1. Exposition: The set up of the story. Gives background information such as the main character, setting, and basic conflict.

   Exposition example: In “Hansel and Gretel” the main characters are two kids (Hansel and Gretel) who are hated by their stepmother. She convinces their father to abandon them. They are taken to the middle of the forest to be left behind, but have overheard their stepmother’s plan and leave a trail of pebbles to find their way home.

2. Rising Action: A series of events and actions that move the story to the climax. Along with the main conflict, there may be many smaller conflicts.

   Rising action example: The second time they are abandoned they drop breadcrumbs which the birds eat. Hansel and Gretel get lost. They come upon a house made entirely of candy. They are delighted and starved and begin to eat. The owner of the house an old lady invites them in to stay.

3. Climax: The peak of the action or the turning point of the story. After the climax in the story, everything changes.

   Climax example: Once they are inside, the old lady reveals she is a witch. She locks them inside. She makes Gretel a slave and fattens Hansel up to eat. Gretel must work around the witch’s house cleaning and cooking to prepare Hansel for the witch. One day when the witch says Hansel is ready, she asks Gretel to fire up the oven. Gretel says it isn’t warming, so the witch leans into the oven. Gretel pushes her in!

4. Falling action: The conflict unravels with the main character either winning or losing. There might be a moment of final suspense.

   Falling action example: The witch burns up! Hansel and Gretel ransack the house and find the witch’s hidden jewels. They stuff their clothes with them and pick through the forest until they find their way home.
5. resolution or denouement (day- noo-mah): The story ends. The main character may be better off than at the beginning of the story. The author may leave it up to the reader to decide an ending.

Resolution example: They finally reach their house and their father is overjoyed to see them. He has missed them terribly. During the time they were away, their stepmother has died. He welcomes them back with open arms, and they live happily ever after off the witch’s wealth.