

Note: All work must be dated and done in your English B Note (Exercise) Book

Lesson No. 1

Introduction to Drama

What is drama?

A **drama**, or a play, is a piece of writing that is presented almost exclusively through dialogue. Like a short story or novel, it has a setting, characters, plot, and even symbolism. However, the way in which they are presented to the audience is different, because unlike a short story or novel, the play is meant to be performed in front of an audience, not read.

Some Key Terms used in Drama

Playwright is the name given to the author of a play.

Script is the written form of a play.

Acts are units of action in a drama. Acts are often divided into parts called **scenes**.

Characterization is the playwright's technique of creating believable characters.

Dialogue is the words the characters say. The words each character speaks appear next to the character's name. Much of what you learn about the characters, settings and events is revealed through dialogue – conversation among the characters.

Monologue is a long, uninterrupted speech that is spoken by a single character. A monologue often reveals a character's private thoughts and feelings.

Stage Directions are sets of bracketed information that convey information to the cast, crew, and readers of the drama about sound effects, actions, and sets. This information can also describe a character's gestures or emotion.

Set is the term used for the scenery on stage that suggests the time and place of the action.

Props are small portable items that the actors use to make their actions look realistic, such as plates on the set of a kitchen

Costumes are the clothing worn by actors in a play

Activity for Lesson No. 1

1. Define the term 'Drama'
2. In your own words explain any **three** of the following terms:
 - (i) Set
 - (ii) Props
 - (iii) Acts
 - (iv) Scenes
 - (v) Dialogues
 - (vi) Stage directions

3. State whether the following statements are true or false.

| | True | False |
|--|-------|-------|
| (i) An act is larger than a scene. | _____ | _____ |
| (ii) A person who writes plays is an author | _____ | _____ |
| (iii) The written version of a play is the script. | _____ | _____ |
| (iv) Dialogues are the words spoken by the actors | _____ | _____ |
| (v) Any items that the actors use to make their actions look realistic are props | _____ | _____ |

Lesson No. 2.

Dramatic Form

Plays are not written in paragraphs like a novel or short story. Instead, they are written as lines of dialogue in the form of a **script**. Typically, these scripts are broken down into one or more **acts**, or major divisions of the play. And each act is then subdivided into a **scene**, or smaller divisions within the act. Usually a change in setting means there will be a change in either the act or the scene.

Example of part of a script from **August Wilson's *Fences***. The characters are told exactly what to say for the dialogue

In this case, this is Act I, Scene 2, and the scene has shifted onto Rose.

Act I

Scene 2

The LIGHTS come up on ROSE hanging up clothes.

SHE hums and sings softly to herself.

It is the following morning.

ROSE. (*Sings.*)

Jesus, be a fence all around me every day

Jesus, I want you to protect me as I travel on my way.

Jesus, be a fence all around me every day.

(TROY enters from the house)

ROSE

Jesus, I want you to protect me

As I travel on my way.

(To TROY.) Morning. You ready for breakfast? I can fix it as soon as I finish hanging up these clothes?

TROY. I got the coffee on. That'll be all right. I'll just drink some of that this morning.

Setting and Staging

In addition to the dialogue, a script will also include **stage directions**. These notes, which are often in italics or parentheses, help the actors interpret the scene for the audience. In this example, when Rose transitions from singing to speaking directly to Troy, the stage directions tell her to whom she is talking. The audience will only see her turn and direct her comment to Troy.

Characters and Actors

Before the dialogue in a script, the playwright will often include a **cast of characters**. Typically, each character, both major and minor, is listed alongside a brief description of the character's role in the story.

Plot

The plot structure of a play doesn't really differ from that in prose. There is an exposition, a rising action, a climax, a falling action and the resolution.

Lesson No. 2

1. Discuss the following:
 - (i) Two similarities of drama and prose.
 - (ii) Two differences between drama and prose.

2. From the example of the script above identify the following:
 - (i) Two characters.
 - (ii) Two stage directions.
 - (iii) Two dialogues.
 - (iv) The setting.
 - (v) The scene of the play.

3. Briefly explain the term 'a cast of characters'.

Lesson No. 3

Types of Drama

Comedy – Comedies are lighter in tone than ordinary works, and provide a happy conclusion. The intention of dramatists in comedies is to make their audience laugh. Hence, they use quaint circumstances, unusual characters, and witty remarks.

Tragedy – Tragic dramas use darker themes, such as disaster, pain, and death. Protagonists often have a tragic flaw — a characteristic that leads them to their downfall.

Farce – Generally, a farce is a nonsensical genre of drama, which often overacts or engages slapstick humor.

Melodrama – Melodrama is an exaggerated drama, which is sensational and appeals directly to the senses of the audience. Just like the farce, the characters are of a single dimension and simple, or may be stereotyped.

Musical Drama – In musical dramas, dramatists not only tell their stories through acting and dialogue, but through dance as well as music. Often the story may be comedic, though it

Function of Drama

Drama is one of the best literary forms through which dramatists can directly speak to their readers, or the audience, and they can receive instant feedback of audiences. A few dramatists use their characters as a vehicle to convey their thoughts and values, such as poets do with personas, and novelists do with narrators. Since drama uses spoken words and dialogues, thus language of characters plays a vital role, as it may give clues to their feelings, personalities, backgrounds, and change in feelings. In dramas the characters live out a story without any comments of the author, providing the audience a direct presentation of characters' life experiences.

Lesson No. 3

1. Drama is one genre of literature. List two other genres of literature and define them.
2. List two types of Drama and explain them.
3. Why is drama considered to be one of the best literary forms?