ENG 1P

PARTS OF A STORY



**Exposition:** also called the introduction, the characters and conflict are brought forward here.

**Rising Action:** you get to know more about the characters as the conflict continues

**Climax**: the turning point of the story. The suspense of the story is at its highest here.

**Falling Action**: after the turning point, characters have to deal with the conflict until the end...

**Resolution**: either the conflict is dealt with... or it’s not! What do you learn either way?

**Setting**: where and when the story takes place. The author’s description of where and when the setting takes place contains details that set the MOOD or ATMOSPHERE of the story.

Setting continued...

Consider details such as:

* geographical location, (the alley in ”On the Sidewalk Bleeding” is pretty dismal)
* description of details (Mary’s living room is perfectly neat and the glasses are already set out for her husband when he returns from work)
* time of day (is it light or dark?)
* weather (the rain in “On the Sidewalk Bleeding” mixes with the pouring blood to create a dismal and depressing atmosphere!)
* generation (is the story set in the new millennium? Or is it older? How do you know?)

**Conflict:**

Usually, stories center on conflict. It’s conflict that drives the plot forward and keeps you interested (or tries to, anyway!). In “Lamb to the Slaughter,” the main conflict at first is Mary vs. her husband. Once she kills him, the conflict switches – it’s now Mary vs. the police.

Main types of conflict:

**Human vs. human** (like Mary against her husband)

**Human vs. society** (more like Mary against the police)

**Human vs. nature** (a person trying to make it through a natural disaster, for example)

**Human vs. self** (wrestling with something inside the character)

WHICH TYPE OF CONFLICT DO YOU THINK IS GOING ON IN “On the Sidewalk Bleeding?”

**Characterization**:

We learn about characters in a variety of ways:

* The character’s name: sometimes contains a hint about what you should think of the character
* The character’s **appearance**: pay attention to details!
* What the character **says**
* What the character **does**
* What the narrator says about the character
* What other characters say about the character

**Theme:** a main idea, not necessarily stated in the story, of what the story means – what do you learn about life, about the world, from the story? In “On the Sidewalk Bleeding”, for example, the theme is that gang participation erases one’s individuality and makes an individual’s life meaningless. The characterization (the boy thinks about why he joined the gang, and desperately tries to take his gang jacket off, but is recognized only as a gang member anyway) as well as the setting (bleak, cold, isolated, raining, in an alley with a drunk who doesn’t recognize he’s hurt and a bag lady) point to the theme of gang identity erasing individual identity and making Andy’s life worthless and meaningless. By the time Andy figures the lesson out, though, it’s too late for him.