

Classic story structure

When people discuss different story structures, they often talk about the different frameworks used to analyze stories. When you boil them all down, all stories have certain shared elements.

Elements of classic story structure:

- **Exposition.** This first part establishes a protagonist's normal life and greater desires, and usually culminates in the inciting incident.
- **Rising action.** The protagonist pursues their new goal and is tested along the way.
- **Climax.** Our hero achieves their goal — or so they think!
- **Falling action.** The hero now must deal with the consequences of achieving their goal.
- **Resolution.** The conclusion tying together the plot, character arcs, and themes.

These are all common 'beats' to most stories. It can be easier to see these moments in genres with higher stakes (such as a military thriller), but you'll find them in almost any type of story.