



## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

### Video: Ready, Set, Invent! Plot

*(parallel pattern of action and person-against-person conflict)*



#### Parallel Pattern of Action

Most plots in children's literature are presented in a linear manner with one event following another according to a sequence through time. Often, children find it confusing to follow several plot lines at once. In the parallel pattern of action, however, readers are able to enjoy several characters, one at a time, as the author tells the story from the perspective of each. These two (or more) stories are parallel to each other in that each character has problems to confront and resolve. The stories eventually merge as each character responds to the other's part in and response to the overall story.

#### Person-Against-Person Conflict

Person-against-person conflict is probably the most common type of conflict found in children's literature. It originates in the earliest stories that have been handed down through the centuries from folktales, myths, and traditional literature. In these early tales, the protagonist (good guy) meets his adversary (bad guy) in some sort of combat. Many authors feel this is the easiest type of conflict for a young reader to understand because this is the type of confrontation children encounter in their everyday surroundings with adults and peers. Often, character traits are revealed through their actions and reactions to these situations.

#### References:

Lukens, R. J. (2007). *A critical handbook of children's literature, 8<sup>th</sup> ed.* Boston: Pearson.

Nikolajeva, M. (2002). *The rhetoric of character in children's literature.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.