

ELEMENTS OF A NOVEL PACKET

Name:

Date Assigned:

Due Date:

General Directions

As you complete this packet, answer questions using complete sentences. Give specific reasons for your answers and use examples or quotes from the book to support your answers wherever possible. When including a quote from the novel, remember to include a page number.

As we discuss the assigned novel, we will refer the concepts and vocabulary from this packet. Below is a list of terms for you to study. As you complete the packet, define vocabulary below. You will find some terms in a dictionary; while other definitions will be given to you during lectures or can be found in the packet. Please be sure to read the paragraphs at the top of each page as you work through your packet.

Define the following terms:

1. Novel
2. Plot
3. Rising Action
4. Climax
5. Falling Action
6. Conflict
7. Person vs. Person
8. Person vs. Self

9. Person vs. Society

10. Person vs. Nature

11. Person vs. Supernatural

12. Person vs. God

13. Person vs. Technology

14. Person vs. Time

15. Character

16. Protagonist

17. Antagonist

18. Major Character

19. Minor Character

20. Setting

21. Theme

22. Narration

23. 1st person narration

24. 3rd person limited narration

25. 3rd person omniscient

26. Irony

27. Imagery

28. Figurative Language

About the Novel

A Novel Is...

Webster's says: an invented prose narrative that is usually long and complex and deals especially with human experience through a usually connected sequence of events.

Encarta says: a long work of written fiction. Most novels involve many characters and tell a complex story by placing the characters in a number of different situations.

Because novels are long—generally 200 pages or more—novelists can tell more richly detailed tales than can authors of briefer literary forms such as the short story. Many readers consider the novel the most flexible type of literature, and thus the one with the most possibilities. For example, writers can produce novels that have the tension of a drama, the scope of an epic poem, the type of commentary found in an essay, and the imagery and rhythm of a lyric poem. Over the centuries writers have continually experimented with the novel form, and it has constantly evolved in new directions.

Albert Camus: “A novel is never anything but a philosophy put into images.”

Henry James: “The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life.”

The History of the Novel...

Miss Lambert says: People have been telling stories from the beginning of time. Some of earliest written literary works available are written as epics—long narrative poems that focus on a heroic or mythological person or group of people. The earliest example of an epic is *The Epic of Gilgamesh* which comes from the ancient Sumerians (circa 2000 B.C.). The later, but arguably the most famous and well-known epics in Western Civilization, were written by Homer sometime in the 8th or 7th century B.C. *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are derived largely from Greek mythology and tell of the destruction of Troy and of Odysseus's disastrous voyage home after the fighting.

The epic is generally considered the ancient forerunner to the novel, which is comparatively a much more recent literary innovation. The earliest novels were picaresque which meant that like epics, they focused on the adventures of a certain character. Unlike the epic and other romantic poetry, these stories celebrated adventure for its own sake. *The Adventures of Don Quixote* (1615) by Cervantes is one such picaresque novel and it is generally considered the first modern novel.

The novel gained popularity in England throughout the 18th century with influential writers such as Daniel Defoe (*The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* in 1719), Samuel Richardson (*Pamela* in 1740), and Henry Fielding (*Joseph Andrews* in 1742). These writers helped to define the English novel for the next several hundred years. Today the novel is one of the most widely read and enjoyed literary form across the world.

Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Every novel is a debtor to Homer.”

Plot

Simply put, the plot is the story that the novel tells. It is the culmination of major events into one overarching story. Many novels, short stories, and plays have a plot that follows this pattern: rising action, climax, and falling action.

Rising action is a term used to refer to the events leading up to the climax. Summarize the rising action of the novel you are currently reading in the space below.

Rising Action: _____

The climax is the culmination of major events. It is the peak of the action or the major turning point of the story. Summarize the climax of the novel you are currently reading in the space below.

Climax: _____

Falling action is a term used to refer to the events that occur after the climax. The fall action leads to the conclusion of the novel. Summarize the falling action of the novel you are currently reading in the space below.

Falling Action: _____

Types of Plot

Some people say there are three main types of plots found in literature: episodic plots, complex plots, and plots that focus on character.

Episodic plots are made up of short episodes (usually in the form of chapters). These episodes do not necessarily relate to or build on one another. They are somewhat like a cartoon or a sitcom on TV—characters are the same week-to-week, but each week a new storyline is introduced. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain is one example of an episodic plot.

Complex plots either follow more than one major character or have more than one storyline. This type of plot is more like a soap opera than a cartoon or sitcom. The story is long and complicated with many twists and turns. *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen is one example of a complex plot.

Plots that focus on character are novels that center on the development of a major character. Typically, these novels contain less action and instead attempt to understand the psychology of the character(s). Any Henry James novel can be considered a plot that focuses on character.

Which type of plot would you say best describes the novel you are currently reading?

Why? Give specific examples from the book.

Conflict

The plot of nearly every novel revolves around some type of conflict. The conflict can be physical, ethical, emotional or social. The conflict can occur between two or more characters who disagree, between nations or groups, or even within a single character. Whatever the basis for the conflict, understanding the sources of the problem is key to understanding the novel as a whole.

Types of conflict commonly found in literature (please note these are types of conflict, not themes):

- *Person vs. Himself*
- *Person vs. Person*
- *Person vs. Society*
- *Person vs. Nature*
- *Person vs. Supernatural*
- *Person vs. God*
- *Person vs. Technology*
- *Person vs. Time*

1. Summarize the main conflict of this novel and explain its sources (reasons for the conflict).

2. Which category, or type, of conflict does this fit under? Why? Support your answer using specific examples from the book.

3. Which other types of conflict occur in this novel? Support your answers with specific examples from the book.

Character

Characters are the fictional people who populate the pages of a novel. Minor characters are the background people who play a comparatively small role in the events of the novel. These characters are typically described in very few words or phrases and are not developed very thoroughly. Major characters are characters who are central to the plot. They are described in greater detail, and they tend to dominate the dialogue both internally and externally.

List minor characters from the novel:

List major characters from the novel:

Characterization

There are two ways novelists describe the characters in a story—through direct characterization and through indirect characterization. Direct characterization is the information clearly stated about a character. The author simply tells you what he/she wants you to know about a character. “Julia was nice” would be an example of direct characterization.

Indirect characterization is material that gives the reader clues about a character’s personality through examples. “Julia noticed that Sarah seemed sad, so she put a kind note in Sarah’s locker and ate with Sarah at lunch.” This would be an example of indirect characterization. In this passage, the author never directly tells us that Julia is nice, but in describing Julia’s behavior to Sarah, the author shows the reader that Julia is a nice person. Direct characterization *tells* the reader what a character is like. Indirect characterization *shows* the reader what a character is like.

Choose two characters from the novel you are reading and for each character, give one example of direct characterization and one example of indirect characterization. The examples of direct characterization must be quotes from the novel. Remember to include the page numbers your quotes are from.

Character 1: _____

Example of direct characterization:

Example of indirect characterization:

Character 2: _____

Example of direct characterization:

Example of indirect characterization:

Heroes and Villains

Define the following words and answer the following questions.

Protagonist-

Antagonist-

1. Who would you consider the protagonist of this novel? How do you know?

2. Who would you consider the antagonist of this novel?
How do you know?

3. In what ways do the protagonist and the antagonist clash?

Setting

The setting of a novel is concerned with these two questions: When did the novel take place? Where does the novel take place? Time period and location can greatly influence the rest of the novel. The way characters speak, eat, and dress will depend on when and where the novel takes place. World events contemporary to the timeframe of the story will likewise have a major influence on the outcome of the novel. The more background information you have on the setting of the novel, the greater likelihood you will understand the subtler nuances of the novel.

1. When does the novel take place?

2. How does this influence the characters' lives (their daily routine, clothing, and speech, etc...)?

3. What major events are happening in the world at this time (feel free to look this up in an encyclopedia or history book if you don't know from reading the novel)?

4. Where does the novel take place?

5. How does this location influence the development of the novel?

Theme

The theme of a literary work is the idea the author is expressing in their written work. Most novels, due to their length and complexity, have more than one theme and these themes can be interpreted in numerous ways. To find the theme in a literary work, there are a number of questions the reader can ask: What do I think the author was trying to say about life when he wrote this book? What ideas are emphasized frequently? What lessons do the main characters learn (or what lesson should they learn)? What questions does this story make the reader ask about society or the world we live in?

Some common themes in literature include: the American dream, appearances vs. reality, good vs. evil, the triumph of the human spirit in the face of adversity, social inequality, the search for personal fulfillment, human relationships, innocence vs. experience, individuality vs. conformity, etc...

1. After reading the novel, what do you consider to be its theme (or main idea)?

2. Why would you choose this as the novel's primary theme?

3. List some other themes that you feel are important to the novel and explain how or why you would choose this as a theme.

Other Techniques of the Novel:

Narration

Every novel has a narrator, someone who tells the story. The narration can either be in first person, third person limited, or third person omniscient. In the first person, a character from the novel is telling the story. That character speaks in first person using words like "I" and "we." In third person limited an outside narrator tells the story, but has access only to the main characters thoughts and feelings. In third person omniscient an outside narrator tells the story, but this narrator has access to the thoughts and feelings of all characters. An omniscient narrator will often assess not only the characters, but the environment and action of the novel as well. The omniscient narrator will, in older works, often address the reader directly.

1. What type of narration is used in this novel?
2. How do you know? Provide at least two specific quotes from the novel with page numbers and explain what these tell us about the type of narration used in this novel.
3. How does the type of narration used in this novel affect the story?

Other Techniques of the Novel:

Symbolism

In literature symbolism is used to help illustrate the theme or other specific ideas the author is trying to share.

Define the word below and answer the following questions.

Symbol:

1. Think of a real life symbol. Illustrate (draw) it and explain its meaning.

2. Think of at least one symbol from the book we are reading. Explain how it functions as a symbol (tell what it represents).

Other Techniques of the Novel:

Imagery

Imagery is a term used to describe vivid descriptions found in a piece of writing. These details should appeal strongly to the reader's senses. Imagery will often employ figurative language.

Write quotes from your novel concerning the following. Include the page number. In your book find:

1. An example of imagery that appeals to the reader's sense of taste or smell.

2. An example of imagery that appeals to the reader's sense of sight.

3. An example of imagery that appeals to the reader's sense of hearing.

4. An example of imagery that appeals to the reader's sense of touch.

5. An example of imagery that employs figurative language (a metaphor or simile).

Other Techniques of the Novel:

Irony

Irony occurs when the reader's expectation of what should happen (or one of the character's expectations of what should happen) differs significantly from what actually happens.

1. Cite an example of irony from the novel.

2. Explain why the situation is ironic (what is the expectation versus the outcome).