

Grade 6 Playlist: Plot

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3:

- Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Welcome

Each event in a comic strip is shown in a separate frame. Like a comic strip, the plot in a story or drama unfolds episode by episode. Understanding the structure of a plot helps the reader appreciate what happens and also helps the reader explain why characters respond or change in the way that they do.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- explain the series of events that make up the plot of a story or drama, including the exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, falling action, and resolution.
- explain how characters in a story or drama react to events or how they change as the plot moves forward.

Review

Key Terms

- The **plot** is the series of events that takes place in a story or drama.
- A **character** is a person in a story.
- A **setting** is a place in a story.
- An **event** is something that happens in a story.
- The **conflict** is the problem that the characters face.

Exploring the Standard

The plot of a story consists of these five different stages:

- The **exposition** at the beginning introduces the setting, characters, and often the main problem.
- The **rising action** is the events that take place at the beginning of the story or drama. As the conflict deepens, suspense builds.



- The **climax** is the turning point in the story. Events reach the highest point of tension, and the conflict is solved.
- The **falling action** is the events that take place after the climax.
- The **resolution** tells what happens to the characters after the conflict is solved.

Watch!

View this video to learn about five elements of a story.

- <http://blog.flocabulary.com/five-elements-of-a-story-lesson/>

A Closer Look: Conflict

A key part of plot is conflict. The conflict in a story or drama drives the plot forward. The conflict is what makes the events unfold.

The conflict that characters face can be *internal* or *external*. For example, an internal conflict is an important decision that a character has to make, like whether to tell the truth when a friend does something wrong. An external conflict is one character's struggle against another character, against society, or against nature.

Example 1

Read the following excerpt from Aesop's fable "The North Wind and the Sun."

¹The North Wind and the Sun had a quarrel about which of them was the stronger. While they were disputing with much heat and bluster, a Traveler passed along the road wrapped in a cloak.

²"Let us agree," said the Sun, "that he is the stronger who can strip that Traveler of his cloak."

³"Very well," growled the North Wind, and at once sent a cold, howling blast against the Traveler.

⁴With the first gust of wind the ends of the cloak whipped about the Traveler's body. But he immediately wrapped it closely around him, and the harder the Wind blew, the tighter he held it to him. The North Wind tore angrily at the cloak, but all his efforts were in vain.

⁵Then the Sun began to shine. At first his beams were gentle, and in the pleasant warmth after the bitter cold of the North Wind, the Traveler unfastened his cloak and let it hang loosely from his shoulders. The Sun's rays grew warmer and warmer. The man took off his cap and mopped his brow. At last he became so heated that he pulled off his cloak, and, to escape the blazing sunshine, threw himself down in the welcome shade of a tree by the roadside.

Gentleness and kind persuasion win where force and bluster fail.



Teaching Notes: Plot

The goal of RL.6.3 is for students to understand **plot structure** in a **story** or **drama** and to be able to explain how **characters** respond or change as the plot events move to a resolution of the conflict. 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. Select a story or a drama that students have recently read in class. Have pairs of students complete a plot diagram to identify the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Invite students to share their plot diagrams with the class.
2. Have students draw a comic strip based on “The North Wind and the Sun.” Ask students to display their comic strips on a classroom bulletin board.

Writing Prompts

1. Have students write a short story or one-act play. Consider suggesting that they write about one of the characters in “The North Wind and the Sun.” Encourage them to share their stories or plays with the class.
2. Assign students a grade-appropriate story or play from a literature anthology. Ask them to read the work and then answer these questions in an essay: How do the characters respond to the events? In what ways do they change from the beginning of the story or play to the end?
3. Have small groups of students discuss an episode from a popular television show they have all seen. Then ask them to write a summary of the plot, including the problem the characters face and how the problem is solved.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RL.6.3:

“Plot Structure: A Literary Elements Mini-Lesson”: This resource provides a lesson plan on plot structure that teachers can use in their classrooms.

- <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/plot-structure-literary-elements-904.html?tab=4>

“An Online Resource Guide to Freytag’s Pyramid”: This resource provides an in-depth explanation of Freytag’s Pyramid.

- <http://quickbase.intuit.com/articles/an-online-resource-guide-to-freytags-pyramid>

