

Narrative

Narrative

- Narrative is the telling of a movie's story.
- Not all movies tell a story, but any type of movie can tell one.
- In telling a movie's story, filmmakers decide what to show and what not to show, how to dress characters and decorate sets, how to direct actors, how to use sound and music, and so on.



Atonement (2007)

Telling the Story

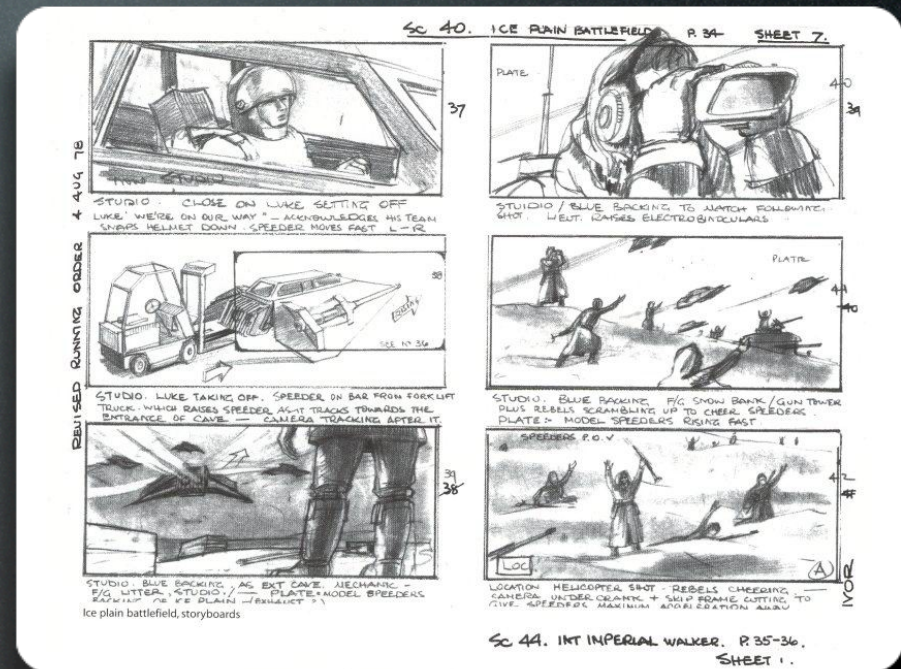
- Screenwriters are responsible for creating a movie's story--either from scratch or adapting it from another format
- A treatment is an outline of the action that briefly describes the essential ideas and structure for the film.
- A treatment is later developed into a rough draft screenplay.



Juno (2007)

Telling the Story

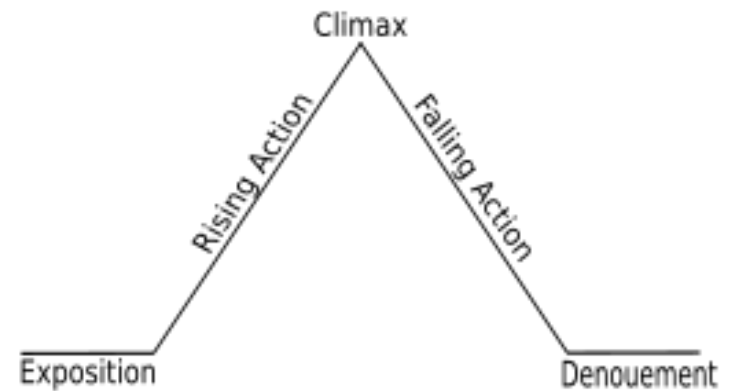
- A storyboard is a graphic representation of the director's conception of the film.
- a shooting script breaks down shots by location, setting, type, and editing between shots.



Star Wars Storyboard

Five-Part Dramatic Structure

- Exposition
- Rising action
- Climax
- Falling action
- Denouement



Story and Plot

- A movie's story consists of (1) all the narrative events that are explicitly presented on the screen plus (2) all the events that are implicit or that we infer to have happened but are not explicitly presented.
- A movie's plot is a structure for presenting everything we see and hear in a film: (1) the diegetic events arranged in a certain order plus (2) nondiegetic material.

Diegetic

- Diegetic Elements:
The total world of the story--the events, characters, objects, settings, and sounds that form the world in which the story occurs.



There Will Be Blood (2007)

Nondiegetic

- Nondiegetic Elements:
The things we see and hear on the screen but that come from outside the world of the story (including background music, titles and credits, or voiceover comment from an omniscient narrator).



There Will Be Blood

Order

- Unlike story order, which necessarily flows chronologically (as does life), plot order can be manipulated so that events are presented in nonchronological sequences that emphasize importance or meaning.



Pulp Fiction (1994)

Events: Hubs

- Hubs are major events or branching points in the plot structure that force characters to choose between or among alternate paths.



Lion King (1994)

Events: Satellites

- Satellites are minor plot events that add texture and complexity to characters and events, but are not essential elements within the narrative.



Lion King (1994)

Duration

- Story duration is the amount of time that the implied story takes to occur. [1 week breakup]
- Plot duration is the elapsed time of those events within the story that the film explicitly presents (in other words, the elapsed time of the plot). [4 days]
- Screen duration is the movie's time onscreen. [2 hours]



Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004)

Duration: Summary Relationship

- Summary relationship is one in which screen duration is shorter than story duration (accomplished through editing).



Titanic (1997)

Duration: Real Time

- Real time is denoted by a direct correspondence of screen duration to story duration.



Time Code (2000)

Duration: Stretch Relationship

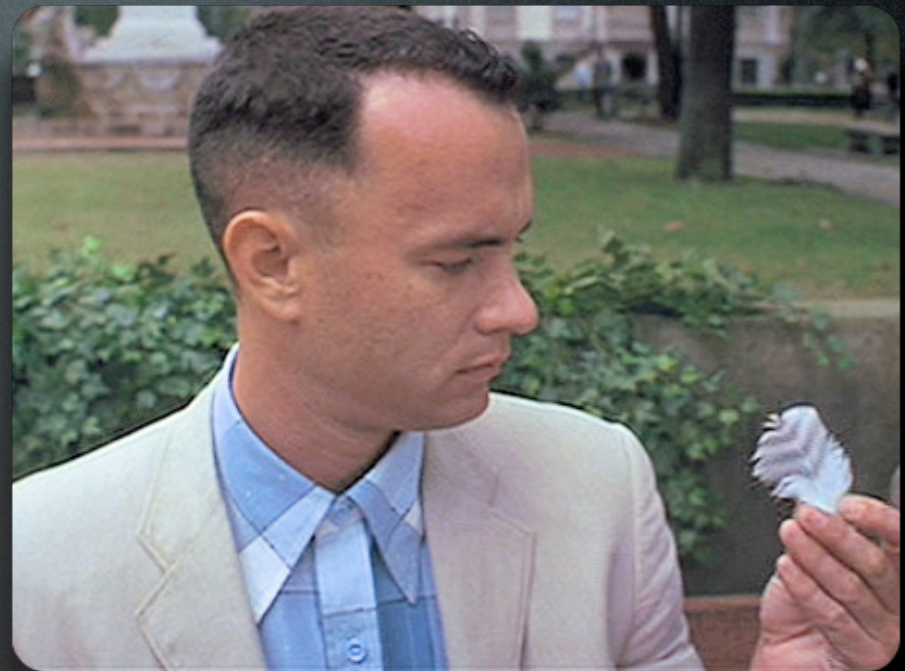
- Stretch relationship is when screen duration is longer than story duration (accomplished through editing).



An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge (1962)

Repetition

- The repetition, or number of times, with which a story element recurs in a plot.
- If an event occurs more than once, it suggests a pattern and thus a higher level of importance.



Forrest Gump (1994)

Plot and Character

- Stories cannot exist without plot and character



Characters:

Round Characters

- Round characters are three-dimensional, possessing several traits, sometimes even contradictory ones. They are unpredictable, complex, and capable of surprising us in a convincing way.



Characters:

Flat Characters

- Flat characters are one-dimensional, possessing one or very few discernible traits, and their motivations are generally predictable.



Characters:

Major Characters

- Major characters, the most important characters in a movie, make the most things happen or have the most things happen to them.
- Because plots depend on conflict, major characters are often further described as protagonists (“heroes” who “win” the conflict) and antagonists (characters whose values or behavior are in conflict with those of the protagonist).



The Dark Knight (2008)

Characters:

Minor and Marginal Characters

- Minor characters are the supporting characters in the film; they play a less important role in the overall movie, functioning usually as a means of moving the plot forward or fleshing out the motivations of the major characters.



Finding Nemo (2003)

Setting

- The setting of the movie is the time and space in which the story takes place.
- It not only establishes the time and space, but may also provide implicit explanations for actions.



The Searchers (1956)

Scope

- Scope is the overall range, in time and place, of the movie's story.
- Stories can range from the distant past to the present or can focus on a short period, even a few moments.
- Stories can take us from one galaxy to another or remain inside a room.
- Stories can present a limited perspective or show several alternative perspectives.



Star Wars (1977)