

Grades 11–12 Playlist: Story Structure

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5*

- Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Welcome

All stories have a plot, setting, and characters. These elements are wrapped up in the **structure** of a story, which is the framework of any story and guides the narrative. In this playlist, the structure of *Sense and Sensibility*, by Jane Austen, will be explored. In particular, the beginning and ending of the novel will be analyzed.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how:

- the specific parts of a story’s structure, such as the exposition, contribute to the overall structure.
- the specific parts of a story’s structure contribute to the meaning of the story.

Review

Key Terms

- The **exposition** is the beginning of the story and provides background information.
- **Rising action** refers to the events that explain the problem of the story and lead up to the turning point of the story.
- **Foreshadowing** is a literary device that provides readers with a hint of what may happen later on in the story.
- The **climax** is the turning point of the story.
- The **falling action** consists of the events that follow the turning point of the story, leading to the conflict or problem being resolved.
- The **resolution** is the ending of the story, when conflicts and/or problems are resolved and loose ends are tied up.



Watch!

To review the components of a basic story structure, watch these **two** videos in the order they are presented.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOWjUhH9QJA&feature=youtu.be>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwIJzYM58X0>

Read!

This resource shows some examples of story structure through graphics. Take a look before exploring the rest of the playlist!

- http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson904/MidPlotStructure.pdf

About the Book

Sense and Sensibility is about the lives of the Dashwood women following the death of the family patriarch, Mr. Dashwood. The Dashwood women are dependent upon John Dashwood, the son of Mr. Dashwood from a previous marriage. The story follows their lives as they settle in and deal with the breadth of human experience: love, life, and loss. The main couples are Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars, Marianne Dashwood and John Willoughby, and later Marianne Dashwood and Colonel Brandon. All couples face difficulties stemming from societal expectations.

Major Characters

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Elinor Dashwood | The oldest sister, 19; reserved and compassionate |
| Marianne Dashwood | The middle sister, 17; passionate and compassionate |
| John Dashwood | Henry Dashwood's son from his first marriage |
| Fanny Dashwood | Wife of John Dashwood |
| John Willoughby | The love interest of Marianne Dashwood; selfish and greedy |
| Colonel Brandon | A quiet man in love with Marianne |
| Edward Ferrars | The love interest of Elinor Dashwood and Fanny Dashwood's brother |

Exploring the Standard

When writing a story, most authors have a structural plan that they keep in mind as they create their works. Each part of the story connects to the next, and each part builds on previous parts of the story. The author controls all of these elements. For example, it's up to the author whether the story will follow a chronological structure or include flashbacks.



Teaching Notes: Story Structure

The goal of RL.11-12.5 is for students to understand how the author’s choice concerning story structure contributes to the overall structure of the story, the meaning, and the aesthetic impact. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities:

1. Direct students to write their own stories and then exchange them with a partner. Instruct students to analyze the structure of their partner’s story.
2. Instruct groups to create a graphic of a story structure. They can use online resources for ideas.
3. Ask students to identify components of story structure that they are struggling to understand. Then, have a student who feels comfortable with that component create a presentation that explains that component.

Writing Prompts:

Instruct students to analyze the story structure of a grade-appropriate contemporary novel. Students can either analyze the story structure in full or pick two components to focus on.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RL.11-12.5:

“Teaching Plot Structure through Short Stories”: The following resource contains a lesson plan on teaching plot structure through short stories.

- <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/teaching-plot-structure-through-401.html?tab=4>

“Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA): A Brief Biography”: This resource contains biographical information about Jane Austen, information regarding her work, and images.

- http://www.jasna.org/info/about_austen.html

“Unto Others”: This resource contains a quiz on story structure.

- <http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/reading-worksheets/story-structure-quiz.pdf>

