

# 5 Elements of Fiction



Do you like to read short stories or novels? Made-up stories like these are called fiction. Good fiction sounds as if it really happened. (Or at least it sounds as if it *could* happen.) The writer may use events from his or her own life. But they are put together in a way that is not true.

Fictional stories have three basic elements. They are setting, character, and plot. Setting is when and where a story happens. Many popular novels are set in the present. But some go back—or forward—in time. Westerns are often set in the 1800s. Books about King Arthur are set in medieval times. Science fiction may have a future setting. The place of a story can vary too. It may be anywhere from New York to the jungles of Asia to Mars. A long novel may have several settings.

Characters are the people in a story. Most stories have only one or two main characters. (This is true even of long stories.) The writer may tell us what they look like. We also learn about them from how they act. What other characters say about them can help too. Of course, we learn more about main characters than minor ones. If we like the characters, we usually like the story. We want to find out what happens to these people.

Plot is what happens in the story. Usually the main character must deal with a conflict. It may be with another character. (Two brothers are competing in business.) Or it may be because of worries or fears. (A woman is afraid to leave her house.) By the end of the story, the conflict is solved. The main character may have learned something. But the ending may not be happy. A marriage may end. Someone may die. Was the story good anyway? That decision is left for the reader to make.

Main Idea	1	Answer	Score
Mark the <i>main idea</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M	15
Mark the statement that is <i>too broad</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B	5
Mark the statement that is <i>too narrow</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	5
a. The basic parts of fiction are plot, character, and setting.		<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. There are various ways to learn about characters in a story.		<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Short stories and novels are called fiction.		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Score 15 points for each correct answer. \_\_\_\_\_ Score

<b>Subject Matter</b>	2	This passage is mainly about <input type="checkbox"/> a. elements that are part of every fictional story. <input type="checkbox"/> b. why people enjoy reading fiction. <input type="checkbox"/> c. characteristics of science fiction. <input type="checkbox"/> d. differences between novels and short stories.	_____
<b>Supporting Details</b>	3	The setting in fiction includes <input type="checkbox"/> a. time, place, and characters. <input type="checkbox"/> b. time and place. <input type="checkbox"/> c. the things that happen. <input type="checkbox"/> d. reasons for the conflict.	_____
<b>Conclusion</b>	4	Conflict in a story can be the result of <input type="checkbox"/> a. the length of the story. <input type="checkbox"/> b. the writer's use of description. <input type="checkbox"/> c. an unhappy ending. <input type="checkbox"/> d. things in a character's mind as well as things that are outside.	_____
<b>Clarifying Devices</b>	5	The writer has organized this passage <input type="checkbox"/> a. by defining and explaining three terms. <input type="checkbox"/> b. in chronological order. <input type="checkbox"/> c. by telling about several famous novels. <input type="checkbox"/> d. by describing possible story settings.	_____
<b>Vocabulary in Context</b>	6	The word <u>medieval</u> means <input type="checkbox"/> a. in the future. <input type="checkbox"/> b. very beautiful. <input type="checkbox"/> c. in the Middle Ages. <input type="checkbox"/> d. hard to hear.	_____

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here \_\_\_\_\_ Total  
 and on the graph on page 214. \_\_\_\_\_ Score