Literary Elements Notes – KEY

Literary elements are: **components that make up a work of literature.**

They include: **characters, characterization, conflict, setting, theme, symbolism, point of view, mood, tone and plot.**

### CHARACTERS

Characters are: **people or animals who take part in the action of the story.**

Three types of characters whom we may meet in any story:

1. **Major character:** These include the **protagonist**, the **antagonist** and other characters who have a large role in the story.
   
   a. **Protagonist**
      
      o The main/central/leading character
      
      o The **most important** character in a story, poem or play.
      
      o The action of the story revolves around the **protagonist**.
      
      o Is this person always a good person or the hero?
   
   b. **Antagonist**
      
      o This is the **character** or **force** that opposes the **protagonist**.
      
      o Is this person always the villain or mean character?

   **Other Major Characters:**
   
   - They can also have their own **subplot** within a story.
   - They play a **significant role** in the action of the story.

2. **Minor characters:** are characters that take place in the **action** but are not the focus of **attention**; they have a small role.

3. **Extra characters:** novels and movies need them to create a **realistic** scene. They become part of the **setting**; therefore, we don’t mention them when discussing the novel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters in “Rikki Tikki Tavi”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protagonist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rikki Tikki Tavi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antagonist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nag and Nagaina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other major characters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minor characters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teddy, Big Man, Darzee, Darzee’s wife, Karait, Chuchunda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra characters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STATIC AND DYNAMIC CHARACTERS

- **Static characters**: characters that **do not undergo any internal change** from the story’s inception to its conclusion.
- **Dynamic characters**: characters that **undergo an internal change over the course of a story as a result of their experience**. Most **protagonists** are **dynamic**.

Is RTT a static or a dynamic character? Why?

Dynamic. He becomes a more courageous character after his battle with Karait.

CONFLICT

- **Conflict**: **struggle between conflicting forces**; the single most important element of a short story; without some sort of meaningful conflict, a story has little plot to interest the reader.
- **Central conflict**: This drives the main plot of the story; it is the conflict between the **protagonist** and the **antagonist**. It shows up in the **inciting incident** of plot mountain.
- Important note: stories can also have **side conflicts**.
- Conflict categories:
  - 1. **Internal** conflict: one in which a character struggles against a force within.
  - There is one type:
    - 1. **Character** vs. **Self**: A conflict in which the main character is at odds with an internal problem such as fear, shyness or guilt.
  - 2. **External** conflict: one in which a character struggles against some outside force. There are five types.
    - 1. **Character** vs. **Character**: a conflict in which a character has a problem with another character.
    - 2. **Character** vs. **Nature**: a conflict in which a character must struggle against a harsh environment or natural disaster.
    - 3. **Character** vs. **Society**: a conflict in which a character faces a problem with a part or the whole of society (e.g. government, tradition, laws).
    - 4. **Character** vs. **Fate**: a conflict in which a character struggles with a force that seems beyond the character’s control.
    - 5. **Character** vs. **Supernatural**: a conflict in which a character struggles with a force that is not of the human world.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Category of conflict</th>
<th>Specific Type of Conflict</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rikki Tikki Tavi</td>
<td>✔️ Internal</td>
<td>Character vs. Character</td>
<td>Rikki Tikki Tavi vs. Nag/Nagaina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒️ External</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaina</td>
<td>✔️ Internal</td>
<td>Character vs. Character</td>
<td>Nagaina vs. Rikki Tikki Tavi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒️ External</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teddy</td>
<td>✔️ Internal</td>
<td>Character vs. Character</td>
<td>Teddy vs. Nagaina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒️ External</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Man</td>
<td>✔️ Internal</td>
<td>Character vs. Character</td>
<td>Big Man vs. Nag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒️ External</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Animals</td>
<td>✔️ Internal</td>
<td>Character vs. Character</td>
<td>All vs. Nag/Nagaina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒️ External</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protagonist</th>
<th>Antagonist</th>
<th>Central conflict category</th>
<th>Type of conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rikki Tikki Tavi</td>
<td>Nag and Nagaina</td>
<td>✔️ Internal</td>
<td>Character vs. Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☒️ External</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RTT Literary Analysis Target Question:** If the story were to take place in another setting, would the conflict be affected?

Yes. It would be affected because the bungalow provides sort of a closed off setting, so the animals are forced to interact with one another. This is why and how the conflict occurs.

### CHARACTERIZATION

- **Characterization:** The ways in which an author reveals the traits of the characters to his audience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Direct Characterization</th>
<th>Indirect Characterization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author directly tells the reader the traits of the character</td>
<td>The reader has to infer the traits of the character.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Direct Characterization</th>
<th>Indirect Characterization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The malevolent queen was a venomous, wicked witch.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The queen slaughtered everyone who defied her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Indirect Characterization Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect Characterization</th>
<th>STEAL</th>
<th>“Rikki Tikki Tavi” Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Speech</td>
<td><em>What does the character say? How does the character speak?</em></td>
<td>“‘If you move I strike, and if you do not move I strike. Oh foolish people who killed Nag.’” (Nagaina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thoughts of character</td>
<td><em>What is revealed through the character’s private thoughts and feelings?</em></td>
<td>Nothing at this time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Effects on other</td>
<td><em>What is revealed through the character’s effect on other people? How do other characters feel or behave in reaction to the character?</em></td>
<td>“Rikki-tikki tingled all over with rage and hatred at this, and then Nag’s head came through the sluice, and his five feet of cold body followed it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Actions of the</td>
<td><em>What does the character do? How does the character behave? Must be significant actions</em></td>
<td>“She had crept up behind him as he was talking, to make an end of him; and he heard her savage hiss as the stroke missed.” (Nagaina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>character <em>High importance</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Looks of the character</td>
<td><em>What does the character look like? How does the character dress?</em></td>
<td>“Rikki-tikki felt his eyes growing red and hot... and sat back on his tail and hind legs like a little kangaroo...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lower importance</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Literary Analysis Question – “Rikki Tikki Tavi”**

“‘It must be the head,’ he said at last; ‘the head above the hood. And, when I am once there, I must not let go.’ Then he jumped. The head was lying a little clear of the water jar, under the curve of it; and, as his teeth met, Rikki braced his back against the bulge of the red earthenware to hold down the head.” Based on the previous excerpt, which of the following types of indirect characterization is/are used to depict Rikki-tikki as brave?

A. Speech  
B. Looks  
C. Actions  
**D. Both a and c**  
E. None of the above
### Theme (aka central message/central idea) VS. Main Idea/Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Moral                 | • An intended lesson expressed in a simple story.  
• Fables and parables are specifically designed to teach a moral, which often appears in a single statement at the end.                                                                                                   |
| Theme (central message) | • A central message that an author conveys in a piece of literature.  
• Sometimes the theme is obvious, while other times the reader must think carefully about a work in order to identify theme  
• Themes are found in stories, movies, songs, poems, etc.  
• There can be more than one theme in a passage.  
• Theme is not the same as main idea or moral! |
| Main Idea             | • The overall idea about a passage or text.  
• The main idea is closely related to the TOPIC of a passage and may sometimes be stated in a topic sentence, especially in shorter passages or paragraphs  
• You can find the main idea by thinking about the supporting details.  
  - Supporting details tell more about the main idea.  

### Moral

Example: “A shepherd boy watching a flock of sheep caused a group of villagers to come running to his aid twice by crying, “Wolf! Wolf!” Each time the villagers arrived, the boy laughed and boasted that he had fooled them. The next day, a wolf really did come, but when the boy cried out, the villagers paid no attention. They thought the boy was trying to trick them again. The wolf was able to eat the boy’s sheep.”

- A. It’s easy to criticize what you cannot have.  
- B. Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.  
- C. Liars are not believed, even when they tell the truth.
A theme (central message) is the message conveyed by the piece. Theme must be converted into a thematic statement.

What were the central ideas of the story?

- **Courage**: The story emphasized the courage of Rikki and contrasted that with the cowardice of Chuchundra.
- **Loyalty**: RTT displays loyalty towards the family as well as to his duty as a mongoose.
- **Survival**: Survival is the motivating factor behind the actions of all characters involved. Even the cobras killed only for food and to protect their way of life.

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**EXAMPLE: The Wizard of Oz (1939)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Idea</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this classic film, a tornado transports Dorothy Gale into the fantastical land of Oz, where she must contend with witches, odd creatures, and supernatural happenings in order to make it back home to Kansas.</td>
<td>The real <em>message</em> of the film is <em>the value of determination and teamwork</em>; one can succeed in life and survive great hardship through resourcefulness and determination. **** This is not the only theme found in this film.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme is NOT:**
- The main idea
- A summary of the story’s plot
- One word
- The same as moral

**HOW IS THEME DEVELOPED?**

Some examples include:
- **Conflict** in the story’s plot
- **Symbols** embedded within the story
- Character’s **actions**

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**“Rikki Tikki Tavi”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Loyalty and courage will prevail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stand up for others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main idea**

Family finds a mongoose (RTT) washed up from flood; they take him back to live with them. He learns two cobras are plotting to kill the family and take over the garden. RTT sets out to stop this from happening.

**Moral**

N/A
Symbol: anything that stands for or represents something else
- May be a person, place, thing or action
- May stand for an idea, belief, feeling, attitude, people or places.

A symbol keeps its own meaning while also standing for something else.
- Symbols are situational.
- Symbols keep their abstract meaning throughout a piece of work.

In literature, symbols aren’t always what they seem...
- **America**
  - Native Americans attributed owls with wisdom and sacred knowledge. The shaman would call upon Owl medicine for insight into the truth of ill-intent. Plains Indians wore owl feathers to protect against evil spirits.
- **Ancient Greece**
  - The ancient Greeks attributed the owl to Athena, goddess of wisdom and foresight. This symbol was used on Greek coins and therefore also became associated with wealth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Possible Meanings!! Remember, it’s situational!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Peace, tranquility, cold, calm, truth, depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Joy, happiness, optimism, hope, sunshine, summer, cowardice, illness, hazard and friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Purity, cleanliness, peace, innocence, youth, winter, marriage (Western cultures), death (Eastern cultures), cold, clinical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Excitement, energy, passion, love, desire, strength, power, heat, aggression, danger, fire, blood, war, violence, all things intense and passionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Royalty and nobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Power, sophistication, elegance, mystery, fear, evil, unhappiness, sadness, mourning, death (Western cultures).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SYMBOLISM IN LITERATURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>A direct comparison of two unlike objects; states that one object is another. *** Even though objects are unlike, they must have a slight similarity to establish meaning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love is a jewel.</td>
<td><em>This is symbolic because it suggests that love is rare and precious.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is a rock.</td>
<td><em>This is symbolic because it suggests that he is strong and dependable.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Symbolism in literature is used to enhance writing and they can help develop theme.

- It can take many forms including:
  - characters
  - words
  - actions
  - events that have deeper meaning in a story
  - metaphors
  - allegories

Allegory as Symbolism

Allegory: an extended use of symbolism and metaphors

- A story, a poem, or even a whole book can be an allegory and the symbolism will permeate throughout.

“Every Rose Has its Thorn” – Poison

“Every rose has its thorn
Just like every night has its dawn
Just like every cowboy sings his sad, sad song
Every rose has its thorn”

What is the theme of this stanza?

**Every rose has its thorn.**

**Life has its ups and downs.**

**Nobody is perfect. Things aren’t always as they seem.**

How does the symbolism help develop theme?

**The rose represents love and happiness.**

**The thorns represent the things that can go wrong, and how love can be painful at times.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nag and Nagaina</td>
<td>Death, Evil, Darkness, Danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kariat</td>
<td>Death, Danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rikki-Tikki-Tavi</td>
<td>Courage, loyalty, bravery, hope, life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyze It!
What do you know about Rudyard Kipling and the time period in which he grew up?
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

How might the conflict in the story be symbolic?
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

How might the English people moving into the bungalow be symbolic?
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

MOOD AND TONE

Mood: **the feeling the author creates for the reader.**
- Mood can change throughout a story based on the events in the plot.
- Mood can also be created in music and movies.

How is mood created?
- **Mood is created by the author through tone.**

Tone: **the author’s attitude toward setting, characters, or action/plot in a story.**
- It can also be used in music and film.
- Tone describes the apparent attitude of the speaker or narrator toward the subject. It refers only to the narrative voice; not to the author or characters

See Your Mood/Tone Handout!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Rikki Tikki Tavi”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly suspenseful as the conflict develops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End delivers relief and joy as the garden and the family celebrate the end of Nag and Nagaina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tone</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At times serious and frightening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also reflects Rikki’s playful side</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### POINT OF VIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
<td>A person who writes a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrator</strong></td>
<td>The character or outsider telling a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point of View (POV)</strong></td>
<td>The view point of the story’s narrator. Stories can be told from several points of view.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Point of View**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The narrator is a character in the story who can reveal only personal thoughts and feelings and what he or she sees and is told by other characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• She/he can’t tell us thoughts of other characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The narrator is not a character in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He/she tells the story from the outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Third person pronouns used by the narrator are he, she, their, they, them, it, theirs, its, his, and hers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person limited</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The narrator is an outsider who sees into the mind of one of the characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person omniscient</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The narrator is an all-knowing outsider who can enter the minds of more than one character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person objective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Giving just the facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The reader is never allowed into any of the characters’ minds, nor given any of their feelings or emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The reader has to judge what the character is thinking or feeling by what they say, what they do, and their facial expressions - much like real life, in fact.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Point of View – Practice**

- As the girl walked up the hill, **she realized** that the atmosphere was just too quiet. The cardinal tipped his head back and drew breath to sing, but just as the first note passed his beak he heard the crack of a dead branch far below his perch high in the maple tree. Startled, he looked down, cocking his head to one side and watching with great interest while the man rattled the blades of grass as he tried to hide himself behind the tree. As the man saw her start up the hill, he moved quickly into the shelter of the huge old maple tree. If she saw him now, everything would be ruined. **She thought** she saw a shadow move high up on the slope, but when she looked again it was gone. The man thought if he could stay hidden until she came within range, she’d have to talk to him. Wouldn’t she? The girl shuddered as she felt a silent threat pass over her. It felt like a cloud creeping over the sun.

**THIRD PERSON OMNISCIENT**

- As **I** walked up the hill, **I realized** that the atmosphere was just too quiet. There was no sound from the cardinal who was nearly always singing from the top of the maple tree. **I thought** I saw a shadow move high up on the slope, but when I looked again it was gone. Still, **I** shuddered **as I felt** a silent threat pass over **me** like a cloud over the sun.

**FIRST PERSON**
As she walked up the hill, she realized that the atmosphere was just too quiet. There was no sound from the cardinal who she so often heard singing from the top of the maple tree. She thought she saw a shadow move high up on the slope, but when she looked again it was gone. Nevertheless, she shuddered as she felt a silent threat pass over her. It felt like a cloud creeping over the sun.

**THIRD PERSON LIMITED**

What is the POV of the story “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi”?
- Go back and skim the text.
- Is the narrator inside or outside the text? **Outside**
- If the narrator is outside the text, can he/she get into the mind of one characters or more than one character? **Yes, so it is third person omniscient.**

How does POV affect a story?

What if the POV of the story Rikki-tikki was written in first person POV? Would that change the story? If so, how?

Who does the POV affect? The characters or the reader? **Explain**

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**CHARACTER PERSPECTIVE**

Character Perspective:
- Viewpoint of the character who is telling the story
- How characters in a story view the occurrences in a story

**FORESHADOWING**

Foreshadowing: The technique authors use to hint at something that will happen or something that we will learn later on in the book.

Two main reasons for foreshadowing:
1. **Build suspense**
2. **Prepare readers for what will happen – either good or bad.**

It is used to:
- Make the story more believable
- In mysteries, authors use foreshadowing to mislead readers (known as a red herring).
**FLASHBACK**

**Flashback**: the technique authors use to tell readers about an event that happened before the current action of the story.

It must be:
- **Relevant to the plot**
- **Triggered by something**

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**PLOT**

**Plot**: the sequence of events a story follows.

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**Exposition**:
- The **first part** of a story.
- It introduces the **setting, characters, and the basic situation**.

**Characters**:
- Major characters are often introduced in the exposition; sometimes a major character will be introduced in the rising actions.
- Minor characters maybe introduced during this period, but they can also be introduced during the rising action.
- Extra characters blend into the background and are not highlighted.

**Setting**:
- **Setting**: the time and place in which the main story events occur.
Setting Creates:
- Mood or atmosphere of the story
- Provides important background information
- Can be used to symbolize important themes of a story
- In some stories it is an integral part; in others, it’s not as important.
- Setting can help create conflict, but there is no such thing as character versus setting!

Setting Includes:
- Scenery, weather, clothing, furniture, and other elements associated with the time period
- Is created through imagery
  - Use of language that appeals to the senses and produces mental images
  - The use of figurative language or vivid descriptions to produce mental images

Basic Situation:
- A basic overview of what is taking place.
- Remember, this is before the central conflict is introduced.

INCITING INCIDENT:

Inciting Incident:
- The point in the story when the central conflict of the story takes place.
- This is where and when the reader will discover the main struggle (central conflict) in the story.

Conflict Review
- Internal Conflict
  - Character vs. self: A conflict in which the main character is at odds with an internal problem, such as fear, shyness, or guilt.

- External Conflict
  - Character vs. Character — A conflict in which the main character has a problem with another character.
  - Character vs. Nature — A conflict in which the main character must struggle against a harsh environment or natural disaster.
  - Character vs. Society — A conflict in which the main character faces a problem with a part or the whole of society (e.g., government, tradition, laws).
  - Character vs. Fate — A conflict in which the main character struggles with a force that seems beyond the character’s control
  - Character vs. Supernatural — A conflict in which the main character struggles with a force that is not of the human world.

RISING ACTION:

Rising Action (Development):
- The part of the story where the conflict increases or becomes more complicated to resolve.
CLIMAX:

Climax:
- The is the point of the story that is the most interesting or suspenseful.
- The main conflict is being directly addressed.

FALLING ACTION

Falling Action:
- The gradual subsiding of action after the climax; needed so all the action just doesn’t stop.
- It may or may not be present.

RESOLUTION:

Resolution:
- The part of the story when the conflict is solved.

DENOUEMENT:

Denouement:
- This is any action or events that take place after the central conflict has been resolved.
- Sometimes the denouement is not present.