<table>
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<tr>
<th>Goal: Comprehension</th>
<th>Strategy: Recognize Literary Elements (Genre, Plot, Character, Setting, Problem/Resolution, Theme)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>Readers identify common elements of a story as they read that include plot, character, setting, and theme. Using these elements helps readers infer what will happen next.</td>
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<td><strong>Why Children Need This Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Identifying and understanding the main literary elements of a story such as character, setting, plot, and problem/resolution gives readers a process for storing information to remember and to comprehend what the story is about. This knowledge will also help students as they are writing stories.</td>
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<td><strong>Secret to Success</strong></td>
<td>Literary elements work together to form and enhance the story. We learn literary elements separately, and then combine them in our mind for better understanding of the story.</td>
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<td><strong>How We Teach It</strong></td>
<td>Teaching literary elements does not happen in one day, or even in one week. We start by teaching our youngest learners about these elements, revisiting these lessons over the years. It is helpful to know the most common elements.</td>
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**Literary Elements**

- **Characters:** Who or what the story is about, based on the actions or words used.
- **Plot:** The important events in the story, which include the *conflict*, or *problem*, of the story, and *resolution*, or how the problem was solved.
- **Setting:** Where and when the story occurs. The author may also convey mood through the setting, leading the reader to feel a certain way, such as sad, scared, or happy.
- **Theme:** The underlying message, or meaning, of the story. This can be stated or inferred.

There are many other literary elements that add to a unified story, such as foreshadowing, flashback, point of view, irony, symbolism, and figurative language (to name a few).

We start with the most common elements as stated above, and add others as students become more sophisticated readers.

Through our read-alouds and thinking aloud, we identify each of the elements of the story. We begin with basic understanding of the elements, and then move to deeper thinking to not just identify each element, but to start using them together to enhance our comprehension. For example, the questions below are more sophisticated than the beginning questions such as “Who are the characters?” Now we think about how the characters have changed during the story, giving examples and saying why we came to that decision.

Language we use:

- “Does the character change during the story? Give examples.”
- “What is the setting in the story? Is it stated or do you have to infer?”
- “How is the mood described in the story based on the setting?”
- “What is the problem of the story? Give text evidence to support this.”
- “How has the problem been resolved? Support your thinking.”

**Troubleshooting**

As readers encounter more sophisticated text, they need to be taught and exposed to other literary elements to understand stories more completely. Ask the students to tell you how they determined the literary elements in the story by giving details from the story to support their thinking. A graphic organizer such as a story map can help students visually organize a story’s elements.