PLOT STRUCTURE ARCHETYPES: OVERVIEW

Table of Contents

PLOT STRUCTURE: FUNCTION AND PURPOSE **3**

STORY PLOT STRUCTURE CHART 3

ARCHETYPAL PLOT STRUCTURES COVERED IN THIS DOCUMENT 4

ALL STORIES EXPLORE UNIVERSAL NEEDS **4**

BASIC STORY STRUCTURE **5**

THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: OVERVIEW **6**

THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: KEY CONCEPTS 6

THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS 7

THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE 8

THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES 9

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY **10**

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STORIES VS BILDUNGSROMAN 10

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS 11

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: PRIDE AND PREJUDICE BY JANE AUSTEN 11

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES 12

RAGS-TO-RICHES PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY **14**

RAGS-TO-RICHES PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS 14

RAGS-TO-RICHES PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: JANE EYRE BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE 15

RAGS-TO-RICHES PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES 16

REBIRTH/REDEMPTION PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY **17**

REBIRTH/REDEMPTION PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS 18

REBIRTH/REDEMPTION PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: A CHRISTMAS CAROL BY CHARLES DICKENS 18

REBIRTH/REDEMPTION PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES 19

TRAGEDY PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY **20**

TRAGEDY PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS 20

TRAGEDY PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: MACBETH BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE 21

TRAGEDY PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES 23

THE QUEST PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY **24**

THE QUEST PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS 24
THE QUEST PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: THE SIGN OF THE FOUR BY ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE 25
THE QUEST PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES 26

THE VOYAGE AND RETURN PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY 27
THE VOYAGE AND RETURN PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS 28
THE VOYAGE AND RETURN PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE BY C.S. LEWIS 28
THE VOYAGE AND RETURN PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES 29

OVERCOMING THE MONSTER PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY 30
OVERCOMING THE MONSTER PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS 30
OVERCOMING THE MONSTER PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: LORD OF THE FLIES BY WILLIAM GOLDING 31
OVERCOMING THE MONSTER PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES 32

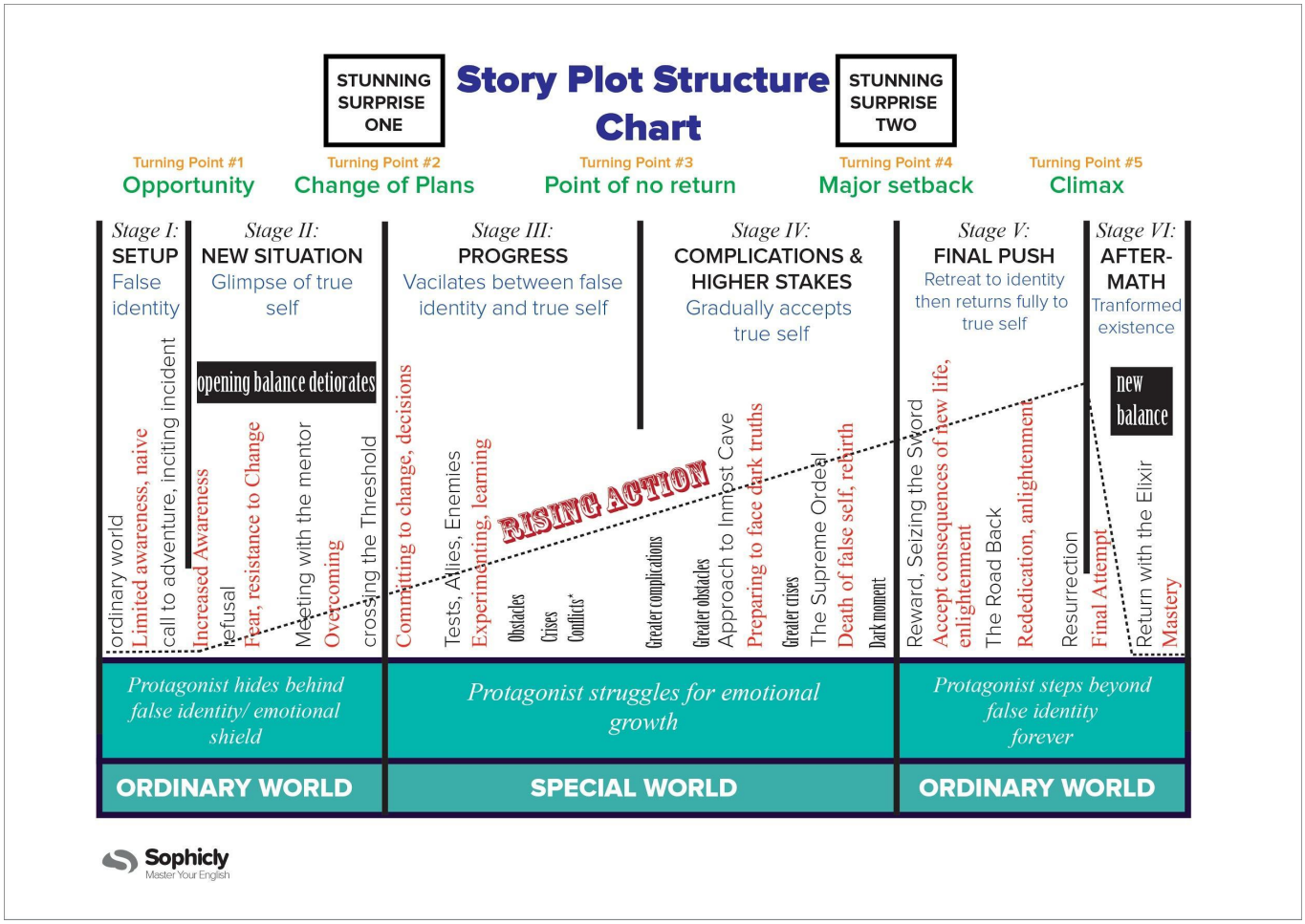
BACK TO START

PLOT STRUCTURE: FUNCTION AND PURPOSE

Plot structure is a selection of events from the characters' life stories that is composed into a strategic sequence to arouse specific emotions and to express a specific view of life.

The purpose of the plot structure is to take the reader on a journey with the protagonist. It's designed to create tension, suspense, and conflict, and to keep the reader engaged and invested in the story. The plot structure is essential for creating a compelling narrative that keeps the reader hooked from beginning to end.

STORY PLOT STRUCTURE CHART



ARCHETYPAL PLOT STRUCTURES COVERED IN THIS DOCUMENT

- The Hero's Journey
- Coming-of-Age Plot Structure
- Rags-to-Riches Plot Structure
- Rebirth/Redemption Plot Structure
- Tragedy Plot Structure
- The Quest Plot Structure
- The Voyage and Return Plot Structure
- Overcoming The Monster Plot Structure

There are 3 important points to note about these plot structures:

1. We cover **8 plot types** but some scholars claim there are many more; the plot types we cover are based on Joseph Campbell's idea of the Hero's Journey, as well as Christopher Booker's concept of the *7 Basic Plots*.
2. The present narrative structures demonstrate a remarkable degree of thematic and structural likeness, albeit with certain nuanced distinctions. The archetypal construct of the Hero's Journey, in essence, serves as the foundational framework for these various plot configurations, thereby accounting for the prevalence of overlapping motifs and motifs upon close inspection.
3. You should also not be surprised to see stories adhering to more than one plot type or featuring characteristics of more than one plot type; this gives you more perspectives to explore the story with.

ALL STORIES EXPLORE UNIVERSAL NEEDS

Characters should be propelled by universal drives that we can all understand:

- to be fulfilled
- the desire to be loved and understood
- to succeed
- survive
- be free
- get revenge
- right wrongs
- to be shown the right way in life
- to seek self-expression
- to be respected
- to respect ourselves
- to succeed
- to express ourselves
- etc

BASIC STORY STRUCTURE

- Main character (who leads the story) and their flaw
- Status Quo (situation at the start)
- Goal (what your character wants) and what kind of need it represents
- Initiating incident (what disturbs the status quo)
- Developments (what happens next)
- Crisis (how things come to a head)
- Resolution (how things resolve)

THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: OVERVIEW

The Hero's Journey is a storytelling structure that was popularised by the American mythologist Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

- The structure follows a protagonist through a series of stages and challenges, ultimately leading to a transformation and the resolution of a conflict.
    - This structure is used in many classic and contemporary works of literature, film, and other forms of storytelling; here are a few examples:
        - The Lion King,
        - The Hobbit
        - The Odyssey
            - The Hero's Journey plot structure reflects a universal and timeless pattern of human experience.
- It is a metaphor for the process of personal growth and transformation that all human beings undergo in their lives, whether they are aware of it or not.

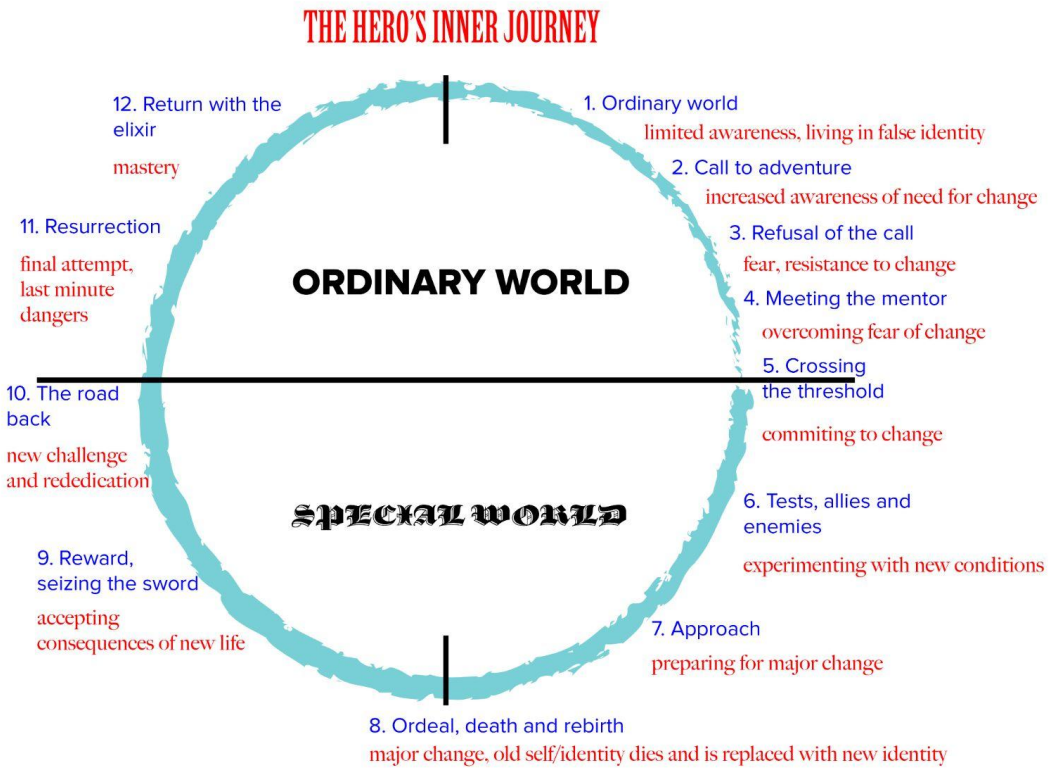
THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: KEY CONCEPTS

The journey begins with a call to adventure, which represents the impulse to break out of the routine and familiar patterns of life and to seek something more. This call may come in many forms, such as

- a personal crisis,
- a desire to explore the world,
- or a search for meaning and purpose.
    - The hero's journey is not an easy one, as it involves facing
        - trials
        - and challenges
            - that test one's
                - strength,
                - courage,
                - and resilience.
                    - The hero must confront and overcome obstacles that represent the
                        - fears,
                        - doubts,
                        - and limitations that hold them back from achieving their goals.
                            - In doing so, the hero gains
                                - knowledge,
                                - skills,
                                - and experience that they can draw upon in the future.

The ultimate goal of the hero's journey is not simply to achieve external success or victory, but to undergo a profound inner transformation (which Chris Vogler called 'The Hero's Inner Journey'). The hero must confront their own limitations, fears, and doubts, and overcome them in order to become a more fully realized and integrated person.

The Hero's Journey is a powerful metaphor for personal growth and transformation, and it has been used by storytellers across cultures and throughout history. It provides a narrative structure that resonates with audiences because it reflects a fundamental truth about the human experience. It shows that, no matter how difficult the journey may be, we all have the capacity to overcome our challenges, transform ourselves, and achieve our goals.



Watch an overview of The Hero's Journey Here 👉:
https://www.sophicly.com/courses/live-lesson-archive/units/plot-structure/lessons/archetypal-plot-structure-the-heros-journey/

THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Hero's Journey is a flexible narrative structure that can be interpreted and presented in many different ways. Here are some examples:

1. Satire - The Hero's Journey can be used for comedic effect, as in the movie Monty Python and the Holy Grail, which parodies the classic Arthurian legend and the Hero's Journey by making fun of its conventions and tropes.
2. Deconstruction - The Hero's Journey can be used to deconstruct traditional hero archetypes and reveal the darker, more complex sides of heroism. For example, the graphic novel Watchmen subverts superhero conventions and deconstructs the Hero's Journey by showing the psychological damage and ethical ambiguities of being a hero.
3. Psychological interpretation - The Hero's Journey can be interpreted as a metaphor for the process of personal growth and individuation, as described by psychologists like Carl Jung. This approach views the hero's journey as a journey of self-discovery, with the trials and obstacles representing the challenges and conflicts that individuals face in their own personal development.
4. Cultural interpretation - The Hero's Journey can be interpreted as a reflection of cultural values and beliefs, with different cultures presenting different versions of the journey. For example, the Hero's Journey in African storytelling often involves communal values and connections to the natural world, while in Western storytelling, it is more individualistic and focused on the hero's personal growth and achievement.

These are just a few examples of the many ways that the Hero's Journey can be interpreted and presented, highlighting its flexibility and versatility as a narrative structure.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

While "Much Ado About Nothing" is not a typical hero's journey story, there are ways in which it can be seen as following the basic structure of the hero's journey.

The play's protagonist can be seen as Benedick, a witty and cynical soldier who is initially resistant to love and marriage. Here is how the play can be interpreted through the lens of the hero's journey:

1. The Call to Adventure: In the play, the call to adventure can be seen as Benedick's re-entry into society after a long absence. He is quickly drawn into the romantic intrigues of the other characters, particularly his old flame Beatrice.
2. Refusal of the Call: Benedick initially resists the call to adventure by denying his feelings for Beatrice and insisting that he will never marry.
3. Meeting the Mentor: In the play, the mentor figure can be seen as Don Pedro, the prince who orchestrates much of the action and who encourages Benedick to pursue Beatrice.
4. Crossing the Threshold: Benedick crosses the threshold by confessing his love to Beatrice and agreeing to marry her.
5. Tests, Allies, and Enemies: Throughout the play, Benedick faces numerous tests and challenges, particularly in his attempts to win over Beatrice and in his efforts to clear the name of his friend Claudio. He gains allies in the form of the other soldiers, as well as Beatrice herself, but also faces opposition from his friends and from Don John, who attempts to sabotage the marriages of Claudio and Hero, and of Benedick and Beatrice.
6. The Supreme Ordeal: The supreme ordeal in the play is arguably the wedding scene, where it appears that Beatrice and Benedick may not be able to reconcile their differences.

7. Transformation: Benedick undergoes a transformation throughout the play, particularly in his willingness to open himself up to love and marriage. He goes from being a cynic who avoids emotional vulnerability to someone who embraces his feelings and is willing to make a commitment.
8. The Return: The return in the play can be seen as Benedick's marriage to Beatrice and his re-entry into society as a changed man. He has undergone personal transformation and emerged as a more fully-realized and emotionally open person.

Overall, while "Much Ado About Nothing" is not a classic hero's journey tale, it contains some of the key elements of this narrative structure, particularly in terms of the protagonist's personal growth and development.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES

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1. The Odyssey by Homer - This epic poem tells the story of Odysseus, a hero who must undertake a perilous journey home after the Trojan War, facing many trials and obstacles along the way.
2. Beowulf - This epic poem tells the story of a hero named Beowulf who battles monsters and dragons to protect his people, ultimately sacrificing himself for their safety.
3. The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien - This trilogy of novels follows the journey of Frodo Baggins, a hobbit who must destroy a powerful ring that threatens to destroy the world, facing many dangers and challenges along the way.
4. The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis - This series of novels follows a group of children who travel to a magical world called Narnia, where they become heroes and fight to protect the land from evil forces.
5. The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho - This novel tells the story of Santiago, a shepherd who sets out on a journey to discover his destiny, facing many challenges and learning valuable lessons along the way.
6. The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins - This dystopian novel follows the story of Katniss Everdeen, a young woman who must fight to survive in a brutal game that pits children against each other in a fight to the death.

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

The ‘coming-of-age’ story plot structure is a narrative that focuses on the personal growth and development of the protagonist as they transition from adolescence to adulthood, often symbolising the transition from ignorance to knowledge.

- This type of story often follows a young person as they navigate the challenges and difficulties of growing up, facing obstacles and making decisions that will shape their future.
    - The term coming-of-age refers to the process of reaching a point in life when one is considered to have reached maturity and is ready to take on the responsibilities of adulthood.
        - In a ‘coming-of-age’ story, the protagonist embarks on a journey of self-discovery, learning important lessons about
            - themselves,
            - their place in the world,
            - and their relationships with others.
                - This type of plot structure often highlights themes such as
                    - identity,
                    - independence,
                    - responsibility,
                    - and the search for meaning and purpose in life.
                        - It is a popular genre in literature, film, and other forms of media, as it appeals to a wide audience and is relatable to many people's experiences of growing up and discovering who they are.

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STORIES VS BILDUNGSROMAN

"Coming of age" story and "bildungsroman" are two terms often used interchangeably to refer to a genre of literature that explores the growth, development, and self-discovery of a young protagonist. However, there are some subtle differences between the two.

A "coming of age" story typically focuses on a particular stage in a character's life, often adolescence, where they experience personal growth and maturation, often as a result of significant life events or relationships. These stories may also explore themes such as identity, independence, and first love. They tend to be more focused on the character's emotional journey and their individual development rather than broader societal issues.

On the other hand, a "bildungsroman" is a German term that means "novel of education" or "novel of formation." It is a more specific type of "coming of age" story that follows the character's entire life journey from childhood to adulthood. These stories typically explore themes such as the struggle for self-discovery, the search for identity, and

the maturation of the character's intellect and morality. The protagonist's growth and development are often shaped by the cultural, social, and historical context in which they live.

In summary, a "coming of age" story is a more general term that refers to stories about young characters' personal growth, while a "bildungsroman" is a specific type of "coming of age" story that follows the protagonist's entire life journey, often exploring broader societal issues.

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Coming-of-age" stories can be interpreted or presented in a variety of different ways, depending on the writer's

- style,
- perspective,
- and intended audience.
    - Here are a few examples of different interpretations and presentations of the coming-of-age genre:

1. Coming-of-age in a specific time period or cultural context:
    a. Many coming-of-age stories are set in a specific time period or cultural context, such as the 1950s, 1960s, or 1970s, and explore the challenges and experiences of growing up in that era.
2. Coming-of-age in a fantastical or surreal setting:
    a. Some coming-of-age stories take place in a fantastical or surreal setting, such as a magical realm, a dystopian world, or an alternate universe, and explore the protagonist's journey to maturity within that context.
3. Coming-of-age as a journey of self-discovery:
    a. In some coming-of-age stories, the protagonist embarks on a journey of self-discovery, learning important lessons about themselves, their place in the world, and their relationships with others.
4. Coming-of-age as a journey of social and political awakening:
    a. Some coming-of-age stories explore the protagonist's journey towards social and political awareness and activism, as they come to understand the issues and challenges facing their community and work to make a difference.
5. Coming-of-age as a journey of personal and spiritual growth:
    a. Some coming-of-age stories focus on the protagonist's journey towards personal and spiritual growth, as they explore their own beliefs, values, and sense of purpose in life.

These are just a few examples of the many ways that the coming-of-age genre can be interpreted and presented. The versatility of the genre allows writers to explore a wide range of themes, perspectives, and styles, making it a rich and diverse genre that continues to evolve and capture the imagination of audiences.

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* BY JANE AUSTEN

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen is a novel that fits the criteria for a coming of age story, as it follows the journey of its main character, Elizabeth Bennet, as she matures and learns important life lessons. The novel is set in early 19th century England, and it revolves around the lives of the Bennet family and their interactions with the wealthy and aristocratic Bingley and Darcy families.

The novel begins with the introduction of the Bennet family and their five daughters, each with their distinct personality and character traits. Elizabeth, the second eldest daughter, is intelligent, witty, and fiercely independent, with a strong sense of justice and a disdain for the rigid societal norms of the time. As the story progresses, Elizabeth's journey of self-discovery and personal growth is depicted through various conflicts, challenges, and revelations that she faces.

One of the key themes of the novel is the societal pressure on women to marry well and secure their future. This theme is reflected in the relationships and interactions between the characters, as well as the societal norms and expectations that they must adhere to. Elizabeth's journey of self-discovery is closely linked to her struggles with these societal norms and her desire to break free from them.

Through her interactions with the male characters in the novel, particularly Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth learns valuable lessons about love, relationships, and the importance of looking beyond initial impressions and prejudices. The novel's title, Pride and Prejudice, reflects the key themes of the story and the character flaws that Elizabeth must overcome in her journey towards maturity and self-awareness.

The plot structure of a coming of age story has a significant impact on the reader, as it allows for a deeper exploration of the characters' personalities and motivations. By following Elizabeth's journey of self-discovery, the reader is able to connect with her character on a more personal level and empathize with her struggles and challenges. The novel's focus on character development and personal growth also allows for a more nuanced exploration of the societal and cultural norms of the time, and their impact on the lives of the characters.

In conclusion, Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen is a coming of age story that follows the journey of its main character, Elizabeth Bennet, as she learns important life lessons and matures as a person. The novel's focus on character development, societal norms, and personal growth makes it a timeless classic that continues to resonate with readers today.

COMING-OF-AGE PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES

- *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles
- *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green
- *An Inspector Calls* by J.B. Priestley
- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
- *The History Boys* by Alan Bennett

- *Pigeon English* by Stephen Kelman (bildunsgroman)

RAGS-TO-RICHES PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

The "Rags-to-Riches" story plot structure is a narrative that describes the journey of a character, often a young, unrecognised character, from a state of

- poverty
- and insignificance
    - to a position of
        - wealth,
        - prosperity,
        - and fame.
            - But their upward progress is not a continuous climb.
                - It is a classic story of success and the American Dream, where a person rises from humble beginnings to attain their heart's desires and achieve greatness.
                    - The "Rags-to-Riches" story structure emphasises the transformation and growth of the main character, who overcomes numerous obstacles and challenges along the way.
                        - It also highlights the importance of
                            - hard work,
                            - determination,
                            - faith,
                            - hope,
                            - and resilience in overcoming adversity and reaching one's goals.
                                - The "Rags-to-Riches" plot structure is a popular genre in literature, film, and other forms of media and is often used to inspire and encourage audiences to pursue their dreams and never give up.

RAGS-TO-RICHES PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Rags-to-Riches" stories can be interpreted or presented in a variety of different ways, depending on the writer's

- style,
- perspective,
- and intended audience.
    - Here are a few examples of different interpretations and presentations of the rags-to-riches plot structure:

1. The Traditional Tale: A classic example of a "Rags-to-Riches" story is "Cinderella" where a poor and mistreated young woman rises to the position of a princess through her kindness and bravery.
2. The American Dream: In "The Pursuit of Happyness," Will Smith portrays a struggling salesman who rises from poverty to become a successful businessman through his determination and hard work.
3. The Entrepreneurial Journey: "The Social Network" tells the story of Mark Zuckerberg, who transforms from a college student to a billionaire through his creation of Facebook.
4. The Artist's Ascension: In "La La Land," Emma Stone plays an aspiring actress who rises to fame and success through her talent and perseverance.
5. The Sporting Triumph: "Rocky" is a classic example of a "Rags-to-Riches" story set in the world of boxing, where a small-time fighter rises to become a champion.
6. The Reverse "Rags-to-Riches": "Slumdog Millionaire" is a unique interpretation of the "Rags-to-Riches" story, where a young man from the slums wins a game show and rises to riches, only to lose it all and return to his roots.
7. The Fantasy Twist: In "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone," the young wizard rises from an abusive family life to become a hero and attain wealth and fame.

RAGS-TO-RICHES PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: *JANE EYRE* BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE

"Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte is a novel that follows the journey of a young, orphaned girl named Jane Eyre as she grows up and faces various challenges and obstacles on her path to self-discovery and happiness. The novel fits the criteria for a "rags-to-riches" story, as it follows the classic narrative structure of a protagonist rising from a state of poverty, adversity, or disadvantage to one of success, happiness, or prosperity.

The rags-to-riches narrative is a popular storytelling trope that dates back to ancient times and has been used in literature, film, and other media to depict the journey of a hero who overcomes hardship and rises to a position of power, wealth, or status. "Jane Eyre" follows this structure by portraying Jane's journey from a young, impoverished orphan to a successful and independent woman who finds love, happiness, and a sense of belonging.

The novel begins by introducing Jane as a lonely, mistreated orphan living with her cruel aunt and cousins. Jane is treated harshly by her relatives, who see her as a burden and a reminder of her family's shameful past. Despite her difficult circumstances, Jane is a determined and resilient character who refuses to be defined by her circumstances. She finds solace in her books and her vivid imagination, which helps her escape from the bleak reality of her life.

As the story progresses, Jane is sent to Lowood, a school for orphaned girls, where she receives an education and forms meaningful friendships. She then becomes a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she meets Mr. Rochester, the master of the house. Jane and Mr. Rochester fall in love, but their relationship is complicated by the revelation that Mr. Rochester is already married. Jane leaves Thornfield Hall and wanders the countryside, surviving on her own until she is taken in by St. John Rivers, a clergyman who offers her a job as a schoolteacher.

Through hard work, determination, and a bit of luck, Jane eventually inherits a fortune from her uncle and returns to Mr. Rochester, who has been left blind and crippled by a fire at Thornfield Hall. The two are reunited and get married, and Jane finally finds the love, acceptance, and security she has been searching for.

The rags-to-riches structure of "Jane Eyre" has a profound effect on the reader. By portraying Jane's journey from poverty to wealth, the novel inspires hope and optimism in its readers. It suggests that even those who start from a position of disadvantage can achieve success and happiness through hard work, perseverance, and a positive outlook.

Moreover, the novel also emphasizes the importance of self-reliance and personal agency. Jane's success is not handed to her on a silver platter; she must work hard, make difficult choices, and take risks in order to achieve her goals. This emphasizes the idea that individuals have the power to shape their own destiny, regardless of their circumstances.

In conclusion, "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte fits the criteria for a "rags-to-riches" story, as it follows the classic narrative structure of a protagonist rising from a position of adversity to one of success and happiness. The novel's emphasis on hard work, perseverance, and personal agency has a powerful effect on the reader, inspiring hope and optimism and emphasizing the idea that individuals have the power to shape their own destiny.

RAGS-TO-RICHES PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES

- *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens: The story follows the life of Pip, a young orphan boy who rises from poverty to become a wealthy gentleman through his association with an anonymous benefactor.
- *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens: The autobiographical novel tells the story of David Copperfield's journey from a life of poverty and hardship to a successful career as a writer.
- *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas: The story follows the journey of a young man who is wrongfully imprisoned, only to escape and use his cunning and wealth to seek revenge and attain a high social status.
- *The Princess Diaries* by Meg Cabot: The novel tells the story of Mia Thermopolis, an awkward and unpopular high school student who discovers she is a princess and rises to royal prominence.
- *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy: The novel tells the story of Rahel and Estha, two young Indian siblings who rise from their lower-caste background to attain wealth and social status.
- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte

REBIRTH/REDEMPTION PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

- In this structure, a character undergoes a transformation from a flawed or lost state (often after spiraling deeper into villainy) to a state of redemption or renewal, after meeting a redemption figure.
- Rebirth stories tell of change, renewal and transformation but they start with the protagonist under the shadow of a corrupting influence that may make the hero seem evil or at least misguided.
- Redemption figures usually come in the form of a child or the protagonist's other half, and they serve to remind the villain-hero what compassion or love feels like. They also help the villain-hero see what the world alignment is actually like, instead of the warped perception that the protagonist has that has given them the proclivity towards villainy.
- The protagonist's transformation is usually the result of them facing and overcoming challenges, facing personal demons, and learning important life lessons.
- In this plot structure, the reader/audience discovers the protagonist as a lost soul, someone who has become disconnected from the rest of humanity and/or from his purpose in life; therefore, this plot structure is about reconnecting with humanity and rediscovering life's purpose
- Forms of rebirth include:
    - Traumatic experience and awakening to a new beginning.
    - Low self-esteem being increased following discovery of one's potential.
    - Inner conflict as the kinder side of one's character wins over the selfish self.
- The plots of Rebirth stories can be very compelling, because they are often about unlikeable protagonists coming good in the end. Classic examples include the six Star Wars films (in relation to Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader's story arc), *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Secret Garden*.
- The reason why they are so compelling is because the main character is damaged in some way and have allowed that damage to consume everything that is good about them. They are not meant to be liked or sympathised with by the audience at first, but something, usually in the form of another character, helps them have a revelation which allows them to go through their rebirth.
- The concept of rebirth and redemption is a central theme in many religious and spiritual traditions, and it is often used in fiction as a way to explore this theme in a narrative context.
    - The protagonist in a "Rebirth/Redemption" story will often have to confront their own limitations and flaws, sometimes hitting rock bottom, before they can begin the process of change.
- Therefore, an interesting aspect of the rebirth plot structure is that because they start off by encouraging us to dislike the protagonist, they can often force us to become aware of our own prejudices; they are also effective in training our empathy because the author sets up the protagonist to be disliked, but then reveals the trauma they went through, which caused them to become hardened characters, thus evoking our empathy by calling us put ourselves in their shoes. In a way, we see how anyone, including ourselves could end up just like them.
- Overall, the process of rebirth or redemption can be symbolic of the character's journey towards self-discovery and personal growth. It can also be seen as a metaphor for the larger human experience, as we all face challenges and struggle to grow and change over the course of our lives.

REBIRTH/REDEMPTION PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Rebirth/Redemption" stories can be interpreted or presented in a variety of different ways, depending on the writer's

- style,
- perspective,
- and intended audience.
    - Here are a few examples of different interpretations and presentations of the rebirth/redemption plot structure:

1. Religious and Spiritual Interpretations: Redemption stories can often have a religious or spiritual angle, in which the protagonist must find their way back to the path of righteousness through faith, sacrifice, or other spiritual means.
2. Psychological Interpretations: Redemption stories can also be interpreted as psychological journeys, in which the protagonist must confront their own inner demons and overcome psychological trauma in order to find personal peace and fulfillment.
3. Political Interpretations: Redemption stories can also be interpreted as political allegories, in which the protagonist must overcome corruption, oppression, or other social ills in order to bring about change and establish a more just society.
4. Crime and Punishment Interpretations: Redemption stories can also be interpreted as stories of crime and punishment, in which the protagonist must face the consequences of their actions and seek forgiveness and absolution through penance or other means.
5. Fantasy Interpretations: Redemption stories can also be set in fantasy or science fiction worlds, in which the protagonist must use technology, or other fantastical elements to overcome obstacles and achieve redemption.

REBIRTH/REDEMPTION PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* BY CHARLES DICKENS

"A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens is a classic example of the "Rebirth/Redemption" plot structure. In this story, the protagonist Ebenezer Scrooge is a miserly old man who is completely consumed by his love of money and his disdain for the poor and less fortunate. However, through a series of ghostly visitations on Christmas Eve, Scrooge is forced to confront the reality of his own life and the consequences of his actions.

The first ghost, the Ghost of Christmas Past, shows Scrooge the events of his past that have shaped him into the person he is today. This serves as a turning point for Scrooge, as he begins to see the error of his ways and begins to understand the pain and suffering that his actions have caused others.

The second ghost, the Ghost of Christmas Present, shows Scrooge the reality of life for the poor and less fortunate in the present. This serves to further awaken Scrooge's conscience and make him aware of the social and economic inequalities that exist in the world.

The final ghost, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, shows Scrooge a vision of his own death, and the complete lack of regret or remorse that those around him feel at his passing. This serves as the ultimate wake-up call for Scrooge, as he realizes the complete emptiness of his life and the importance of changing his ways.
By the end of the story, Scrooge has undergone a profound transformation. He becomes a kind, generous person, who is more concerned with helping others than with amassing wealth. Through this transformation, Scrooge has found redemption and has become a better person.

The "Rebirth/Redemption" plot structure has a profound effect on the reader. By seeing a character like Scrooge, who is so deeply flawed and consumed by greed, undergo such a profound transformation, the reader is encouraged to think about their own lives and to consider the ways in which they can strive for personal growth and redemption. The story serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of treating others with kindness and compassion, and of the power of self-reflection and change.

REBIRTH/REDEMPTION PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES

1. "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald - In this novel, the protagonist Jay Gatsby tries to reclaim his lost love and redeem himself in the eyes of society through his relentless pursuit of wealth and status.
2. "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee - In this novel, the protagonist Scout Finch learns about the unjust nature of the world and the importance of standing up for what is right, leading to her own personal growth and redemption.
3. "One Hundred Years of Solitude" by Gabriel García Márquez - In this novel, the Buendía family must confront their own personal demons and past mistakes in order to achieve a sense of closure and redemption.
4. "As I Lay Dying" by William Faulkner - In this novel, the Bundren family embarks on a journey to bury the body of their deceased matriarch, leading each character to confront their own personal demons and find a sense of redemption.
5. "The Sun Also Rises" by Ernest Hemingway - In this novel, the protagonist Jake Barnes tries to find meaning and purpose in a world scarred by the aftermath of World War I, leading to his own personal growth and redemption.

TRAGEDY PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

- This is a plot where a potentially admirable protagonist commits a ‘hamartia’, which is Greek for ‘fatal error’ or ‘error in action’ - often erroneously translated as ‘fatal flaw’. Rather, the ‘hamartia’ is not a characteristic of the protagonist, as such, but an ‘error in action’ from which he cannot escape. Very often, or almost always, the root cause of this ‘hamartia’ is a fundamental societal flaw which drives him to do something which he later regrets and which almost always leaves him dead by the end of the story.
- This plot structure offers readers and audiences the opportunity to identify with the protagonist’s need for fulfillment and at the same time, learn from their mistakes.
- The tragic structure is often used to criticise flawed societal structures and values because by the time of the protagonist’s death there is a sense that no matter what course of action they might have chosen, the result would have been some kind of tragedy, in any case; tragic structures create the impression that the protagonist is trapped by multiple forces: their own ambitions and desires, perhaps supernatural forces and most overwhelmingly, societal structures.
- Tragedy has also often been used as a method of exposing the corruption of rulers and statesmen.
- Because this plot makes the protagonist’s death seem inevitable, it is also sometimes used to ask the question of what role fate plays in our destiny and whether or not humans have any control at all over their destinies.

Read more about tragedy here 👉: https://www.sophicly.com/structure-language/

TRAGEDY PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Tragedy" stories can be interpreted or presented in a variety of different ways, depending on the writer's

- style,
- perspective,
- and intended audience.
    - Here are a few examples of different interpretations and presentations of the tragedy plot structure:

1. Classical tragedy: The classical tragedy follows Aristotle's definition of tragedy, which involves the downfall of a noble hero due to a tragic flaw. The plot usually has five stages: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and catastrophe.
2. Revenge tragedy: The revenge tragedy is a type of tragedy that focuses on a protagonist seeking revenge against those who have wronged them. The plot is often violent and gruesome, and it typically involves the protagonist's descent into madness.
3. Domestic tragedy: The domestic tragedy is a type of tragedy that focuses on the tragic events that occur within a family or household. The plot typically involves the breakdown of relationships and the destruction of the family unit.

4. Political tragedy: The political tragedy is a type of tragedy that focuses on the tragic events that occur within a political context. The plot typically involves the abuse of power, corruption, and the downfall of a political leader.
5. Modern tragedy: The modern tragedy is a type of tragedy that reflects the social and cultural realities of the modern world. The plot typically involves the struggle of an individual or group against social norms, systems, and institutions.
6. Tragicomedy: The tragicomedy is a type of drama that blends tragic and comic elements. The plot typically involves a serious theme, but it also includes humour, satire, and irony.

TRAGEDY PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: *MACBETH* BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Although the term 'tragedy', in a literary sense, is not simple to define, and the definition is not always agreed upon, "Macbeth" by William Shakespeare is generally seen as a quintessential tragedy that reflects numerous concepts about tragedy, such as Aristotle's concept of tragedy, Medieval notions of tragedy and Renaissance conventions of tragedy.

For example, Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* offers a definition of tragedy that primarily emphasises a fall from greatness to wretchedness, a medieval definition that suggests a Christian moral; the reader is encouraged to scorn transient, earthly pleasures and glories. If we view Macbeth through this lense, we can see Shakespeare presenting the protagonist as a tragic figure whose ambition and lust for power ultimately lead to his downfall. His actions, therefore, are portrayed as sinful and immoral, especially when we consider the text's numerous Biblical allusions; for example, in Macbeth's bleak 'Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' soliloquy, he says that 'all our yesterdays have lighted fools / The way to dusty death', which appears to be a reference to Genesis 3.19: 'For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou be turned'. Thus, he has come to terms with his own mortality and has also come to believe that through all his sinful and immoral past behaviour, he has run out of time to repent because death is now imminent for him. Therefore, the play emphasises the transience of earthly pleasures and glories, as Macbeth's rise to power is short-lived and ultimately meaningless in the face of his impending destruction; perhaps, here, Shakespeare is attempting to emphasise the Christian values of morality and spiritual virtue. Macbeth's downfall is ultimately the result of his moral weakness and failure to resist the temptation of power and status.

Similarly, in his book *Defence of Poetry*, Sir Phillip Sidney (1578) suggests that tragedy is a didactic form, meaning it teaches morals just as the medieval notion does; however, Sidney also suggests that tragedy lays bare the corruption that rulers and statesmen may attempt to conceal. If we take this perspective, we can actually see the play of Macbeth as an internal exploration of the methods, such as murder and deception, that rulers and statesmen use to acquire power and status, as epitomised by Lady Macbeth's simile, 'Act like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't'. In particular, the deceptive strategies Macbeth employs appear to reflect Niccolo Machiavelli's ideas from his infamous treatise, *The Prince*, where he states that, for a ruler, the most important good to aim for was honour and glory and that the ruler in question should be prepared to adapt to the situation at hand, even if this involved immoral acts; to rule wisely, according to Machiavelli, there was no necessity to be virtuous. The important thing was to maintain the appearance of virtue. What counted was the image, not the reality: He states that 'All men will see what you seem to be; few men will know what you truly are.' His reasoning for this is to maintain a certain appearance over the average person, 'for the mob is always impressed by appearances and by results; and the world is composed of the mob.' Therefore, Shakespeare could be suggesting that the Macbeths' route to the throne is, in many ways, a

typical one; it begins with a 'vaulting ambition' and is set in motion through scheming, deception and murder, which often results in a senseless cycle of violence, as we see when Macbeth orders the killing of Macduff's wife and her children. However, by providing this internal perspective, Shakespeare has also given the audience access to the psychological effects of these actions, particularly as we see in Lady Macbeth's guilt-ridden sleepwalking scene and Macbeth's nihilistic 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' soliloquy, when he finally reflects on his murderous path to the throne.

However, another view is that the tragic plot structure is designed to criticise the values of the societies that the protagonists live in. Although the play is set during the Feudal period, Shakespeare was trained and wrote his plays throughout the Renaissance/early modern period, a time in Europe's history that was in the grip of an elaborate cult of honour. In fact, honour was such an important concept during the Renaissance and early modern period that many of the plays during the period explored the concept of honour in relation to other key concepts such as a war, gender and status. In particular, many of the tragedies of the period portray men at the centre of the story who struggle to live up to the standards of masculinity or carried them to the extreme and so destroy themselves and others, as in the case of Tamburlaine or Macbeth. Most plays had a man at the centre of the action who was willing to do anything to acquire social as well as an inner sense of honour, and thus, manhood was often portrayed as a complicated affair – insecure, fragile, extreme, but also admirable. Consequently, not only can Macbeth be read as a tragedy about going to extremes to achieve honour, but many of Shakespeare's tragedies, such as Othello, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Julius Caesar and many more, can be read as explorations about honour. Therefore, because one of the key hallmarks of tragedy is that they must end with the destruction of the protagonists, it is not difficult to see how the tragic plot structure itself is a means of criticising the values of society; in Shakespeare's case, because his tragedies so often explore the concept of honour, we can see his plays being a warning - perhaps to early modern audiences, in particular - of the dangers of pursuing honour to extremes.

In conclusion, it should be noted that despite the mistakes the protagonists make, historically, the tragic plot structure does not simply lay all the blame at the feet of the protagonists or fate, or supernatural forces, despite the fact that some stories, such as Macbeth actually explore these topics. For example, tragedy can be seen as a Christian moral that encourages audiences to scorn transient, earthly pleasures; in Renaissance England, Sir Philip Sidney suggested that tragedy is a didactic form that lays bare the corruption that rulers and statesmen may attempt to conceal, while the tragic plot structure has also often been used to criticise the values of the societies in which the protagonists live, such as violence, war (civil war in this case), kingship, extreme masculine ideals and honour. Therefore, although the protagonists must take responsibility for the decisions they make, tragedies encourage us to pity these fallen heroes because they are essentially trapped in a society whose values are almost impossible to attain or live up to. The plot of Macbeth reflects the values of Early Modern Society in which, in the words of Niccolo Machiavelli, 'the highest good to aim for was honour and glory'. This incessant pursuit of honour, which appears to be the root of Macbeth's faults (not supernatural soliciting), was reflected in many of the tragedies of the period, where the male characters struggle to live up to their society's standards of masculinity or carried them to the extreme, and so destroy themselves as well as others. Yet, it is these very same extreme masculine values that Duncan and the other thanes praise in Macbeth at the beginning of the play as 'worthy', 'good' and 'valiant', because he defeats the rebel Macdonwald as well as the invading Norwegian army. Duncan's valourising of violence brings us back full circle to the Witches' concluding couplet in act 1, scene 1: 'fair is foul and foul is fair / hover though the fog and filthy air'; the play appears to be less of a focus on the powers of the supernatural and more of a warning to individuals as well as entire societies to be careful of the values we expound, and to be wary of what we wish for, because the very things we think are worthy', 'good' and 'valiant' may well be the very same things that destroy us. Perhaps Shakespeare is implying that, instead, we should see past appearances and personal desire, and learn to value higher ideals such as truth.

TRAGEDY PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES

1. *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
2. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson
3. *Blood Brothers* by Willy Russell
4. *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley
5. *Othello* by William Shakespeare

THE QUEST PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

- The hero is pulled towards some distant all-important goal. There are side-trips that get resolved along the way. But the story is not complete until our hero achieves the overarching goal.
- This plot focuses on the universal human virtue of courage. One of the strongest human desires is to be brave, to have what it takes to save ourselves and our loved ones, even our community, without sacrificing our dignity or morality. We want to have courage in the face of pain, but particularly in the face of death.
- Curiosity, interest, novelty-seeking, and openness to experience represent one's intrinsic desire for experience and knowledge. Curiosity involves the active recognition, pursuit, and regulation of one's experience in response to challenging opportunities.
- Adventure fills a gap in our lives; it interrupts the routine passage of time and suggests that life could have been more interesting if we had only taken a different course somewhere along the way.
- The quest story is often used to explore themes such as personal growth, heroism, and the human condition, and can be found in a wide range of genres, from fantasy and science fiction to mystery and adventure.

Quest stories often follow a very similar structure to The Hero's Journey and can even be seen as a variation of it.

1. The Call: If you've read either of the other two entries in this series, you've probably got an idea of what this entails. Kickstarts the plot and gives the hero and the rest of the party a mission to accomplish.
2. The Journey: Obviously our heroes are not going to get to their end goal that easily. Most of the journey is over enemy territory or hostile land, and obstacles pop up left and right, like dandelions in the spring. Obstacles come in several flavors, like monsters (kill/escape, rinse, repeat), temptations (see a good portion of the Odyssey for examples), a rock and a hard place (Scylla and Charybdis being the classic example), or a journey to the underworld. Amid these tests come periods of rest where the party can regain their strength (or count the bodies, if the party is the third type).
3. Arrival and Frustration: They're so close! Our heroes can see the Emerald City! They're almost there! Oh, wait, the Wizard won't actually help them until they kill the Wicked Witch of the West. Damn. Well, that's annoying. Our heroes still have some work to do before they actually complete their Quest.
4. The Final Ordeals: Now come the final tests of our heroes. Often these come in sets of three, like in Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. Usually our main hero is the only one who can complete the final test. Success! And then our intrepid band of heroes (or just one hero, in case everyone else is dead) makes an amazing escape from death, either by running away or by killing whatever bad guys are left.
5. The Goal: Huzzah! Our hero(es) have completed their quest, and get their treasure/kingdom/princess/trip home.

THE QUEST PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Tragedy" stories can be interpreted or presented in a variety of different ways, depending on the writer's

- style,

- perspective,
- and intended audience.
    - Here are a few examples of different interpretations and presentations of the tragedy plot structure:

1. The Quest as Metaphor: In some stories, the quest is used as a metaphor for a personal journey or transformation. For example, in J.D. Salinger's novel "The Catcher in the Rye," the main character Holden Caulfield goes on a journey of self-discovery as he navigates the challenges of adolescence.
2. The Anti-Quest: Some stories subvert the typical quest narrative by presenting a character who actively resists the call to adventure. In Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot," for example, the two main characters wait endlessly for a character who never arrives, representing a lack of purpose or direction in life.
3. The Group Quest: While many quest stories focus on a single protagonist, others feature a group of characters who band together to achieve a common goal. The "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, for example, features a diverse cast of characters who work together to destroy the ring of power and defeat the evil Sauron.
4. The Satirical Quest: Some stories use the quest narrative to poke fun at traditional heroism or adventure stories. Terry Pratchett's "Discworld" series, for example, features a wide range of quirky characters who embark on various quests with humorous results.
5. The Psychological Quest: In some stories, the quest is an internal rather than an external journey, with the character confronting their own inner demons or psychological struggles. One example is the film "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," in which the main character undergoes a quest-like journey through his own memories and emotions.

THE QUEST PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: *THE SIGN OF THE FOUR* BY ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

"The Sign of the Four" by Arthur Conan Doyle can be analyzed as a quest story in various ways. The story is centered around a quest to find the treasure that was stolen from the Agra Fort in India. The journey to find the treasure can be seen as a metaphorical journey towards self-discovery and growth for the protagonist, Sherlock Holmes, and his sidekick Dr. John Watson.

The quest in "The Sign of the Four" is initiated by Miss Mary Morstan, who comes to Sherlock Holmes seeking help to find her missing father and the treasure that he promised her. This sets off a chain of events that leads Holmes and Watson on a journey of discovery, danger, and adventure. Along the way, they encounter various obstacles, such as the mysterious deaths of Thaddeus Sholto and his brother Bartholomew, as well as the villainous Jonathan Small and his accomplices.

Throughout their quest, Holmes and Watson grow as characters. Holmes, who is known for his rational and analytical mind, begins to show his more human side as he develops feelings for Miss Morstan. Watson, who is initially skeptical of the treasure hunt, becomes more invested in the case and gains a deeper appreciation for his friend's skills and deductive abilities.

The structure of the quest story in "The Sign of the Four" has a number of effects on the reader. For one, it creates a sense of excitement and anticipation as the reader follows the characters on their journey. The obstacles and

challenges that the characters face add a layer of suspense and tension to the story, which keeps the reader engaged.

Additionally, the quest story structure allows for a deeper exploration of the characters' motivations and inner worlds. As the characters encounter challenges and obstacles, they are forced to confront their own fears, doubts, and weaknesses. This makes them more relatable and human, which in turn makes the story more engaging and emotionally impactful.

Overall, "The Sign of the Four" is a compelling example of a quest story, which uses the journey to find the treasure as a metaphor for the characters' personal growth and self-discovery. The structure of the quest story creates a sense of excitement and anticipation, while also allowing for a deeper exploration of the characters' inner worlds. These effects make the story engaging and emotionally resonant for readers.

THE QUEST PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES

1. "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens - the novel follows the archetypal plot structure of "the quest," where the main character is on a journey of self-discovery, finding love, and achieving success and fulfillment.
2. "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Brontë - the novel follows the archetypal plot structure of "the quest," where the main character is on a journey of self-discovery and finding love, and overcomes various obstacles to achieve her goals.
3. "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen - the novel follows the archetypal plot structure of "the quest," where the characters are on a journey of self-discovery, finding love, and overcoming societal expectations and prejudices.
4. "The Sign of Four" by Arthur Conan Doyle - the novel follows the archetypal plot structure of "the quest," where the main character is on a journey of solving a mystery and overcoming various obstacles to achieve his goal.
5. "The Lord of the Rings" by J.R.R. Tolkien - Perhaps the most famous example of a quest story in literature, "The Lord of the Rings" follows hobbit Frodo Baggins as he embarks on a journey to destroy the One Ring and defeat the dark lord Sauron.
6. "The Odyssey" by Homer - This classic Greek epic poem follows the hero Odysseus as he travels home after the Trojan War, facing numerous challenges and obstacles along the way.
7. "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" by C.S. Lewis - In this children's classic, four siblings enter a magical world called Narnia and embark on a quest to defeat the evil White Witch and restore the rightful king, Aslan the lion.
8. "The Hobbit" by J.R.R. Tolkien - This precursor to "The Lord of the Rings" follows hobbit Bilbo Baggins as he joins a company of dwarves on a quest to reclaim their stolen treasure from the dragon Smaug.
9. "The Once and Future King" by T.H. White - This retelling of the legend of King Arthur follows the king and his knights on a series of quests, including the search for the Holy Grail.
10. "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho - In this philosophical novel, a shepherd named Santiago goes on a journey to find a hidden treasure, encountering a series of mystical characters and life lessons along the way.
11. "The Princess Bride" by William Goldman - This humorous fantasy novel follows the hero Westley as he sets out on a quest to rescue his true love, Princess Buttercup, from the evil prince Humperdinck.

THE VOYAGE AND RETURN PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

The "voyage and return" plot structure is a common story archetype in which the protagonist goes on a journey to a new and unfamiliar place, faces challenges and obstacles along the way, and ultimately returns home, transformed in some way by their experiences.

In this type of story, the protagonist often starts out feeling unfulfilled or dissatisfied with their current circumstances, and sets out on a quest for something more. This could be a physical journey to a new location or a journey of self-discovery.

Along the way, the protagonist faces a series of trials and obstacles, which can include physical challenges, emotional struggles, and encounters with strange and unfamiliar cultures or creatures. These challenges force the protagonist to grow and change, and they may develop new skills or gain new insights about themselves and the world around them.

Finally, the protagonist returns home, often bringing with them a newfound appreciation for their old life and a sense of inner peace or fulfillment. Sometimes they also bring back a new perspective, a new way of thinking or a newfound sense of purpose, which they can use to make a positive impact on their community or the world.
Examples of "voyage and return" stories include Homer's Odyssey, Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, and L. Frank Baum's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.

‘Voyage and Return’ stories often follow a very similar structure to The Hero’s Journey and can even be seen as a variation of it.

1. Anticipation Stage and “Fall” into the Other World: We see the protagonist in their dreary, dull, humdrum life, and then all of a sudden, something happens to escort them to the other world. This could be a rabbit hole, a wardrobe, or just a blow to the head, and the protagonist regains consciousness in the other world.
2. Initial Fascination or Dream Stage: Wow, the clouds are made of cotton candy! Or there's a talking rabbit! Or everything is suddenly colored in ways that it shouldn't be! Our hero is aware of the fact that they are no longer in Kansas, and they take the opportunity to explore their surroundings and the strange laws of physics that might be in this new place. However, no matter how awesome the new world is, Booker notes that the hero never feels completely at home there, foreshadowing their return.
3. Frustration Stage: This is where the dark magic starts to creep in. The hero starts feeling a little more uncomfortable, and the wonder of the world starts to feel a little more oppressive. In The Phantom Tollbooth, this is where Milo and his companions start heading towards the Castle in the Air, over the Mountains of Ignorance, and they start meeting the demons of the Lands Beyond. Chaos hasn't completely set in, but things are looking more sinister for our hero.
4. Nightmare Stage: The Queen of Hearts has unleashed her armies, Aslan has been killed on the Stone Table, and Dory is stuck in a net with a bunch of tuna. For the love of all that is good and holy, our hero better run for his life, because the shadowy element of the magical land is coming in full force.
5. Thrilling Escape and Return: We can all breathe a sigh of relief, because the cavalry has arrived! Our hero has escaped from doom and makes the return home, having learned a valuable lesson about their home or themselves.

THE VOYAGE AND RETURN PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

'Voyage and return' stories can be interpreted or presented in a variety of different ways, depending on the writer's

- style,
- perspective,
- and intended audience.
    - Here are a few examples of different interpretations and presentations of the 'voyage and return' plot structure:

1. Classic adventure stories: The most traditional and well-known examples of the "voyage and return" story structure are classic adventure stories, such as Jules Verne's Journey to the Center of the Earth or Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island. In these stories, the protagonist goes on a physical journey to an exotic or dangerous location, faces challenges and obstacles, and returns home transformed by their experiences.
2. Psychological journeys: "Voyage and return" stories can also take the form of psychological journeys, in which the protagonist embarks on an inner journey of self-discovery and transformation. For example, in Hermann Hesse's novel Siddhartha, the title character goes on a spiritual journey to find enlightenment and ultimately returns home with a new understanding of the world.
3. Comedies: "Voyage and return" stories can also be presented as comedies, in which the protagonist's journey is lighthearted and humorous. For example, in the movie Groundhog Day, the protagonist Phil Connors is stuck in a time loop and must relive the same day over and over again until he learns to appreciate life and become a better person.
4. Science fiction: Science fiction stories often use the "voyage and return" structure to explore themes of exploration, discovery, and the unknown. For example, in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, the protagonist Victor Frankenstein goes on a journey to discover the secret of life and returns home with a monster he has created.
5. Mythological journeys: Many mythological stories also follow the "voyage and return" structure, with the hero going on a journey to face trials and obstacles and ultimately returning home transformed. Examples include the story of Theseus and the Minotaur in Greek mythology and the story of Gilgamesh in Mesopotamian mythology.

THE VOYAGE AND RETURN PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: *THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE* BY C.S. LEWIS

"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" by C.S. Lewis is a classic example of a "voyage and return" story, in which the protagonists embark on a physical and psychological journey, face obstacles and challenges, and ultimately return home transformed.

At the beginning of the story, the four Pevensie siblings are sent to live with a professor in the countryside during the Second World War. While playing hide-and-seek, the youngest sister, Lucy, discovers a wardrobe that serves as a

portal to a magical world called Narnia. After she returns to the real world and tells her siblings about her discovery, they all venture into Narnia and begin their journey.

The siblings face various obstacles and challenges on their journey, such as dealing with the White Witch, who has plunged Narnia into an eternal winter, and her minions. They also encounter various creatures, such as Mr. Tumnus the faun, who joins them on their quest to overthrow the Witch and restore the rightful king, Aslan the lion, to his throne. Through their journey, the siblings grow in courage, strength, and maturity, as they learn to work together, overcome their fears, and make difficult decisions.

Towards the end of the story, Aslan sacrifices himself to the Witch in order to save one of the siblings, Edmund, who had been captured by the Witch. However, Aslan is resurrected and leads the siblings into battle against the Witch and her army. The siblings emerge victorious and Aslan is crowned king of Narnia.

After their victory, the siblings return to the real world and find that no time has passed since they left. However, they have been transformed by their experiences in Narnia, having learned valuable life lessons and grown in courage, strength, and maturity. They are now better equipped to face the challenges of the real world.

In summary, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" follows the "voyage and return" plot structure by taking the protagonists on a journey to a magical world, where they face challenges and obstacles, grow and mature as individuals, and return home transformed by their experiences.

THE VOYAGE AND RETURN PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES

1. "The Odyssey" by Homer: One of the oldest and most famous examples of the "voyage and return" structure, "The Odyssey" follows the hero Odysseus as he journeys home from the Trojan War and faces a series of obstacles, including monsters, witches, and gods.
2. "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll: In this classic children's story, Alice falls down a rabbit hole and enters a strange and magical world, encountering talking animals, playing cards, and a mad hatter before returning home to the real world.
3. "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" by C.S. Lewis: This beloved fantasy novel follows four siblings who enter a magical world called Narnia through a wardrobe, where they join forces with a lion to defeat an evil witch before returning home.
4. "The Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank Baum: In this children's classic, Dorothy is swept away to the magical land of Oz by a tornado and sets out on a journey to meet the wizard, encountering friends and foes along the way before returning home to Kansas.
5. "Gulliver's Travels" by Jonathan Swift: In this satirical novel, Lemuel Gulliver travels to several different imaginary lands, including one populated by tiny people and another by giants, before returning home and reflecting on the nature of humanity.
6. "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho: This philosophical novel follows a shepherd boy named Santiago who embarks on a journey to find a treasure, encountering various obstacles and learning important life lessons before returning home with newfound wisdom.

BACK TO START

OVERCOMING THE MONSTER PLOT STRUCTURE: SUMMARY

The hero is called upon to face and overcome a terrible and deadly personification of evil.

The Evil often represents mankind's internal fears, a real physical threat or both and is...

- Heartless
- Egocentric
- Seemingly All-powerful
- Ultimately has a blind spot that renders it vulnerable

'The monster is heartless; totally unable to feel for others, although this may sometimes be disguised beneath a deceptively charming, kindly or solicitous exterior; its only real concern is to look after its own interests, at the expense of everyone else in the world' (Booker, 2004)

The Overcoming the Monster plot is found in many genre types such as

- Gothic / horror
- Science fiction
- Action
- adventure
- dystopian

The "overcoming the monster" plot structure is a common narrative archetype found in many stories, myths, and legends. In this plot structure, the protagonist faces a powerful and often evil entity or force that poses a threat to their world, whether it be a physical, psychological, or societal threat.

The narrative arc typically involves the protagonist's journey to confront and defeat the monster, often with the help of allies or mentors. Along the way, the protagonist must overcome their own personal weaknesses and limitations, gaining new skills and strengths that enable them to face and ultimately defeat the monster.

The "monster" can take many forms, including literal monsters such as dragons or evil gods, as well as figurative monsters such as oppressive rulers, corrupt institutions, or personal demons. The ultimate triumph over the monster represents a symbolic victory over the challenges and obstacles that stand in the way of the protagonist's goals and values.

Overall, the "overcoming the monster" plot structure is a powerful narrative device that taps into universal themes of courage, heroism, and triumph over adversity, making it a popular trope in many different genres of storytelling.

OVERCOMING THE MONSTER PLOT STRUCTURE: INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Overcoming the monster' stories can be interpreted or presented in a variety of different ways, depending on the writer's

- style,
- perspective,
- and intended audience.
    - Here are a few examples of different interpretations and presentations of the 'overcoming the monster' plot structure:

1. Physical monsters: This is the most traditional interpretation of the "overcoming the monster" plot structure, where the protagonist must defeat a literal monster, such as a dragon or giant. Examples of this include Beowulf, where the hero battles the monster Grendel, or the movie Godzilla, where the protagonist must stop the giant monster from destroying a city.
2. Psychological monsters: In this interpretation, the monster represents a psychological or emotional obstacle that the protagonist must overcome. For example, in the movie A Beautiful Mind, the protagonist John Nash battles with schizophrenia, which is portrayed as a "monster" that he must defeat.
3. Societal monsters: The monster in this interpretation represents a larger societal problem, such as racism, inequality, or corruption. The protagonist must fight against the system that perpetuates these problems. An example of this can be seen in the movie Erin Brockovich, where the protagonist battles against a powerful corporation that is poisoning a community's water supply.
4. Self-created monsters: In this interpretation, the protagonist's own actions or beliefs create the "monster" they must overcome. For example, in the novel Frankenstein, the protagonist's creation of the monster is a consequence of his own ambition and arrogance.
5. Unconventional monsters: The monster in this interpretation may not be the typical physical creature, but can instead take on different forms. For example, in the movie Jaws, the monster is a great white shark, which is a real animal but takes on an almost mythical quality in the film.

OVERCOMING THE MONSTER PLOT STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE: *LORD OF THE FLIES* BY WILLIAM GOLDING

"Lord of the Flies" by William Golding can be interpreted as a story that fits the criteria for the "Overcoming the Monster" plot structure, with the monster in this case being the boys' own savage nature. The novel follows a group of British schoolboys who become stranded on a deserted island and must fend for themselves without adult supervision. As time passes, the boys' behavior becomes increasingly violent and barbaric, with the character of Jack representing the most savage and tyrannical impulses of the group.

One of the key elements of the "Overcoming the Monster" plot structure is the presence of a clear and identifiable antagonist or monster. In "Lord of the Flies," this role is fulfilled by the boys' own primal and violent nature, which becomes personified by the character of Jack. As the story progresses, Jack becomes more and more tyrannical, and his followers become increasingly savage, culminating in the brutal murders of two of Ralph's followers, Piggy and Simon.

The protagonist in an "Overcoming the Monster" story is typically a hero who must face and defeat the monster, and in "Lord of the Flies," this role is shared by the characters of Ralph and Piggy. Ralph represents the forces of civilization and order, while Piggy represents the forces of reason and rationality. The conflict between Ralph's group and Jack's group can be seen as a battle between good and evil, with the two sides vying for dominance over the island and the boys' fates.

However, unlike many traditional "Overcoming the Monster" stories, the hero in "Lord of the Flies" does not ultimately triumph over the monster. Instead, the novel presents a bleak and brutal commentary on the dangers of unchecked power and the fragility of civilization. The boys' descent into savagery is a reflection of the darker impulses that exist within all human beings, and the novel suggests that these impulses can never truly be overcome or defeated.

The effects of this plot structure on the reader are complex and thought-provoking. While the "Overcoming the Monster" plot structure typically provides a sense of closure and resolution, "Lord of the Flies" subverts this structure, leaving the reader with a feeling of discomfort and unease. The novel challenges the idea that there are clear lines between good and evil, and that the forces of civilization will always triumph over the forces of barbarism. Instead, it suggests that the line between good and evil is blurred and that the forces of civilization are fragile and easily destroyed.

Overall, "Lord of the Flies" can be seen as a complex and nuanced example of the "Overcoming the Monster" plot structure. While the novel follows many of the conventions of this plot structure, it also challenges and subverts those conventions, leaving the reader with a powerful and unsettling sense of the darker aspects of human nature.

OVERCOMING THE MONSTER PLOT STRUCTURE: FURTHER EXAMPLES

1. Beowulf: One of the oldest and most famous examples of the "overcoming the monster" plot structure, this Anglo-Saxon epic tells the story of the hero Beowulf, who battles three monsters: Grendel, Grendel's mother, and a dragon.
2. The Lord of the Rings: J.R.R. Tolkien's epic fantasy trilogy follows Frodo Baggins and his companions as they journey to destroy the One Ring, a powerful artifact created by the dark lord Sauron. The entire story can be seen as a series of battles against the monstrous forces of evil.
3. Frankenstein: Mary Shelley's classic novel tells the story of Victor Frankenstein, a scientist who creates a monster out of corpses. The novel can be seen as a battle between the protagonist and the monster he created.
4. Harry Potter series: J.K. Rowling's series follows Harry Potter, a young wizard, as he battles against the dark wizard Voldemort, who seeks to take over the wizarding world. The series can be seen as a classic example of the "overcoming the monster" plot structure.
5. The Odyssey: Homer's epic poem tells the story of the Greek hero Odysseus, who faces many challenges on his journey home after the Trojan War. One of the challenges is his battle against the monster Scylla.
6. The Hunger Games: Suzanne Collins' dystopian novel follows Katniss Everdeen, a teenager from a poor district who is forced to compete in a deadly reality TV show called the Hunger Games. The story is a battle against the oppressive government that created the games.