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ANALYZE YOUR WRITING BASED ON E.M. FORSTER'S FIVE ELEMENTS TO ACHIEVE BALANCE.

In *Aspects of the Novel*, E.M. Forster identifies five key elements of a novel: *story*, *plot*, *people*, *pattern*, and *rhythm*.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? The balance of these elements helps determine the overall “feel” of both non-fiction and fiction writing. Develop the habit of tracking how you are applying each of the five elements to ensure that your work is balanced and communicates the right message.

TRY IT

At regular intervals in your writing process (e.g., every 5,000 words, twice a week, etc.), revisit these five elements and write down how you are applying them in your work.

STORY *Story is the “what” of the work. For example, “The King died, and then the Queen died.”*

▶ The story so far is:

PLOT *Plot is the “why” of the work. For example, “The King died, and then the Queen died of grief.”*

▶ The plot so far is:

PEOPLE *People refers to the “who” of the work. In the example, it’s the King and the Queen.*

▶ The people so far are:

PATTERN *Pattern is the “shape” of the narrative. For example, a circular narrative shape would start with the King dying, the Queen dying of grief, and then the revelation that the King had died of grief as well.*

▶ The narrative shape so far is:

RHYTHM *Rhythm is the “repetition and variation of a motif” throughout the work. For example, a motif of death and grief introduced in the above examples can be continued through other details in the story, such as a prince losing his favorite cane, or a servant that grieves losing her only pair of shoes.*

▶ The rhythm so far is:

Are all five elements clear in your writing? Does it seem like some elements are more important in the work than others? What effect does this have? How can you work on one of the elements to make the work stronger?