



## PLOT & CHARACTER:

Read the following stories:

- [“The Wizard”](#) by Ryunosuke Akutagawa
- [“The Magic Shop”](#) by H.G. Wells

After reading them, reflect on these questions yourself, or discuss them with someone who might be interested in listening to your thoughts / reading the story with you!

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Evaluating a story, just like evaluating any other type of art, is subjective, so your answers to these questions will definitely vary. The important thing to remember is that you’re answering these questions critically – referencing the stories you read, not simply making up answers. If you want to be a better writer, you’ve got to read like a writer!

1. It’s usually difficult to try and identify the parts of the plot of a story if you come to it as a reader, because the writer can blur lines between a beginning and rising action, climax and falling action, etc. In longer works, it’s even harder to highlight a specific sentence that separates these parts. Plot, after all, flows naturally due to the events occurring in a story, and dividing parts just to satisfy a certain structure can make it feel stilted and unnatural. However, try to identify the parts of the plot of “The Wizard” – even just the beginning, middle, and end. Which parts were given a lot of focus, and which parts were skimmed over quickly?
2. What of Gonsuke’s actions in “The Wizard” do that struck you the most? How did it move the story forward, and keep you interested?
3. “The Magic Shop” focuses on the relationship between Gip and his father, the narrator. In which ways did you find them similar, and which ways different? Think beyond the general attributes, such as them being related, Gip being younger, and his father being older. What ways were these similarities and differences shown?
4. Which character in “The Magic Shop” did you relate to the most? Think about the way they were described, the dialogue they might have delivered, and the actions they did. Did any of them make you think, “*I would have done/said that, too*”?

To summarize:

**Plot** is the series of events that propel a story from one point to another. You’ll notice that in “The Wizard”, the major character, Gonsuke, and the minor characters, the head clerk, physician, etc., all play a part in reaching the end of the story. Their actions dictate the course of the story.

**Characters** are beings that do the actions that give life and motion to the story. In “The Magic Shop”, they also work to heighten emotions and create tension. Gip’s childishness clashes with his father’s maturity, and their relationship – which is explored through actions, dialogue, etc. – works to make the story more engaging and intriguing.