

Elements of Drama

One-Act Play: Takes place in a single location and unfolds as one continuous action. The characters in a one-act play are presented economically and the action is sharply focused.

Act: Major division in the action of a play, accommodating changes in time, setting, character(s), mood. Acts are further divided into *scenes*.

Scene: Changes when the location of the action shifts or when a new character enters.

Dialect: A type of informational diction. Dialects are spoken by definable groups of people from a particular geographic region, economic group, or

social class. Writers use dialect to express differences in educational, social, and regional backgrounds of their characters.

Dialogue: The verbal exchanges between characters.

Drama: Derived from the Greek word dram, meaning “to do” or “to perform”

Play: General term for a work of dramatic literature.

Playwright: The writer who makes plays.

Exposition: A narrative device, often used at the beginning of a work, that provides necessary background information about the characters and their circumstances.

Stage Directions: The playwright’s instructions about how the actors are to move and behave.

Plot: The author's arrangement of incidents in the play.

Theme: The central idea or meaning of the play.

In Media Res: Term used to describe the common strategy of beginning a story in the middle of the action, usually on the verge of some important moment.

Denouement: A French term meaning "unraveling" or "unknotting," used to describe the resolution of the plot following the climax.

Irony: The difference between what appears to be true and what is known to be true.

Cosmic Irony: Also called irony of fate, occurs when God, fate, or some larger, uncontrollable force seems to be intentionally deceiving characters into believing they can escape their fate.

Verbal Irony: The difference between what is said and what is true (sarcasm).

Dramatic Irony: Difference between what the character believes to be true and what the reader or audience knows to be true.

Situational Irony: The difference between what is expected to happen and what actually happens due to forces beyond human comprehension and control.

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