



Story Structure and Author Intention

Writers structure stories in different ways, depending on their reasons for writing them. The following are the four most common ways to structure a story. A **milieu** structure focuses on 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. 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. In a **character** story the focus is 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. 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: Consider the two stories you have just read. How is each one structured? Fill out the chart below.

TITLE:

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<p>Which structure does the story use?</p>		
<p>How do you know?</p>		
<p>What meaning do you think that the writer wants you to take from this story?</p>		