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# **Elements of the NOVEL**

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# Contents

*A Note to the Teacher* .....v  
*Answer Key to Final Student Quiz* ..... vii

## POSTERS

1. How Is the Novel Different from the Short Story?
2. The Elements of the Novel
3. Novels Allow a Wide Range of Characters
4. Novels Allow for Full Character Development
5. Novel Action Takes Place in Multiple Settings
6. Settings Are More Developed in the Novel
7. Novel Plots Include Multiple Conflicts
8. Novel Plots Present Simultaneous Action
9. Novel Plots Make Use of Subplots
10. Novel Plots Make Use of Crisis Within Chapters
11. Novels Experiment with Time Sequence
12. Novels Make Use of “Cliffhangers” to Build Suspense
13. Novels Make Use of Multiple Points of View
14. Stream of Consciousness in the Novel
15. Dialogue in the Novel
16. Theme and Meaning in the Novel
17. Imagery and Symbolism in the Novel
18. Tone in the Novel
19. Style in the Novel
20. Genre in the Novel

## REPRODUCIBLE MASTERS

- 1-2. Review of Basic Vocabulary Terms
3. Additional Terms Used in Discussing the Novel
4. Comparing the Novel and the Short Story
5. Exploring Character Development in the Novel
6. Exploring Setting in the Novel
7. Exploring Plot Structure in the Novel
8. Exploring Point of View in the Novel
9. Exploring Theme in the Novel
10. Exploring Genre in the Novel
- 11-13. Final Student Quiz

## A Note to the Teacher

These materials have been prepared to help teachers with the important task of introducing students to the fundamental elements of the novel. They have been designed to be used successfully with a minimum of teacher preparation.

The posters and reproducible masters have been coordinated to familiarize students with the basic critical terms commonly used in discussing the novel. These materials have been prepared with the aim of helping the average student more fully appreciate—and enjoy—reading novels, both in and out of class.

The twenty posters introduce key concepts necessary to help the average student begin to grasp the fundamentals of the novel. They are presented sequentially so that concepts introduced later build on terms presented earlier.

The reproducible masters include two pages of review of basic vocabulary terms that students will have been introduced to in previous study of the elements of the short story; one additional vocabulary sheet featuring terms often used in discussing the novel; seven separate in-depth discussion sheets to amplify key poster concepts; and a three-page final student quiz that allows teachers to assess student comprehension at the end of the study unit.

It should be noted that all the materials in this study unit assume that students have a working knowledge of the basic concepts reviewed on Reproducible Masters 1 and 2. It is recommended that teachers take time to review these key concepts with their classes before making use of other materials enclosed. The final quiz has also been constructed on the assumption that students will be familiar with all basic terms reviewed on the vocabulary review sheets as well as with terms specifically introduced in these materials.

In sum, these materials have been designed with flexibility to serve your specific needs. As secondary materials, they offer a valuable supplement to whatever primary text materials you use with your class. Used on their own, they can provide a basic foundation for helping your students appreciate the rich heritage of the novel.

# Review of Basic Vocabulary Terms

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Many of the elements of the novel draw on terms you may have already learned in your study of the short story. Before moving on to a more detailed study of the novel, make sure you understand the important terms defined below:

**Characterization:** The methods a writer uses to communicate information about characters to readers.

When the author *tells* the reader directly about a character, it is called **direct characterization**.

When the author *shows* the character in action and lets readers draw their own conclusions, it is called **indirect characterization**.

**Climax:** The moment when the action comes to its highest point of dramatic conflict. Most often, the climax occurs *before* the actual ending of the story.

**Complication:** Any obstacle that increases the tension of the story conflict.

**Conflict:** The central source of tension and drama in the story. Conflict is also sometimes referred to as the **story problem**.

**Dialogue:** The actual words that characters speak. Authors use dialogue skillfully in the story to portray character and to dramatize conflict.

**Dramatic irony:** A technique that increases suspense by letting readers know more about the dramatic situation than the characters know.

**Exposition:** Background material about the characters, setting, and dramatic situation with which the author introduces the essentials of the story to the reader.

**Falling action:** The part of the story, following the climax and leading to the resolution, in which there is a sharp decline in dramatic tension.

**Foreshadowing:** A writing technique that gives readers clues about events that will happen later in the story.

**Imagery:** The use of selected details to describe one thing in terms of another. This comparison helps suggest additional meanings and feelings.

**Irony:** A particular tone created when the speaker intends a meaning that is opposite to the words he or she says.

(continued)

# Review of Basic Vocabulary

## Terms (*continued*)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrator:** The speaker who tells the story. If the narrator is also a character who participates in the story, it is important not to confuse the narrator with the author—who may, in fact, hold a very different attitude toward the story.

**Point of view:** The perspective from which a story is told.

Point of view is said to be **omniscient** if the narrator is outside the story and presents the thoughts of all the characters involved.

Point of view is called **limited** when the story is told from the viewpoint of one character who can see only a part of the whole story.

**Protagonist:** The central character of the story.

**Resolution:** The conclusion of the story. The resolution includes the story's action after the climax until the end of the story.

**Rising Action:** The part of the story, including exposition, in which the tension rises. Rising action builds to its highest point of tension at the story's climax.

**Setting:** The environment in which the story takes place.

**Structure:** The framework that determines how a story is put together—its “skeleton.” The structure of many stories includes four basic parts: exposition, complication, climax, and resolution.

**Style:** The characteristic ways that an individual author uses language—including word choice, length and complexity of sentences, patterns of sound, and use of imagery and symbols.

**Suspense:** Techniques used by the author to keep readers interested in the story and wondering what will happen next.

**Symbol:** An image, object, character, or action that stands for an idea (or ideas) beyond its literal meaning.

**Theme:** The story's main ideas—the “message” that the author intends to communicate by telling the story. Themes are often universal truths that are suggested by the specifics of the story.

**Tone:** The clues in a story that suggest the writer's (or narrator's) own attitude toward elements of his or her story.

# Final Student Quiz

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## I. VOCABULARY MATCHING

Directions: Match each of the words below with the letter of the definition that best describes them.

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. plot                 | A. technique of presenting more than one story line at the same time                 |
| _____ 2. tone                 | B. the conclusion of a story or novel plot   |
| _____ 3. crisis               | C. a character that serves as a contrast for another character                       |
| _____ 4. point of view        | D. the central source of tension and drama in a story or novel plot                  |
| _____ 5. resolution           | E. technique that begins the action of a story at the climax of the central conflict |
| _____ 6. foil                 | F. the characteristic ways an author uses language                                   |
| _____ 7. symbol               | G. a person, place, or object that also stands for an idea other than itself         |
| _____ 8. parallel plotting    | H. the peak of dramatic tension within a chapter                                     |
| _____ 9. complication         | I. any obstacle in the plot that leads to increased conflict                         |
| _____ 10. <i>in media res</i> | J. the perspective from which a story or novel is told                               |
|                               | K. the arrangement of story events that defines a novel's structure                  |
|                               | L. the methods authors use to communicate characters to readers                      |
|                               | M. clues that express the attitude of the author or narrator                         |

(continued)

# Final Student Quiz

(continued)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## II. MULTIPLE RESPONSE

*Directions:* In the list of responses that follows each question below, circle each response that answers the question correctly. (Think carefully. Some questions may have more than one allowable answer.)

1. The novel allows for greater **character development** than the short story because:
  - a. characters are shown in a greater variety of situations
  - b. characters have more problems and obstacles to overcome
  - c. characters have more opportunity to change over time
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
2. What are the advantages of an author being able to develop **multiple settings** in a novel?
  - a. Multiple settings can be used to show the effects that different environments can have on characters.
  - b. Multiple settings allow for more plot variety.
  - c. Multiple settings are always more developed than single settings.
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
3. Which of the following might be a good example of a **subplot** in a novel?
  - a. in a mystery novel about a traveling circus: scenes involving local boys trying to sneak in to see the show
  - b. in a sci-fi novel about the parallel lives of identical twins: scenes involving one twin's psychic dreams
  - c. in a romance novel about a pair of newlyweds aboard an ocean liner: scenes involving an immigrant stowaway on board
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
4. Which of the following might be an example of "stream of consciousness" **point of view**?
  - a. "Jack was the kind of man you wouldn't trust if he were the last person on earth except yourself."
  - b. "Slippery—like a snake. Beady-eyed. Fork-tongued. Be careful of that one!"
  - c. "No, you can't pull me into your web, Jack old boy. I'm on to your devilish tricks."
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
5. Which of the following might be expected to contain the clue to an important **theme** in a novel?
  - a. the novel's title
  - b. a recurring symbol in the novel
  - c. the author's name
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
6. Which of the following plots could be described as following the **genre** of a "picaresque" novel?
  - a. a novel about the experiences of two master counterfeiters in federal prison
  - b. a novel written in the form of letters between a man and woman who live on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean
  - c. a novel about an out-of-work hobo traveling by rail across the United States during the Depression
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above

(continued)

# Final Student Quiz

(continued)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## III. FILL-INS

*Directions:* From the word list below, complete each of the following sentences with the word that completes it best.

### WORD LIST

climax	characterization	multiple point of view
subplot	theme	character development
irony	flashback	stream of consciousness
genre	exposition	complication
rising action	foreshadowing	serial plotting

1. \_\_\_\_\_ introduces background material about characters, setting, and the present situation in a story or novel.
2. The strategies a writer uses to communicate information about characters to readers is called \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. A scene that takes the reader back to a time preceding the present action is called a \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is a narrative technique in which a novel's story line is told by more than one character in the plot.
5. A narrative point of view that presents the actual thoughts going on inside a character's head is called \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. In both the short story and the novel, the \_\_\_\_\_ is the moment when the action rises to its highest point of conflict.
7. The plot technique that creates suspense by concluding chapters with "cliff-hanger" endings is called \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. A secondary story line that parallels or contrasts with the main plot is called a \_\_\_\_\_ .
9. \_\_\_\_\_ may be defined as any of a number of traditional forms of the novel that are categorized by a particular treatment of elements such as character, setting, plot, or style.
10. The ways in which a novelist shows how a character changes as a result of experiences over time is called \_\_\_\_\_ .