EVIL GENIUS

THE BILDUNGSROMAN

A *bildungsroman*, also known as a coming-of-age story, is a <u>narrative</u> that deals with a sensitive or tragic protagonist's psychological and moral development during the teenage, or formative, years. The tragic element is usually set up in the <u>exposition</u> of the story and this frames the narrative.

The character in a *bildungsroman* will undertake a journey to find some meaning in his/her existence and by doing so will experience a series of conflicts or challenges to social values during the <u>rising action</u> of the story. During this journey the character generally will suffer disappointment and make a series of mistakes that will come to a <u>climax</u> and then are resolved once the character gains maturity and acceptance during the <u>falling action</u> of the narrative. From these <u>resolutions</u> the responder is able to define the <u>coda</u>, or moral message, of the story.

The *bildungsroman* often will reflect a sense of <u>realism</u>, even in <u>allegorical narratives</u>, in order to effectively convey these messages to the <u>target audience</u>.

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1. Where does the word '*bildungsroman*' originate and what is its literal meaning?

2. The first recognised *bildungsroman* is *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795) followed by such iconic works as *David Copperfield* (1850) and *Catcher in the Rye* (1951). Do some literary research, identify a *bildungsroman* from the 21st Century and explain how you feel this narrative meets the criteria of the genre. You may look at a range of textual mediums: film, graphic novel, anime, video game, biography, etc.

3. The following chart follows a basic formula for an essay body paragraph. Use your reading journal to help you identify elements of the *bildungsroman* in the narrative.

Identify	Example	Effect	Link
Tragic backstory	Cadel is adopted; he doesn't know who his real parents are.		
Challenges to social values			
Conflicts and disappointments			
Climax			
Resolution and moral development			
Coda			Cadel's maturity and moral development.