

The Novel: Some Elements

Elements in nearly all novels:

CHARACTER	direct description or commentary by the narrator, including ironic comment language: in speech and thought, in both content and form of expression action: especially as it confirms or contradicts what characters say change: growth or deterioration †
Coincidence	Coincidence, which surprises us in real life with symmetries we don't expect to find there, is all too obviously a structural device in fiction, and an excessive reliance on it can jeopardize the verisimilitude of a narrative. †
Ending	last-minute twist is generally more typical of the short story than of the novel †
Intertextuality	some ways a text can refer to another: parody, pastiche, echo, allusion, direct quotation, structural parallelism †
IRONY	consists of saying the opposite of what you mean, or inviting an interpretation different from the surface meaning of your words. †
Narrative Structure	you can't see it, but it determines the edifice's shape and character † the arrangement of the parts of the material
PLOT	Plot has been defined as "a completed process of change." † A story is "a narrative of events in their time-sequence. A <i>plot</i> is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality." --Forster
POINT OF VIEW	the vantage point from which an author tells a story. The two broad categories are (1) the third-person narrator who tells the story and does not participate in the action and (2) the first-person narrator who is a major or minor participant.
Repetition	can be lexical or grammatical; incantatory rhythms and repetitions †
SETTING	the background of a story in [1] PLACE, including city/country/region, indoors or out, weather and [2] TIME, including century, year, historical and social conditions, season, day/night, and the like
Showing and Telling	Fictional discourse constantly alternates between <i>showing</i> us what happened and <i>telling</i> us what happened. [Scene and Narration] †
STYLE	the individual way a writer works, especially to achieve a specific effect. The elements of style include diction, syntax, imagery, figurative language, and larger questions of structure, modes of discourse, and the like.
SYMBOL	anything that "stand for" something else is a symbol, but the process operates in many different ways. †
THEME	a central idea. Like <i>thesis</i> , it implies a subject and a predicate of some kind, as opposed to a <i>topic</i> , which can be simply a label
TOPE	the author's attitude toward the material in a work or toward the reader. Tone is revealed by style.

Elements in many novels

Comedy	Two primary sources: situation and style. Both depend crucially upon timing †
Duration	as measured by comparing the time events would have taken up in reality with the time taken to read about them. This factor affects narrative tempo †
Epiphany	literally, a showing. Any descriptive passage in which external reality is charged with a kind of transcendental significance for the perceiver †
Epistolary Novel	advantages: can have more than one correspondent and thus show the same event from different points of view †
Exotic	foreign, but not necessarily glamorous or alluring †
Implication	especially sexual in Victorian lit †
Interior Monologue	very difficult technique to use... apt to impose a painfully slow pace on the narrative †
Intrusive Author	around the turn of the century fell into disfavour †
Magic Realism	marvellous and impossible events occur in what otherwise purports to be a realistic narrative †
Metafiction	fiction about fiction novels and stories that call attention to their own compositional procedures. †
Names	In a novel names are never neutral. †
Sense of Past	"historical novels (19th century) dealt with historical personages and events; but also evoked the past in terms of culture, ideology, manners and morals †
Stream of Consciousness	1] one technique is interior monologue 2] second technique is free indirect style. It renders thought as reported speech but keeps the kind of vocabulary that is appropriate to the character, and deletes some of the tags †
Allegory	does not merely suggest, but insists on being decoded in terms of another meaning; at every point a one-to-one correspondence to the implied meaning †
Time-Shift	narrative avoids presenting life [in order] and allows us to make connections of causality and irony between widely separated events †
Title	The title is part of the text--the first part of it, in fact †
Unreliable Narrator	invariably invented characters who are part of the stories they tell †

† adapted from David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction*, London: Penguin, 1992. Print.
[An invaluable source with the strongest recommendation.]