**in media res**

in or into the middle of a narrative or plot

From Latin, meaning literally “into the midst of things”

From *Encyclopædia Britannica*:

In [narrative](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/403613/narrative) technique, the practice of beginning by plunging into a crucial situation that is part of a related chain of events**;** therefore, **the given situation is an extension of previous events**. The narrative then goes directly forward, and exposition of earlier events is supplied.

**Exposition**

A setting forth of meaning or intent

In dramatic literature, it is the part of a play that provides the **background information** needed to understand the characters and the action.

Much is usually provided near the beginning of a play, but exposition can be revealed at any time.

**Rising Action**

A related series of incidents in a plot that build toward the point of greatest interest (climax)

**Inciting Incident**

The inciting incident, also sometimes called the **point of attack**, is the moment – and first major plot point – at which the dramatic conflict, hidden up until that moment, announces itself.

**Conflict**

From <http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~cpercy/courses/220KeyTermsDefinitions>

**Dramatic conflict is created when a character is prevented from getting something he or she wants. Action is the result of conflict**: I want, I cannot have, therefore, I act: I try to remove the obstacle so I can get what I want.

A play traces the resolution of a central conflict; that is, the conflicting desires of two or more characters. Each character’s desire prevents the other(s) from accomplishing his or her desire. **The play is over when the conflict is resolved.**

**Crises (and complications)**

Dictionary Definition:

1. A point in a sequence of events at which the trend of future events is determined (for better or worse); a turning point.
2. A condition of instability or danger that leads to decisive change.

Crises occur as a result of conflicts, obstacles and complications. One crisis is averted only to bring on another. They build until the main crisis, aka, the climax.  
[<http://department.monm.edu/cata/rankin/classes/cata171/Lectures/Chapter14.htm>]

**Climax**

Dictionary Definition:

The point in a play at which hostile elements are most tensely opposed to each other

From *Encyclopædia Britannica*:

The climax is the ***decisive moment***, ***or turning point***, **at which the rising action of the play is reversed to falling action**. In modern drama it occurs **close to the end of the play**.

**Falling Action**

The part of a plot that occurs after the climax has been reached and the conflict has been resolved.

**Dénouement (Resolution)**

1. the final outcome of the main dramatic complication in a literary work
2. the outcome of a complex sequence of events

In French, dénouement literally means “untying,” as a knot.

From *Encyclopædia Britannica*:

**dénouement**, ( French: “unknotting”) conclusion after the climax of a narrative in which the complexities of the plot are unraveled and the conflict is finally resolved. In the dénouementof a traditionally structured plot, the villain may be exposed, the mystery explained, misunderstandings clarified, or lovers reunited. In a tragedy, the conclusion is often called the **catastrophe** (from Greek, literally “an overturning,” “a sudden end.”)

**Plot**

In fiction, the structure of interrelated actions, consciously selected and arranged by the author. Plot involves a considerably higher level of narrative organization than normally occurs in a story or fable. According to E.M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), a story is a “narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence,” whereas a plot organizes the events according to a “sense of causality.”

In the history of literary criticism, plot has undergone a variety of interpretations. In the *Poetics,* Aristotle assigned primary importance to plot (*mythos*) and considered it the very “soul” of a tragedy. Later critics tended to reduce plot to a more mechanical function, until, in the Romantic era, the term was theoretically degraded to an outline on which the content of fiction was hung. Such outlines were popularly thought to exist apart from any particular work and to be reusable and interchangeable. They might be endowed with life by a particular author through his development of character, dialogue, or some other element. The publication of books of “basic plots” brought plot to its lowest esteem.

In the 20th century there have been many attempts to redefine plot as movement, and some critics have even reverted to the position of Aristotle in giving it primary importance in fiction. These neo-Aristotelians (or Chicago school of critics), following the leadership of the critic Ronald S. Crane, have described plot as the author’s control of the reader’s emotional responses—his arousal of the reader’s interest and anxiety and the careful control of that anxiety over a duration of time. This approach is only one of many attempts to restore plot to its former place of priority in fiction.