

B.A. First Year

What Are the Elements of Prose?

The elements of prose include characters, setting, plot, point of view, theme and mood. Taken together, these components create a complete literary work, whether a novel or a short story. Not all elements must be present in a piece of prose.

Interactions between characters are typically the forces that drive the story forward. There can be many types of characters in prose, including complex characters who change throughout the course of the story and simpler characters who serve a specific purpose.

Setting is where the story takes place. Setting typically functions in two distinct senses: physical and chronological. Physical refers to where the events actually take place and chronological refers to when they take place.

Plot is the sequence of events that drives the story forward. Plot almost always involves some sort of conflict, whether between different characters, characters and events, or characters and themselves.

Point of view indicates the perspective from which the story is told. Typically, prose is written in either first person, in which a character narrates events firsthand using "I," or third person, in which the protagonist's actions are narrated using "he" or "she."

Mood is the feeling the story creates using the preceding elements. A mood may be uneasy, optimistic, uncertain or anywhere in between.

Theme is the overall message expressed in the writing. The writer uses all of the other elements to convey the theme to readers.

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