

*The Writing Center & Reading/Study Skills Lab presents:*

## Tip Sheet on: Elements of Narration

The narrative, as defined by Lee Brandon in Paragraphs and Essays, “is an account of an incident or a series of incidents that make up a complete and significant action.” The various elements of narration include:

**Characters** – these are the people involved in the story. The main character or hero in the story is the *protagonist*. The character that clashes with or goes against the protagonist is the *antagonist*.

**Conflict** – this is the struggle, tension or opposition developed in the story. The conflict develops between one of the following:

1. the protagonist and the antagonist
2. the protagonist and the environment or nature
3. the protagonist and a group
4. the protagonist and him/herself

**Plot** – this is what happens in the story; it is the series of events that forms the action. The plot is arranged in a chronological (time) order and includes the following:

1. ***the rising action***, where events lead to increased tension
2. ***the climax***, where the tension reaches its peak or most important point before the conflict is resolved
3. ***the falling action***, where events wind down to the story’s conclusion

**Signal Words** – words that give order and time reference to the story. Examples of signal words include: first, next, then, before, on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1991.

**Theme** – the main idea or ideas developed in the story. As author Brandon explains, the theme “is what the story means in terms of human nature, the human condition, one individual, or particular institutions.”

**MCC offers a *Writing Center & Reading/Study Skills Lab* at both the Bedford and Lowell campuses. Tutoring is available weekdays and some evenings, at no charge. Schedules are posted on the doors. Drop in or make an appointment.**

***In Bedford:* AR 214, Tel: 781-280-3727 or 3728.**

***In Lowell:* City Campus Room 406, Tel: 978-656-3364 or 3365.**