


## Lesson 1: Elements of Fiction

There are five main elements people refer to when they discuss fiction. **Setting** is the time and place in which the events of a literary work occur. **Plot** is the sequence of events in a story. **Characters** are the people, animals, or beings in a work. The **theme** is the main idea or message a literary work conveys. **Point of view** is the relationship of the narrator or storyteller to the story. (See Lessons 2 and 3 for more on point of view.) Another aspect of fiction is **conflict**, which is the struggle between opposing forces in the plot of a story. This struggle can occur between a character and an outside force, such as another character, society, nature, or fate. It can also take place within a character who is faced with conflicted feelings or indecision about how to act.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following passage. As you read, try to identify the different elements of fiction. Then answer the questions on the next page.

1	From a young age, Shandot Beto was known throughout Jupiter as an artist of great talent. Art was his life and he lived only to create.
2	When he was just past middle age and still at the height of his artistic powers, a military coup occurred on the planet. The new emperor soon proved himself to be a ruthless dictator. He had plans to take over the entire galaxy by the year 4025.
3	As part of his vision for Jupiter, the emperor tore down hundreds of structures and had them rebuilt at great expense to celebrate himself. These palaces were to be filled with beautiful frescoes and murals. The emperor invited three of the greatest artists on the planet to discuss the planned artwork with him. He would then choose the artists and the plans he liked best.
4	Of course, Beto was one of the invited artists. He hated the new emperor and all that he represented. But the buildings were to be beautiful and extraordinary. Beto struggled with his conscience but, in the end, he submitted a proposal and was selected to paint the palaces. Beto soothed his qualms with the thought that, after all, he was an artist. What were interplanetary politics to him? When both he and this dictator were dead and gone, Beto's art in these magnificent structures would remain, exquisite and immortal.
5	He began work on the frescoes immediately. His brain teemed with ideas and he threw himself into the work. But every day, the emperor or one of his people was there, watching Beto work and redirecting him. "Not like that," they would say. "Like this."
6	When Beto complained of the interference, the emperor's eyes narrowed. "You work for me," he reminded the artist. "You paint what I want."

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



For more information on the elements of fiction, see *Glencoe Literature, Course 4*, pp. 2-3.



Four horizontal lines for writing.

3. What do you think the theme of the story is? Why do you think that?

Five horizontal lines for writing.

2. What is the central conflict that the main character faces in the story?

Five horizontal lines for writing.

1. Briefly recount the plot of this story.

7	Slowly, Beto's vision for the frescoes and murals began to be corrupted. He was unable to proceed as he wished. The emperor and his courtiers had no artistic talent but he could not ignore their demands. In the end, the frescoes were lackluster and lifeless, the murals uninspired.
8	The emperor, however, was smug with delight. He thought the art was glorious, and he congratulated Beto. From that time on, Beto became the emperor's pet artist, painting slick court portraits and other works as required by the emperor.
9	In galactic year 6012, when the emperor and the artist were long dead, Beto's early artwork was discovered and revered, though the man himself was always spoken of as one who had willingly collaborated with a tyrant.
10	His later works were found to have no merit at all.



### Focus Lessons

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