

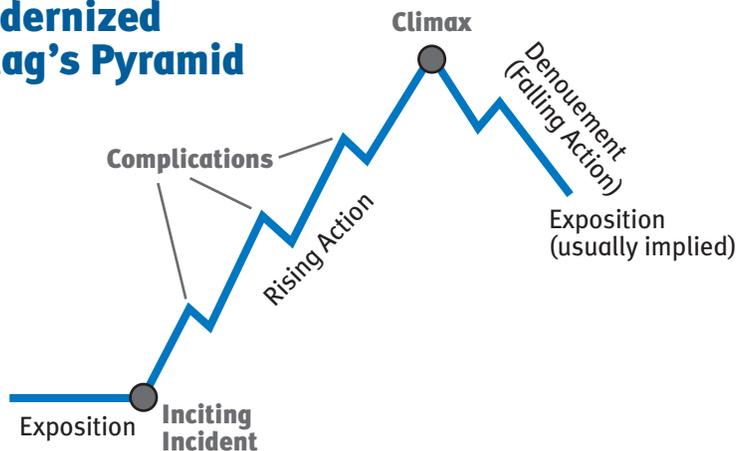
## Learning Targets

- Analyze the impact of minor characters on the conflict and plot.
- Analyze the role of two incidents of rising action that complicate the conflict and move the plot inevitably to a climax.

## Before Reading

1. Act Two begins one week after the opening act. Once again, the action is set in a domestic context, bringing the conflict into the home of John Proctor, the protagonist. As you read, think about how Miller intensifies the level of personal and social conflict in this Act.

## A Modernized Freytag's Pyramid



2. Review the elements of plot as you read Act Two, and think about how Miller uses them.

### Plotting the Conflict

A plot map can guide you as you think about creating a short dramatic scene. Act Two creates complications that set the plot on a path to destruction. Review the elements of effective plotting.

### Exposition, or Set-Up

The beginning of the play must establish a little about the characters, setting, and conflict. This happens through stage directions and dialogue. Early Act One accomplished this for us in *The Crucible*. Locate a sentence or paragraph that functions as exposition in the play.

### Inciting Incident

This is where our protagonist is launched into the action—like it or not. Again, both stage directions and dialogue make this happen. Review Act One of *The Crucible* for this moment in the life of John Proctor.

**LEARNING STRATEGIES:**  
Diffusing, Graphic Organizer,  
Drafting, Discussion Groups

## My Notes

# Rising Action

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### Rising Action

This is the long hill upward on the way to the climax of the play. Here is where the playwright builds tension by developing characters, deepening their relationships, and complicating the conflicts between them. How do the incidents in Act Two function to build this tension?

### Climax

Here is the point of greatest suspense in a play. It doesn't last long, but it culminates all the conflict thus far. It is the moment in which the conflict could go either way. Like the "roller coaster" image, the climax will come close to the end of the play. Be on the lookout for the climax of *The Crucible* as you continue reading Acts Three and Four.

### Falling Action, or Denouement

Will our antagonist be defeated? Will our protagonist fulfill his mission? Here's where we get these answers as things move quickly toward the resolution.

### Resolution

The resolution of the play does not always mean a happy ending. It does mean that the protagonist is not the same person that he/she was when this whole thing started. Since that time, he has battled the enemy, deepened (or lost) relationships, and often, come to terms with something about himself.

## Check Your Understanding

**Writing Prompt:** The important minor character of Mary Warren is more fully developed in Act Two. She represents the position of girls and young women in Salem Village. Compare her role in the Proctor household to her role in the courtroom. How is Miller using her as emblematic of the girls' hysteria and their position in Salem society? Be sure to:

- Begin with a clear topic sentence comparing her roles.
- Provide textual evidence of Mary Warren's roles at home and in court.
- Show how her character is connected to the larger themes of the play.