

In Medias Res

Definition: When an author begins writing a story from the middle of the plot or story-line.

- *In media res* is Latin for “in the middle of things”
- The narrative will rework itself to make sense discursively, following a discourse, if not necessarily chronologically.
 - Here, it is important to differentiate between discourse and story:
 - *Story* refers to the actual chronology of events in a narrative
 - *Discourse* refers to the manipulation of the story through the narrative. It also refers to the material an author adds, including similes, metaphors, and verse.

Examples:

- *The Odyssey*
 - The start of the *Odyssey* in the story is when Odysseus is about to be set free from the isle of Calypso. There is much that happens before and after this point chronologically, and Odysseus, in telling the story, fills in on the background as more events occur throughout the course of the story.
- Dante's *The Divine Comedy*
 - The narrative poem begins in the inferno; his opening line reads, “Midway into the journey of our life.”
- Many critics believe the appeal of writing a narrative in media res, is that it draws readers in quickly and effectively, whereas in a chronological narrative, it may take some time for the action to build.
- Helpful links:
 - <http://mentalfloss.com/article/20618/5-great-examples-medias-res>
 - <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/narratology/terms/inmediasres.html>