

Name _____

Structure and Meaning

STRUCTURE 1: THE MILIEU STORY

The milieu is the world in which the story takes place. The milieu can be a planet or a universe, a society, a family, a country, etc. Every story has a milieu, but a writer structures a story around the milieu when it is the thing the storyteller cares about most.

STRUCTURE 2: THE IDEA STORY

In an idea story, a character is the vehicle through which an idea is discovered or revealed. The idea story begins with a question and ends when the question is answered.

STRUCTURE 3: THE CHARACTER STORY

A character story is focused on a character's growth, transformation, or, sometimes, downfall. It usually begins at a time when the character is unhappy, impatient or angry enough to be spurred into some action, which is also the beginning of the process of change. It ends when the character has changed, or has given up and returned to where he or she began.

STRUCTURE 4: THE EVENT STORY

The event story seeks to fix some external problem; something is wrong, and the characters need to set it right. The story begins with the main character's awareness of this problem, and ends when a new order is established. Sometimes, but rarely, the story ends when the old order is restored when all forces of order are destroyed.

DIRECTIONS: Compare and contrast the two stories that you just read. Identify the structure of each story, and briefly describe how the structure of the story contributes to its meaning.

