

# The Elements of Drama

Theater Arts

# Essential Question

- How is drama different from prose or poetry?
- How is drama different from television?

# Drama

- Comes from the Greek Word, “Dran”
- Means “To do” or “To Act”
- The Doing/Acting Makes Drama

# What is Drama?

“Drama is life with  
the dull bits cut.”

-Alfred Hitchcock



# What Makes Drama Unique?

Drama has one characteristic peculiar to itself—it is written primarily to be **performed**, not read.

Drama is a  
**Presentation of Action...**

**...through actors**

(the impact is direct and  
immediate)

Drama is a  
**Presentation of Action...**

...on a **stage**  
(for a captive audience)

Drama is a  
**Presentation of Action...**

...before an **audience**  
(suggesting a  
communal experience).



# Theatre



- Where a play takes place

# Elements of Drama

- **Audience Etiquette**
  - **No unnecessary movement or noises**
  - **No cell phones, talking, standing, walking, etc.**

# Elements of Drama

- **Why?**
  - **Shows respect for the actors, the playwright, and the play**
  - **Allows actors to concentrate and perform their best**

# Elements of Drama

- **Playwright**-the author of a play (script)
- **Actors**-the people who perform



# Types of Drama

- Comedy is a form of drama that has a happy ending. Humor comes from the dialogue and situations.



# Types of Drama

- Tragedy is a form of drama in which events lead to the downfall of the main character, often a person of great significance, like a king or hero.



# Elements of Drama

- **Script**- the written pages of a play.
- Scripts are divided into Acts and Scenes.
- Scripts for stage and screen have strict but very different formats.

**\*\*We will study scripts specifically in a few weeks.\*\***

# Elements of Drama

- **Acts**- long sections of a play, made up of multiple **scenes**, usually designed to separate the play into its main parts and to give the audience a “break” from the performance.
- **Scenes**- shorter sections of a play, usually each scene occurs in one location at a specific time. Multiple **scenes** make up an **act**.



# Set

- Construction on the stage that shows time/place



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# Props

- Items used onstage by actors



# Dramatic Speech

- **Dialogue**- two or more people talking
- **Monologue**- one person talking
- **Soliloquy** - one person speaking their thoughts out loud for the audience



# Stage Directions

- Found in brackets [ ] or parenthesis ( )
- Describe scenery, action, and how characters speak

**UR**

Upstage Right

**UC**

Upstage  
Center

**UL**

Upstage  
Left

**R**

Stage Right

**C**

Center

**L**

Stage Left

**DR**

Downstage Right

**DC**

Downstage  
Center

**DL**

Downstage  
Left

# Conflict



- The internal or external struggle that creates dramatic tension.

# External Conflict

## Character vs. Character

When one character has a problem with another character in the story

# External Conflict

## Character vs. Nature

When the character is opposed by a natural force



# External Conflict

## Character vs. Society

When the character has a problem with the society--such as laws, culture, or social norms

# Internal Conflict

## Character vs. Self

When the character struggles with a decision or his/her own identity.

# Characterization

- Is the playwright's technique for revealing the PERSONALITY of a character.
- **Direct or Indirect**



# Direct Characterization

- When the playwright TELLS the audience what the personality of a character is.
- Usually found in character description under “Cast of Characters”

# Direct Characterization

## Cast of Characters

GIRL: An early teen, on the cusp of change; strong and determined with overcompensating swagger.

MAN: In his 30's, lost in a broken world, hardened by the road; a father learning to talk to his daughter.

# Indirect Characterization

- When the playwright SHOWS the audience things that reveal the personality of the character
- Can be described by the STEAL method

# S.T.E.A.L.

- **Speech**
- **Thoughts**
- **Effect on others**
- **Actions**
- **Looks**

# SPEECH

GIRL

Maybe the water's still on.

MAN

Don't get your hopes up.

GIRL

Yeah.

MAN

Plenty of water in the ocean though.



# THOUGHTS

MAN

No. I'll go. Wait here.

[MAN EXITS. GIRL finds picture of their family and stares longingly at photo.]

# Effect on Others

MAN

The whole world is different.

GIRL

Think the ocean's still there?

MAN

[MAN stands.]

Maybe. There's only one way to find out.

[MAN and GIRL  
shoulder their  
packs and EXIT.]

# Actions

GIRL

It's all different now. What happened before doesn't matter. We aren't those people anymore.

[GIRL tears up paper and lets the pieces fall to the ground.]

# Looks

AT RISE:

GIRL and MAN ENTER, DOWNSTAGE of proscenium, STAGE LEFT. They are dressed in travel-worn clothes and carry large packs.

## **Narrative**

a story with a beginning, middle and end

## **Plot**

The series of events that make up the story