

Elements of Drama

A drama, or a play, is a piece of writing that is presented almost exclusively through a 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.

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. The actors are told exactly what to say for the dialogue. 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. In here, we have mentioned the main elements of drama.

1. Script:

The text of a play. It includes stage directions, characters, dialogue and scenes.

2. Stage Directions:

a direction by the playwright to the actors in the script. It indicates how the actor should speak and/or move during a particular line or scene. It also provides descriptions of what the stage should look like in terms of furniture, weather, lighting, music, etc.

3. Setting:

It refers to the time and place in which a story takes place.

4. Scene:

A scene can refer to the actual action that takes place in a specific and single setting and moment in time. It usually begins with the entrance of an actor (which starts the action) and ends with the exit of the actor (the signal of the end of action). Scene headings are expressed in capitalized letters in the script and has an ordinal numeral as a companion (unlike Act that is followed by Roman numeral).

NB: The scene displays the setting in terms of time and place of the action.

5. Plot:

This is what happens in the play. Plot refers to the action; the basic storyline of the play.



- Exposition = Gives audience information about earlier events + the present situation + the characters.
- Rising Events = Question of potential conflict + complication + discoveries + decisions = Change the course of action.
- Climax = Crisis = Turning point. Concealed information is partly revealed and answers the dramatic question.
- Falling events = possible solutions + Release of tension.
- Denouement = Disengage = Resolution = Final part of the play to satisfy the expectations of the audience.

6. Theme:

While plot refers to the action of the play, theme refers to the meaning of the play. Theme is the main idea or lesson to be learned from the play. In some cases, the theme of a play is obvious; other times it is quite subtle.

7. Cast of Characters:

Characters are the people (sometimes animals or ideas) portrayed by the actors in the play. It is the characters who move the action, or plot, of the play forward. The

list of characters is provided at the beginning of the play's script so the audience knows who is who before the action begins.

8. Dialogue:

This refers to the words written by the playwright and spoken by the characters in the play. The dialogue helps move the action of the play along.