

CLASS ACTIVITY - Our Writing Schedule and the Arc of a Story

Writing Schedule // Deadlines:

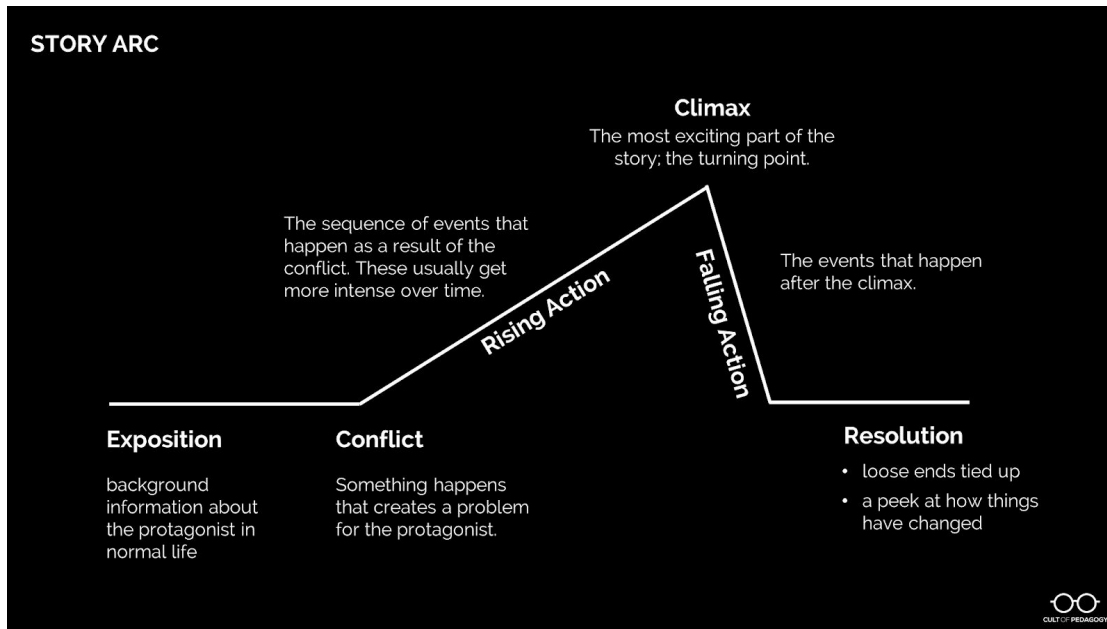
Monday, November 9th - Exposition, Conflict, and Rising Action (first half of draft due)

Thursday, November 12th - **Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution (completed draft due)**

Monday, November 16th - Incorporate Feedback from Ms. Nataliya and Revise (final draft due)

Tuesday, November 17th - Final day to submit your personal narrative to the

[New York Times Youth Personal Narrative Contest](#)



Climax

The night my father started dying in 2002, I greeted him in the doorway after he came home from work, to give him a kiss hello and ask for his blessing. I was 13. He collapsed onto me to cry into my neck. My father the dictator, heaving full-throated sobs. He handed me a letter saying that New York State had suspended driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants as part of a post-Sept. 11 national security measure. My father had just lost his job as a taxi driver. He had also lost his only official form of ID.

What makes this strong?

- It gives us an emotional reaction.
- She paints a very vivid picture -- she describes it well. Imagery!
- She focuses on a very specific moment - she brings us to that moment
- Personal: she's used to seeing her dad as strong, but here he is falling apart, this is such a vulnerable moment.
- Political: undocumented people losing their license and their job.

<u>Falling Action</u>	<u>What makes this strong?</u>
<p>I never learned to swim. The farthest I had ever ventured into the ocean was to my knees, screaming the whole while. But by last summer, our roles had so profoundly reversed and his self-esteem was so low that I wondered if I could give that back to him, this ability to save me. I invited him to come spend an afternoon at the beach in the middle of July precisely with the purpose of teaching me how to swim.</p> <p>We went to Lighthouse Point on Long Island Sound, not far from downtown New Haven, Conn. I like this beach because there are always black and brown families fishing or building sand castles there, proudly being alive, and there is just something about the ocean air perfuming dark bodies that makes me want to live another day.</p> <p>My father told me the first step was being able to stand in deep water. Your legs have to be apart just so, and you use your arms to stabilize yourself. He asked me to shift my weight from foot to foot as if I was on a bumpy subway ride. He grabbed my hand and we went deeper into the ocean until the water was up to my chest, the deepest I had ever gone. “Next, you float,” he told me. He grabbed my hands and asked me to go on my stomach, extend my legs as far as they would go, and kick. He assured me he would not let go.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Again, a lot of imagery -- she showed us instead of just telling us. ● More detail about her father and their connection. ● She lets her dad teach her how to swim so that he can feel like he's a hero again ● Memorable! ● Emotional shift - tender, sweet, -- bitter sweet.
<u>Resolution</u>	<u>What makes this strong?</u>
<p>A couple of months after that outing, I asked my father to leave our home in Queens because his relationship with my mother, after 30 years — 29 of which had been spent in America, together and illegally — had become toxic. He left home one night while my mother and younger brother were at church.</p> <p>Shortly before I asked him to leave, my father had told my brother: “I am tired of living just for you and your sister. It is my turn to be happy now.”</p> <p>He had handled it the wrong way, totaled some people’s lives in his wake, but he was right. It was his turn to be happy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He is leaving their home, leaving her mother. ● Shows her own maturity/growth -- she sees how he deserves to be happy, even though he is causing harm to her family. ● Mixed feelings (avoiding cliché “happy ending”) ● Demonstrating -- making us see and feel -- how much the governments mistreatment of undocumented people impacts their lives, their families, and relationships.