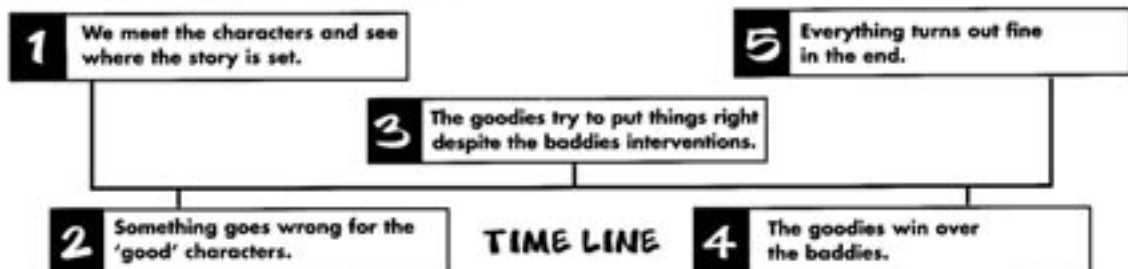


NARRATIVE TIME LINES

Film narratives follow a pattern:



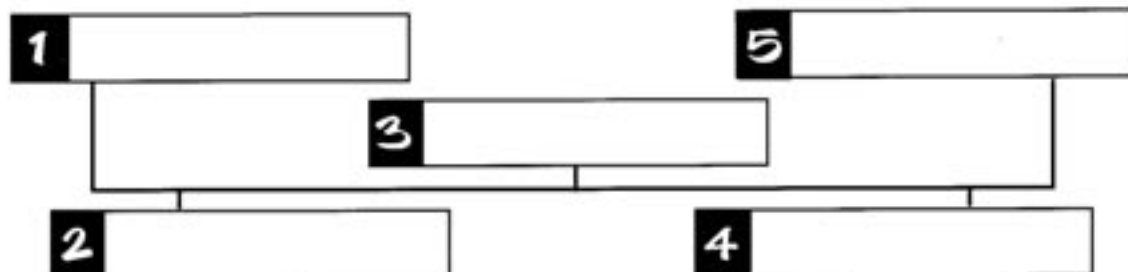
For instance, in a film like *Stuart Little*:

- 1** We meet the Littles who adopt Stuart.
- 2** Stuart comes up against Snowbell, the family cat, who tries to get Stuart 'scratched' with the help of his tom-cat friends.
- 3** With some help, Stuart finds his way back to the Littles.
- 4** Snowbell ends up feeling sorry for Stuart and helps him out.
- 5** Stuart is re-united with the Littles and everything is happy once more.



Stuart Little © 2000 Columbia Pictures Industries Inc. All Rights Reserved

Task: Think of a film you have seen recently. Make your own narrative timeline using the pattern outlined below.



Extension:

Why do we need narratives like these? What use have stories in today's society? Why do we enjoy going to the cinema so much?

STORY + PLOT = NARRATIVE

No - this is not the Numeracy Hour! This is all about film narratives.

When we go to the cinema to see a film, we see the story told in layers.

WE SEE...

1. the **STORY** that the characters are involved with

AND WE SEE...

2. the **PLOT** that surrounds the story that the characters make



Toy Story 2 © Disney/Pixar. Buena Vista International (UK) All Rights Reserved.

For instance, a film like *Toy Story 2* is a:

- 1 **STORY** about a group of toys who try to save a friend when he is kidnapped by a toy collector. If Buzz and Woody had to tell people what had happened to them, this would be the story that they would tell.
- 2 **PLOT** in the form of a comedy adventure all about how we can work together to make things right.

One thing that joins the **STORY** and **PLOT** is the characters. If you had to make a maths equation to show how film narratives work, it might be something like this:

story + plot x characters = film narrative

or for *Toy Story 2* as follows:

Toys set out to save a friend in need + working together can solve problems x
Woody, Buzz, Jessie and all the other toys = film narrative (*Toy Story 2*)

Task: Work out your own film narrative sum for the last two films that you saw (apart from *Toy Story 2*!).

Extension: Can you draw a timeline to show how the characters of your favourite film help the narrative to happen?

GENRE GEMS

Film narratives can be sorted into different types of stories such as action, adventure, comedy or a love story. Another word for type of story is 'genre'. Can you write your own narrative genre?

Task:

You have to write a story below using the following information:

- there are two characters
- an object is given to one of the characters
- the object is stolen from that character
- the stolen object is returned to its rightful owner



The Adventures of Erno in Grouchland
© Columbia Pictures, A Sony Pictures Entertainment Company
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Now get into groups and tell the story as if it were:



a western
(a film about cowboys)



science fiction



a police story



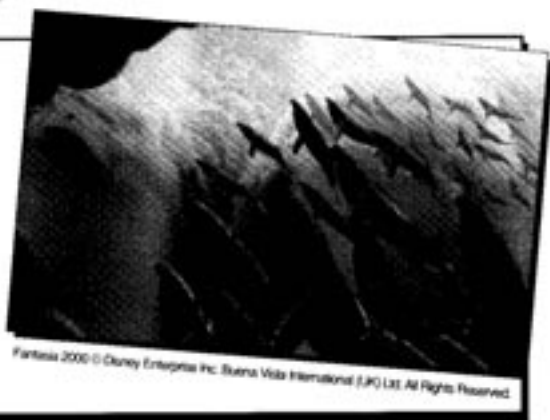
an animal story

How does the story change each time?
Write a list of other genres you can think of.

NARRATIVE KNOW-HOW

Film narratives tell stories in a special way:

There is the story that the characters in the film would be able to tell if they were real and the 'extra bits' that the characters would not be aware of, such as the music or voice-overs or super-imposed images that we see on the big screen.



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Task 1

Think of the scene in the film *Babe* where Babe himself is sent into the house by Ferdinand the Duck to find a clock. Write Babe's version of what happened.

Task 2

Now describe what you saw on the screen - including a description of the music. Do you think Babe would have heard the music? Why was the music there?

Extension:

Think of a film where there is a voice-over such as at the beginning of *The Railway Children*. Why is there a voice-over? What would happen to the narrative if there were no voice-over?

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