

A Strategy for Reading Novels

A story is a fictitious tale that is written to entertain, amuse, or instruct the reader. A novel is the same as a story but it is longer and more complex. To understand a story or novel, you need to understand the six elements used by authors when they write a story or novel. Characters

Characters are the first element to look for when reading a story or novel. Characters are most often people but can be animals or even fictionalized beings like those seen in cartoons or movies. The main character plays the biggest role and is often the first character to be introduced. Most often the story is seen through the eyes of the main character. Secondary characters play a smaller supporting role and are introduced throughout the story.

 Setting

The setting is the second element you should look for when reading a story or novel. The setting is the location where the story takes place. A story may take place in a home, countryside, town, school, or wherever the author chooses to have the action occur. The setting is usually revealed very early in a story. Time

The time when the story takes place is the third element you should look for when reading a story or novel. A story may take place very recently or many years ago. Usually the time when the story takes place is introduced very early in the story. Problem

The problem is the fourth element you should look for in a story or novel. The problem most often grows out of a conflict between the main character and another character in the story. But the problem can also involve a circumstance such as a hurricane, a war, or one of the many obstacles that produce a conflict in life.

Events

Events are the fifth element you should look for when reading a story or novel. An event is an attempt at solving the problem in the story. In a story there are usually a number of attempts to solve the problem and these events make up most of the story. Solution

A solution is the sixth and final element in a story or novel. The solution is how the problem is resolved or brought to an end. Most often the solution is revealed near the end of the story. Sometimes the solution is not revealed until the very last page or even the final paragraph of the story.

Recognizing these story elements will help you better understand and enjoy a story, remember the story facts, and appreciate different writing styles used by authors.

About the Author

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