



Reading On The Move

What's The Story? Elements of Fiction: Plot

Fiction is a type of literature that is based on made-up people or events. Sometimes the entire story is made up, or *fictional*, and sometimes parts of the story are based on real life people or events.

Plot of a story is the main story line. There are many parts that help to build the plot. Let's take a look at these parts:

The beginning of a story is called the **introduction, or exposition**. This introduces the setting and characters. The **setting** is where and when the story takes place. The **characters** are the people, animals, or ideas in the story. The growth of the characters is what moves the action, or plot, of the story forward. **Main characters** play a main role in the story. **Minor characters** are in the story but do not play a main role.

The next part of the plot is called the **rising action**. The rising action includes the events in the story that lead up to the **climax**. The climax of the story is usually the turning point of the story. It is usually somewhere in the middle of the story, where the conflict starts to be resolved.



Conflicts are problems that characters face. Some types of conflicts are:



- **Man vs. himself:** when a character struggles with himself (depression, loneliness, rejection, etc.). This is an **internal conflict** because the character is fighting something within him/herself.

The types of conflicts listed below are all **external conflicts** because the characters are fighting against some outside force.



- **Man vs. man:** when two characters struggle with each other.

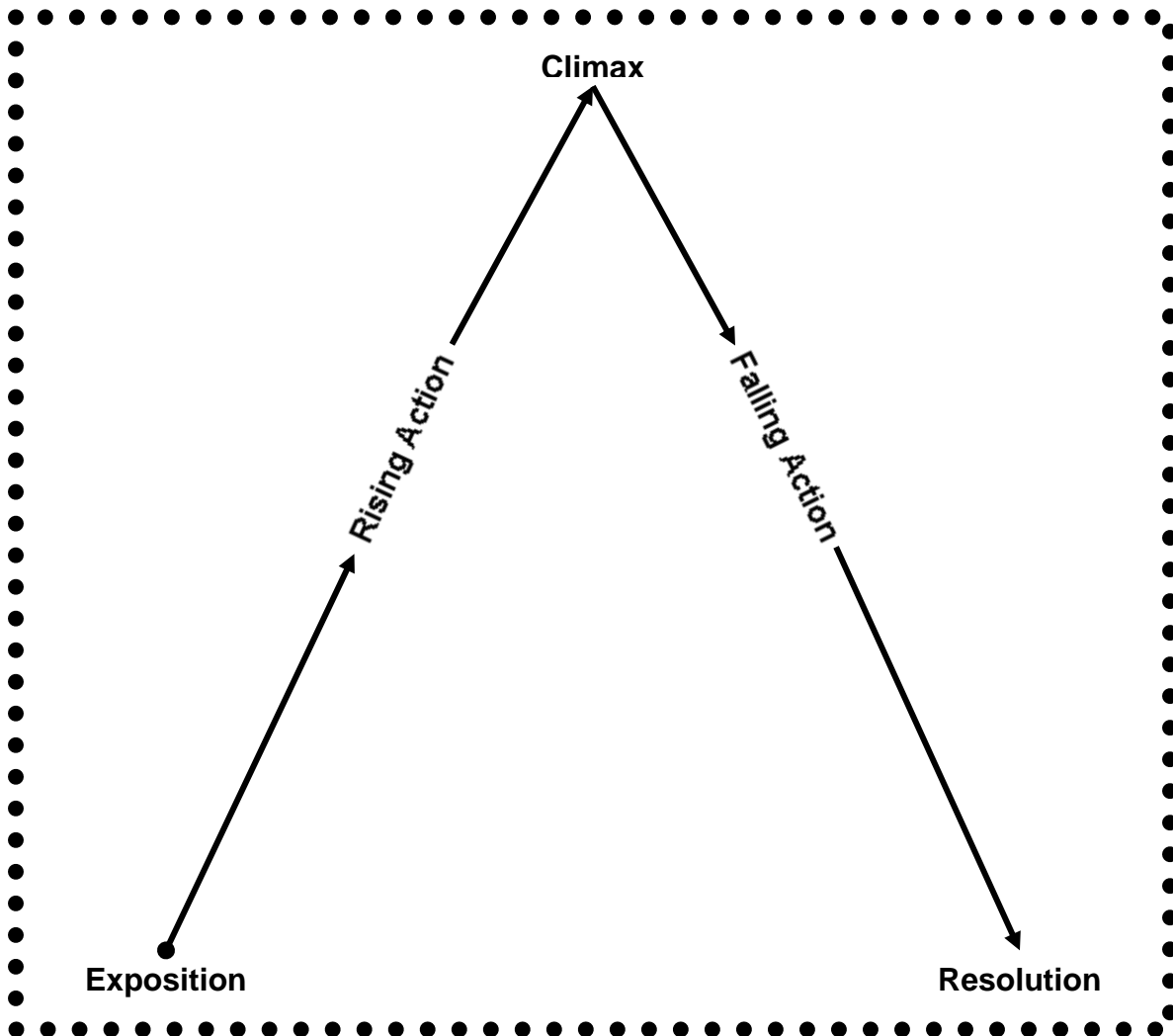
- **Man vs. nature:** when a character struggles with nature (natural disaster such as a storm, blizzard, hurricane, etc.)



- **Man vs. supernatural:** when a character struggles with things that are not easily explained (ghosts, evil forces, gods, etc.)

After the climax comes the ***falling action***. This is where problems start to be resolved and any loose ends in the story are tied up.

Finally, the story ends with the ***resolution***. The resolution is the conclusion, or end, of the story where all problems are solved.



A long story is called a **novel**. It involves several main characters and some minor characters. There is usually more than one event taking place that comes together into a main plot.

A shorter length story is called a **short story**. It involves a couple main characters and usually one big, main event. These stories are meant to be read in one sitting.

Let's explore **plot** a little closer. Read the *short story* below and the plot summary on the next page.



A lion was sleeping deep in the jungle. He was lying so still that a mouse who came near him thought he was a mountain. She ran up and down his back a few times. The lion woke up, felt the mouse tickling him, and grabbed her in his giant paw.

"You little pest!" he grumbled. "I'm going to eat you!"

"No," said the mouse. "That would be unwise. I'm so little that you would still be hungry. Anyway, you never know, someday you might need my help."

"That is funny!" roared the lion. "How can a tiny mouse like you help a big powerful lion like me? You're a funny mouse, so I will let you go."

The mouse ran away quickly, before the lion could change his mind. The lion walked away into the jungle looking for larger prey, forgetting all about the little mouse.

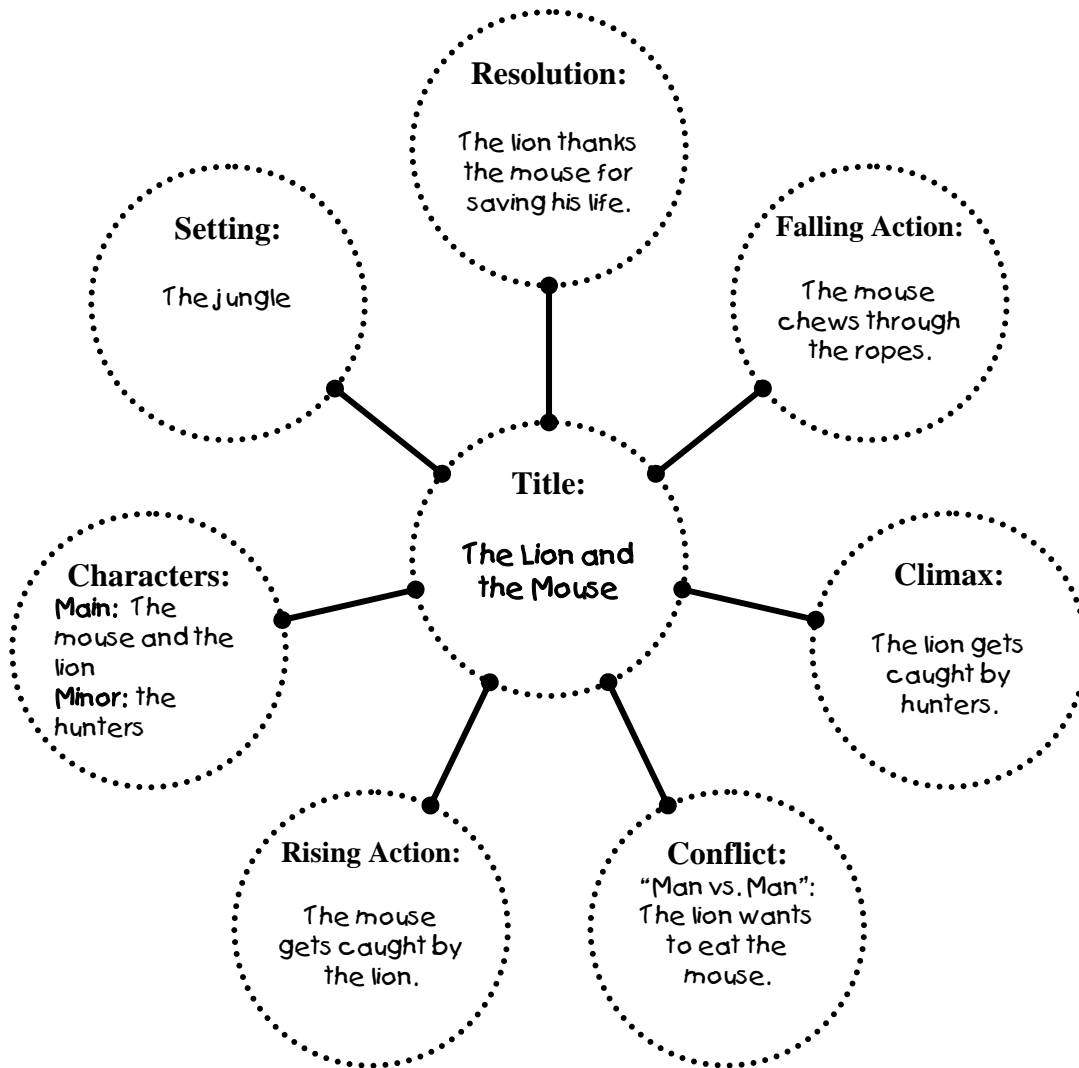
A few days later, some hunters caught the lion and tied him up with strong ropes. Then they went away to get their truck to take the lion to a faraway zoo. The lion roared and pulled at the ropes, but they were very tight and he couldn't get free. Finally, he cried out and gave up hope that he would ever be free to roam the jungle again.

Suddenly he felt something tickling him again. It was the little mouse. She was chewing on the ropes with her little sharp teeth. In a few minutes, the rope was broken and the lion was free.

"I was smart, my little friend, to listen to you that day in the jungle," said the lion. "I'm glad I didn't eat you!"

"Me, too!" answered the mouse. "I'm glad I was here to help you, my powerful friend, and repay your kindness!"

Plot Summary:



Did you understand the story you read? Answer the questions below to check your reading comprehension, or understanding.

1. Why did the lion first get angry at the mouse?

2. How did the mouse make the lion change his mind and not eat her?

3. What happened to the lion?

4. How did the mouse help him?

5. Why did she help him?

Now, you try! Read the short story below and answer the questions that follow.



The Legend of Robin Hood

Robin Hood and his father entered an archery contest at King Richard's palace in Nottingham. On their way home from the contest, Robin Hood's father was murdered by Hench men of King Richard's brother, Prince John.

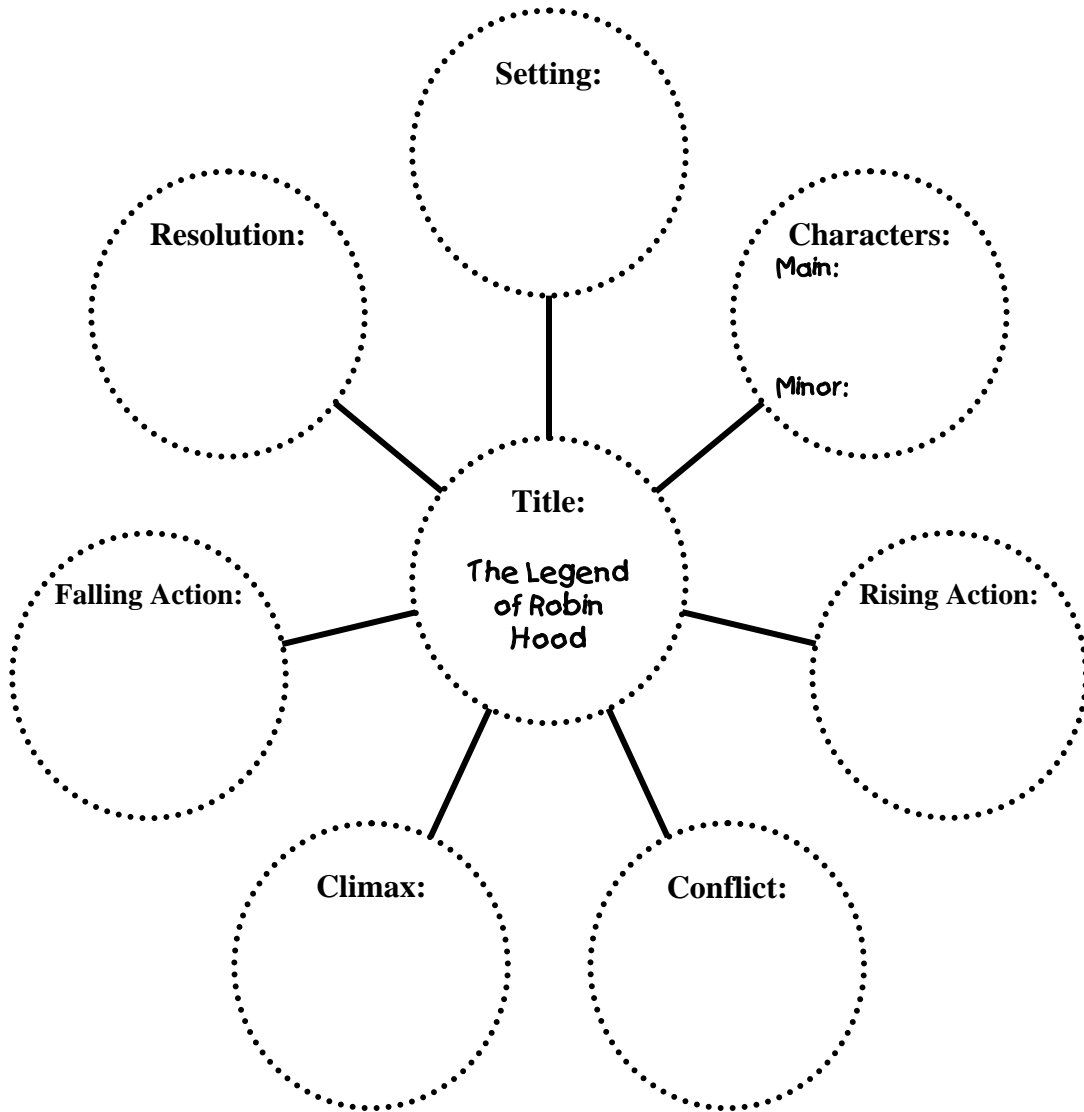
Robin Hood swore to **avenge** his father's death and became an outlaw. However, he was not a bad outlaw. Instead, he vowed to help the over-taxed and very poor people of the land that were under the rule of Prince John.

He gathered in the Sherwood Forest with a band of merry men, who also wanted to help the poor people of the land. Robin Hood and his merry men, dressed in green, would steel valuables from the rich and give them to the poor.

The sheriff of Nottingham complained to the king of Robin Hood's activities. The king trusted the word of his sheriff and decided that Robin Hood needed to be stopped. The sheriff came up with a plan to trap Robin Hood with an archery contest where the prizes were arrows with gold and silver heads. The sheriff knew such a valuable prize would interest Robin Hood.

Against the advice of his merry men, Robin Hood entered the contest. However, he entered the contest in **disguise** so the king and his sheriff would not recognize him. Robin Hood won the competition and gave his winnings to the poor.

6. Fill in the graphic organizer based on what you have read.



7. What happened to Robin Hood's father?

8. In the second paragraph, Robin Hood swears to **avenge** his father's death. Which definition below does **NOT** have the same meaning as the word **avenge**?

- a. to punish
- b. to get even with
- c. to celebrate
- d. to take revenge

9. What did Robin Hood and his merry men do for the people?

10. What was the sheriff's plan to stop Robin Hood?

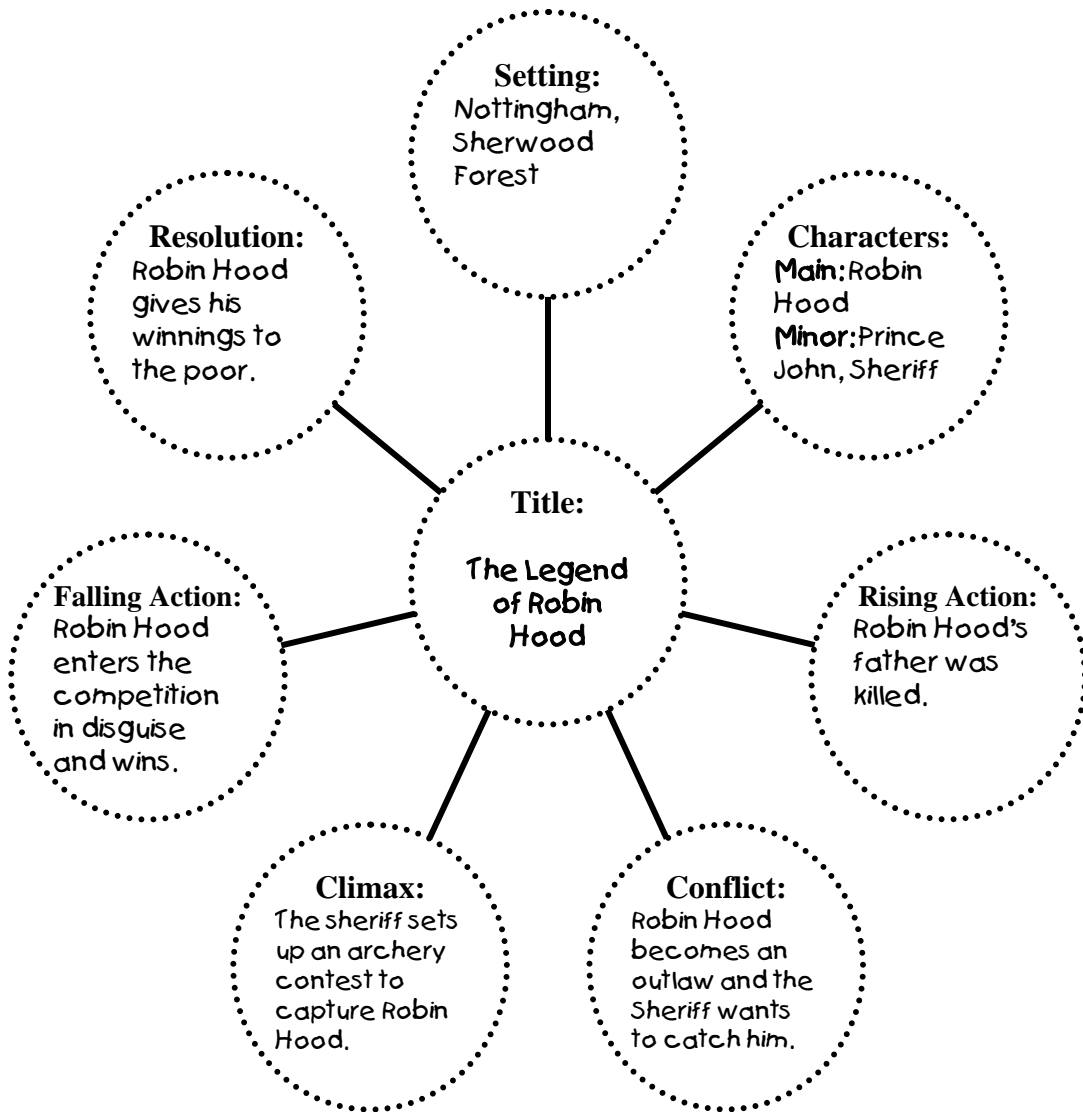
11. Did the sheriff's plan work? Why or why not?

12. Robin Hood wore a **disguise** in the archery competition. What does **disguise** mean?

- e. costume
- f. formal clothing
- g. a hat
- h. to dress in green

Answer Key

1. The mouse was “being a pest” and woke the lion up.
2. The lion thought the mouse was funny because she suggested that she might be helpful to the lion someday.
3. The lion was caught by hunters.
4. The mouse freed the lion by chewing through the ropes.
5. The mouse saved the lion to repay the lion’s kindness for not eating her.
- 6.



7. Robin Hood's father was murdered by Prince John's Hench men.
8. c
9. Robin Hood and his men stole from the rich and gave to the poor.
10. The sheriff planned to trap Robin Hood at an archery contest that offered valuable prizes.
11. The sheriff's plan did not work. Robin Hood entered the contest in disguise. He won the contest and gave his prizes to the poor.
12. a