Closed Ending: all major plot conflicts are resolved, and there is a sense of order restored; readers feel closure

Flashback: scene that interrupts the present action of a narrative work to depict some earlier event that typically occurred before the opening scene of the work; usually accomplished by reverie, remembrance, dreaming, etc.

Foreshadowing: the introduction of material that prepares the reader or audience for future events, actions, or revelations; or the introduction of objects, facts, events, or characters that hint at or prefigure a developing situation or conflict

Frame Tale: a story that contains another story or stories; the outer story usually explains why the interior story or stories are being told

in medias res: literary technique of beginning a narrative in the middle of the action; crucial events that occurred before the point at which the narrative starts are related at a later time via flashbacks, character dialogue, or other means

Open Ending: the central conflict is left relatively open; order may be restored, but the details of how, or the subsequent effects are left uncertain; readers are left with unanswered questions

Story: a narrative of events ordered chronologically, not selectively, and with emphasis on establishing causality; the raw material from which plot is constructed

Suspense: a state of tension, a sense of uncertainty and foreboding that maintains the attention of the reader; built and maintained during the rising action, climax, and is usually resolved in the falling action or resolution

Analysis

- It is possible to make an analysis of plot structure the central focus of an essay. Typically, plot structure analysis will be one of several points to support an assertion in a more broad literary analysis. Herein, one may use terminology to reference events in the plot, or one can use terminology to explain how the author enhances the message of his/her work by utilizing a specific structure.

For more information on this topic, see
"Writing about literature" on Pages 589-620 in The Bedford Reader.