

Climax

Definition:

- the particular point in a narrative at which the conflict or tension hits the highest point.
- a decisive moment or a turning point in a storyline at which the rising action turns around into a falling action
- the point at which a conflict or crisis reaches its peak that calls for a resolution
- In a five-act play, the climax is close to the conclusion the third act (look for this in *Hamlet*).
- A climax helps readers understand the significance of the rising action earlier to the point in the plot where the conflict reaches its peak. The *climax* of the story makes readers mentally prepared for the resolution of the conflict.

Examples:

- In *Romeo and Juliet*, the climax comes during act three. This is when Romeo kills Tybalt and comes to realize that he just killed his wife's cousin. This is the major point in the plot where the audience has to wonder how Romeo will get out of such a bad situation. After this point, the story lines start to resolve.
- In *The Ultimate Gift*, the climax occurs as Jason runs from his capturers in South America, and he decides to go back for the other man who was trapped with him. Here is when Jason's opinion and the way he behaves changes for the rest of the novel. He takes the challenges of his grandfather more seriously after this point, and conflicts begin to come to an end.

Links:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/climax>

http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_c.html

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/fiction_glossary.html

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/121675/climax>