Please note the differences between the types of prose fiction, which are all governed by length:

Novels: Multi-chapter narratives without any specific length requirements or restrictions.

Novellas: Multi-chapter narratives which are shorter than novels, typically averaging between 100 and 150 pages.

Short Stories: Very short narratives, typically not longer than one or two chapters.

Flash Fiction: Extremely short works of fiction that average around 100 words.

N.B.! As per your course requirements for this module, you will not be expected to analyse anything more than an extract from a novel, novella or short story.

N.N.B.!! Remember to focus your analyses on the passages presented to you **only!** Even if you are familiar with the novel the passage comes from, make sure that your work focuses only on the information in the passage, as that is what you are being tested on.

N.N.N.B.!!! Plot is only **peripherally useful,** at best, as it is **too broad** a topic to be used to substantiate an argument being made in a **short analysis**, such as the ones you will be asked to do. **Retelling the story** or **summarising the plot** in anything more than two or three sentences **is counter-productive**, as the only key question answered by the plot is **"what",** as in **"what is the passage about?"** The best thing that answering this question can do for you is to **give you clues** about **likely themes** from the passage, so you would be **wasting your time** trying to provide a **detailed retelling of the plot**.

Plot:

Definition: A plot is the series of events portrayed in a story, the way these events are structured and how they connect to one another to become the story.

Plots can be divided into **main plots** and **sub-plots**:

- **Main plot:** The primary or most obvious action that can be seen to be directly connected and that extends through the whole narrative.
- **Sub-plot:** Sub-plots tend to be slightly harder to identify, as they usually support the main plot, while being distinct from it.

The number of plots and sub-plots is generally linked to character development and overall development of the story in its entirety.

A plot can be **linear** and **chronological** (the action happening within a specific order), or **non-linear** (the plot can be **fragmented** and **disordered**, meaning that sequences of events do not happen within the narrative as they would in real time).

The more complex a work of fiction is, the more detail will be incorporated into the sub-plots and there will be a larger number of sub-plots incorporated into the work.

Naturally, this means that there are typically few, if any, sub-plots in short stories and none at all in flash fiction!

There are various types of plot development, although basic plot development is often structured like so:

Exposition: The beginning of the story which will normally introduce the main character (or protagonist – more on that later!), the setting of the story (the location and time period), other important characters and the protagonist's goals.

Rising action: This is the build-up of events within a plot, where conflict develops between characters and the characters are 'fleshed out'. Moral and physical challenges are presented to the main character who will attempt to negotiate around the difficulties faced.

The Climax: Is the point in the plot where the main character directly confronts the source of the conflict in the narrative. The main character will frequently be forced to make a choice at this point that will reveal his or her moral quality. This is the "high point" of the narrative.

Falling action: In the wake of the revelation of the central conflict of the narrative, the main character is often at his or her lowest point and furthest from victory. As the events of the story gradually lead the main character to triumph or defeat, the narrative "winds down" towards **resolution**, which is the end of the story, where all the conflicts have been settled, for good or ill.