

# Creating an Outline for a Short Story

Once you have ideas for all the elements of your story (setting, characters, etc.), you should outline your plot before beginning writing.

As you may know, we use Roman numerals for an outline. In this case, rather than each numeral standing for a paragraph, use each for a section of the plot:

- I. Exposition
- II. Rising action
- III. Climax
- IV. Falling action
- V. Resolution

The exposition tells the reader what the world and characters are like before the story really begins. The rising action will probably be the longest part of your story. Here is where your main character tries to overcome the obstacles keeping them from their goal. The climax is when the character overcomes their greatest obstacle (or fails to). The falling action is what happens as a direct result of that climax. And the resolution is where your reader finds out what has changed because of everything that has happened in the story.

A more fleshed out outline might look like this:

- I. Exposition
  - A. Introduce Red Riding Hood and her mother
  - B. Granma is sick, so Red has to take her food.
  - C. Warning from mother not to talk to anyone
- II. Rising Action
  - A. Red starts on her journey.
  - B. Wolf sees her.
  - C. Red forgets her mother's warning, tells wolf where she is going.
  - D. Wolf races ahead to grandmother's.
  - E. Wolf eats grandmother and waits for Red.
- III. Climax
  - A. Red arrives at grandmother's. She is fooled by wolf and eaten.
  - B. Her cries alert the woodsman.
  - C. The woodsman kills the wolf.
  - D. He saves Red and her grandmother.
- IV. Falling Action
  - A. Red and her grandmother are safe.
  - B. They invite the woodsman to share their food.
- V. Resolution
  - A. Red realizes the need to remember her mother's advice.



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