

# Elements of Fiction & Short Stories



3 Weeks of  
**Bell Ringers**

# Week One Focus...



## Characters

How do writers actually create their characters and make them seem so real?

# Bell Ringer 1



## Protagonist

The protagonist is the main character in the story.

## Antagonist

The antagonist is the protagonist's enemy in the story.

Create a list of as many famous protagonists & antagonists from your favorite books and movies as you can think of.



# Bell Ringer 2



## Direct Characterization

Jacob was a strong and fast 12 year old boy, especially when he played hard at football.

## Indirect Characterization

Jacob moved quickly, diving on the football and gripping it toughly in his hands.

What is the difference between the two descriptions of the same character above?

# Bell Ringer 3



## Static characters

...never change or grow or learn from their mistakes.

## Dynamic characters

...change their opinions, become better people, and learn from their mistakes.

Explain which type of character would be more interesting in a book or movie.

# Bell Ringer 4



## Conflict

A conflict is  
a problem in the story.

Conflicts happen  
between characters  
when they disagree  
with each other and  
cause issues with  
each other.

Write about a time you were in a conflict with  
another person (but don't use the real name!).

# Bell Ringer 5



## Internal Conflict

These are problems inside the character that others may or may not even know about.

### Example:

If a character is trying to figure out whether to tell the truth and hurt someone's feelings or lie and make that person feel good, then that's an internal conflict.

Think of other examples of what it's like to feel an internal conflict.

# Week Two Focus...



## Plot

What's important about the plot?



# Bell Ringer 1

**Explain what you learn about the setting and the main character in this EXPOSITION:**

**Jack and his mother lived alone and were very poor. To supplement their meager amount of food, Jack's mother told him to take the only cow they owned and sell it in the village. They could use the money to plant crops, repair the barn, and buy new tools. So Jack set off down the long, dirt road and headed to the village to find a potential buyer.**

# Bell Ringer 2

The INCITING INCIDENT is that little thing that happens that starts all the trouble.

Watch this video about “Jack and the Beanstalk.”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sB0UklgJBnI>

What is the INCITING INCIDENT?

In other words, think about what is that one little thing that happens that causes everything else in the story to happen, too?

# Bell Ringer 3

**This is the RISING ACTION of a story. How many pieces of rising action do you see here?**

**Tiny grains of light brown sand stuck to the bottoms of his feet, each one like a minuscule shard of glass. Robbie's feet churned over and over as he ran at a lightning-fast pace stumbling past the bicycle hut, around the umbrellas, and practically through the hot dog stand. Panicked, Robbie reached the front steps of the condo only to realize that it was locked and that he didn't have a key. Frustrated, he spun around to search for the hidden spare key only to knock it down from its hiding place and into the gutter.**

# Bell Ringer 3

This is the **RISING ACTION** of a story. How many pieces of rising action do you see here?

Tiny grains of light brown sand stuck to the bottoms of his feet, each one like a minuscule shard of glass. Robbie's feet churned over and over as he ran at a lightning-fast pace stumbling past the bicycle hut, around the umbrellas, and practically through the hot dog stand. Panicked, Robbie reached the front steps of the condo only to realize that it was locked and that he didn't have a key. Frustrated, he spun around to search for the hidden spare key only to knock it down from its hiding place and into the gutter.

1

2

3

4



# Bell Ringer 4

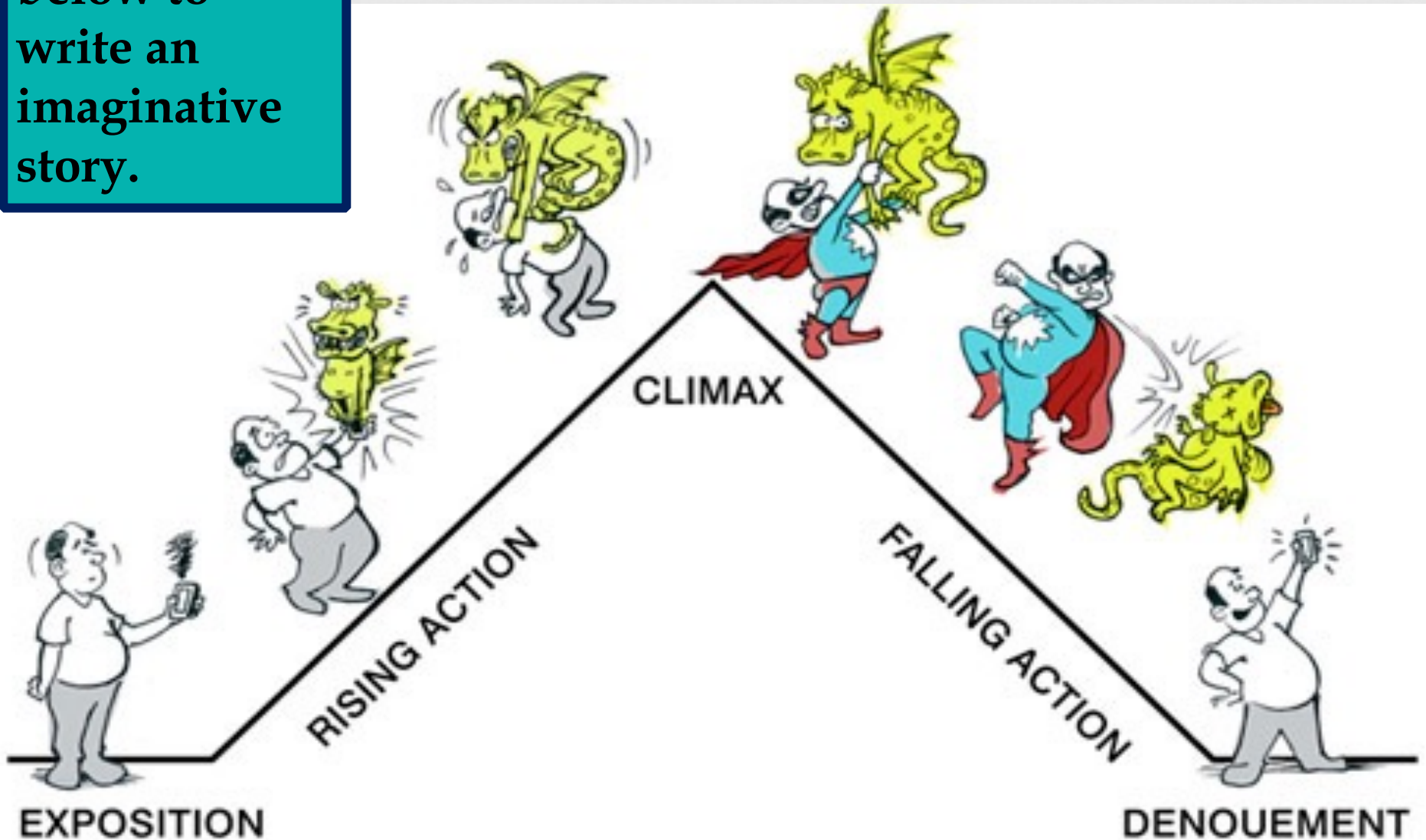
**Remember that the TURNING POINT is the part of the story where you don't know if or how the character will ever make it out of the situation.**

**Use your imagination to think of what would happen next that would be an awesome TURNING POINT in the story:**

**Tiny grains of light brown sand stuck to the bottoms of his feet, each one like a minuscule shard of glass. Robbie's feet churned over and over as he ran at a lightning-fast pace stumbling past the bicycle hut, around the umbrellas, and practically through the hot dog stand. Panicked, Robbie reached the front steps of the condo only to realize that it was locked and that he didn't have a key. Frustrated, he spun around to search for the hidden spare key only to knock it down from its hiding place and into the gutter.**

Use the  
images in the  
plot diagram  
below to  
write an  
imaginative  
story.

# Bell Ringer 5



# Week Three Focus...



## Analysis

What else helps us think about what we read?

# Bell Ringer 1



## Mood

The mood is like the “feeling” of a room when you walk into it. It’s something you can feel just by noticing everything around you.

Describe the mood of a classroom where everyone just found out they were going to be off of school on Friday.



# Bell Ringer 1



## Mood

The mood is like the “feeling” of a room when you walk into it. It’s something you can feel just by noticing everything around you.

Describe the mood of a classroom where everyone just found out they were going to be off of school on Friday.

# Bell Ringer 2



## TONE

The TONE is the ATTITUDE.  
It's not WHAT the character said...  
It's HOW the character sounded  
when he /she said it.

How many ways can you say  
"Shut the door." ???

# Bell Ringer 3



## Foreshadow

**Foreshadowing is the BEST!! It's awesome because if you're the writer, you get to plant little clues about what will happen in the future of the story!**

**Why might foreshadowing be really cool for the reader, too?**

# Bell Ringer 4



## Flashback

Sometimes a writer likes to take us back in time to explain how something came to be. It helps to understand things that might have happened before a story started.

Think of a movie that uses a flashback to explain something to the viewers.



# Bell Ringer 5

## SYMBOLISM

A SYMBOL is when one thing is really special and it represents something else that is also very special and meaningful.

The American flag is a SYMBOL for freedom.

The sun is a symbol for health and growth.

Green symbolizes health and Spring time.

Write two more examples of symbols.

# Week Four Focus...



## Theme vs. Topic

They're not the same thing!

# Bell Ringer 1



**Copy the following information  
for today's bell ringer:**

## **THEME**

**The life lesson  
or  
the moral of the story**

## **TOPIC**

**The subject of the story**

# Bell Ringer 2

**Explain the theme and the topic in this passage:**

It was the first warm day of April and instead of working on his homework, Dylan decided to play street hockey. The next day, when Dylan's parents realized he didn't do his homework, they grounded him from playing outside for the whole weekend, even though it was nice and warm. When Dylan finally got to go outside to play again, the warm weather had passed and a cold front came through. No one wanted to go outside, so Dylan stayed in and worked ahead on his next assignment to get it done before the due date.



# Bell Ringer 3

Explain the  
theme and  
the topic in  
this poem  
called  
"Happiness"  
-->

## HAPPINESS

Happiness is glowing  
in a puppy's hop,  
the green field, the tall grass,  
Wind blowing, sun shining  
and friends walking, running.

Happiness is shared  
in the afternoon,  
during free time, over ice cream  
exuberant laughter  
and music.

# Bell Ringer 4

**In your own words,  
explain the difference between a  
THEME and a TOPIC.**

# Bell Ringer 5

**Explain the theme and the topic  
in the Dr. Seuss quote below:**

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own, and you know what you know. And you are the guy who'll decide where to go."

— Dr. Seuss