

The plot is a planned, logical series of events having a beginning, middle, and an end.

The parts/elements of a plot

Exposition/introduction: It is the opening/beginning of a story where the characters and setting are revealed. Sometimes the main conflict is also introduced here.

Rising action: This is where the events in the story become complex. The conflict is revealed at this stage (events between introduction and climax).

Climax: It is the highest point of interest, tension and suspense. It is the turning point of the story where the reader questions what will happen next.

Falling action: At this stage the events and conflicts/complications begin to resolve. Events show the results of how the characters begin to resolve the conflict.

Resolution/ denouement: The part of the plot that concludes the falling action by revealing or suggesting the outcome of the conflict. It is the end of the story.

The types of plot

- a. **Linear plot:** It is a plot which starts from a certain point and ends at another point. The events in the story flow a chronological/sequential order. At the end of a linear plot, the main character finds a solution to his problems or not.
- b. **Circular plot:** It is the plot which ends at the same place where it began. It is the unfolding of events that begin and end in the same place. It is when the story starts with the end and then jumps back in time, to the beginning. In a circular plot the solution to a conflict/problem is never reached.

B. SETTING

Setting refers to the historical period, geographical place and social-cultural context in which the events of a story occur. It is the place and time of a story. It answers the questions of where and when. The time and place can be real or imaginary.

Setting as:

- Time:** -the actual time in which the events of a story occur, like at 5h00' A.M, during the night, on Monday, in August, in 2019....
-the historical period in which the events of a story occur, as Before Christ, precolonial period, colonial period, post-colonial period, post-independence era, post genocide period...

Place: - the geographical place where the events of a story take place like inside the house, on the hill, in a garden, in a sea, at Muyumbu, in Rwanda, in Nyungwe Forest, at school, in a prison....

The socio-cultural context in which the events of a story are set like in urban or rural environment or in a traditional society...

The types of setting

- a. **The social setting:** It refers to the physical environment in which the events of a story happen.
Ex: In a town, a slum, a suburb, upcountry...
- b. **The historical setting:** It is the specific time in which the events in a story happen.
Ex: Before Christ, pre-colonial era, colonial period, post-colonial era, computer age...

- c. Cultural setting:** It includes the patterns of behaviours and beliefs that dominate the society in which the characters live. It includes the family relations, moral values, gender roles, customs, beliefs...
- d. Political setting:** It refers to the prevailing political situation around which a story revolves. A story could condemn bad governance or unequal distribution of national resources.

Context

Context refers to the whole situation, background or environment relevant to a particular event. It also refers to the social, cultural, and historical circumstances and setting at which the author is writing. Therefore, context refers to the background information surrounding a subject.

- a. Social context:** It refers to the reflection of how the characters' actions and attitudes are affected by events occurring around the time and place where they live. It involves the characters' interactions in all levels of life.
- b. Historical context:** This refers to the time period in which a story occurs. Both historical events (like wars) can influence the story. It is an aspect of setting that pertains to when events and when characters live and interact.
- c. Cultural context:** It can be described as the sustained conditions, collective expectations and prevailing norms among a group of people or a social network. It includes the values of a society, their beliefs social and moral norms as well as the meanings people give to the human actions and behaviours.
- d. Political context:** This deals with the leadership characteristics and dynamics of a society. It includes the types of leadership (like democracy, monarchy, kingdom, chieftom), the role of people in determining their leadership, freedoms and rights...

C. CHARACTERS

A character refers to the fictional human being, animal or thing in a story. The character is any person, animal or figure represented in a literary work. Characters are central figures on which the action of the plot happens.

Types of characters

- a. Main/major/central characters:** They are characters that play a big role in the story. Most of the actions in the story happen around these characters. The plot and resolution of the conflict revolves around them.
- Protagonist:** A protagonist is a main character who is faced with problem/conflict he must resolve. He is a main character who has good behaviours. He is considered as a **hero**.
- Antagonist:** An antagonist is a main character who usually challenges the protagonist or test him/her. He/she is a main character who has bad behaviours. He/she is also considered as a **villain**.

Main characters are well developed which makes us to know more about them and we can relate to them.

- b. Minor characters:** They are characters that do not play a big role in the story. They are characters that support/help or serve to complement the main ones and help move the plot events forward.
- ❖ **Positive characters:** They are characters that show positive /good qualities or behaviours. They can be brave, hardworking, caring, humble, peaceful,...
- Ex:** Protagonist

❖ **Negative characters:** They are characters that show negative/bad qualities/behaviours. They can be cruel, wicked, brutal, lazy, revengeful,.....

Ex: Antagonist

Other types of characters

- a. **Dynamic character** is a character who changes over time. This kind of character goes through some sorts of change. He/she/it grows or changes his/her/its personality, attitudes, behaviours.
- b. **Static character** is a character who doesn't change over time. This remains the same throughout a story.
- c. **Round/complex character** is a character that has a complex personality. He /she is a character that has a mixture of traits that come from both nature and experience. This character is fully developed and described that a flat one. He/she is viewed as a conflicted and a contradictory character. A round character is a major character in a story.
- d. **Flat/simple character** is a character that shows one or two personality traits in a story. He/she can't be a main character. That character is neither conflicted nor contradictory. He/she doesn't change and the story doesn't reveal much about him.

Characterization

Characterization refers to the author's representation and development of characters in the story.

How to identify characters

In studying a short story, novel,...we need to identify and know the characters very well. In order to identify them we look at:

- ✓ The physical description of a character in terms of size, colour, and general appearance.
- ✓ What the character says about him/herself and about other issues affecting the society.
- ✓ The character's actions in his/her interactions with other characters in the society.
- ✓ What other characters in the story say about him/her.
- ✓ The character's thoughts, desires, dreams and wishes.

How to identify characters and explain their behaviours

In order to describe characters, we use adjectives. A character may be described in many ways such as:

- | | | |
|---------|---------------|------------|
| ✓ Good | ✓ Rude | ✓ Careless |
| ✓ Bad | ✓ Hardworking | ✓ honest |
| ✓ Funny | ✓ Polite | ✓ Etc. |
| ✓ Lazy | ✓ Beautiful | |
| ✓ Ugly | ✓ Kind | |

The author creates different characters and has to show what makes a character behave the way he/she does or why he/she behaves in that way and how his/her behaviours affect others.

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UNIT II: SUBJECT, THEMES AND MESSAGES

II.1. A SUBJECT

A subject is a topic which acts as a foundation for a literary work/story. It is the subject which makes a writer writes something. It is what something is about. Subject is the inspiration that makes you write anything.

II.2. A THEME

A theme can be explained as follow:

- ✓ A theme is an opinion expressed on the subject.
- ✓ It is what a writer is saying about a certain subject.
- ✓ It is the central/ main idea of the story.
- ✓ It is the writer's opinion or perspective about a certain issue in society.
- ✓ It is the controlling idea which is continuously developed throughout the story.

- a. **Minor theme:** It is an idea that appears in a story briefly or an idea that appears once in a while in a story.
- b. **Major theme:** It refers to an idea that a writer repeats in his/her work making it the most significant idea in a literary work.

Themes can be about friendship, love, good vs bad, loneliness, grief,.....

II.3. A MESSAGE

A message can be explained as follow:

- ✓ A message refers to the lesson the writer wishes to convey to the society through his/her story.
- ✓ A message is what an author wants the society to learn from his/her literary work.
- ✓ It is the kind of a lesson that the reader learns after reading the story.
- ✓ It is the moral in the story.
- ✓ It is something the story aims to teach the reader.
- ✓ It is the lesson the writer wishes the society to learn from his/her poem.

Messages can be about respecting elders, not fighting, caring for your loved ones,...

TYPES OF THEMES AND MESSAGES

The two types of themes and messages are: - Hidden
- Fully stated

a. **Hidden themes/messages**

Hidden themes or messages are the ones which are hidden. They are implied or communicated indirectly or suggested. To get them, the reader has to use his/her intelligence and analysis. They are also called **implicit** messages/ themes.

b. **Fully stated themes/messages**

These are the themes or messages which are stated or communicated directly or clearly. The reader does not have to analyze the poem to find them. They are fully and clearly expressed leaving nothing implied. They are also called **explicit** messages/themes.

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UNIT III: LITERARY DEVICES AND AUDIENCE

III.0. DEFINITION

Literary devices or literary techniques (narrative techniques) are the methods a writer uses to convey/deliver his/her message properly. They are the typical structures used by writers in their works to convey their messages in a simple manner to their readers. They help the reader to visualize what an author is saying.

III.1. IMAGERY

Imagery refers to the use of words and phrases that create “mental pictures” for the readers. Imagery helps the reader to visualize more realistically the author’s writings. It makes use of particular words that create visual representation of ideas in our minds.

Imagery which entails the use of words that create mental pictures in the reader’s mind, enables us to see, taste, hear, smell and touch what the author says. It is done by using **simile, metaphor, personification, ...**

a. Simile

A simile is a literary device which compares two unlike things by using the words “like”, “as...as” or “than”

Ex: He is as strong as a lion
 She is beautiful like an angel.
 It shines like a diamond.
 They work as hard as their parents.
 That exam was more complicated than the previous one.

b. Metaphor

Metaphor is a literary device which compares two unlike things without using words “like”, “as....as” or “than”. It is when you say that one thing is another.

<p>Ex: My father is a lion She is an angel. That man is a dog. Her smile was a ray of sunshine. She is a peacock. The classroom was a zoo. My teacher is a dragon He is a night owl</p>	<p>Jamal was a pig at dinner The snow is a white blanket You are my sunshine The sun is a golden ball Books are the keys to your imagination He couldn't stand because his legs were rubber.</p>
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c. Personification

It is a figure of speech which gives human traits or qualities to animals or things. By here a thing, an idea or an animal is given human attributes. It is when the non-humans are given human characteristics.

Ex₁: Lightning danced across the sky.
 The wind howled in the night.
 The car complained as the key was roughly turned in its ignition.
 My alarm clock yells at me to get out of bed every morning.
 The door protested as it opened slowly.
 The moon played hide and seek with the clouds.
 The approaching car's headlights winked at me.
 The camera loves her since she is so pretty.
 The stairs groaned as we walked on them.

My flowers were begging for water.
 The thunder was grumbling in the distance.
 The wildfire ran through the forest at an amazing speed.
 The moon smiled at the stars in the sky.
 The leaves waved in the wind.

Ex₂: *Pregnant clouds*

Ride stately on its back,

Ex₃: *The wind whistles by*

And trees bend to let it pass.

Ex₄: The cow jumped over the moon;

The little dog laughed

To see such sport,

And the dish ran away with the spoon.

III. 3. AUDIENCE

We modify what we say and how we say it depending on who our audience is. Our content, tone and language changes according to what we know about our audience. In writing, audience is whom you are writing for.

- ✓ Audience is the number of people or particular group of people who watch, read or listen to the same thing.
- ✓ It is also the group of people who have gathered to watch or listen to something (a play, a concert, somebody speaking...)
- ✓ For books, audience refers to people who read that book.

In few words, audience refers to the spectators, listeners and intended readers of a writing, performance or speech.

a. Target audience

Target audience refers to the person or group of people a piece of writing is intended to reach.

b. Intended audience

It refers to the group of people for whom a service or product (novel, novella, poem, play) is designed.

PART TWO: POETRY

UNIT IV: BALLADS

IV.0. INTRODUCTION

A ballad is a poem that tells a story similar to a folk tale or legend and often has a repeated refrain. A ballad is often sung. It is a story in a poetic form.

The ballad is also a form of verse, often a narrative set to music. It is a type of poem that is sometimes set to music. It is a type of poem that tells a story and was traditionally set to music.

IV.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF BALLADS

- ✓ Ballads always make use of simple and easy to understand language.
- ✓ Usually ballads comprise stories about hardships, tragedies, love and romance.
- ✓ Ballads usually have certain lines that recur at regular interval.
- ✓ Some ballads are made up of questions and appropriate answers to every question they ask.

- ✓ Ballads seldom offer a direct message about a certain event, character or situation. It is left to the audience to deduce the moral of the story from the whole narration.

Ex₁: Ballad of A Lonely Road by Saurabh Jairath

I walk a lonely road
 Away from abode
 A path not much taken
 I fear its far away
 I started to sway
 Have I been mistaken

The bells are ringing
 The birds are singing
 But no one can hear the words I have spoken
 The powerful words
 The ballad of swords
 The battle rages till the war is forsaken

The journey to wisdom
 The legendary kingdom
 The principle of truth has just awoken
 I will tread till the end
 Maybe find a friend
 And just hope that I am not forgotten

Its lonely road I take
 A journey to the beautiful lake
 I will need all the wisdom
 To take me to the end
 Carry me through this bend
 If only a friend can lend a hand....

Ex₂:

As I was walking down the street
 I saw two people in secret meet
 The second one said to the first
 'You have some news to quench my thirst?'

'In behind the old, damp shed
 There lies a noble man slain, dead
 And no one knows he lies in strife
 Except his dog and lonely wife

With master gone where no one knocks
 His dog has left to chase a fox
 His wife has found somebody new
 His house is left for all to view

Though it's been empty for a while
 We'll be warm and dry in half a mile
 For now we can take comfort there
 We'll flee the place when it grows bare

Many people knew the noble man
 But none do care where he has gone
 Over his grave, all do ignore
 The wind shall blow forever more.'

OTHER TYPES OF POEMS

- a. **An ode:** It is a poem that speaks to a person or thing or celebrates a special event.
 It is a kind of poem devoted to praise a person, an animal or thing.
- b. **An epic:** A long poem about the actions of great men, women or about a nation's history.
- c. **An elegy:** - It is a poem or a song composed especially as a lament for a deceased person.
 -It is a poem/song that expresses sadness especially for someone who has died.
 - It is also a mournful or funeral song or a poem of lamentation.
- d. **A duet:** It is a poem with two lines in each stanza.
- e. **A sonnet:** It is a poem of fourteen lines using any number of formal rhyme scheme and has ten syllables per line.

UNIT V: POETIC DEVICES

V.1. REVIEW OF POETIC DEVICES

Poetic devices are literary techniques that are used in poetry to create sounds and mental pictures within a poem. Poetic devices make poems pleasant to listen to.

They are also tools that a poet uses to create rhythm, enhance a poem's meaning, or intensify a mood or a feeling.

a. Repetition

It refers to the deliberate use of a word or a group of words over and over again or recurrently in a poem. It is a poetic device that is commonly used.

It is the repeating of a word, a phrase, line, stanza or idea in a poem. Repetition not only creates rhythm in a poem but also establishes unity in the poem as well as helping the poet to emphasize certain ideas.

When repetition is used in the poem,

It -creates rhythm.

-lays emphasis on the theme and main idea in a poem.

- emphasizes the poet's message and keeps it constantly stuck in the mind of the reader or audience.

Ex₁: Smile by Mark Chetambe

They say she smiled at me

I will not slaughter my only cock

I will not throw a party

I will not bring down my flute

I will not compose a song

I will not change my walking style

I will not go to the barber for a box haircut...

Ex₂: Freedom song by Marjorie Macgoye

Atieno washes dishes,

Atieno plucks the chicken,

Atieno gets up early,

Beds her sacks down in kitchen,

Atieno eight years old,

Atieno yo.

Ex₃: Late, Late, So Late

Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

b. Personification

It is a figure of speech in which a thing, an idea or an animal is given human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings.

Ex: Pomegranate by Rabiariavelo

The rays of the new-born sun

search under the branches

the breast of ripe pomegranate

and bite it till it bleeds.

Discreet and shuddering kiss

hard and scalding embrace,

Soon the pure thrust

will draw purple blood.

Its taste will be sweeter,

because it was pregnant with desire

And with fearful love

and scented blossoms-
Pregnant by lover sun.

c. **Simile**

It is a figure of speech which uses the words 'like', 'as' or 'than' to show the resemblance between two things or it is a comparison which shows similarities between two different things by using words 'like', 'as' or 'than'.

Ex: My husband's tongue

Is bitter like the roots of the lynno lily
It is hot like the penis of the bee,
Like the sting of the kalang!
Ocol's tongue is fierce like the
arrow of the scorpion,
Deadly like the spear of the
buffalo-hornet.
It is ferocious
Like the poison of a barren woman
And corrosive like the juice of the gourd.

From Song of Lawino by Okot p' Bitek.

V.2. FURTHER POETIC DEVICES

a. **Assonance**

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds within words in a line or lines of a poem. It is the repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words.

Ex: Fleet feet them

Looting hoofers of Bloomington
Blood and blooming
Footing and glooming.

Ex₂: -Men sell the wedding bells

-We light fire on the mountain

How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes

I see mean people seeking.

He took a good look
At the nuisance tooth

N.B: You must be very sure of the pronunciation of words. They may seem similar yet they are pronounced differently.

b. **Alliteration**

It is the repetition of initial consonant sounds at the beginning of words. It is the repetition of the same consonant sounds at the beginning of words.

Ex: On his watch

Bleeds black blood
Brothers broken backs
Creature craving for crunches
They snarl.

Farewell for fools
He says

Ex: Plain plan pronounced
Sincere since seventh sabbath
Sweet smell of success
Bigger and better.

c. Consonance

It is a repetition of consonant sounds within lines or sentences or in a poem.

Ex: -Mike likes his new bike
- I will crawl away the ball
-The zoo was amazing,
especially the lizards and the chimpanzees.
-There is no right time to imitate the teacher.

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UNIT VI: SUBJECT, THEME AND CONTEXT

VI.1. SUBJECT

In poetry, just like in prose, subject is a topic which acts as a foundation for a poem.

VI.2. THEME

It is an opinion expressed on the subject or the central/ main idea of the poem. Thus, a poet might for instance have corruption as the subject of his or her poem. He/she might choose condemning this vice as his/her theme.

VI.3. CONTEXT

In poetry, context refers to the prevailing conditions and circumstances that inspire a poet to compose a poem. It is also a circumstance in which an event occurs.

Generally, context refers to the whole situation, background or environment relevant to a particular event.

- So as to identify the theme of a poem, you must look at the subject of the poem. Pay attention to what the poet says about the subject. The poet will keep on repeating his views on the subject throughout the poem. This is what will make the theme take its place as the central idea in the poem.
 - In poetry, poets draw themes from the prevailing cultural trends, historical events and other experiences.
 - Though there are hundreds of different popular poetry themes, several concepts have endured across ages, forms, and cultural divisions. Love, nature, history, religion, and death are some of the most common poetry.
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PART THREE: DRAMA

UNIT VII: DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

VII.1. REVIEW OF KEY ELEMENTS IN A PLAY

Dramatic techniques are the tools or devices used by playwrights to help the audience understand and enjoy a play. The key elements of a play are: **plot**, **setting** (including context) and **characters**.

A. PLOT

Plot refers to the author's arrangement of the events of a play in terms of cause and effect. It is how the events are connected, leading to the conflict. The conflict can either be internal or external. The plot is carefully arranged with logical series of events having a beginning, middle and end.

The parts or elements of a plot

- a. Introduction/exposition:** It is the opening part of a play which introduces important information to the audience. This information includes the setting, characters and the conflict is also introduced.
- b. Rising action/complication/development:** It is the part of a plot which comes after introduction. This part is where the events/actions rise. A lot of tension and suspense are built in this part.
- c. Climax/crisis:** In drama, it is the turning point. It is the highest point of interest. It is where the main characters have to make decisions that must resolve the main conflict of the play.
- d. Falling action:** It is the point where the events begin to lead to the conclusion of the play. At this point, the conflicts begin to be resolved and the main character(s) either lose or win against the problems.
- e. Resolution/denouement/conclusion:** This is where the conflict is resolved or concluded. There is a sense of finality and conclusion. The character(s) might live happily ever after.

B. SETTING

It is the point in time and location in which a drama takes place. It is the historical period, geographical place and socio-cultural aspect during which events in a play take place.

In a play, setting is established in several ways:

- ✓ *Notes from the playwright:* The playwright might state clearly the setting.
Ex: The action takes place in a coastal town in southern Norway.
- ✓ *Through the characters' dialogues, costumes and behaviours.*
- ✓ *The stage sets:* This is what the set designer arranges on stage.
Ex: The set may suggest that the characters are poor, or that is a palace or that it is a sea shore.
During the performance, the set may also include props and stage lighting.
- ✓ *Through the stage directions:* The playwright may use stage directions to let the readers or audience know where the action is taking place.

C. CHARACTERS

Characters are people, animals or things that play a part in a play. Characterization is the playwright's presentation and development of the characters in a text.

Characterization is made better in drama by the use of suggestive/symbolic/revealing costume, suggestive names, manners of walking, dialect etc. Sometimes masks are used to enhance characterization. The most important tool for the development of characters in a drama is dialogue.

Like in prose, we can also have the following characters in drama: main characters, minor characters, positive characters, negative characters, ...

In drama, characters' names are written followed by double points. The double points are also followed by the characters dialogues.

Ex: GONGOLO: Which responsibilities have I not shouldered?

KYATE: Buying cooking-pans for your wife.

VII.2. DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

Dramatic techniques are the tools or devices used by a playwright to help the audience understand and enjoy a play. Those dramatic techniques include dialogue, monologue, soliloquy, body language, flashback, asides, entrance, exit, props and costumes.

a. Dialogue

In drama, dialogue refers to a conversation between two characters on a particular subject.

Therefore, dialogue: - makes a play enjoyable and lively.

-reveals the characters to the audience through their words, actions and thoughts.

-creates the tone of the play.

-presents the exposition or cause of conflict.

b. Monologue

It is a long speech by one character in a play to the audience. This speech is intended to be heard by other characters. The audience might be audience within a play [or those who are watching a play]. Monologue can be heard by other characters on stage and they can respond.

c. Soliloquy

This is long speech by one character in a play to himself or herself in order to reveal to the audience his/her thoughts.

d. Body language (gestures & facial expressions)

Body language refers to gestures, postures and facial expressions. They help a person to manifest various physical, mental or emotional states. This way he/she communicates non verbally with others.

Ex:- Kyate smiles when Gongolo agrees to buy the cooking pans.

-Nooding a head.

In theatre and drama, body language is used to convey the mood and emotion with subtlety.

e. Flashback

Flashback is a technique in drama by which an event or a scene that took place before the present time in the play is inserted into the chronological structure of the play.

Therefore, flashback:

-gives insight into a character's current motivation and emotional state. It makes the audience understand why a character behaves in a particular manner.

-shows an event that happened years before the play began which is vitally important for the audience to know in order to fully understand the conflict of mysterious circumstances around which a play revolves.

-enhances suspense in a play which arouses interest and curiosity among the audience.

f. Aside

It is a short comment or speech from a character that is spoken directly to the audience. It is only meant for the audience. It reveals inner thoughts. Asides are shorter than soliloquies, usually one or two lines.

- ✓ An aside gives special information to the audience about the plot and other characters on stage.
 - ✓ It gives better understanding to the audience about the essence of the matter.
 - ✓ Asides also give enjoyable experience to the audience as an actor talks to them directly, drawing them closer to his/her actions and thoughts.
- The similarities between an aside and soliloquy is that a single character speaks directly to himself or audience and no other character can hear the speech.
 - The difference between them is that an aside is shorter while a soliloquy is a longer speech . An aside reveals hidden secrets or judgements whereas the soliloquy reveals motives, inner thoughts or internal struggles going on in the mind of the character.

g. Entrance

Entrance in drama refers to the coming of an actor or other performer on stage.

h. Exit

In drama, exit is the act of going off the stage

i. Props

It refers to any object used on stage or screen during a performance or screen production.

Ex: Stick, water, radio, match, chair, ...

j. Costumes

Costumes refer to any kind of cloth or dress used by actors on stage during a performance.

VII. 3. PURPOSE

In composition, the term *purpose* (also known as the *aim* or *writing purpose*), refers to a person's reason for writing, such as to inform, entertain, explain, or persuade.

Playwrights write plays to achieve particular ends. This is what is referred to as **purpose** in drama. The purpose of a play may for example include:

- a. *Entertain*
- b. *Educate*
- c. *Re-enact history*

VII.4. TYPES OF CHARACTERS**a. Round character**

A round character is a complex and fully developed character. We may relate to this kind of character as a human being since we come to know so much about him or her. The **protagonists** develop with the story and we are able to account for the changes that occur in their lives.

b. Flat character

A flat character is unsophisticated or plain. The story may not reveal so much about a flat character. Flat characters are not central to the story. A flat character may only have 'two' sides, representing only one or two character traits.

c. Stock character

A stock character is one who is easily recognized by readers or audiences from recurrent appearances. He or she is easily recognisable because of his or her flatness. Stock characters tend to be easy targets for parody and criticism.

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UNIT VIII: SUBJECT MATTER, THEME AND MESSAGE**VIII.1. A SUBJECT**

A subject is a topic, which acts as a foundation for a literary work/story. Subject is the inspiration that makes you write anything.

VIII.2. A THEME

A theme can be explained as follow:

- ✓ A theme is an opinion expressed on the subject.
- ✓ It is what a playwright is saying about a certain subject.
- ✓ It is the central/ main idea of the play.
- ✓ It is the playwright's opinion or perspective about a certain issue in society.
- ✓ It is the controlling idea which is continuously developed throughout the play.

- a. Minor theme:** It is an idea that appears in a story briefly or an idea that appears once in a while in a story.
- b. Major theme:** It is the idea that appears repeatedly from the beginning to the end of a play. It refers to an idea that a writer repeats in his/her work making it the most significant idea in a literary work.

How to identify a theme in a play

- ✓ Read and understand it.
- ✓ Write down the play's plot and characterization.
- ✓ Write down the conflicts in the play. -Ask yourself, the most important moment in the work?
-Does the author resolve the conflict? How did the work end?
- ✓ Write down the topic of the play.

VIII.3. A MESSAGE

A message refers to the lesson the playwright wishes to convey to the society through his/her play. There will always be many messages in a single play.

A message can also be explained as follows:

- ✓ A message is what a playwright wants the society to learn from his/her literary work.
- ✓ It is the kind of a lesson that the reader learns after reading the story.
- ✓ It is the moral in the play.
- ✓ It is something the story aims to teach the reader.
- ✓ It is the lesson the playwright wishes the society to learn from his/her play.

..... **The End**