

## Definition of Novel

The word novel derives from the Italian word novella, which means a new story or a new thing. A number of critics have defined the word novel in a different way. Dr. Tillyard defines novel as “a novel is a not too unorganized, fictitious narrative in prose of at least, say, 20,000 words.” W.E Williams defines it as “a long narrative in prose detailing the actions of fictitious people.” In simple words, we can easily define the novel as a long story in prose. Novel is not a short story in prose; instead, it is actually an extensive and an illustrated account of series of events that happened right through the life of a character. It is an in-depth and all-inclusive autobiography of a character in the novel.

Whatever may be the meaning of the novel, it is apparent that novel is a picture-perfect image of the time of the writer. It is much the same as a mirror, which reflects the picture of a thing put against it. Additionally, a novel reflects the patterns, eccentricities and attributes of the contemporary age with true colours.

## What Critics Say about Novel?

“It is only a novel... or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language” Jane Austen

“People wonder why the novel is the most popular form of literature; people wonder why it is read more than books of science or books of metaphysics. The reason is very simple; it is merely that the novel is more true than they are.” G.K. Chesterton

The novel is the one bright book of life. Books are not life. They are only tremulations on the ether. But the novel as a tremulation can make the whole man alive tremble.”

D.H. Lawrence

## Elements of a Novel

There are several elements, which build the edifice of a novel. All of these elements are integral parts of any novel. Without these elements, no writing work might be incorporated in the realm of a novel. Following are some of the elements of a novel:

## Characterization in a Novel

Characterization is an essential element of a novel. It is the craft of creating characters in a novel or drama. The author unveils the personality of the character through characterization. There are two different types of characterization: Direct Characterization and Indirect Characterization. In direct characterization, the author straightforwardly lets us know about the identity of the character. He can make use of different descriptive words to expose the disposition of the character. Identity incorporates many things i.e., name, location, relationship, age, profession, mindset,

behaviour , etc. . Look at the following examples:

He is undaunted, fearless and above all an honest man.

She is the queen of beauty and an embodiment of feminine virtue.

In the afore-mentioned lines, the modifiers applied undoubtedly uncover the identity of the character.

In indirect characterization, the author employs multiple techniques to bring out the personality of the character. He uses his behaviour, speech, action, and appearance to reveal the personality of the character. Take for example, the speech delivered by Antony after the murder of Julius Caesar in William Shakespeare's tragedy Julius Caesar, entirely unwraps the unique personality of Antony. It shows us what sort of person he is. It indicates his capacity to motivate the people by his speech to rise in rebellion against the murderers of Julius Caesar. Likewise, soliloquies of Hamlet in William Shakespeare's great tragedy Hamlet expose the personality of Hamlet. It shows us philosophical bent of mind of Hamlet. Take a look at his soliloquy, wherein the personality of Hamlet is clearly visible and understandable:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:

Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer

The Slings and Arrows of outrageous Fortune,

Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles,

And by opposing end them: to die, to sleep

No more; and by a sleep, to say we end

The Heart-ache, and the thousand Natural shocks

That Flesh is heir to?

(Hamlet by Shakespeare)

In Jane Austen's novels, she is using direct characterization to reveal her characters. Her characters reveal themselves through dialogues and actions, while George Eliot used indirect characterization to lay bare various traits of his characters. Both of these techniques assist the author to create his characters.

Every author needs to create a number of characters in his novel to help out him develop his story. These kinds are: Flat Characters and Round Characters. Flat characters are those characters, who don't change throughout the story, while round characters are those characters, who change throughout the story. Round characters are of immense importance in any sort of novel. They are the one, who advance the story ahead.

It was E.M Forster, who distinguished the round characters from flat characters in his lecture Aspects of the Novel. Charles Dickens is a great example in this regard. He has presented many round and flat characters in his novels. Look at his novel Great Expectations, wherein Mr. Joe doesn't change throughout the novel, while, Mr. Pip, who undergoes many changes, is certainly an exact example of round character. Mr. Pip forgets his humble origin and doesn't want to meet Mr. Joe, who is his great friend and helper.

### Plot in a Novel

As outlined by Aristotle, "Plot is the arrangement of incidents." There is a difference between plot and story. E .M Forster says, "The King died and the queen died", is a story. "The King died and the queen died of grief" is a plot. Plot is a story or the foundation of the novel. It is an essential element of a novel. Plot is like a pillar of the building. In case we remove the pillar, the whole building will certainly collapse. Similarly, without a plot the structure of a novel is impossible.

Typically, plot of every novel consists of Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action and Dénouement. These are important elements of a plot, which are discussed below:

### Exposition

Exposition is the very first phase of the plot. Every single novel starts with the introduction of a number of characters. These characters interact with each other and advance the story head Rising Action

Rising action is the consequence of exposition. Action of the novel steadily moves forward and goes on till it reaches up to its peak, often referred to as Climax of a plot. It is a series of events, animosity, conflicts, and adversary. It is additionally labeled as complication.

### Climax

Climax is the most essential stage of a plot. It is actually the heightened peak of Rising Action. The culmination of Rising Action is the starting point of Climax. In

almost any novel, this phase is considered the most poignant, turbulent, thought provoking and also inciting position in the plot. In Charles Dickens' Great Expectations, the climax of the novel is the identity of the benefactor of Pip. Pip's understanding of his real benefactor is the climax in the novel.

### Falling Action

The culmination of Climax is the onset of Falling Action in the plot. In a plot, each time the action gets reversed and the main character undergoes a significant change, then it is the Falling Action of a plot.

### Dénouement

Dénouement is also called Resolution. It is the final stage of plot. It brings an end to the plot and thereby settles the long lasting conflict.

Now let's move to discuss some types of plots in a novel. William Foster-Harris, in his book, The Basic Patterns of Plot, has discussed the following three types of plot:

### A Happy Ending Plot

As the very name reveals its connotation, it is the plot which has a happy ending. Charles Dickens' Great Expectations is an example in this regard. Pip and Estella are united at the end of the novel after having passed through many tribulations and hardships.

### An Unhappy Ending Plot

A novel, which has an unhappy ending, is referred to as An Unhappy Ending Plot. In this type of plot, usually, the main character sacrifices his life for the sake of a great cause. This cause may be anything, but not less in its magnitude and importance.

### Inconclusive Plot

Inconclusive plot is a plot, wherein the ending of the novel is ambiguous.

### Dialogue in Novel

Dialogue is a key element of a novel. Dialogue may be defined as a written conversation between two or more people in a novel. Dialogue seems to have many functions. It not simply moves the story of the novel ahead, but additionally discloses the personality of the character. It offers us an awesome piece of information about the setting, time, age and location of the characters. It also provides us a good chance to get insight into the mindset of various characters. Their words and intonation lay

bare the personality of characters .

Without dialogue, the entire structure of a novel sounds like a monotonous essay. It enhances the flow of thoughts and provides you with a sort of pleasure. The readers won't get sick and tired, in case the text is being presented in the form of dialogue. Merely prose won't make up the novel. Novel is not an essay; it is a representation of real life. For this reason; dialogue is extraordinarily important in a novel. According to W.H Hudson, dialogue must fulfill the following requirements:

It should be an organic element and an inseparable part of the novel, and should really contribute, directly, either to the movement of the plot or the elucidation of the characters in their relation with it.

Dialogue, to be really and fully effective, should be natural, appropriate, and dramatic. The novelist should take care, that the language employed in conversation is in keeping with the personality of the speaker and suitable to the situation in which it occurs. The novel reflects life as it is actually lived and if the language is not in harmony with the character and talent of the speaker, the novel will become unrealistic.

Poll

What is an important element of a novel?

Characterization

Plot

Theme

Setting

Point of View

VoteSee results

Point of View in a Novel

Point of view is usually an important element of a novel. Point of view is the mode of narration of the author to portray the events in a novel. It is the utilization of pronouns to express the point of view of the author. Usually, there are three types of points of views: First Person, Second Person & Third Person.

First Person Point of View

First Person Point of View is the mode of narration, whereby the author utilizes first person pronouns to narrate the entire story of the novel. It is the use of pronouns I, me, us & us. In this particular point of view, the narrator is normally the author himself, or any other character like hero, heroine, who tells the story. It really is an important and also natural method of narrating the story. The First Person Point of View provides credibility to the story of the author. The author himself tells the story to his readers, which gives rise to an impression that the story, the author is telling, is based on realities and there is absolutely no element of artificiality. Charles Dickens' Great

Expectations an example in this respect. In this novel, the hero, Pip, is telling the story. Have a look at the following example taken from *Great Expectations*:

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

(*Great Expectations*: By Charles Dickens)

### Second Person Point of View

Second Person Point of View is the mode of narration, whereby the author employs 2nd person pronouns to narrate the story of the novel. This point of view is also called Objective Point of View. It is very occasionally employed by novelists because it is the most challenging point of view. The author needs to use the pronouns you, your and yours to take the story ahead. In this particular point of view, the author turns out to be a spectator. He barely watches the action of the story. Look at the following example taken from *Bright Lights, Big City* by Jay McInerney:

You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning. How did you get here? It was your friend Tad Allagash. Your brain is rushing with Brazilian marching powder. You are talking to a girl with a shaved head. You want to meet the kind of girl who isn't going to be here.

(*Bright Lights, Big City* by Jay McInerney)

### Third Person Point of View

Third Person Point of View is the mode of narration, whereby the author makes use of third person pronouns to tell the story. The author utilizes the pronouns he, she, it, and they. It is more widely used by authors on account of having flexibility in narrating the story of the novel. The novelist has many choices to obtain information about any character or event. It is the point of view, which gives us insight in the personality of any character. That is why; it is also called Omniscient Point of View. Look at the following example taken from Jan Austin's novel *Pride & Prejudice*:

Sir William had been delighted with him. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and, to crown the whole, he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love; and very lively hopes of Mr. Bingley's heart were entertained.

(*Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austen)

## Setting in a Novel

Setting is yet another compelling element of a novel. Setting means the location, where the events of the novel have been taken place. It might be one place or it might covers more than one places like in Henry Fielding's novel *The History of Tom Jones*. Setting generates a visual sketch in the minds of readers, which in turn, causes it to be easier for the readers to have an understanding of the environment around the characters. An ambiguous and non-realistic setting can mar the quality of a novel. The novelist has got to showcase the location to the readers like a mirror reflecting an image. The more vivid the description of the setting, the more the reader will grasp the meaning of the novel.

Setting encompasses quite a few factors like weather, geography, socio-economic status, surroundings etc. These elements have an effect on the entire atmosphere of the novel. The weather conditions give the reader an insight into the emotional conditions of the characters . You might have observed the dreary and scary sounds of wolves in *Wuthering Heights*, which give us an impression how the *Wuthering Heights* is . It reveals the gloomy atmosphere of the novel.

## Theme in a Novel

Theme is the crux of the matter that the author wants to explain through the events of the novel. It is the principal idea of the novel. The entire story of the novel revolves around one main idea and the author's purpose is almost always to make aware the reader about his main idea. Without having a clear idea in your mind, you won't be able to compose a stunning novel. Every novel and every story has a theme, which the author would like to elucidate. Consequently, theme has assumed a key role in a novel. In Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, the novelist wants to prove that money is nothing in comparison with love. Money is the only thing that brings about horrible changes in the personality of Pip. Wealth turns Pip into a name-dropper and he doesn't want to meet Mr. Joe as he is unsocial, rustic and rural bumpkin. He forgets his friendship, affection, behaviour and treatment, when he was a little child and he had no one except Mr. Joe.