



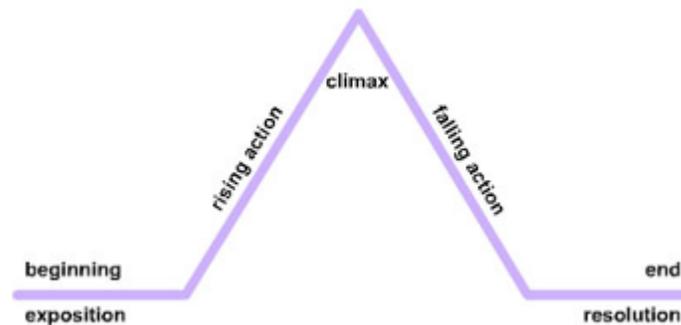
# What is a Plot Diagram? - Definition & Examples

## Lesson Transcript

In this lesson, we will learn what a plot diagram is and how to use it when analyzing a story. We will analyze the story 'Cinderella' using a plot diagram.

## Plot Diagram Defined

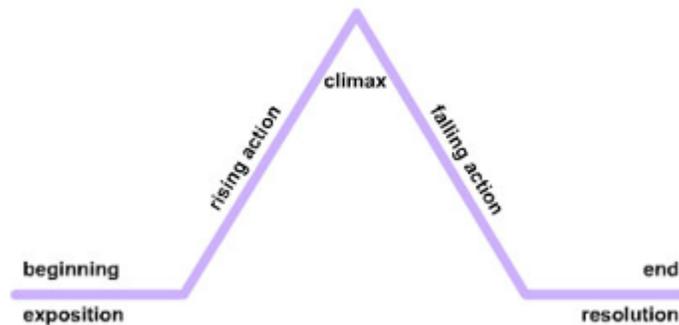
A **plot diagram** is a tool that is commonly used to organize a story into certain segments. Once the parts of the plot diagram are identified, it is easier to analyze the content. A plot diagram also gives a common framework for analyzing and understanding written prose.



1. The *exposition* or the introduction introduces the characters, describes the setting and establishes the problem in the story.
2. The *rising action* is where the suspense builds and the problem gets worse and becomes more complicated. There are often multiple steps or parts in the rising action.
3. The *climax* is the turning point in the story. It is usually the most exciting part in the story and the part that makes the reader want to keep reading.
4. The *falling action* is the events that happen after the climax that lead to a resolution or ending to the story.
5. The *resolution* is the outcome of the story. It is how things end up or turn out for the characters.

## Example: *Cinderella*

Look at the plot diagram below and think about the story, *Cinderella*. Think about how each element in the plot diagram fit with the parts of the story.



### *Exposition or introduction*

Cinderella and her evil stepsisters and stepmother are introduced, and a description of Cinderella's life as a maid inside the castle is given. We also learn about her positive, happy demeanor and about her friendships with the animals who live in and around the castle. The characters and the setting are described, and we learn about Cinderella's sad life.

### *Rising action*

After we learn about Cinderella's life inside the castle, she is invited to a ball. She struggles to clean the house and attend to the needs of her mean stepsisters. She finds time to make her dress only to have it ruined by the stepsisters. Her fairy godmother appears and with a tap of her wand, gives Cinderella a brand new dress and a carriage for the ball. She goes to the ball, dances with the prince and has to leave when the clock strikes twelve. She leaves a glass slipper behind and the prince tries to find her, despite the efforts of her step family to keep her from trying on the slipper.

### *Climax*

Cinderella comes down the stairs and tries on the slipper. Everyone gasps when they realize the slipper fits.

### *Falling action*

Cinderella goes to live with the prince in the castle.

### *Resolution or conclusion*

Cinderella lives happily ever after and forgives her evil step family.

## Lesson Summary

A **plot diagram** is a tool that is commonly used to organize a story into certain segments. Once the parts of the plot diagram are identified, it is easier to analyze the content. After reading the example of a plot diagram with the familiar story *Cinderella*, we can better understand each part of the story.

## Learning Outcomes

At the end of the video, you may find it helpful to try to:

- Define a plot diagram and understand how it helps us analyze written prose

- List the parts of a plot diagram
- Demonstrate your knowledge of how to use the plot diagram with examples