



Narrative Writing

Module 1: Understanding Plot

DAY 3

Climax and Falling Action

Bell Ringer

REVIEW YESTERDAY

With a partner, discuss the following questions. Be prepared to share one answer with the class.

Rising Action

What is rising action? How does it build tension in a story?

Mathilde's Complications

What complications did Mathilde face throughout the story so far?

Building Tension

How did each complication increase the tension and raise the stakes for Mathilde?



Learning Objectives

By the end of today's lesson, you will be able to accomplish the following goals:

01

Define the Climax

Articulate a clear definition of the climax and its role in narrative structure.

03

Identify in *The Necklace*

Locate and identify the climax as it occurs in Maupassant's story.

02

Explain the Turning Point

Explain why the climax is considered the turning point of any story.

04

Define Falling Action

Explain how falling action reveals the consequences that follow the climax.

Climbing the Mountain

Yesterday we climbed through the rising action — each complication made the conflict more serious, the stakes higher, and Mathilde's situation more desperate. Today, we reach the highest point of the story.

- This moment — the peak of the mountain — is called the climax. Everything in the story has been building toward it.



What Is the Climax?

Definition

The climax is the most important moment in a story — the turning point where the central conflict reaches its highest level of tension and emotional intensity.

What Happens After?

After the climax, the story begins moving toward its conclusion. The tension that has been building throughout the rising action finally releases. A good climax changes everything — for the characters, and for the reader.

Guided Reading

THE FINAL MEETING

Continue reading *The Necklace* until Mathilde meets Madame Forestier after ten years. As you read, keep the following questions in mind:

- **What has changed about Mathilde?**
Consider her appearance, her circumstances, and her attitude toward life after years of hardship.
- **What does Madame Forestier notice?**
Pay attention to Madame Forestier's reaction when she sees Mathilde. What does her response reveal?
- **Why is this meeting important?**
Think about what this reunion means for the story's conflict and its emotional impact on the reader.





Identifying the Climax

In this curriculum, we identify the climax as the story's most explosive revelation:

Madame Forestier reveals that the original necklace was fake.

— Guy de Maupassant, *The Necklace*

This single revelation changes everything the reader thought they knew. In one sentence, ten years of sacrifice are reframed. It forces readers to rethink the entire story — every decision, every hardship, every year of poverty — from a completely new perspective.

Why Is This the Climax?

Truth Revealed

The central secret of the story — the nature of the necklace — is finally exposed to both Mathilde and the reader.

Emotional Peak

The central conflict reaches its highest emotional intensity at this single, devastating moment.

Irony Made Clear

The story's bitter irony — that all suffering was unnecessary — becomes unmistakably clear to the reader.

Shared Tragedy

Both Mathilde and the reader understand the full weight of the tragedy simultaneously, creating a powerful emotional impact.



Why is this revelation more powerful than simply discovering the necklace was lost?

Literary Note

Not every reader identifies the climax in the same place — and that's part of what makes great literature so rich for discussion.

Interpretation A

Some readers believe the climax occurs when the necklace is lost — this is the moment that sets all consequences in motion and creates the story's central crisis.

Our Interpretation

In this course, we treat the final revelation as the climax because it is the story's greatest emotional and thematic turning point — the moment that gives all previous events their full tragic meaning.

Both interpretations can be defended with evidence from the text. Strong literary analysis always returns to the story itself.



What Is Falling Action?

After the climax, the story begins its descent. The falling action is the section of the narrative that follows the turning point and moves the story toward its conclusion.



Consequences of the Climax

The falling action shows what happens as a result of the story's turning point — every action has a reaction.



Resolution of Conflict

The central conflict begins to settle, even if the outcome is tragic or unresolved in a traditional sense.



Characters Are Changed

We see how the climax has transformed the characters — physically, emotionally, and morally.



Falling Action in *The Necklace*

For ten years, Mathilde and her husband pour every resource they have into repaying the enormous debt from replacing the necklace. The falling action is long, grinding, and relentless — a decade of consequences from a single night's mistake.

Comfort

They give up their modest but decent home and move to a much humbler dwelling.

Money

Every franc is sacrificed to pay off the loans taken out to buy the replacement necklace.

Beauty

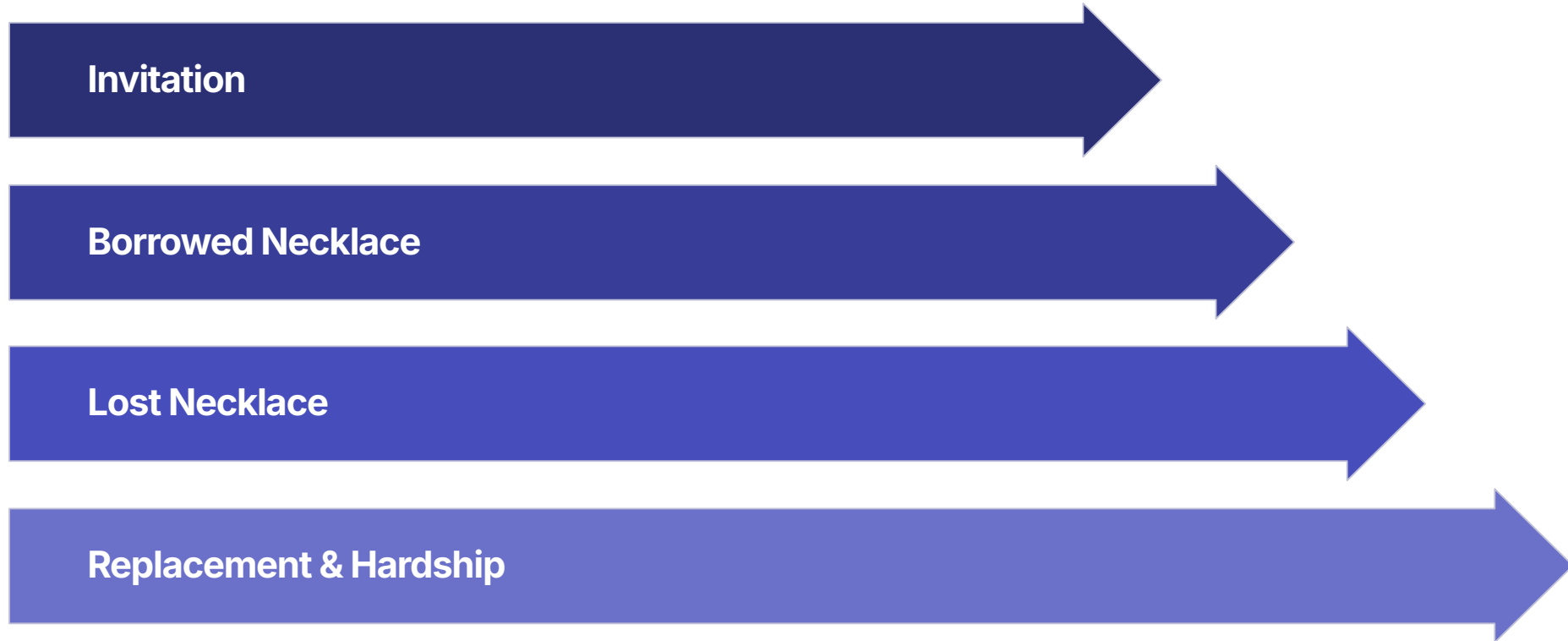
Mathilde's appearance changes dramatically — the labor ages her far beyond her years.

Youth

Ten years vanish in servitude. Mathilde becomes a woman worn down by poverty and regret.

Cause and Effect

Every event in *The Necklace* flows directly from the one before it. Complete the chain below and consider how each event leads naturally and inevitably to the next.



This chain illustrates one of the story's most powerful lessons: small decisions can set off enormous, irreversible consequences. Maupassant uses this structure to build his devastating commentary on pride, vanity, and fate.

Looking Back

Let's review the plot structure we've covered so far. We've traveled through four of the five stages of the narrative arc — with only one remaining.

1

Exposition

We meet Mathilde and learn about her desires and dissatisfaction.

2

Inciting Incident

Mathilde receives an invitation to a grand ball.

3

Rising Action

Complications build — borrowing, losing, replacing, and hiding the truth about the necklace.

4

Climax

The shocking revelation: the necklace was never real.

5

Falling Action

Ten years of hardship — the long consequences of one terrible mistake.



Only one stage remains. Tomorrow we will examine the story's resolution.

Writer's Toolbox

EVERY GREAT CLIMAX CHANGES SOMETHING

When you write your own stories, use these guiding questions to craft a climax that truly lands. A powerful climax doesn't just happen — it transforms.

- ☐ **What is the biggest turning point?**
Identify the single moment in your story where everything shifts — for your character and for the reader.
- ☐ **What changes after that moment?**
The world of your story before the climax must be different from the world after. What is irreversibly altered?
- ☐ **How do the consequences affect your characters?**
Show the ripple effects. A climax should leave nothing — and no one — exactly the same.



Exit Ticket

ANSWER IN COMPLETE SENTENCES

Before you leave today, answer all four questions in writing. Use specific evidence from *The Necklace* where possible.

1

Define the Climax

What is the climax? Write a clear, complete definition in your own words.

2

Identify the Climax

Identify the climax in *The Necklace*. What specific moment does it occur?

3

Explain the Turning Point

Explain why that moment is the turning point of the story. What does it change?

4

Define Falling Action

What is the falling action? Describe how it functions in *The Necklace*.

Looking Ahead

TOMORROW

Resolution

We have now traced the story through its exposition, rising action, climax, and falling action. Tomorrow we complete the arc.

How does Guy de Maupassant bring *The Necklace* to its unforgettable ending? What does the resolution reveal about the story's themes — and what final emotion does Maupassant leave the reader with?



Come prepared to discuss: What do you think the story's ending says about pride, sacrifice, and fate?