# Freytag Pyramid

- named after German playwright Gustav Freytag (1863)
- initially based on Aristotle's theory of tragedy
- basic five-act structure of a plot
  - **exposition**
    - introduction of characters, setting, pertinent information, initial dialogue
  - **rising action**
    - series of events designed to move the story forward
    - slow build of tension that reveals the major conflict(s)
  - **climax**
    - maximum point of tension/conflict
    - the primary point in the story where the protagonist must make a big decision for gain or loss
    - often reveals ultimate strengths and weakness of the protagonist
  - **falling action**
    - the conflict between characters unravels
    - secrets are revealed
    - sacrifices are made (deaths, breakdown of relationships, etc)
  - **resolution**
    - either a return to how things used to be or the presentation of a new reality
    - conflicts are resolved
    - the ending unfolds
- other elements can be added to Freytag's Pyramid for greater understanding of a story
  - *inciting incident*: the point of no return; the thing that sets the hero on his journey
  - *complication*: this is the intense moment before the climax, the series of events the pushes characters to the breaking point
  - *reversal*: when there's a twist or shift in the narrative that sends the story in another direction
  - *denouement*: the final pages, the true end; occasionally an epilogue

## Freytag Pyramid

Climax

Complication — Reversal

Rising Action — Falling Action

Inciting Incident — Resolution

Exposition — Denouement
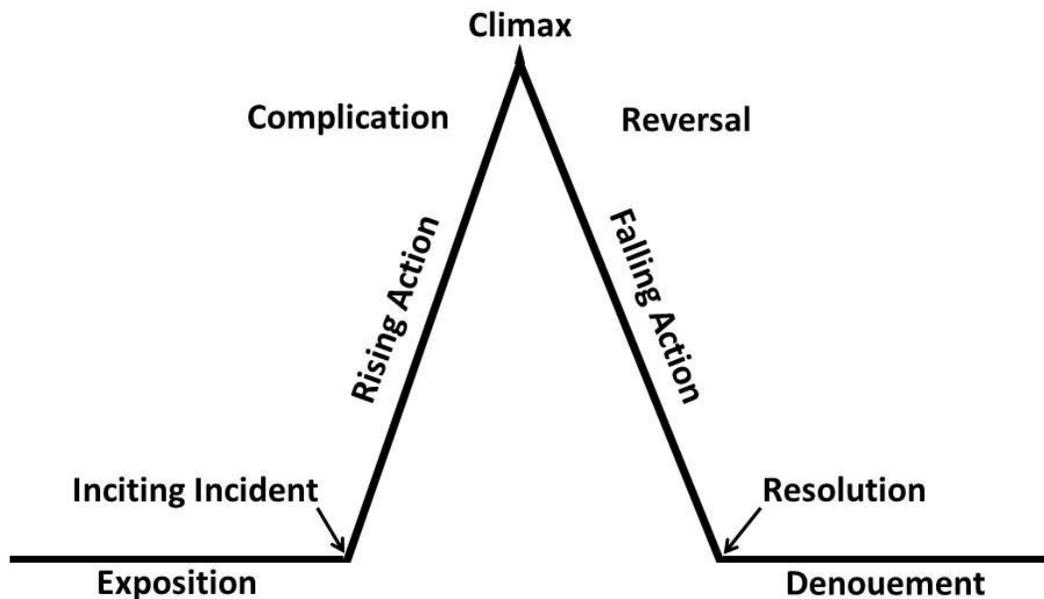
- **plot devices and narrative techniques** occur throughout the narrative to spur the story along and make the story more interesting
    - *red herring*: character or idea created to mislead the reader; an intentional distraction (most common in mysteries)
    - *deus ex machina*: the convenient solving of all the problems (This device is particularly unsatisfying when used in the resolution, i.e., the hero shows up at just the right time, the character wakes up and it was all a dream, there's an earthquake that causes a crack in the earth that swallows the villain whole…) Often considered "the easy way out."
    - *foreshadowing*: events in the second half of the story are alluded to in the first half the story through imagery, parallel storylines, and dialogue
    - *backstory*: seemingly irrelevant information is given through dialogue or flashback, but often there is something readers need to remember for future reference. Sometimes backstory is used to further character development.
    - *poetic justice*: good old karma! A good character is rewarded for his/her virtues or a bad character gets what coming to him/her.