

Literary Analysis of Narrative Texts

Setting and atmosphere

| Setting | Atmosphere |
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| <p>The setting refers to the time and place.</p> <p>Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When does the action take place?</i> • <i>Is the plot narrated in chronological order or are there any flashbacks? Foreshadowing?</i> <p>Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where does the action takes place?</i> • <i>How does the place look like? (Weather conditions, other people,..).</i> | <p>The atmosphere of a text is created by the settings, descriptions, and characters. The atmosphere can be cheerful, gloomy, threatening, etc. The atmosphere has a strong influence on the reader's perception of a passage, chapter, or a whole text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How is the atmosphere influenced by the setting?</i> • <i>Character(s): What can you say about the state of mind/ mood/ feeling/attitude?</i> |

Characterization

The people in a narrative text (e.g. novel, short story, fairytale, fable) are known as **characters**. Characters are usually presented through their actions, speech, and thoughts as well as by description. Characterization is the way in which the author presents his or her characters.

We distinguish between **two kinds of characterization**:

If the reader is told about a character's personality directly by the author, another character or by the character him- or herself, we speak of **explicit characterization**.

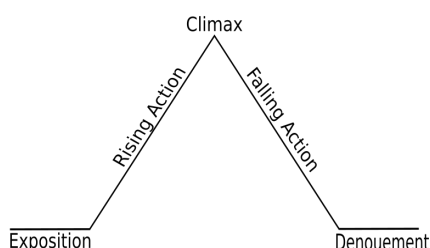
If the reader is expected to draw conclusions about the character by studying his or her behaviour, opinions, choice of words and/or way of talking, we speak of **implicit characterization**.

A **round character** is usually a main character and develops in the course of the narrative text. In contrast, a **flat character** shows no development at all.

Narration

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|---|--|
| Narrating I | author = part of the story |
| Omniscient narrator (Allwissender Erzähler) | „knowing-it-all“ narrator = knows about the feelings of the characters, is present at all times, has knowledge about the past, present, and future of the characters |

Freytag's Pyramid



Exposition: Background information to understand the story

Rising action: Action(s)/ Conflict(s) leading to the climax

Climax: Point of highest tension / Turning point

Falling action: Conflict(s) unravel

Denouement: Open end? Closed end?