

Plot is the series of events in a story. **Exposition** is the author's introduction to the characters and setting. The **conflict**, or problem, sets up the action and moves it along. The **climax** is the story's point of highest emotional interest. The **resolution** shows the outcome.

Write the key elements of the plot in a story you have read.

Exposition:

Conflict(s) or problem(s):

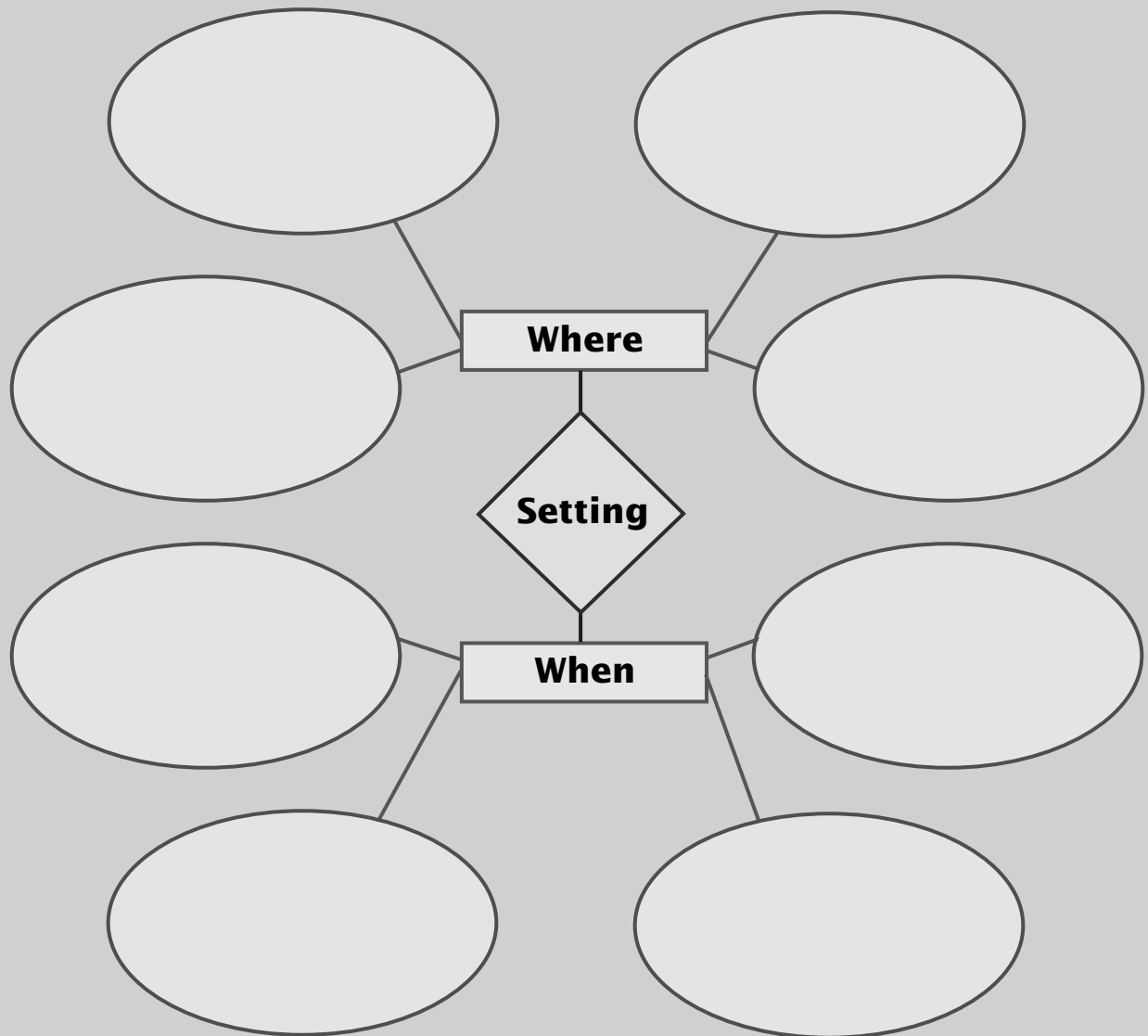
Climax:

Resolution:

Identify another selection in which the plot is developed. Write the sequence of events which build to the story's climax.

The **setting** of a story, poem, or play is the time and place in which the events happen. Setting can include the geographic location, the time period, the season of the year, even the time of day. The setting of a story often helps create an atmosphere or mood.

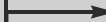
Fill in details about the setting of a story you have read on the web below.



The main idea of a written work is usually expressed as a general statement called a **theme**. Sometimes, a piece of writing has a **stated theme**—a theme that is expressed directly. More often, a piece of writing has an **implied theme**—a theme that is not stated directly, but is revealed gradually as the piece unfolds.

Choose a story you have read. Then write a general statement that expresses the implied theme of the selection. Find three events that help reveal this theme as the story progresses. List the events in chronological order.

Theme



1



2



3

When a writer tells a story, it is called **narration**. Writers use narrative strategies to make their stories more vivid. They add **movement** to the story by describing characters doing things and moving from place to place.

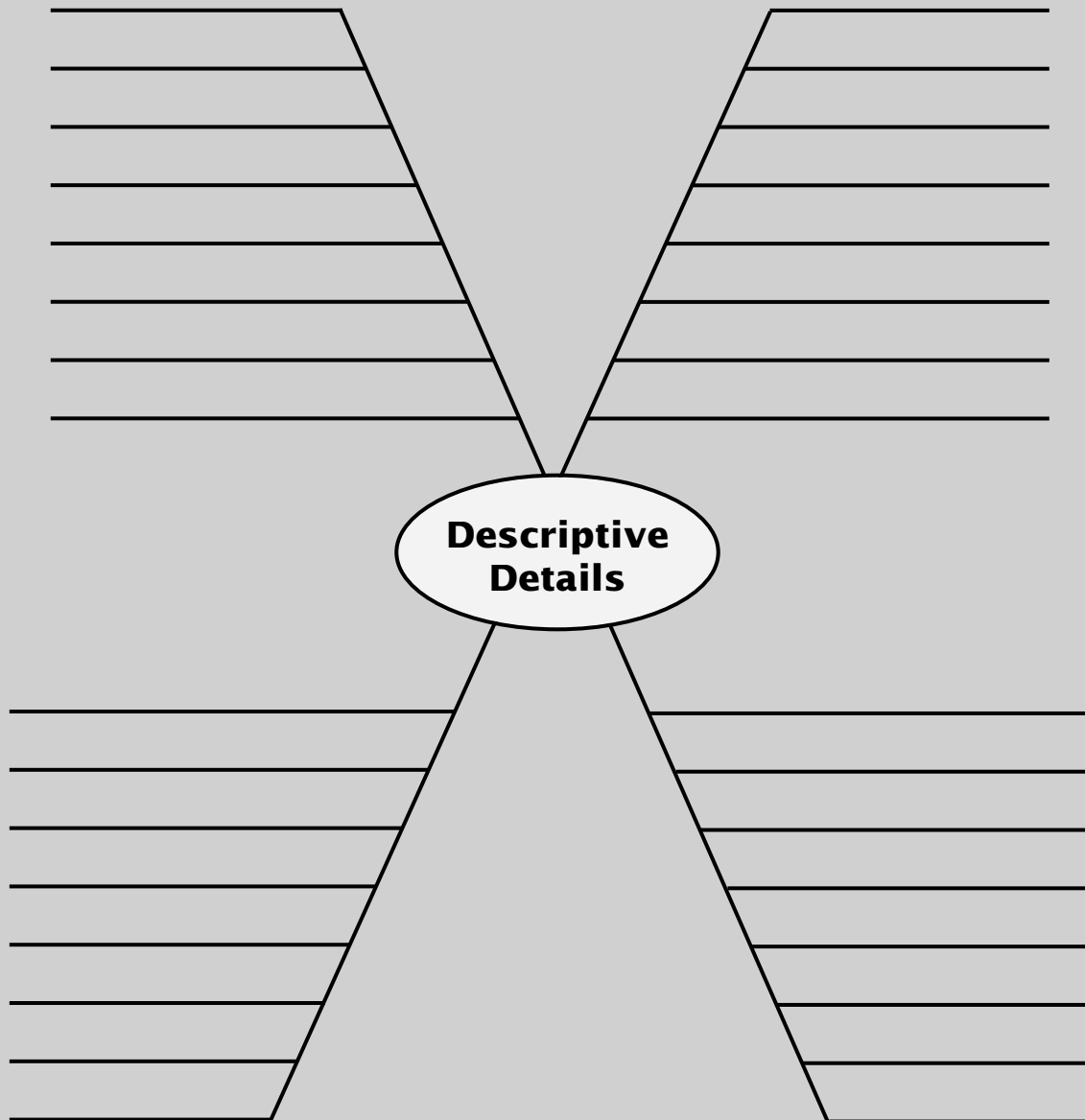
Choose a story you have read. Use the diagram below to show how the story moves from one place to another place. Tell what happens in each place.



Think of another poem or story you have read. Explain if the movement in the story holds your interest.

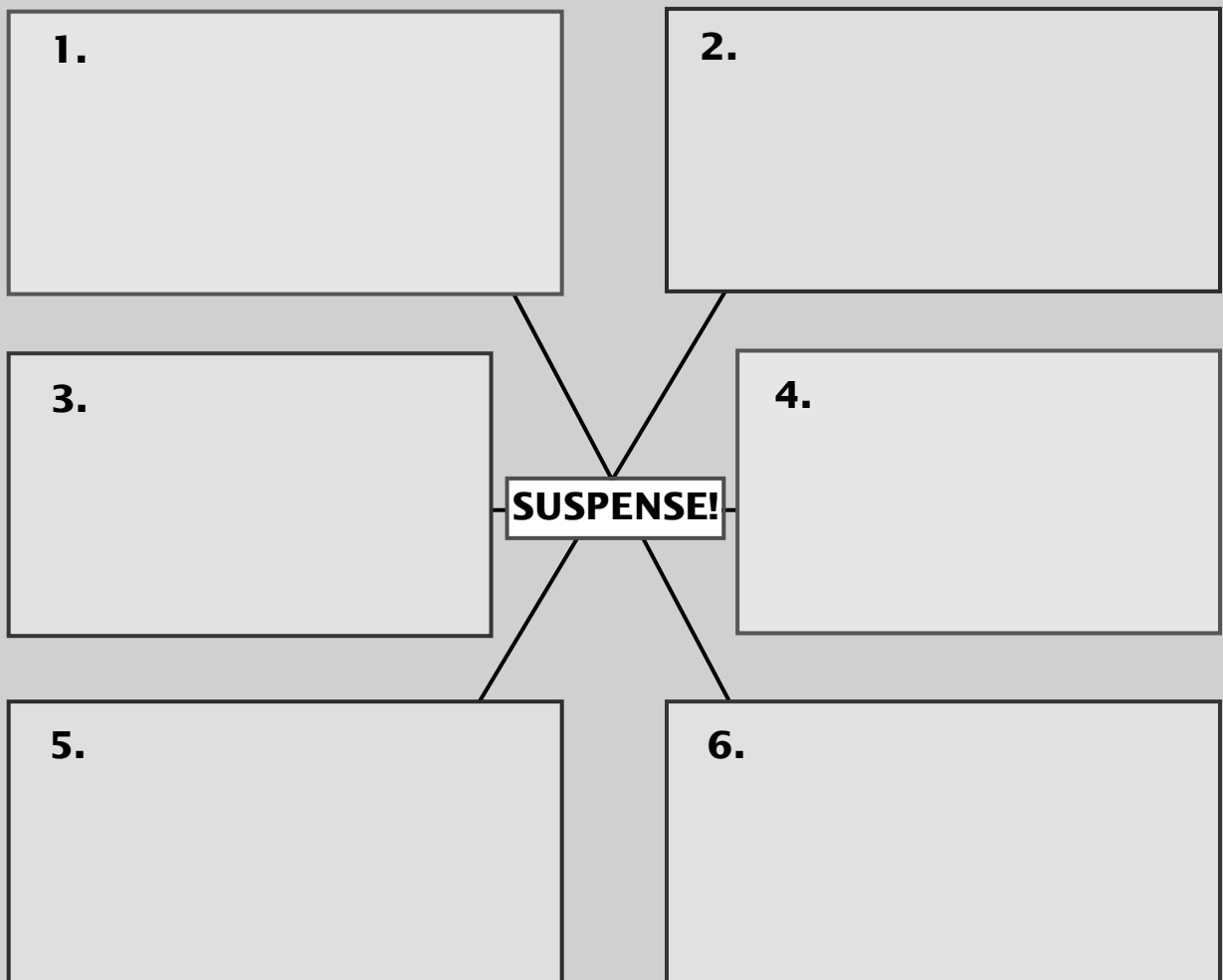
A detailed portrayal of a person, place, thing, or event is called a **description**. Strong writers select details carefully so their readers can *see, hear, smell, taste, and feel* what's being described.

Record descriptive details from a story you have read on the diagram below.



The feeling of excited uncertainty about what will happen next in a story is caused by the **suspense** a writer creates. Writers can build suspense by raising questions in a reader's mind about characters and their motivations, by describing a mood that is threatening or mysterious, or by including hints about possible story developments.

Think of a story you have read. Name the story elements that created suspense in that story.



A **flashback** is an interruption in the sequence of a piece of writing to describe a scene that happened at an earlier time. Skillful writers sometimes use flashbacks to give background information to readers so they can better understand what is happening at the present time.

Think of a story you have read in which the author uses flashbacks. Identify three situations from flashbacks that contributed to a better understanding of a present situation. Fill in the chart below.

	Past Experience:
	Past Experience:
+	Past Experience:
=	Truth about a Present Situation:

Think of another selection in which information from flashbacks contributed to the understanding of a present situation. Decide why the author may have chosen to use flashbacks and the effect they had on the story.

READING STRATEGIES AND
LITERARY ELEMENTS TRANSPARENCY **4**

FOR USE WITH FOCUS LESSON 4: POINT OF VIEW

- When a story is told from a **first-person point of view**, the narrator is one of the characters. He or she speaks to the reader using the pronouns *I*, *me*, and *we*.
- When a story is told from a **third-person point of view**, the narrator is an unnamed person. In this case, the narrator uses the pronouns *he*, *she* and *they*. The third-person narrator may or may not be one of the characters in the story.
- An **omniscient** third-person narrator is an outside-the-story person who knows what all the characters in the story are thinking and feeling.

Think of three of your favorite stories or poems. Identify the point of view used in each one.

Title of Story/Poem	Point of View

The method a writer uses to develop the personality of a character is called **characterization**. Writers often characterize through a character’s words, actions, and interactions with other characters.

Think of a story with vivid characters. Identify what you know of the characters through what they say, how they act, and what others say about them.

Character	What He/She Says	What He/She Does	What Others Say About Him/Her

Choose another story or poem you have read in which characters are vividly described. Fill in a chart similar to the one above. Use direct quotes from the story to support your ideas.

Writers often communicate ideas through **figurative language**, that is, language that compares one thing to something that is familiar. These figures of speech include similes and personification.

A **simile** uses *than*, *like*, or *as* to compare two things. The sentence—“It’s as refreshing as a swim”— is a simile.

Personification is a figure of speech in which an idea, object, or animal is given a human form or human characteristic. An example is: *The teakettle danced on the stove*. In this example, *The teakettle* is given human characteristics.

Look for similes and personification in a poem or story you have read. Use the chart below to analyze the author’s use of these figures of speech.

	Examples	Effect
Similes		
Personification		

An **allusion** is a reference to a well-known person, place, or situation from another work of literature, music, art, history, politics, or science. A recognition of allusion enriches an understanding of a piece of writing.

For example, the following sentence contains an allusion to the mythological hero, Hercules: *The two men began the Herculean task of moving the piano.*

Think of a story or poem that you have read. Then use the graphic below to help you analyze the allusions. Begin by writing the allusion.

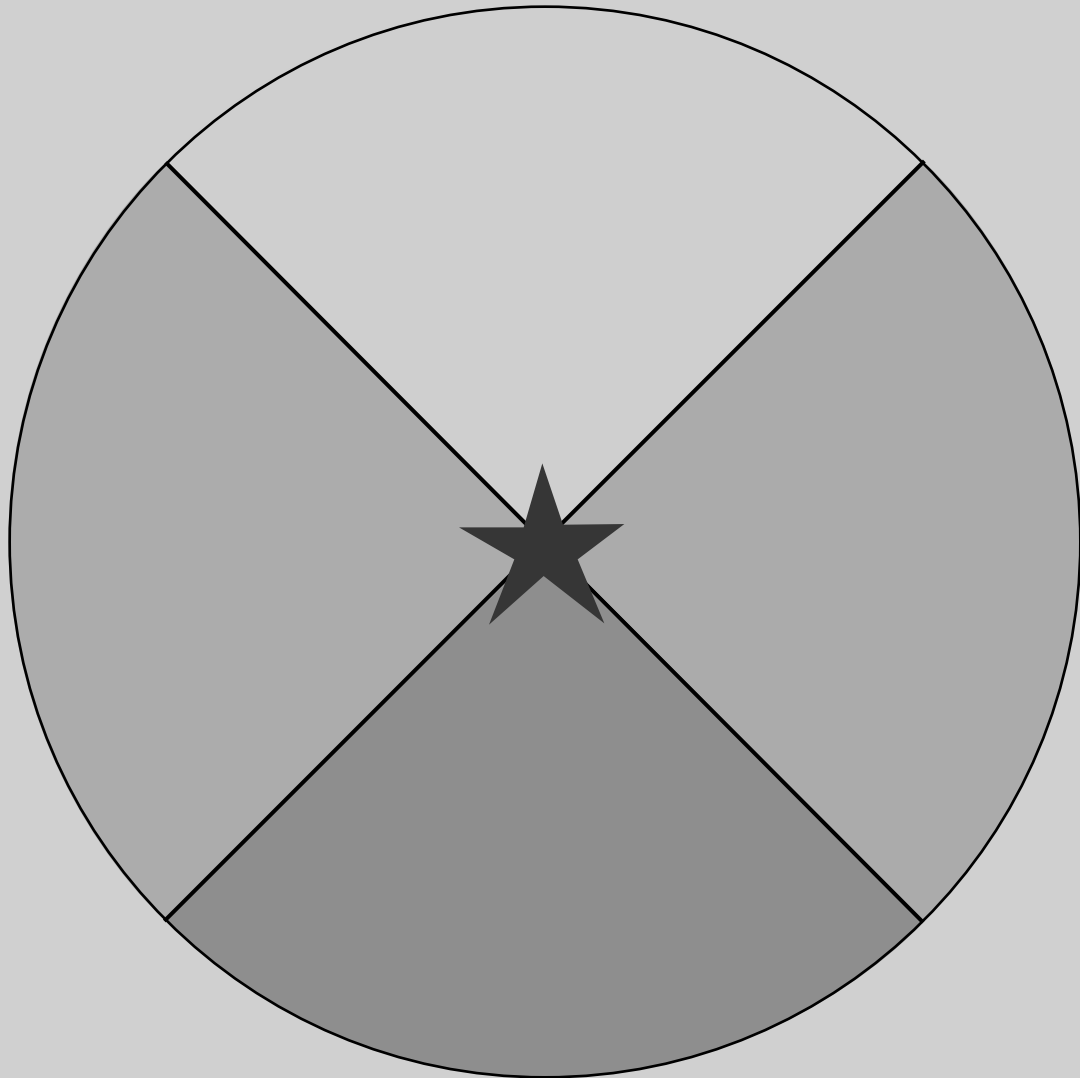
<p>Allusion:</p>	<p>Meaning:</p>	<p>How/allusion enriches the story or poem:</p>
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READING STRATEGIES AND LITERARY ELEMENTS TRANSPARENCY 8

FOR USE WITH FOCUS LESSON 8: MOOD

The emotional atmosphere or feeling of a story or poem is called the **mood**. Descriptive words, setting, dialogue, and characters' actions can all contribute to the mood of piece of writing. For this reason, it is sometimes difficult for the reader to pinpoint the exact words or phrases that create the mood of a piece. The mood pervades the writing.

On the mood ring below, describe the mood conveyed in a story or poem you have read. Use words not found in the selection to express the mood.



Irony is the difference between the way things seem to be and the way they actually are. In **situational irony**, the outcome of a situation is the opposite of what someone expects. Authors often use irony to heighten drama, create humor or strong emotion, or prove some kind of moral lesson.

Identify two examples of irony from a story, poem, or play you have read. Explain why the situations are ironic.

What was Expected	What Actually Happened	Ironic Outcome's Effect

Think of another story or poem you have read in which what actually happens is the opposite of what you expect. Make lists to compare the elements.

A writer's **style** is what makes his or her work unlike the work of all other writers. Word choice, subject matter, imagery, tone, and mood are a few of the factors that make up a writer's style.

Think of an author you enjoy reading. List three characteristics of that author's style. Then give examples for each style characteristic from a piece of that author's writing.

Style characteristics	Example
Word choice	
Subject matter	
Imagery	
Tone or mood	

Writers don't always state what they want you to understand in a selection. Instead, they provide clues and interesting details. When you combine those clues and details with your own background and knowledge, you are **making an inference**. An inference involves using your reason and experience to come up with an idea based on what the writer implies or suggests.

Choose a non-fiction passage that you have read. Identify an inference you drew while reading it. What clues led you to make that inference? Fill in the chart below.

Clue:

Detail:

Clue:

Detail:

Inference:

The **author's purpose** is the writer's goal in a particular work. For example, the author of a humorous essay probably wants to **entertain** readers. An author's purpose in a newspaper editorial is probably to **persuade** readers to consider a particular viewpoint. The purpose of an encyclopedia article is usually to **inform**.

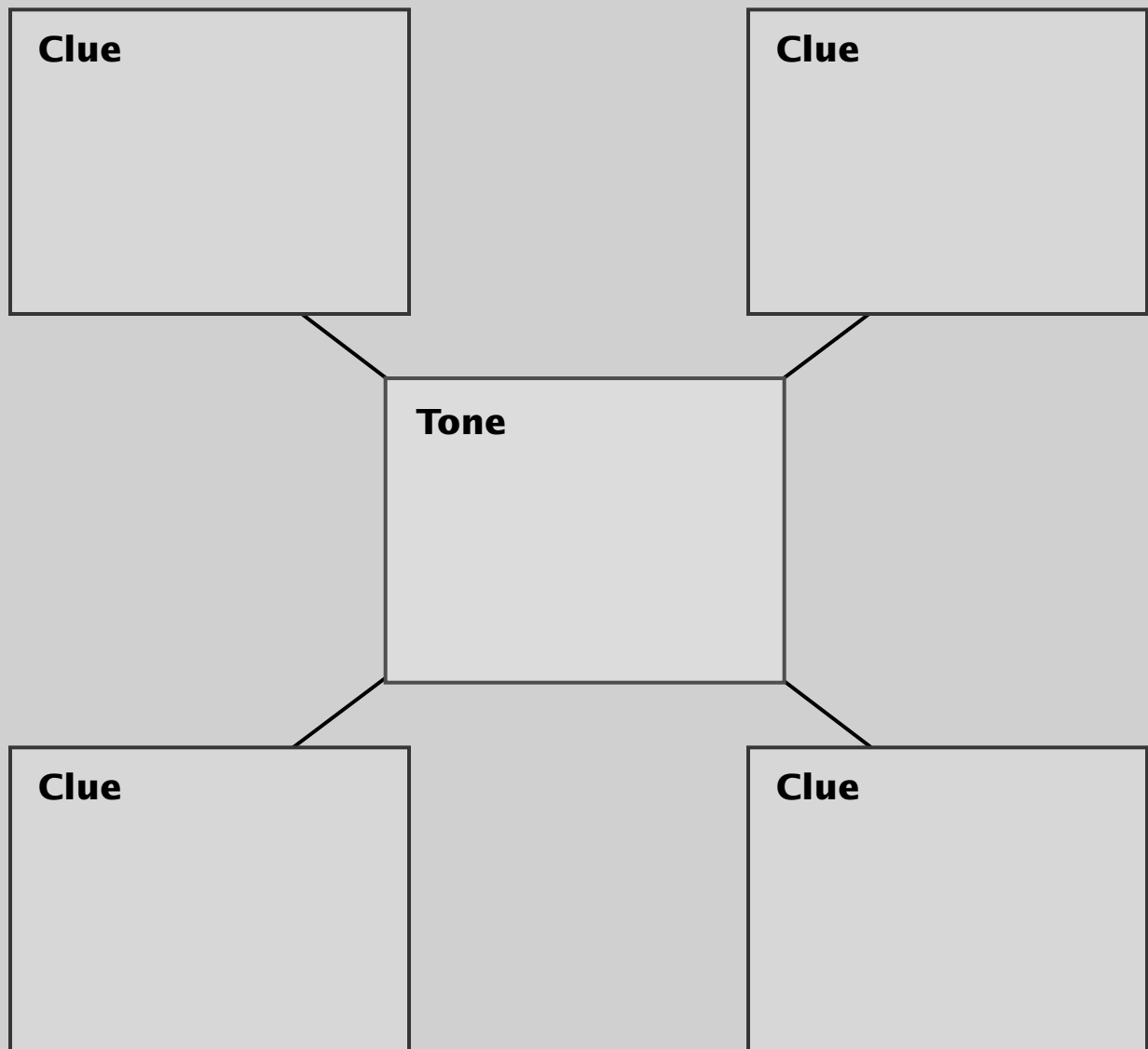
Think of non-fiction passages you have read. Which of the following purposes do the writers achieve? Support your opinions with examples from the selections.

Purpose	Examples
To Entertain	
To Persuade	
To Inform	

Think of a non-fiction passage you have read in which the author achieves more than one of the purposes listed above. Describe how the multiple purposes are achieved and use examples from the selection to support your opinion.

The author's **tone** is the writer's feelings toward his or her subject, ideas, characters, or theme. If a passage has an objective tone, the author treats the subject in an unbiased way. If a non-fiction selection has a passionate tone, the author shows strong feelings about the topic. You can determine the author's tone by looking carefully at word choices.

Think of a work of non-fiction you have read. Determine the author's tone. Then list the clues you used to determine the tone.



When readers ask themselves questions as they read, they are using a technique called **generating questions**. Some readers first skim the passage and write down questions on the unfamiliar words or concepts. Other readers scan the table of contents, the major headings, and the first page of a new selection. Both techniques help clarify understanding of the text.

Choose a non-fiction article or passage you might use for research. Use the chart below to generate two questions you might ask. Read the text and answer your two questions. How do the answers to these questions help you understand the text?

1. Question based on scanning the major headings and the first page:

2. Question based on skimming the passage:

Select another non-fiction passage to read. As you read, jot down questions. When you finish reading, determine how many questions were answered by the end of the selection. Where would you find answers to the remaining questions?

When you identify the most important idea in a paragraph or selection, you are **determining the main idea**. Sometimes the main idea is clearly stated within a passage. At other times, without stating a main idea, an author will suggest it by providing a variety of clues. Each new paragraph may have a main idea, or an entire passage could have one main idea.

Write the main idea in a non-fiction passage you have read. Explain how the main idea is developed through the beginning, middle, and end of the selection.

MAIN IDEA
↓
Beginning
↓
Middle
↓
End

Think of another non-fiction selection you have read. Determine the main idea and trace its development through the selection.

When you read a non-fiction passage that interests you, you may want to **conduct research**, or find more information, about the topic.

The first step is to pick out **key terms**, words that can be used to look up information. Your next step is to select reference sources that will help you research those terms. As you gather information, make sure each source you use relates closely to your topic and is reliable.

Identify a reference source you would use to locate the following information:

The winner of the 1975 Super Bowl:

Facts about the life of Abraham Lincoln:

The definition of *evaporation*:

Information about the history of China:

Choose a non-fiction passage you have read. Based on a topic in the selection, create a list of key terms you would use to conduct research on that topic. Then identify the reference books you would use to locate information on each key term.