

9th Grade Summer Reading and Writing Assignment:
“Comedy” Plot Pattern
***The Princess Bride* by William Goldman**

Assignment: Read through the explanations below of plot structure and the seven basic plot patterns. Read the novel, paying close attention to the plot structure. Write a literary analysis essay explaining how this novel fits into the archetypical plot pattern of “Comedy.” See below for detailed essay requirements. The first weeks of class will be devoted to a further exploration of the theme and novel.

What is Plot?

There are five main elements in a plot.

1. The **exposition** or the introduction. This is known as the beginning of the story where characters and setting are established. The conflict or main problem is introduced as well.
2. The **rising action**, which occurs when a series of events build up to the conflict. The main characters are established by the time the rising action of a plot occurs, and at the same time events begin to get complicated. It is during this part of a story that excitement, tension or crisis is encountered.
3. The **climax** or the main point of the plot. This is the turning point of the story and is meant to be the moment of highest interest and emotion. The reader wonders what is going to happen next.
4. The **falling action** or the winding up of the story. Events and complications begin to resolve and the result of actions of the main characters are put forward.
5. The **resolution** or the conclusion. It is the end of a story and ends with either a happy or a tragic ending.

<https://literarydevices.net/plot/>

What are the Basic Plot Patterns?

In literary theory, some critics have identified seven basic plot patterns into which most stories fit. The seven basic plot patterns are: Rags to Riches, Voyage and Return, Rebirth, Comedy, Tragedy, Overcoming the Monster, and Quest. As 9th graders, your focus this summer will be on the Comedy plot pattern.

9th: What is the Comedy Plot Pattern?

A comedy is usually characterized by an absurdly complex set of problems which miraculously resolve at the climax of the story. Often, there is a hero and heroine who are destined to get together but some dark force is preventing them from doing so. A comedy typically contains much misunderstanding and confusion, which is eventually cleared up as everyone is shown for who they really are and everything gets brought to light.

Comedy meta-plot structure:

1. **Under the Shadow**

A little world in which people are under the shadow of confusion, uncertainty, and frustration, and are shut up from one another.

2. **Tightening the Knot**

The confusion gets worse until the pressure of darkness is at its most acute and everyone is in a nightmarish tangle.

3. **Resolution**

With the coming to light of things not previously recognized, perceptions are dramatically changed. Shadows are dispelled, the situation is miraculously transformed, and the little world is brought together in a state of joyful union.

Works Cited

Booker, Christopher. *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*. Bloomsbury Continuum, 2016.

What is your assignment?

1. Read this handout carefully.
2. Read the book. While you are reading, pay attention and take notes about a plot.
3. Write a four-paragraph plot-analysis essay. In paragraph one, identify the five main plot elements (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). In paragraphs two, three, and four, use specific examples from the book to explain how this story exemplifies the comedy pattern. Use the three meta-plot sections (under the shadow, tightening the knot, resolution) as the topics for these three paragraphs.
4. Check your spelling and grammar!
5. Use ***at least 2*** specific examples ***with page numbers*** per paragraph.
6. Be prepared to submit a draft essay on the first day of school.
7. The due date for the final version of the essay is Friday, August 11.

9th Grade Rubric: Summer Reading Literary Analysis Essay
(/10) MLA Style, 8th edition: heading, header, double space, margins, title, font
(/20) Plot Elements
Identify where the five main plot elements (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) occur in this story. Provide at least two examples of textual evidence (quotations). You must use “ “ and novel page numbers to cite quotes.
(/15) Plot Stage 1: Under the Shadow
Explain the stage in your own words.
Provide two pieces of textual evidence (quotations) proving the novel has (or doesn't have) this stage. You must use “ “ and novel page numbers to cite the quotes. Give commentary or explanation of how the quotations you chose prove your point about the stage.
(/15) Plot Stage 2: Tightening the Knot
Explain the stage in your own words.
Provide two pieces of textual evidence (quotations) proving the novel has (or doesn't have) this stage. You must use “ “ and novel page numbers to cite the quotes. Give commentary or explanation of how the quotations you chose prove your point about the stage.
(/15) Plot Stage 3: Resolution
Explain the stage in your own words.
Provide two pieces of textual evidence (quotations) proving the novel has (or doesn't have) this stage. You must use “ “ and novel page numbers to cite the quotes. Give commentary or explanation of how the quotations you chose prove your point about the stage.
(/10) Grammar
Check for spelling and word usage accuracy.
Check sentence structure (no fragments or run-ons).
Check for any other grammatical errors.
(/10) Works Cited , MLA 8th Edition (perfect, almost right, many errors, missing) Cite the novel & anything else you use to write your paper.
(/5) Biblical Integration
Suggestions: Make a connection between this story and a story or character you have read about in the Bible. Explain the connection. Identify a message the author might be conveying in writing this book. Does this message line up with a biblical worldview? Or does it contradict what Scripture teaches?
(/100)