themselves for others and were resurrected. Beauty and the Beast, The Snow Queen, and A Christmas Carol are all examples of stories with rebirth plots. Overcoming the Monster: The hero sets out to fight an evil force and thereby protect their loved ones or their society. The "monster"
could be literal or metaphorical: in ancient Greek mythology, Perseus battles the monster Medusa, but in the television show Good Girls Revolt, a group of women files a lawsuit in order to fight discriminatory policies in their workplace. Both examples follow the "Overcoming the Monster" plot, as does the epic poem Beowulf. Rags-to-Riches: In a rags-
to-riches plot, a disadvantaged person comes very close to gaining success and wealth, but then appears to lose everything, before they finally achieve the happy life they have always deserved. Cinderella and Oliver Twist are classic rags-to-riches stories; movies with rags-to-riches plots include Slumdog Millionaire and Joy. The Quest: In a quest
story, a hero sets out to accomplish a specific task, aided by a group of friends. Often, though not always, the hero and their friends face challenges together, but the hero must complete the final stage of the quest alone. The Celtic myth of "The Fisher-King and the
Holy Grail" is one of the oldest quest stories; Monty Python and the Holy Grail is a satire that follows the same plot structure; while Heart of Darkness plays with the model of a quest but has the quest end not with the discovery of a treasure or enlightenment but rather with emptiness and disillusionment. Voyage and Return: The hero goes on a literal
journey to an unfamiliar place where they overcome a series of challenges, then return home with wisdom and experience that help them live a happier life. The Odyssey, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chronicles of Narnia, and Eat, Pray, Love all follow the voyage and return plot. As you can probably see, there's lots of room for these categories
to overlap. This is one of the problems with trying to create any sort of categorization scheme for plots such as this—an issue we'll cover in greater detail below. The Hero's Journey is an attempt to describe a narrative archetype, or a common plot type that has specific details and structure (also known as a monomyth). The Hero's Journey is an attempt to describe a narrative archetype, or a common plot type that has specific details and structure (also known as a monomyth).
Journey plot follows a protagonist's journey from the known to the unknown, and back to the known world again. The journey can be a literal one, as in the Lord of the story. The Hero's Journey structure was first popularized by Joseph
Campbell's 1949 book The Hero With a Thousand Faces. Later, theorists David Adams Leeming, Phil Cousineau, and Christopher Vogler all developed their own versions of the Hero's Journey structure. Each of these theorists divides The Hero's Journey into slightly different stages (Campbell identifies 17 stages, whereas Vogler finds 12 stages and
Leeming and Cousineau use just 8). Below, we'll take a closer look at the 12 stages that Vogler outlines in his analysis of this plot type: The Ordinary World: When the story begins, the hero is a seemingly ordinary person living an ordinary life. This section of the story often includes expository details about the story's setting and the hero's background
and personality. The Call to Adventure: Soon, the hero is asked to find something gives them an opportunity to go on a quest. Often, the hero is asked to find something or someone, or to defeat a powerful enemy. The call to adventure sometimes, but not always, involves a supernatural event. (In Star Wars: A New Hope
the call to adventure occurs when Luke sees the message from Leia to Obi-Wan Kenobi.) The Refusal of the Call: Some heroes are initially reluctant to embark on their journey and instead attempt to continue living their ordinary life. When this refusal takes place, it is followed by another event that prompts the hero to accept the call to adventure
(Luke's aunt and uncle getting killed in Star Wars). Meeting the Mentor: The hero meets a mentor: a wiser, more experienced person who gives them advice and guidance. The mentor trains and protects the hero until the hero is ready to embark on the next phase of the journey. (Obi-Wan Kenobi is Luke's mentor in Star Wars.) Crossing the
Frodo leaving the Shire in Lord of the Rings.) Tests, Allies, and Enemies: As the hero continues on their journey, they face a series of increasingly difficult "tests" or challenges. Along the way, they acquire friends who help them overcome these challenges. Along the way, they acquire friends who help them overcome these challenges.
phase or find ways to keep them temporarily at bay. These challenges help the reader develop a better a sense of the hero's strengths and weaknesses, and they help the hero become wiser and more experienced. This phase is part of the rising action. Approach to the Innermost Cave: At this stage, the hero prepares to face the greatest challenge of
the journey, which lies within the "innermost cave." In some stories, the hero must literally enter an isolated and dangerous place and do battle with an evil force; in others, the hero must confront a fear or face an internal conflict; or, the hero may do both. You can think of the approach to the innermost cave as a second threshold—a moment when
the hero faces their doubts and fears and decides to continue on the quest. (Think of Frodo entering Mordor, or Harry Potter entering the Forbidden Forest with the Deathly Hallows, ready to confront Lord Voldemort.) The Ordeal: The ordeal is the greatest challenge that the hero faces. It may take the form of a battle or physically dangerous task, or
it may represent a moral or personal crisis that threatens to destroy the hero. Earlier (in the "Tests, Allies, and Enemies" phase), the hero must face the ordeal often determines the fate of the hero's loved ones, society, or the world itself. In many
stories, the ordeal involves a literal or metaphorical resurrection, in which the hero dies or has a near-death experience, and is reborn with new knowledge or abilities. This constitutes the climax of the story, it may come in the form of new wisdom
and personal strengths, the love of a romantic interest, a supernatural power, or a physical prize. The hero begins to make their way home, either by return to the ordinary world. The Road Back: The hero begins to make their way home, either by return to the ordinary world. The Road Back: The hero begins to make their way home, either by return to the ordinary world. The Road Back: The hero begins to make their way home, either by return to the ordinary world.
or setbacks along the way. This phase is part of the falling action. The Resurrection: The hero faces one final challenge in which they must use all of the powers and knowledge that they have gained throughout their journey. When the hero faces one final challenge in which they must use all of the powers and knowledge that they have gained throughout their journey.
of the hero's journey. Return with the Elixir: The hero reenters the ordinary world, where they find that they have changed too). Among the things they bring with them when they return is an "elixir," or something that will transform their ordinary life for the better. The elixir could be a literal potion or gift, or it
may take the form of the hero's newfound perspective on life: the hero now possesses love, forgiveness, knowledge, or another quality that will help them build a better life. Other Genre-Specific Plots Apart from the plot types worth
mentioning. When a story uses one of the following plots, it usually means that it belongs to a specific genre of literature—so these plot structures can be thought of as being specific to their respective genres. Mystery: A story that centers around the solving of a baffling crime—especially a murder. The plot structure of a mystery can often be
described using Freytag's pyramid (i.e., it has exposition, rising action, and denouement), but the plots of mysteries also tend to follow other, more genre-specific conventions, such as the gradual discovery of clues culminating in the revelation of the culprit's identity as well as their motive. In a typical story (i.e., a non-mystery)
key characters and their motives are usually revealed before the central conflict arises, not after. Bindungsroman: A story that shows a young protagonist's journey from childhood to adulthood (or immaturity), with a focus on the trials and misfortunes that affect the character's growth. The term "coming-of-age novel" is sometimes used
interchangeably with Bildungsroman. This is not necessarily incorrect—in most cases the terms can be used interchangeably—but Bildungsroman carries the connotation of a specific and well-defined literary tradition, which tends to follow certain genre-specific conventions (for example, the main character often gets sent away from home, falls in
love, and squanders their fortune). The climax of the Bildungsroman typically coincides with the protagonist reaching maturity. Other Attempts to Classify Types of Plots In addition to Freytag, Booker, and Campbell, many other theorists and literary critics have created systems classifying different kinds of plot structures. Among the best known are:
William Foster-Harris, who outlined three archetypal plot structures in The Basic Patterns of Plot Ronald R. Tobias, who wrote a book claiming there are 20 Master Plots Georges Polti, who argued there are in fact Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, who in the early twentieth century outlined seven types of plot And then
there are the more atypical approaches to classifying the different types of plots: In 1965, the University of Chicago rejected Kurt Vonnegut's college thesis, which claimed that folktales and fairy tales shared common structures, or "shapes," including "man in a hole," "boy gets girl" and "Cinderella." He went on to write Slaughterhouse-Five, a novel
and-downs of stories. Both projects concluded that there are six types of stories concluded that the six types of stories concluded that the six types of stories concluded the six types of stories conclud
critic Michiko Kakutani, who in a 2005 review described Christopher Booker finds interesting ways to categorize stories by plot type, he is too fixated on finding stories that fit these plot types perfectly. As a result, Booker tends to idealize overly
that while some great works of literature may follow archetypal plot structures, they may also have unconventional plot structures that do not perfectly fit any of the "plot types" discussed above. William Faulker's The Sound and the
Fury and Jennifer Egan's A Visit From the Goon Squad are both examples of this kind of work. Even William Shakespeare, who wrote many of his plays following the traditional structures for tragedies and comedies, authored several "problem plays," which many scholars struggle to categorize as strictly tragedy or comedy: All's Well That Ends Well,
Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida, The Winter's Tale, Timon of Athens, and The Merchant of Venice are all examples of "problem plays." Plot in The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien The plot of The Hobbit closely follows the
structure of a typical hero's journey. The Ordinary World: At the beginning of The Hobbit, the story's hero, Bilbo Baggins, is living a comfortable life alongside his fellow hobbits in the Shire with a band
of 13 dwarves and asks Bilbo to go with them to Lonely Mountain in order to reclaim the dwarves, explaining that it isn't in a hobbit's nature to go on adventures. Meeting the Mentor: Gandalf, who serves as Bilbo's
mentor throughout The Hobbit, persuades Bilbo to join the dwarves on their journey. Cross the Threshold: Gandalf takes Bilbo to meet the dwarves at the Green Dragon Inn in Bywater, and the group leaves the Shire together. Tests, Allies, and Enemies: Bilbo faces many challenges and trials on the way to the Lonely Mountain. Early in the trip, they
are kidnapped by trolls and are rescued by Gandalf. Bilbo takes an elvish dagger from the trolls' supply of weapons that he uses throughout the rest of the journey. Soon Bilbo and the dwarves are captured by goblins, but they are rescued by Gandalf who also kills the Great Goblin. Later, Bilbo finds a magical ring (which becomes the focus of the Lord
of the Rings books), and when the dwarves are captured later in the journey (once by giant spiders and once by elves), Bilbo uses the ring and the dwarves arrive at Lake Town, near the Lonely Mountain. Approach to the Innermost Cave: Bilbo and the dwarves makes his way from Lake Town to the Lonely
Mountain, where the dragon Smaug is guarding the dwarves' treasure. Bilbo alone is brave enough to enter the Smaug's lair. Bilbo steals a cup from Smaug flies to Lake-Town and devastates it, but is killed by a human archer who learns of Smaug's weak
spot from a bird that overheard Bilbo speaking of it. The Ordeal: After Smaug's death, elves and humans march to the Lonely Mountain to claim what they believe is their portion of the treasure (as Smaug plundered from them, too). The dwarves refuse to share the treasure and a battle seems evident, but Bilbo steals the most beautiful gem from the
treasure and gives it to the humans and elves. The greedy dwarves banish Bilbo from their company. Meanwhile, an army of wargs (magical wolves) and goblins descend on the Lonely Mountain to take vengeance on the dwarves for the death of the Great Goblin. The dwarves, humans, and elves form an alliance to fight the wargs and goblins, and
eventually triumph, though Bilbo is knocked unconscious for much of the battle. (It might seem odd that Bilbo doesn't participate in the battle but rather Bilbo's moral choice to steal the gem and give it to the men and elves to counter the dwarves growing greed.)
Reward: The victorious dwarves, humans, and elves share the treasure among themselves, and Bilbo receives a share of the treasure, which he takes bilbo and Gandalf nearly a year to travel back to the Shire. During that time they e-visit with some of the people they met on their
journey out and have many adventures, though none are as difficult as those they undertook on the way to the Lonely Mountain. The Resurrection: Bilbo's return to the Shire believe that he has died and are preparing to sell his house and
belongings. Return with the Elixir: Bilbo returns to the shire with the ring, the dagger, and his treasure—enough to make him rich. He also has his memories of the Comedic Plot in Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare William Shakespeare's play,
Twelfth Night, is generally described as a comedy and follows what Booker would call comedic plot structure. At the beginning of the play, the protagonist, Viola is shipwrecked far from home in the kingdom of Illyria. Her twin brother, Sebastian, appears to have died in the storm. Viola disguises herself as a boy, calls herself Cesario, and gets a job as
the servant of Count Orsino, who is in love with the Lady Olivia. When Orsino sends Cesario to deliver romantic messages to Olivia on his behalf, Olivia falls in love with Orsino, but she cannot confess her love without revealing her disguise. In another subplot, Olivia's uncle Toby and his friend Sir Andrew
Aguecheek persuade the servant Maria to play a prank convincing another servant, Malvolio, that Olivia loves him. The plot thickens when Sebastian (Viola's lost twin) arrives in town and marries Olivia, who believes she is marrying Cesario. At the end of the play, Viola is reunited with her brother, reveals her identity, and confesses her love to
Orsino, who marries her. In spite of the chaos, misunderstandings, and challenges the characters face in the early part of the play's humor—Twelfth Night reaches an orderly conclusion and ends with two marriages. Other examples of comedic plot structure: The Tragic Plot in Macbeth by William Shakespeare William
Shakespeare's play Macbeth follows the tragic plot structure. The tragic hero, Macbeth, is a Scottish nobleman, who receives a prophecy from three witches saying that he will become the Thane of Cawdor, Lady Macbeth persuades her husband to fulfill the prophecy by
secretly murdering Duncan. He does, and is named King. Later, to ensure that Macbeth will remain king, they also order the assassination of the nobleman Macduff. However, as Macbeth protects his throne in ever more bloody ways, Lady Macbeth begins to go mad with guilt. Macbeth
consults the witches again, and they reassure him that "no man from woman born can harm Macbeth suicide, and Macbeth feels numb and empty, even
as he is certain he can never be killed. Meanwhile an army led by Duncan's son Malcolm, their number camouflaged by the branches they carry, so that they look like a moving forest, approaches Dunsinane. In the fighting Macduff reveals he was born by cesarian section, and kills Macbeth. Macbeth's mistake (hamartia) is his unrelenting ambition to
be king, and his trust in the witches' prophecies. He realizes his mistake in a moment of anagnorisis when he is defeated by Macduff. Other examples of tragic plot structure: The "Rebirth" Plot in A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
Charles Dickens' novel A Christmas Carol is an example of the "rebirth" plot. The novel's protagonist is the miserable, selfish businessman Ebenezer Scrooge, who mistreats his clerk, Bob Cratchit, who is a loving father struggling to support his family. Scrooge scoffs at the notion that Christmas is a time for joy, love, and generosity. But on Christmas
Eve, he is visited by the ghost of his deceased business partner, who warns Scrooge that if he does not change his ways, his spirit will be condemned to wander the earth as a ghost. Later that night, he is visited by the ghosts of Christmas Present, and Christmas Present, an
of his youth, sees Cratchit celebrating Christmas with his loved ones, and finally foresees his own lonely death. Scrooge awakes on Christmas with the Cratchits, but embraces the Christmas with his loved ones, and finally foresees his own lonely death. Scrooge has been
"reborn" through acts of generosity and love. Other examples of "rebirth" plot structure: The "Overcoming the Monster" Plot in Beowulf, follows the structure of an "overcoming the monster, but three. As a young warrior, Beowulf slays Grendel, a
swamp-dwelling demon who has been raiding the Danish king's mead hall. Later, when Grendel's mother attempts to avenge her son's death, Beowulf kills her, too. Beowulf manages to kill the dragon, but dies from his wounds, and is
given a hero's funeral. Three times, Beowulf succeeds in protecting his people by defeating a monster. Other examples of the overcoming the monster plot structure: The "Rags-to-riches" plot. The protagonist, Jane, is a mistreated orphan who is
eventually sent away to a boarding school where students are severely mistreated. Jane survives the school and goes on to become a governess at Thornfield Manor, where Jane falls in love with Mr. Rochester. The two become a governess at Thornfield Manor, where Jane falls in love with Mr. Rochester is first wife, Bertha, has gone insane and is imprisoned in
Thornfield's attic. She leaves Rochester and ends up finding long-lost cousins, St. John, proposes to her. Jane almost accepts, but then rejects the proposal. She returns to Thornfield to discover that Bertha started a house fire and leapt off the burning building to her death, and that Rochester had been
blinded by the fire in an attempt to save Bertha. Jane and Rochester marry, and live a quiet and happy life together. Jane begins the story with nothing, seems poised to achieve true happiness before losing everything, but ultimately has a happy ending. Other examples of the rags-to-riches plot structure: Cinderella by Charles Perrault David
Copperfield by Charles Dickens Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens The Once and Future King by T.H. White Villette by Charlotte Brontë Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw Vanity Fair by William Makepeace Thackery The Quest Plot in Siddhartha by Herman Hesse Siddhartha, by Herman Hesse, follows the structure of the "quest" plot. The novel's
protagonist, Siddartha, leaves his hometown in search of spiritual enlightenment, accompanied by his friend, Govinda. On their journey, they join a band of holy men who seek enlightenment through self-denial, and later, they study with a group of Bhuddists. Disillusioned with religion, Siddartha leaves Govinda and the Bhuddists behind and takes up
a hedonistic lifestyle with the beautiful Kamala. Still unsatisfied with his life, he considers suicide in a river, but instead decides to apprentice himself to the man who runs the ferry boat. By studying the river, Siddhartha eventually obtains enlightenment. Other examples of the quest plot structure: The "Voyage and Return" Plot in Their Eyes Were
Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston Zora Neale Hurston Zora Neale Hurston's novel Their Eyes Were Watching God follows what Booker would describe as a voyage and return plot structure. The plot follows the hero, Janie, as she seeks love and happiness. The novel begins and ends in Eatonville, Florida, where Janie was brought up by her grandmother. Janie has
three romantic relationships, each better than the last. She marriage stifling and she soon leaves him. Janie's second, more stable marriage to the prosperous Joe Starks lasts 20 years, but Janie does not feel truly loved by him. After Joe dies, she marries Tea Cake, a
farm worker who loves, respects, and cherishes her. They move to the Everglades and live there happily for just over a year, when Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane. Janie mourns Tea Cake dies of rabies after getting bitten by a dog during a hurricane.
Tea Cake with her. Her journey and her return home have made her stronger and wiser. Other examples of the voyage and return plot structure: Other Helpful Plot Resources So you want to write a story. You've built a whole complex world in your head and developed a few well-rounded, interesting characters to populate it. You can't wait to start
writing and see how these characters interact with each other. If you find yourself staring at a blank screen, not sure how to get started despite having such great characters and an interesting setting, here's why: Your characters need something to do. In other words, you need a story plot. Grammarly helps you communicate confidently What is a
story plot? Essentially, a story plot is what happens in the story. More specifically, the plot is the series of events that take place. It's the action of the story that drives the narrative forward. Here's a short plot: Two sisters are playing in their backyard, as they do every day after school. The younger sister finds a toad sitting in the grass. The toad
speaks. It tells the sisters to go into their house and bring back snacks. The older sister is suspicious yet intrigued because toads don't talk. Despite her sister's protests and warnings, the younger sister goes into the family's pantry and brings the toad a sleeve of crackers. The toad thanks the girl, then names her the Toad Princess. From that day
forward, every toad the younger sister meets bows to her. The older sister is impressed. This is not what she expected, and she's glad the encounter with the story's plot, but at its core, a plot
doesn't include them. Plot is one of the five elements present in every story: Plot Theme Character Setting Conflict In our example story plot, the conflict is the girls' responses to it. The theme isn't immediately apparent (which is the case in many stories), and the setting is the girls' backyard. A plot's purpose is to give a story
structure. In many ways, it's what makes a story a story a story a story with no explicitly named setting, and even the readers become the story's characters. Similarly, you can't really tell a story with no explicitly named setting, and even the readers become the story's characters. Similarly, you can't really tell a story with no explicitly named setting, and even the readers become the story's characters.
assumptions about its setting. Without a conflict, there's nothing to drive the plot forward, and without a theme, a series of events is just a series of events. Without a plot, the characters don't do anything. They simply exist in their setting, with no conflict to face and no themes to explore. Any kind of narrative writing needs a plot. Narrative writing
is any writing that tells a story, like: Screenplays Novels Short stories Plays Narrative poetry Narrative p
narrative is not the same as a plot. Neither is a story arc. But they have similarities and can't exist without each other. A story's narrative is the way the story is told. To go back to our example story plot from before, a narrative might be the toad telling the
story from his point of view, starting with the moment he spotted the girls walking toward their jungle gym and ending with him proudly proclaiming to end. It's called an arc because in many cases, the progress from exposition to the rising action,
climax, falling action, and end can be visually represented as an arc. How to write a plot Whether you want to write a plot outline before writing, you're going to write a plot outline before writing, you're going to write a plot. For a lot of writers, writing a plot outline before writing the story's scenes is a helpful way to organize their thoughts and keep their
writing focused. A story outline is similar to an outline for an essay or other piece of writing. It's a pared-down, beat-by-beat frame that lists your story's sections and a few details about the themes you want to explore. Jot down
everything that crosses your mind, and don't worry if it doesn't all fit together neatly—you'll organize it in the next step. With your notes in hand, create a basic frame for your story plot. Do this just like you would for an essay outline—the key plot points listed in order, providing a basic framework for your story. As we mentioned above, a plot is
simply the linear (or in some cases, nonlinear) series of events a story's characters face. In most stories, these events have a cause-and-effect relationship to each other, like how the grandmother's illness in Little Red Riding Hood caused Little Red to go into the woods with a basket of food, or how the ship hitting the iceberg in the movie Titanic
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resulted in the passengers being evacuated and Rose scrambling to find Jack. There are lots of ways to structure a plot. Every plot has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and every plot has some kind of inciting incident that kicks off the action, a climactic point where the action peaks, and a resolution following the climax. However, the climax can be anywhere in the story—you might write a story that starts with the climax and explores how the characters work through its resolution, or you might write a story where the tension seems to resolve itself after the first scene, only to drop the characters into an even more challenging situation. Elements of a plot The only rule for writing a plot is that