



## Language Arts: Linear Plot Analysis

### Students will

- Read “The Story of the Opera”
- Read and discuss “What’s the matter: How Conflict Works in Literature” and “Tell it to me straight: Linear Plot Elements”
- Complete Activity Worksheets 1 & 2

**Copies for Each Student:** The Story of the Opera / What’s the matter / Tell is to me straight / Activity Worksheets

**Copies for the Teacher:** same as above, plus Answer Keys for Activity Worksheets

### Getting Ready

Review the lesson

Gather pens, pencils and additional writing paper as needed for your group.

**Introduction:** Read “The Story of the Opera” as a class. Continue reading through the additional information sheets (“What’s the matter” and “Tell it to me straight”), reviewing the concepts as you go.

**Review:** As guided practice, you may want to use a book your students have read to complete an example linear plot diagram or review conflict types as a class before moving on to the Activity Worksheets.

**Guided/Independent Practice:** Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students, and time constraints, you may choose to have students work as a whole class, in small groups, with a partner, or individually. Read the directions on the Activity Worksheet. Provide instruction and model the activity as needed. Have students complete the Activity Worksheet with opportunity for questions.

**Evaluation:** Have students share their answers individually or by groups and explain why they gave their answers. The teacher may want to guide the discussion with the sample answers provided.

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## TEKS

### 110.14.B.8.A – Reading/ Comprehension of Literary Text/ Fiction

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (A) sequence and summarize the plot's main events and explain their influence on future events.

### 110.15.B.6.A – Reading/ Comprehension of Literary Text/ Fiction

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (A) sequence and summarize the plot's main events and explain their influence on future events.

### 110.16.B.6.A – Reading/ Comprehension of Literary Text/ Fiction

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:

(A) describe incidents that advance the story or novel, explaining how each incident gives rise to or foreshadows future events.

### 110.20.B.6.A – Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction.

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (A) analyze linear plot developments (e.g., conflict, rising action, falling action, resolution, subplots) to determine whether and how conflicts are resolved.

**Correlates:** Music

**Gardner's Intelligences:** Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

**Bloom's Taxonomy:** Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

**Sources:**

Pepito Libretto (TDO Production by Mary Dibbern, 2017)

<https://www.texasgateway.org/resource/analyze-linear-plot-developments-literary-textsfiction?binder=92071>

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## The Story of the Opera

Manuelita, the owner of the Blue Bird Hotel, is gazing out at her garden and thinking about her fiancé, Pépito, who is away serving in the army. Although she has not received a letter from him in four months or seen him in three years, she has been saving up her hotel profits in order to help Pépito come home sooner so that they can be married. Meanwhile, Vertigo, a jack of all trades, fluba player, and owner of The Crocodile (the rival hotel in town) tries to persuade Manuelita to go on a date with him. Steadfast in her love for her fiancé, Manuelita rejects Vertigo's advances.

Later, Manuelita sees her old friend, Miguel, who is home from college and searching for a wife. They recall their time together as children, and Miguel suddenly realizes that he and Manuelita were destined for each other. Miguel tells her that he and Pépito exchange letters and in their latest correspondence, Pépito had informed him that he is in love. Upon hearing this, Manuelita rejoices because she is sure that Pépito is still in love with her. Always one to stir up a bit of trouble, Vertigo secretly tries to convince Miguel that Manuelita will never love him because she is already involved with Vertigo. Miguel is not one to give up easily. So, when they sit down to eat cupcakes and some of Vertigo's famous gateau Basque, Miguel makes sure that Vertigo stuffs himself so full that he falls asleep. With Vertigo out of the way, Miguel expresses his feelings for Manuelita. However, Manuelita maintains that she is completely devoted to Pépito. Miguel is so impressed by Manuelita's virtue and loyalty to Pépito that he volunteers to take the young soldier's place, so that Pépito may return to marry Manuelita. Suddenly, Vertigo awakes in a frenzy because he realizes that he is late for the church service where he has promised to play a solo on his fluba.

When he returns from church, Vertigo, who is also the town's postman, announces that Pépito has sent Miguel a letter. Miguel hurries to open it and reads with great joy that Pépito has married another woman! Manuelita is shocked. How could Pépito betray her? While Manuelita is trying to process this news, Miguel realizes that Vertigo lied to him before and that she had never even gone on a date with the jack of all trades, let alone been in love with him. In yet another twist of events, Vertigo responds to the news by quickly asking Manuelita to marry him, but she declares she will marry Miguel instead. Though unhappy at his own misfortune, Vertigo cannot let a lucrative business opportunity such as a wedding pass him by and agrees to bake the cake for Miguel and Manuelita, who are ecstatic that they can finally be together.

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## What's the matter: how conflict works in literature

Conflict is the key to every good story. It's what keeps us interested and leaves us wondering what's going to happen to the characters so we'll finish the story to see how everything works out. Will the superhero defeat the villain at last? Will the dog find his way back home? Will everything be ok again? When you ask these kind of questions during a story, it's a signal you're in the middle of a conflict.

There are two main types of conflict: external and internal. External conflict exists when there is a problem between the character and an outside source, like another character, society as a whole, or nature. These are usually labeled as character vs. character, character vs. society or character vs. nature. Here's a few examples:

- Marcus is annoyed. He did forget to take out the trash again, but his mom didn't have to yell at him in front of his girlfriend. She just doesn't get it. (character vs. character)
- Denise had been looking forward to her family vacation to the beach all year. Now they're finally here and it has rained for three days straight. They haven't even been able to get in the water because the storms have been so bad. She is so disappointed. (character vs. nature)
- Jack knew what was expected of him, he'd heard it his whole life. Go to school, come home and work on the farm. But he knew he could do so much more. (character vs. society)

Internal conflict is the opposite. It describes a conflict within a character, usually centered around values or feelings about an event.

- Rachel did not enjoy Sonia's idea of fun. A sleepover with horror movies and she'd never sleep again. But if she didn't go or told her she was afraid of those shows Rachel might not let her be a part of the group anymore. She didn't know what to do. (character vs. self)

Take stock: What is the major conflict in Pepito? Which type of conflict is it?

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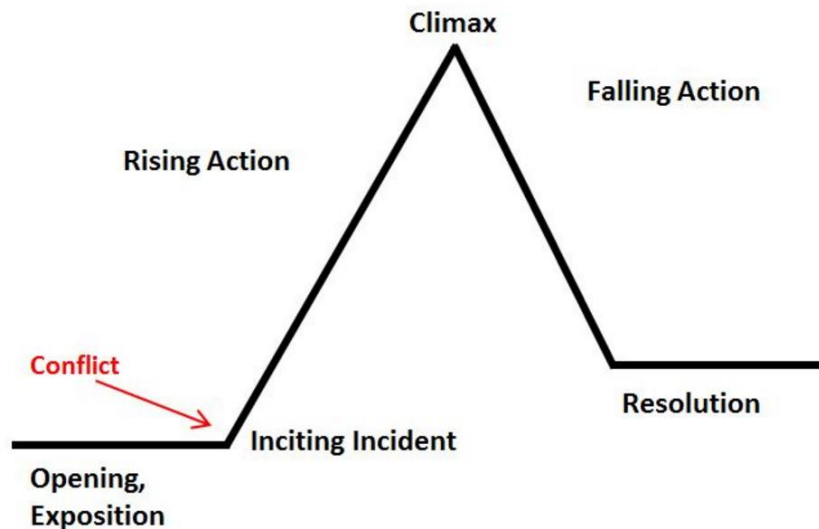
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## Tell it to me straight: Linear Plot Elements

A Linear Plot is one way to organize the plot of a story. The story moves continuously forward from point A to point B and contains some specific elements:

### Basic Plot Diagram



**Opening/Exposition:** introduces the characters and sets the tone of the story

**Inciting Incident:** what happens to kick off the action of the story – the main conflict is introduced and reveals the protagonist (good guy) and the antagonist (bad guy)

**Rising Action:** everything that happens in the story that adds conflict and builds suspense

**Climax:** the turning point of the story – the rising action builds to this most intense moment in the conflict

**Falling Action:** what happens after the climax to let us know how the resolution could be achieved

**Resolution:** how the conflict is resolved and all the loose ends of the story tied up to finish the story

- Conflict is always what keeps the story moving forward and keeps the reader interested. Events and actions build to increase the conflict until it is resolved and the story ends.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Worksheet 1: Pepito's in Trouble

Below are several conflicts found in Pepito. Identify each conflict as internal or external and character vs. character, society, nature or self.

1. Manuelita is sad because she misses her fiancé Pepito and hasn't received a letter from him in several months.

\_\_\_\_\_ | character vs. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Vertigo wants to marry Manuelita and combine their two inns. Manuelita is not interested in him at all.

\_\_\_\_\_ | character vs. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Manuelita has not been able to save enough money to get Pepito out of the army because Vertigo's inn takes all her potential customers.

\_\_\_\_\_ | character vs. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Miguel is forced to leave his studies to come home and find a wife.

\_\_\_\_\_ | character vs. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Manuelita is drawn to Miguel because of their childhood connection, but she is engaged to Pepito.

\_\_\_\_\_ | character vs. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Miguel is shocked after Vertigo says he plans to marry Manuelita.

\_\_\_\_\_ | character vs. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Miguel is frustrated because he argued with Manuelita and made her angry

\_\_\_\_\_ | character vs. \_\_\_\_\_

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## ANSWER KEY 1

### Activity Worksheet 1: Pepito's in Trouble

Below are several conflicts found in Pepito. Identify each conflict as internal or external and character vs. character, society, nature or self.

1. Manuelita is sad because she misses her fiancé Pepito and hasn't received a letter from him in several months. (external, character vs. character,)
2. Vertigo wants to marry Manuelita and combine their two inns. Manuelita is not interested in him at all. (external, character vs. character)
3. Manuelita has not been able to save enough money to get Pepito out of the army because Vertigo's inn takes all her potential customers. (external, character vs. character)
4. Miguel is forced to leave his studies to come home and find a wife. (external, character vs. society)
5. Manuelita is drawn to Miguel because of their childhood connection, but she is engaged to Pepito. (internal, character vs. self,)
6. Miguel is shocked after Vertigo says he plans to marry Manuelita. (external, character vs. character,)
7. Miguel is frustrated because he argued with Manuelita and made her angry. (internal, character vs. self)

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Worksheet 2: Linear Plot Summary

Identify each of the character quotes below as it fits into the Linear Plot Summary: Exposition, Inciting Action, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action or Resolution. (Some of the plot elements may contain more than one quote.)

When you have labeled each quote, summarize the event in 1-2 sentences and create a Linear Plot Diagram on the page provided.

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MANUELITA

He walked around this lovely garden, He ate the fruit picked from the trees,  
He took a long nap in the hammock, He rested there cooled by the breeze.  
My trees are lonely, they miss you, We're waiting for a rendez-vous.  
When he returns he'll understand, How much he's missed our land.

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MIGUEL

Excuse me, señora, could you tell me....

MANUELITA

Señor Miguel?

MIGUEL

Manuelita! Oh...I hardly recognized you!

MANUELITA

Where have you been all this time?

MIGUEL

I've been studying in Madrid...and you... I can't believe my eyes...you are more beautiful than ever!

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VERTIGO

Wake up and stop dreaming about Pépito. He has forgotten all about you and I can prove it.  
(triumphantly) He hasn't written you one letter in four months.

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VERTIGO

Oh...getting married is a GREAT idea! I'm getting married, too...I've found a jewel, a peach, a honeybun! Can you guess who she is? I'll give you a hint....*(starts softly and then does a cheerleading routine with arm signals)* M.A.N.U.E.L.....

MIGUEL *(choking rom shock)*

I....T...A. ??????

VERTIGO

Yes! MANUELITA!!!! *(confidentially)* She's waiting for me to pop the question....and now....time for my *chef d'oeuvre*...my world-famous gateau Basque. *(he rushes off to get his gateau).*

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VERTIGO

Here I am! The best barber in town...well...the ONLY barber in town! I shave everyone, but when it comes to shaving myself...I just don't have time. BUT....today is my big day. I am going to play a solo in church

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MANUELITA

Vertigo is right.....Pépito hasn't written in months.....and he has been gone for three years. It's horrible! I've tried to save up to hire somebody to take his place in the army....but I've only got \$400 in the bank. Do you want to know why? People come from all over to stay at Vertigo's Hotel Crocodile! They sit there and eat his world-famous gateau Basque. He takes away all of my business.... My poor Pépito will never be able to leave the army....

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MIGUEL

I'm telling the truth....I love you. I want you to marry me....now, immediately!

MANUELITA

But, I love you like a brother...I cannot marry you. It's impossible!

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MIGUEL, *alone*

Me and my big mouth! Now she is really mad at me....and she really loves Pépito...and I really love her.....

Last night when I arrived in town I didn't want to stay.

I didn't want to hang around, Couldn't wait to get away.

Alas, I cannot tell you why I never looked for love.

But now she's come into my life I cannot run away

I want us to get married, Right now without delay.

Alas, I cannot tell you why, I really am in love.

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MIGUEL

All I can tell you.... is that I don't have to leave. Even if I go there to replace Pépito, he won't come here to marry you.

MANUELITA

Pépito, oh no, is he dead? Is he dead?

MIGUEL

No not dead. He's a....married man....

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MIGUEL

Would marrying Pepito really make you happy?

MANUELITA (*hesitating*)

Maybe.....well....yes, I think so...

MIGUEL

Alright.... I will go to Cadix AND I take his place AND he can come back here AND then...(sadly) you can marry Pépito.

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VERTIGO

To celebrate, I'll bake a wedding gift, a true gateau Basque the best I can make....vanilla cream or sweet fruit jam?

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VERTIGO

He wants to ask you to get married.

MANUELITA

I know I cannot turn him down.

VERTIGO (*falling at Manuelita's feet*)

Will you allow him now  
to ask this hand in marriage?

MANUELITA (*giving her hand to Miguel*)

With all my heart, this hand is yours!

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MANUELITA

What did you say? Forget P epito?

MIGUEL (*with passion*)

He went away, he has left you all alone.

He doesn't care and now you are on your own.

MANUELITA

No, you are wrong, my P epito still loves me  
and I don't care if you say you disagree.

MIGUEL (*kissing her hand*)

P epito left you, he does not care.

Please love me now, this is not fair.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Linear Plot Diagram

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## ANSWER KEY 2

### Activity Worksheet 2: Linear Plot Summary

Identify each of the character quotes below as it fits into the Linear Plot Summary: Exposition, Inciting Action, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action or Resolution. (Some of the plot elements may contain more than one quote.)

When you have labeled each quote, summarize the event in 1-2 sentences in the correct place on the Linear Plot Diagram.

---

MANUELITA

He walked around this lovely garden, He ate the fruit picked from the trees,  
He took a long nap in the hammock, He rested there cooled by the breeze.  
My trees are lonely, they miss you, We're waiting for a rendez-vous.  
When he returns he'll understand, How much he's missed our land.

**Exposition**

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MIGUEL

Excuse me, señora, could you tell me....

MANUELITA

Señor Miguel?

MIGUEL

Manuelita! Oh...I hardly recognized you!

MANUELITA

Where have you been all this time?

MIGUEL

I've been studying in Madrid...and you... I can't believe my eyes...you are more beautiful than ever!

**Rising Action**

---

VERTIGO

Wake up and stop dreaming about Pépito. He has forgotten all about you and I can prove it.  
(triumphantly) He hasn't written you one letter in four months.

**Inciting Action**

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VERTIGO

Oh...getting married is a GREAT idea! I'm getting married, too....I've found a jewel, a peach, a honeybun! Can you guess who she is? I'll give you a hint....*(starts softly and then does a cheerleading routine with arm signals)* M.A.N.U.E.L.....

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Yes! MANUELITA!!!! *(confidentially)* She's waiting for me to pop the question....and now....time for my *chef d'oeuvre*...my world-famous gateau Basque. *(he rushes off to get his gateau).*

**Rising Action**

---

VERTIGO

Here I am! The best barber in town...well...the ONLY barber in town! I shave everyone, but when it comes to shaving myself....I just don't have time. BUT....today is my big day. I am going to play a solo in church

**Exposition**

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MANUELITA

Vertigo is right....Pépite hasn't written in months....and he has been gone for three years. It's horrible! I've tried to save up to hire somebody to take his place in the army....but I've only got \$400 in the bank. Do you want to know why? People come from all over to stay at Vertigo's Hotel Crocodile! They sit there and eat his world-famous gateau Basque. He takes away all of my business.... My poor Pépite will never be able to leave the army....

**Rising Action**

---

MIGUEL

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MANUELITA

But, I love you like a brother...I cannot marry you. It's impossible!

**Rising Action**

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MIGUEL, *alone*

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Alas, I cannot tell you why I never looked for love.

But now she's come into my life I cannot run away

I want us to get married, Right now without delay.

Alas, I cannot tell you why, I really am in love.

### **Rising Action**

---

MIGUEL

All I can tell you.... is that I don't have to leave. Even if I go there to replace Pépito, he won't come here to marry you.

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Pépito, oh no, is he dead? Is he dead?

MIGUEL

No not dead. He's a....married man....

### **Climax**

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MIGUEL

Would marrying Pepito really make you happy?

MANUELITA (*hesitating*)

Maybe.....well....yes, I think so...

MIGUEL

Alright.... I will go to Cadix AND I take his place AND he can come back here AND then...(sadly) you can marry Pépito.

### **Rising Action**

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VERTIGO

To celebrate, I'll bake a wedding gift, a true gâteau Basque the best I can make....vanilla cream or sweet fruit jam?

### **Resolution**

---

VERTIGO

He wants to ask you to get married.

MANUELITA

I know I cannot turn him down.

VERTIGO (*falling at Manuelita's feet*)

Will you allow him now  
to ask this hand in marriage?

MANUELITA (*giving her hand to Miguel*)

With all my heart, this hand is yours!

**Falling Action**

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MANUELITA

What did you say? Forget P epito?

MIGUEL (*with passion*)

He went away, he has left you all alone.

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No, you are wrong, my P epito still loves me  
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MIGUEL (*kissing her hand*)

P epito left you, he does not care.

Please love me now, this is not fair.

**Rising Action**