



ELA Virtual Learning

Creative Writing

May 14, 2020



Creative Writing

Lesson: Thurs., May 14

Objective/Learning Target: Students will learn how action contributes to structure.

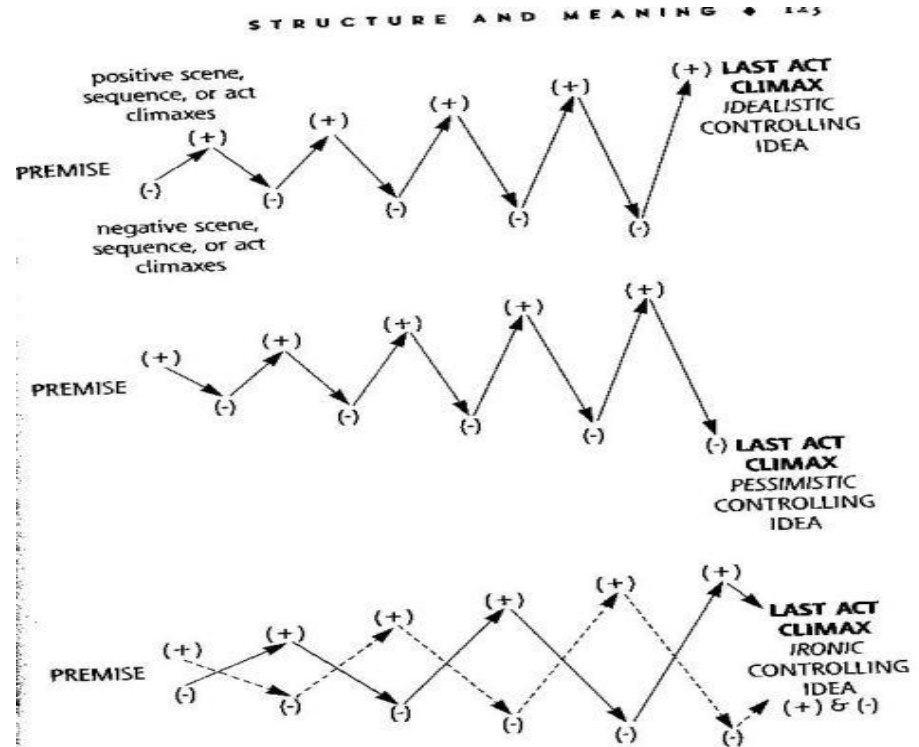


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Review: We've learned before that characters must have motivation, and the obstacles (or conflict) thwarting that character's desire propels the story forward. When she makes progress toward her goal, we consider that a net positive change. Any kind of setback would be considered negative.

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Review (cont'd): According to Robert McKee, the final “value” in the story structure determines its controlling idea-idealistic, pessimistic, or ironic. This helps us determine the underlying value of the story.



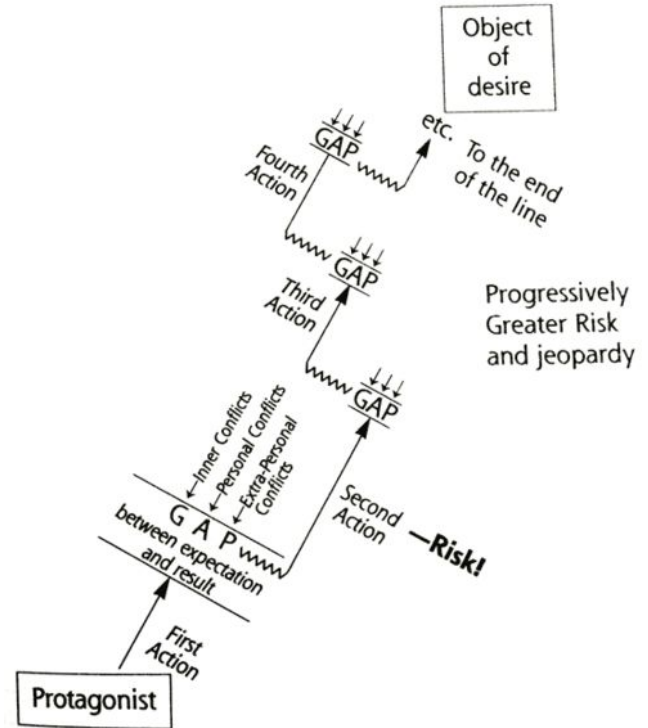


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Warm-up: Watch these clips from the film *Up*. At this point in the film, a young scout named Russell goes off on his own to save a rare bird named Kevin. Carl, who has fulfilled his quest to move his house to Paradise Falls, has to choose whether to stay or go help Russell and Kevin. Both clips contain conflict; however, one can be characterized as *internal* conflict and the other *external*.

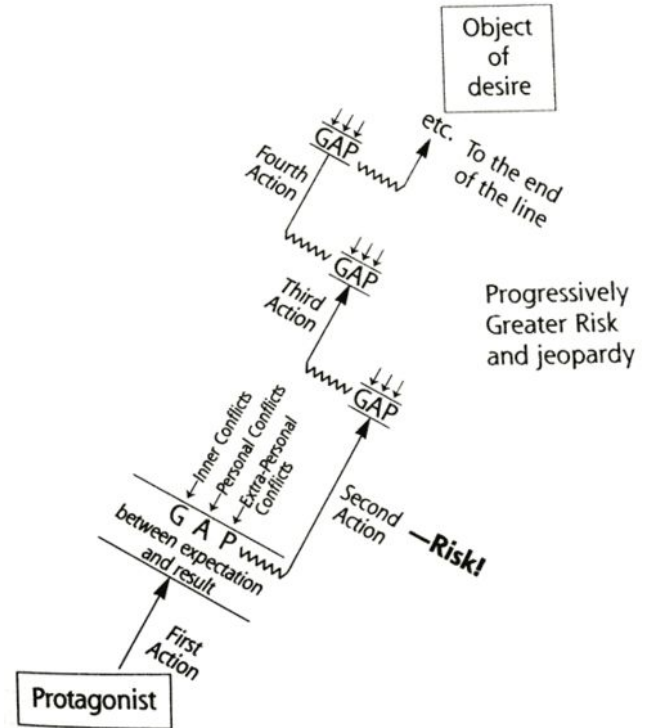
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Lesson: Obstacles, whether or not your character is successful in navigating them, propel the story forward. Think of their attempts in terms of the story's structure--scenes that dramatize their journey toward the "object of desire."



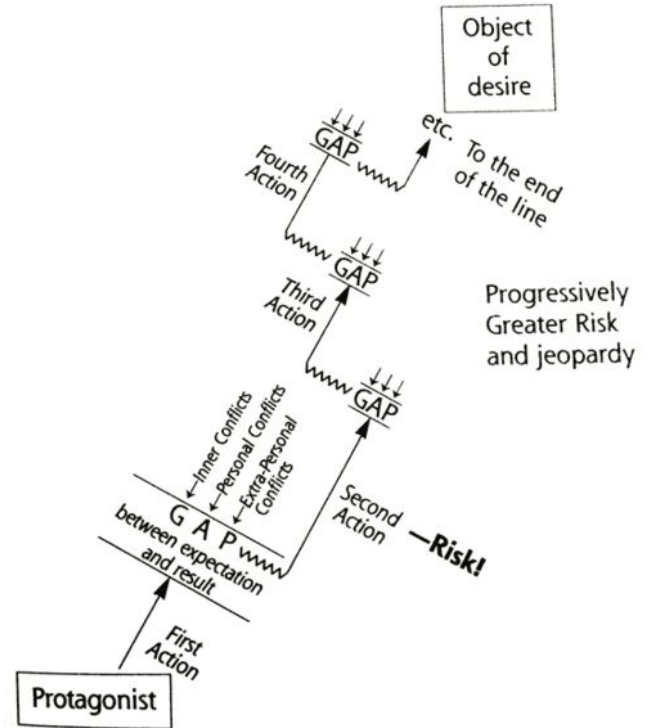
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Lesson (cont'd): In *Up*, Carl faces a number of challenges as he journeys toward Paradise Falls (including the presence of Russell). When he accomplishes his goal, but Russell is in trouble, he faces an *internal* conflict about whether to help him or stay put.



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Lesson (cont'd): Once he decides to help (spurred on by a note from his late wife to have a *new* adventure), he launches into external conflict--saving Russell from those intent to harm the boy.





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Practice: Using the sitcom/television series you've been studying, select an episode and chart the main character's actions (using the graphic in the previous slides as a model). When the protagonist meets an obstacle, how do her actions reveal internal conflict? In your journal, reflect on what we learn about that character based on how they *react* to conflict (both internal and external) as well as what the outcome says about the show's underlying value/theme.



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Additional Practice/Resources:

[How to Become a Television Comedy Writer](#)

[Screenwriting Glossary](#)

[Screenplay Formatter Add-On for Google Docs](#)