What is Narrative?

The way the story is told through the plot. The story is what happens, the plot is how we are told the events. You need to consider - In what order do events unfold, and why? From whose perspective, and why? The narrative devices used in a film can be split into 2 areas of thought:

**Structuralism:**
- Levi Strauss' Binary Oppositions:
  - Symbolic juxtapositions that have a deeper ideological meaning.
  - Binary Oppositions create conflict, this is the essence of drama.
  - These can be entwined within the elements of form, aesthetic & visuals.
  - They can be thematic or representational.

For example:
- Protagonist Vs Antagonist
- Anarchy Vs Order
- Internal dilemma Vs External problem
- Male Vs Female
- Young Vs Old

**Formalism:**
- Chronology & Time:
  - How have flashbacks/flashforwards/ellipsis been used? (Flashback = Analepsis, Flashforward = Prolepsis)
  - What information are we told and in what order? How does this affect our reading of the film?
  - Does the film follow conventional structure?
  - How is verisimilitude & equilibrium established in the opening sequence? What enigmas are constructed?
  - What messages and values does the resolution (final sequence) offer? Is there a new equilibrium?
  - What is the time frame of the film?
  - How is time condensed? Montage? Editing? What effect does this have on the audience?

- Voice and Perspective:
  - Through whose POV are we told the story?
  - How would you describe the voice/character? Are they reliable?
  - Does their understanding change/evolve?
  - How is their voice/POV visualised?
  - Is it a male or female voice?
  - Is it a restricted narrative? How is it visualised?
  - Is it a restricted narrative? How is it visualised?
  - What is the time frame of the film?

- Genre:
  - ‘Genre C&C’s are a repertoire of possibilities’ - Stafford
  - ‘Genres are constantly evolving’ - Neale
  - Are there expected narratives & characters associated with the genre?
  - What codes and conventions are recycled? What conventions of the genre are subverted?
  - Are the genre expectations of the audience satisfied or challenged?