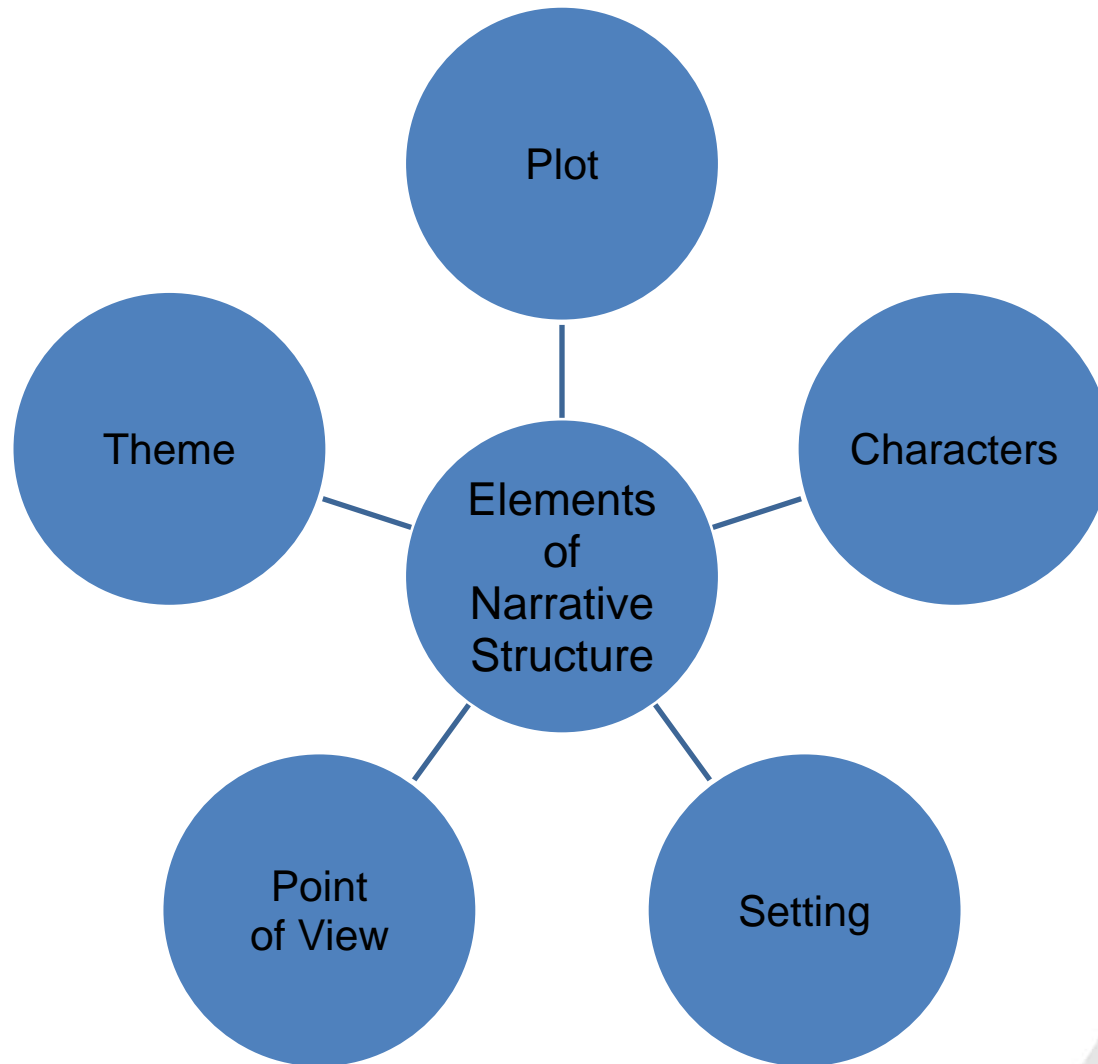


Narrative Text Structure

“A key to comprehending narrative is a sense of plot, theme, characters, and events, and how they relate....Teaching students to attend to the organization of a well-formed story...improves not only comprehension but also the quality and creativity of stories the students compose.”

- Fitzgerald & Spiegel, 1983

5 Elements of Narrative Structure



Plot

- Sequence of events involving characters in conflict situations.
- *Plot* is based on the goals of one or more characters and the processes they go through to attain these goals.
- Beginning, middle, end
OR
- Introduction, problem, and resolution





Plot Development

1. **A problem:** Usually presented at the beginning of the story
2. **Roadblocks:** Throughout the story, characters face roadblocks as they attempt to solve the problem
3. **The high point:** When the problem is about to be resolved
4. **Solution:** The problem is solved and the roadblocks are overcome

Plot Story Frame

In this story, a problem begins when _____

After that, _____

Next _____

Then _____

The problem is solved when _____

The story ends when _____

Help students understand the plot

- Look for the information included in the introduction of a story: time, place, circumstances, main characters.
- Look for the series of incidents where main characters go about achieving goals.
- Call attention to how the goals are achieved or not achieved in the conclusion, and the high point of the action.
- Make time lines of the story.



Characters

- The people or personified animals who are involved in the story.
- Fully developed characters have many character traits
 - Appearance
 - Action
 - Dialogue
 - Monologue



Character Analysis Frame

In the story _____ by
_____ the major character is
_____ who is _____

Another main character is _____

The problem that the major character faces is
that _____

The story ends with _____

The lesson I learned from reading was that _____

Help students identify characters

- List characters, noting physical and personality traits.
- Point out how authors reveal personality traits through character thoughts, behavior or language.
- Identify the main characters' goals and how these goals guide the story.



Setting



Components of setting:

- Location
- Weather
- Time Period
- Time of Day

Setting Frame

This story takes place _____

I know this because the author uses the words

Other clues that show when and where the story take place are _____

Help students identify key aspects of setting

- Find words and phrases that signal the time and place a story occurs.
- Read the beginnings of stories aloud noting the clues for time and place.



Point of View



First Person

- Story is told through eyes of one person
- Reader experiences story as the narrator views it
- Found mostly in picture books

Third Person

- Used so readers can know the viewpoint of one character
- The author is godlike: sees and knows all
- Found mostly in chapter books

Theme

- The underlying meaning of a story.
- Truths about human nature.
 - Characters' emotions and feelings
 - They can be explicit (stated openly) or implicit (suggested)

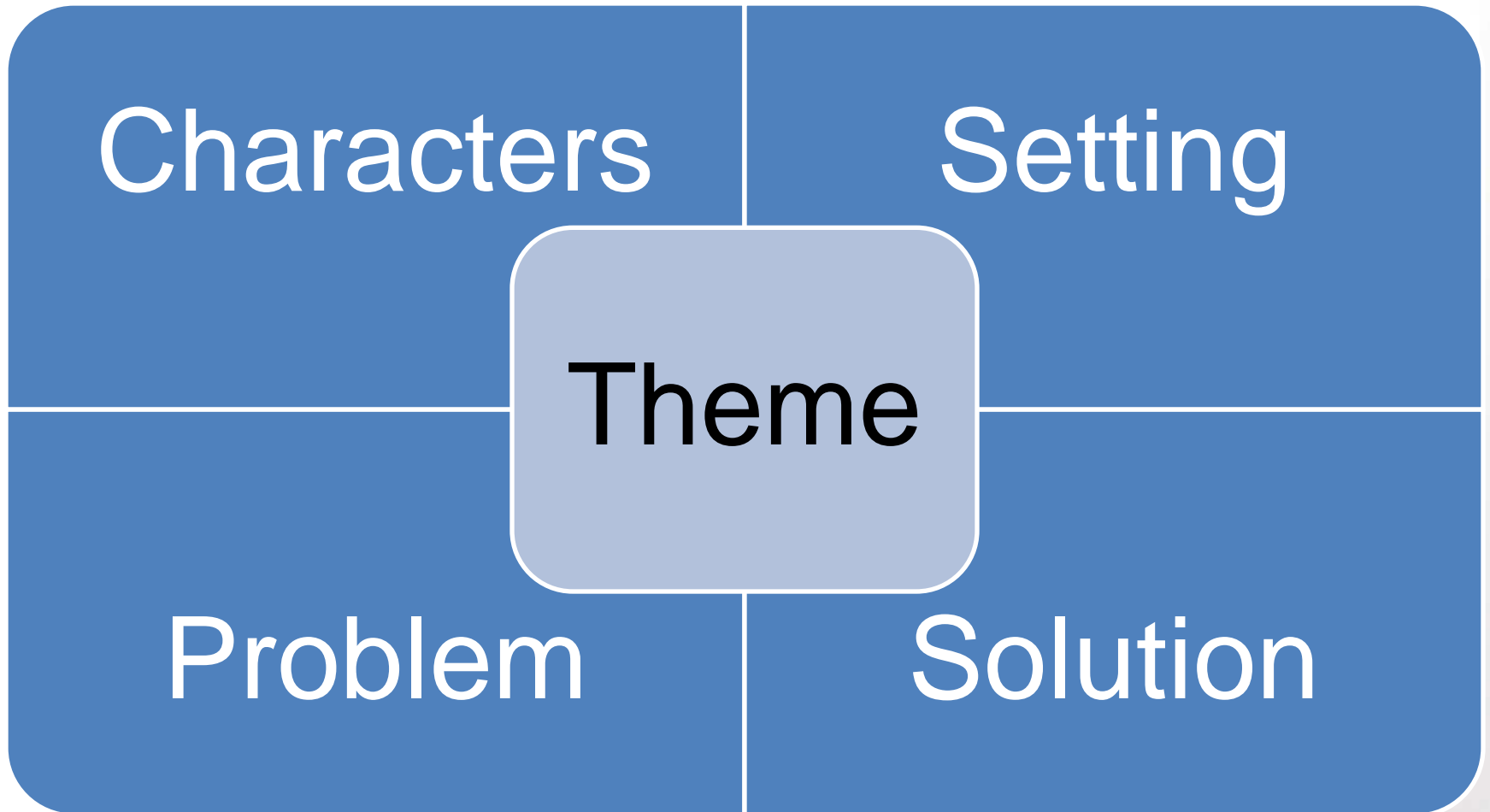


Strategies to Teach Narrative Text Structure

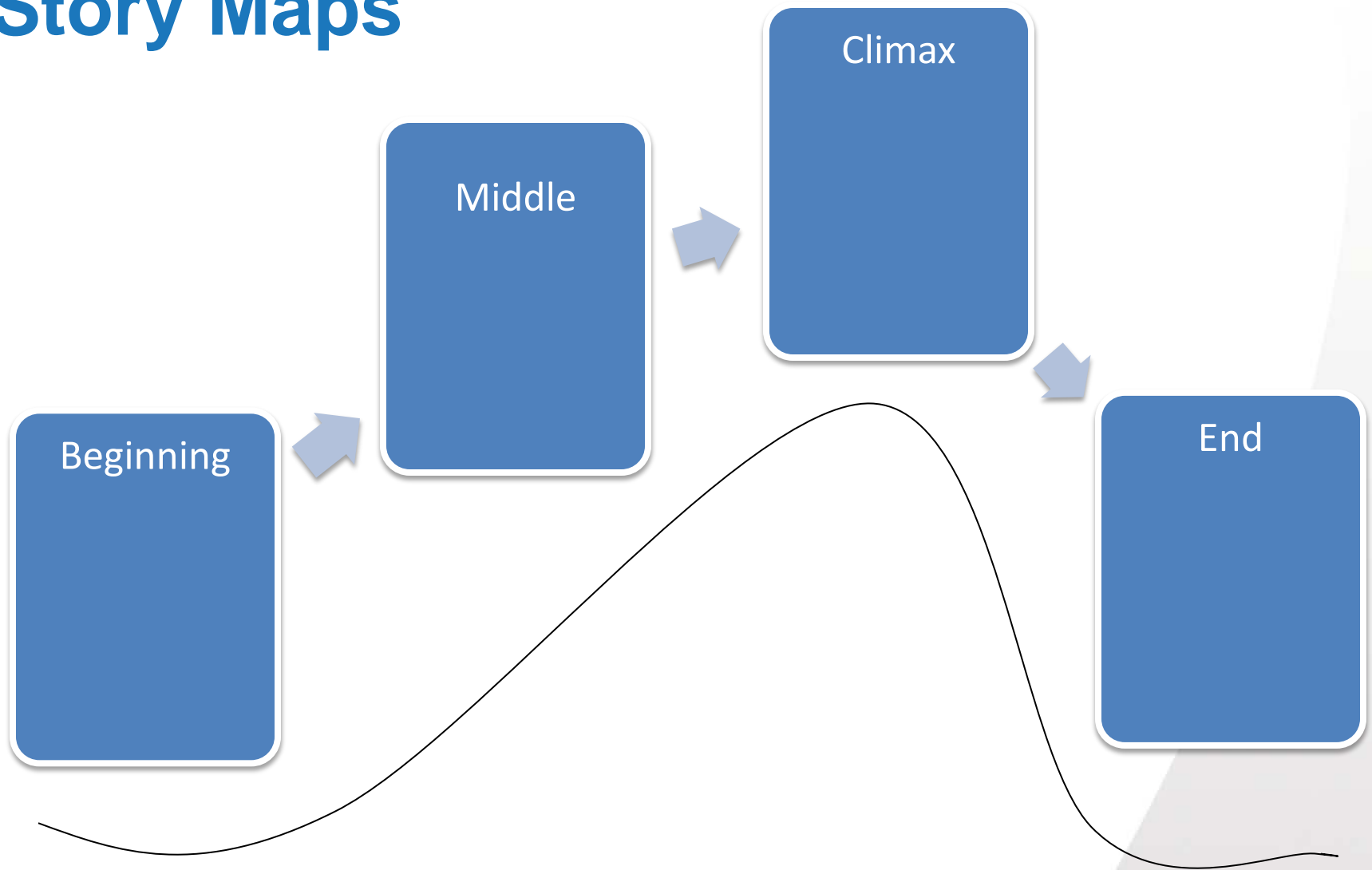
- Story Map Graphic Organizers
- Probable Passages
- Story Impressions



Story Maps



Story Maps



Probable Passages

- Probable passages is a strategy that encourages students to predict the content of selections to be read.
- They create a predictive passage and then revise it based on their understanding of key elements of story structure.

Probable Passage Template

Name _____ Date _____

Probable Passages Concept Frame

Setting Character Problem Solution Ending

Passage Form

The story takes place _____.

_____ is a character in the story who _____.

A problem occurs when _____.

After that, _____.

Next, _____.

The problem is solved when _____.

The story ends with _____.

Step 1: Activating Prior Knowledge

- Ask students to identify story elements from previous books they have read
 - Where and when did the story take place?
 - What happened as a result of the character's actions
- Have students discuss how the characteristics of the story helped them to understand the story
 - How did you learn about the characters?
 - How did you gather information about the setting?

Step 2: Before Reading Word Categorization

- Predetermine terms that are significant to students' comprehension of the story
 - Relate to elements of the story
 - Unknown words
- Discuss what the words mean and how they are related
- Students collaborate and place the words under the correct frame

Teacher Selected Key Terms from *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes

- Chrysanthemum
- school
- Victoria
- unhappy
- perfect
- dreadful
- tease
- flower
- parents
- Mrs. Twinkle
- name
- baby

Key Terms from *Chrysanthemum* Categorized by Story Elements

| Setting | Character | Problem | Solution | Ending |
|---------|--|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| school | Chrysanthemum Mrs. Twinkle Parents Victoria | dreadful unhappy tease | perfect name | flower Baby |

Step 3: Before Reading Completion of Story Frame

- Students now apply their understanding of story grammar by filling in the story passage frame using the categorized terms
- Be sure to model and think aloud to scaffold the process for students

Sample Before Reading Story Frame for *Chrysanthemum*

The story takes place at home after school.

Chrysanthemum is a character in the story who is dreadfully unhappy because she is being teased.

A problem occurs when Chrysanthemum goes to play with her friend Victoria.

After that, her parents tell her she should be doing her homework for Mrs. Twinkle.

Next, Chrysanthemum and Victoria try to come up with a name for her baby sister.

The problem is solved when they decide to go outside and play. They see pretty flowers and decide it would be perfect to name the baby after one of the flowers.

The story ends with the girls deciding to name the baby Daisy.

Step 4: Read the Selected Text

- Students read the selected text and make continuous comparisons between their predictions and what actually happens in the story

Step 5: After Reading Revision of the Story Frame Example

The story takes place at school.

Chrysanthemum is a character in the story who loves her name and thinks it is absolutely perfect because her parents tell her so.

A problem occurs when Chrysanthemum goes to school and Victoria and the other students tease her and tell her she is named after a flower.

After that, she thinks her name is dreadful and she is unhappy with her name.

Next, Chrysanthemum meets the new music teacher, Mrs. Twinkle.

The problem is solved when Mrs. Twinkle tells the class that she is also named after a flower, a delphinium, and if she has a baby girl, she will name her Chrysanthemum.

The story ends with Chrysanthemum thinking her name is not dreadful, but absolutely perfect.

Story Impressions

1. Provide introduction: “Today we’re going to make up what we think this story could be about.”
2. Direct students to the list of key concepts by saying, “Here are some clues about the story we’re going to read. We’re going to use these clues to write our own version of the story. After that, we’ll read the story together to see if the author had ideas similar to ours.”
3. After student read through the list of clues, brainstorm and record how the ideas might connect.
4. Using the brainstormed ideas, a class story is developed that ties together the clues.
5. The students read the author’s actual story and discuss how their story compares.

Sample Story Impression Word List for *Make Way for Ducklings* by McCloskey

Mr. & Mrs. Mallard

Public garden

Peanuts

Hatched

Highway

Family of Ducks

Policeman

Ducklings

Swim

Waddled

Speeding Cars

Live

Review



You have learned about the various narrative text structures and explored some possible graphic organizers and strategies for teaching these text structures.

Your Turn!

Now ask yourself:

- What are the common text structures for narrative text?
- What are some effective ways to teach students the organization of narrative text?



Check for Understanding

- What are the common text structures for narrative text?
 - Plot, characters, setting, point of view, theme
- What are some effective ways to teach students the organization of narrative text?
 - Story map graphic organizer, Probable Passage, Story Impressions

