

“Old Ben” by Jesse Stuart
“Fox Hunt” by Lensey Namioka

Literary Analysis: Narrative Structure

Narrative structure is the form or pattern a story follows. In some stories, authors may break the straight timeline by using one or both of these two common devices:

- A **flashback** is a scene within a narrative that interrupts the sequence of events to relate events that occurred in the past. A flashback often reveals something important about a character.
- **Foreshadowing** is the use of clues hinting at events that are going to occur later in the plot of a narrative. Foreshadowing creates suspense by keeping readers guessing.

DIRECTIONS: Read the passages from “Old Ben” and “Fox Hunt.” Then, answer the questions.

One morning in July when I was walking across a clover field to a sweet-apple tree, I almost stepped on him. There he lay coiled like heavy strands of black rope. He was a big bull blacksnake. We looked at each other a minute, and then I stuck the toe of my shoe up to his mouth. He drew his head back in a friendly way. He didn’t want trouble. Had he shown the least fight, I would have soon finished him. My father had always told me there was only one good snake—a dead one.

1. Identify one detail that foreshadows the friendship between the narrator and the snake.

2. Identify one detail that hints at what will ultimately happen to Ben.

3. Which of the two details you identified helps the author create suspense? In what way? _____

One night, while he was struggling to stay awake over his book, [Fujin] heard a soft voice behind him. “A fine, hardworking young man like you deserves to pass the examination.”

Fujin whirled around and saw a beautiful girl standing behind him. Somehow she had appeared without making any noise. She had huge, bewitching eyes that slanted sharply. Could he be dreaming?

“Let me help you,” continued the girl. “I can act as a tutor and coach you.”

“And that was how your ancestor, Liang Fujin, got the coaching he needed to pass the examinations,” said Andy’s mother.

4. Explain why this passage is a flashback. _____

5. What does this flashback reveal about Andy, his goals, or his motives? _____

6. Explain the element of foreshadowing in this passage. _____
