

# MAKING NEW WORDS YOUR OWN

## Lesson 13 **CONTEXT: Reading, Writing, and Performing** *Understanding Plot*

You probably already know that one way to define the word plot is “what happens in a story.” That’s a good, basic definition and accurate as far as it goes. But plot is much more than that. Plot involves many different aspects. One of the most important of these is conflict. Plot always involves some kind of conflict or tension—something that will make us want to keep reading to find out what will happen. Some plots are fairly basic, while others are highly complicated. Regardless, a plot must have an interesting and believable conflict to keep the reader involved.

In the following exercises, you will have the opportunity to expand your vocabulary by reading about plots in literature and film. Below are ten vocabulary words that will be used in these exercises.

- |             |         |           |               |          |
|-------------|---------|-----------|---------------|----------|
| acknowledge | elude   | homage    | metamorphosis | surmount |
| adversary   | exploit | implement | precedent     | wrangle  |

### EXERCISE 1 *Mapping*

**Directions.** In the item below, a vocabulary word is provided and used in a sentence. Take a guess at the word’s meaning and write it in the box labeled **Your Guess**. Then look the word up in your dictionary and write the definition in the box labeled **Definition**. In the **Other Forms** box, write as many other forms of the word, such as adjective and noun forms, as you can think of or find in your dictionary.

Then, following the same procedure, draw your own map for each of the nine remaining vocabulary words. Use a separate sheet of paper.

1. acknowledge →

Many writers **acknowledge** that they don’t get their plots from thin air. They freely admit that they borrow ideas for plots from a variety of places, such as news stories or experiences their friends have had.

↓

**Your Guess:**

↓

**Definition:**

**Other Forms:**

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**EXERCISE 2** *Context Clues* 

**Directions.** Scan the definitions in Column A. Then think about how the boldface words are used in the sentences in Column B. To complete the exercise, match each definition in Column A with the correct vocabulary word from Column B. Write the letter of your choice on the line provided; then write the vocabulary word on the line preceding the definition.

**COLUMN A**

\_\_\_\_\_ 11. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*n.* tool; instrument; *v.* to carry out; accomplish; fulfill

\_\_\_\_\_ 12. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*v.* to overcome (a difficulty); to rise above; to be above or on top of

\_\_\_\_\_ 13. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*n.* an opponent; an enemy

\_\_\_\_\_ 14. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*n.* a noisy quarrel or brawl; *v.* to quarrel or bicker; to win or obtain by argument; to herd (livestock)

\_\_\_\_\_ 15. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*n.* something done or given to show respect or honor; an act of allegiance

\_\_\_\_\_ 16. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*n.* an act that serves as an example for later acts

\_\_\_\_\_ 17. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*v.* to admit; to recognize the rights or authority of; to express thanks for

\_\_\_\_\_ 18. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*n.* a transformation achieved by magic; a dramatic change; change in the form or function as a result of development

\_\_\_\_\_ 19. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*v.* to escape from or avoid; to escape the understanding of

\_\_\_\_\_ 20. word: \_\_\_\_\_

*n.* a bold or brilliant act; *v.* to use to full advantage; to make unfair use of

**COLUMN B**

- (A) The conflict in a plot may involve a minor **wrangle** between two characters or a major feud like the one between the Montagues and the Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet*.
- (B) A common plot in a mystery centers on a lost murder weapon; the police and the villain compete in a feverish search for the **implement** of foul play.
- (C) Sometimes the main character's **adversary** is not another human being. The opponent might be a natural force, such as a flood or a dust storm.
- (D) If a character is faced with a conflict, he or she may react to the problem by experiencing a **metamorphosis**. The change may be actual or symbolic.
- (E) Sometimes the conflict in a plot is between two groups of people. Often, one group **exploits** the other by using it for selfish reasons.
- (F) A good plot might involve a character whose memories of a summer in Rome **elude** her. She is haunted by the idea that something terrible happened there, but she can't quite remember.
- (G) Conflict might result from a character's failure to **acknowledge** the truth about himself. He simply will not admit that he has made mistakes.
- (H) A plot might follow a lawyer's search for a legal **precedent** that will allow her to call a chimpanzee to the stand. She needs to convince the judge that the courts have previously recognized evidence given by apes.
- (I) Another plot line might involve a musician who is planning a concert to pay **homage** to a great composer when he learns a terrible truth and loses respect for his former idol.
- (J) Conflicts in stories are not always resolved, but usually the main characters **surmount** their difficulties before the story ends.

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**EXERCISE 3****Sentence Completion** 

**Directions.** For each of the following items, circle the letter of the choice that best completes the meaning of the sentence or sentences.

21. Film directors often \_\_\_\_\_ their debts to other filmmakers by paying \_\_\_\_\_ to them through scenes in their movies.  
 (A) elude . . . precedent  
 (B) acknowledge . . . homage  
 (C) surmount . . . adversary  
 (D) exploit . . . precedent  
 (E) wrangle . . . homage
22. Film directors and screenwriters sometimes \_\_\_\_\_, disagreeing over the best approach to developing the plot.  
 (A) elude  
 (B) exploit  
 (C) surmount  
 (D) acknowledge  
 (E) wrangle
23. In an interesting twist in some films, the hero and his \_\_\_\_\_ find that they are trapped together and must cooperate to \_\_\_\_\_ some obstacle.  
 (A) exploit . . . wrangle  
 (B) exploit . . . surmount  
 (C) adversary . . . surmount  
 (D) precedent . . . wrangle  
 (E) implement . . . exploit
24. Often a filmmaker will establish \_\_\_\_\_ in a film that later filmmakers \_\_\_\_\_ in their own work.  
 (A) an exploit . . . acknowledge  
 (B) a metamorphosis . . . elude  
 (C) an adversary . . . surmount  
 (D) a precedent . . . implement  
 (E) a homage . . . exploit
25. A director may \_\_\_\_\_ a variety of techniques to develop a believable character.  
 (A) implement  
 (B) elude  
 (C) confuse  
 (D) surmount  
 (E) wrangle
26. Before a character can solve a problem, he or she must \_\_\_\_\_ that there is a problem.  
 (A) elude  
 (B) acknowledge  
 (C) exploit  
 (D) surmount  
 (E) wrangle
27. Often the heroes in adventure films \_\_\_\_\_ their enemies in the car-chase scene. Other \_\_\_\_\_ might involve scaling tall buildings or snow-skiing down treacherous mountain slopes.  
 (A) implement . . . adversaries  
 (B) exploit . . . wrangles  
 (C) surmount . . . metamorphoses  
 (D) elude . . . exploits  
 (E) acknowledge . . . implements
28. Sometimes a struggle with the environment causes a change in a character. For example, a city slicker \_\_\_\_\_ cattle for a summer and undergoes a complete \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (A) eludes . . . exploit  
 (B) exploits . . . wrangle  
 (C) wrangles . . . metamorphosis  
 (D) implements . . . precedent  
 (E) surmounts . . . adversary
29. Do filmmakers \_\_\_\_\_ audiences' emotions when they use clichéd, tear-jerking situations instead of challenging, original plots in their films?  
 (A) wrangle  
 (B) elude  
 (C) implement  
 (D) acknowledge  
 (E) exploit
30. If the hero changes as a result of her struggles, she has experienced \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (A) a wrangle  
 (B) a precedent  
 (C) an exploit  
 (D) an adversary  
 (E) a metamorphosis

