



Drama Elements

English 7





What is the Drama Genre?

- * “A story in dramatic form, typically emphasizing conflict in key characters and written to be performed by actors.”
(from Harris, et al. The Literacy Dictionary, IRA, 1995)
- * Three elements in drama-
 - * 1) a story
 - * 2) told in action
 - * 3) by actors who impersonate the characters of the story
(Thrall and Hibbert, A Handbook to Literature, Odyssey Press, 1960)



Purpose of Drama

- * 1) To entertain
- * 2) To provoke thought and emotion
- * 3) To present a visual and aural experience for the audience
 - * Definition of aural: relating to the ear or the sense of hearing



Origins of Drama

- * Early drama's purpose was for religious ceremonies.
- * The theatre we know today is from ancient Greece (around 550 BC) and the first actor was Thespis (and this is why there is an actor group called the Thespians).
- * The ancient Greeks created the two classes of drama-
 - * Comedy- humorous and ends happily
 - * Tragedy- deals with death/suffering and ends unhappily





Form & Features

- * Two parts of script: Spoken dialogue (no quotation marks) and Stage Directions
- * Stage Directions:
 - * Describe setting, lighting, movement of characters & props, intonation of dialogue (how something should be said), and costumes.
 - * In italics and brackets/parenthesis
 - * Begin with a capital letter and period, even if not complete sentences
 - * Lines and sections may be numbered in left margin (in order to reference to a certain place)
 - * Character names are usually in all caps followed by a colon and then their dialogue
 - * Character names listed at beginning of script in order of appearance with brief description

Play Script



* Sample-

* MINA: (shocked) I like can't believe you just said that!
(picks up purse and turns to leave)

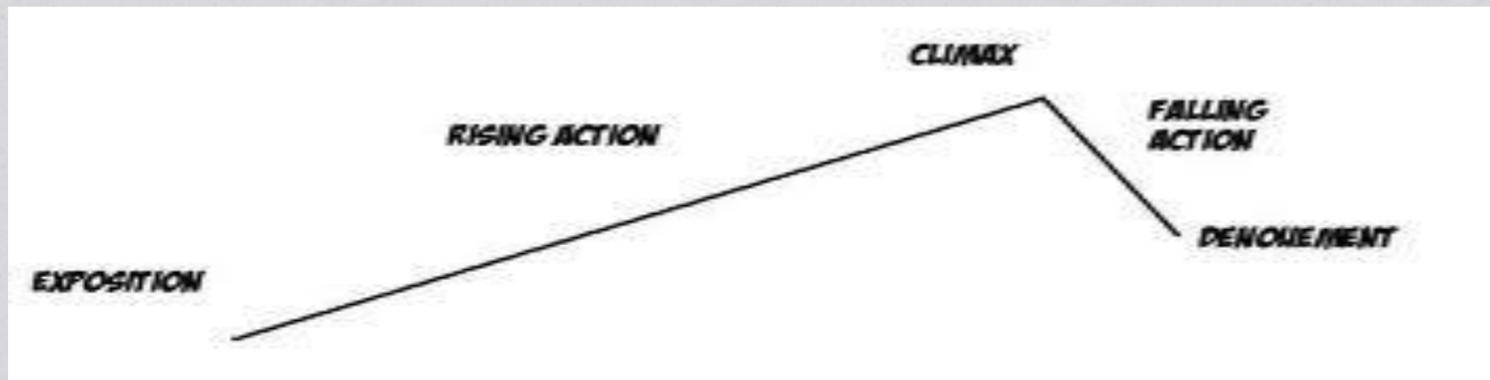
* SAM: (whispers to self) Man, I'm in trouble. (running up to
Mina) Please don't leave. I was just joking.

Plays may be divided by Acts (usually two with an intermission in between) and Scenes (a new scene is for a new time or setting)



Structure

- * Conflict, the tension that exists between the forces in the character's life, is important in drama and can be in four forms-
 - * 1) Person vs. Self
 - * 2) Person vs. Person
 - * 3) Person vs. Nature
 - * 4) Person vs. Society



Structure

- * Exposition- creates the tone, introduces setting and some character, gives background (Who the characters are and what they want.)
- * Rising Action/Complication- sets the action in motion and continues through stages of conflict to the Climax (most intense/emotional/high point)
- * Falling Action stresses the activity of the forces opposing the hero as the action moves to the denouement/resolution (final unraveling of the plot or where everything is tied up.)
- * Dramas may include flashbacks (an event from the past) or soliloquies (one character's thoughts revealed in a solo reflection to the audience).
- * Theme is the universal idea or lesson learned.



The Screenplay/ teleplay

- * A script for television is called a teleplay
- * A script for a movie is called a screenplay
- * Teleplays and screenplays will need to give camera descriptions
- * Before character dialogue, the scene setting/actions are described



Screenplay Elements

- * ANGLE ON- type of shot telling camera to focus somewhere else within the location
- * BEAT- interrupts line of dialogue, tells actor to pause
- * b.g. (BACKGROUND)- anything going on behind main action
- * CLOSE ON- a close up of a person or object
- * CUT TO- most simple transition to change a scene
- * DISSOLVE TO- common transition- as one scene fades out, the next scene FADES IN (usually shows passage of time)



Screenplay Elements

- * EXT. EXTERIOR- Scene takes place outside
- * INT. INTERIOR- Scene takes place indoors
- * INTERCUT- a transition where two scenes go back and forth between each other within a few moments each
- * POV (POINT OF VIEW)- Camera replaces the eyes of a character, monster, or machine
- * SLUG LINES- The text in all CAPS at the beginning of a scene that briefly describes the location and time of day. Looks like this: **EXT: MAPLE STREET DAY**



Screenplay Elements

- * SUPER- Superimpose- one picture placed over another in the same shot (titles may be superimposed over the scenes)
- * TIGHT ON- close up of a person or thing used for dramatic effect
- * V.O. (VOICE OVER)- you hear the character's voice, but do not see him/her speaking (generally used for narration or a character's inner thoughts only for the audience)