

## Dramatic Techniques and Elements

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## OUTLINE

- Techniques
  - Movement
    - Mime
    - Gesture
  - Dialogue
    - Monologue
    - Soliloquy
    - Aside
  - Improvisation
- Elements of drama (Six Aristotelian elements of a play with four modern variation)
  - Plot
  - Character
  - Theme
  - Language
  - Rhythm/music
  - Spectacle
  - Modern Theatre
    - Convention
    - Genre
    - Audience

## DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

The sequence proceeds from sensory/concentration activities to movement/pantomime, dialogue, characterization and improvisation/story playing.  
(Ward in Wright 1985)

## DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

- Ward placed an emphasis on the external skills which children display through that process: characterization, development of plot, the enriching of dialogue and action, ensemble work and tempo with voice and diction understood to be vitally important (Ward in Heinig and Stillwell 1981).

## Movement

([http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/drama/exploring/drama\\_mediumrev6.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/drama/exploring/drama_mediumrev6.shtml))

- This covers:
  - where we move to on and around the stage - upstage, downstage, avoiding masking another actor, etc
  - how we move to help with characterization [**characterization:** *To portray a role using voice and physical skills*] - slowly, painfully, lightly, etc
  - how we move in relation to other characters - threateningly, fearfully, in a friendly manner, etc

## DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

Forms of Movement Include:

*Mime covers:*

- working in silence, or with few sounds or words, to show activities - eg painting a wall, opening a door
- working with dialogue, but miming any props or set – e.g looking in a mirror, perhaps facing the audience, to put on make-up while speaking to another character

## DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

*Gesture covers*

- Gesture covers the use of our arms (and sometimes legs) to communicate ideas to the audience.
- Examples of gesture in melodrama include:
  - holding the back of the hand to the forehead to indicate that you are upset
  - when the heroine pleads for her life by clasping her hands up towards the villain
  - when Lady Bracknell holds out her hand to be kissed

## DIALOGUE

Dialogue is not just about what characters say – it's about what they express by what they say.

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom/writers-lab/scriptwriting-essentials/9-dialogue>)

## DIALOGUE

- Dialogue is conversation between two or more characters.
    - Monologue is a lengthy speech that one character addresses to others on stage.
- The purposes of both are to reveal character traits and to advance the action of the story.

## DIALOGUE

- Asides are speeches, often short, made to the audience or to himself, or even to another character, but out of earshot of the other characters on stage.
  - A Soliloquy is a long speech that reveals a character's true thoughts or feelings, unheard by other characters, usually while alone on stage.
- The purposes of both are to reveal the character's thoughts or confidences while advancing the action of the story.

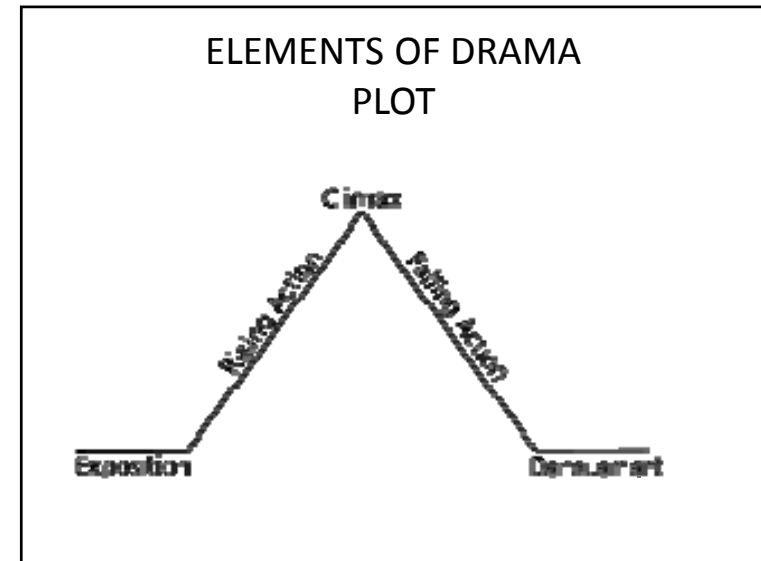
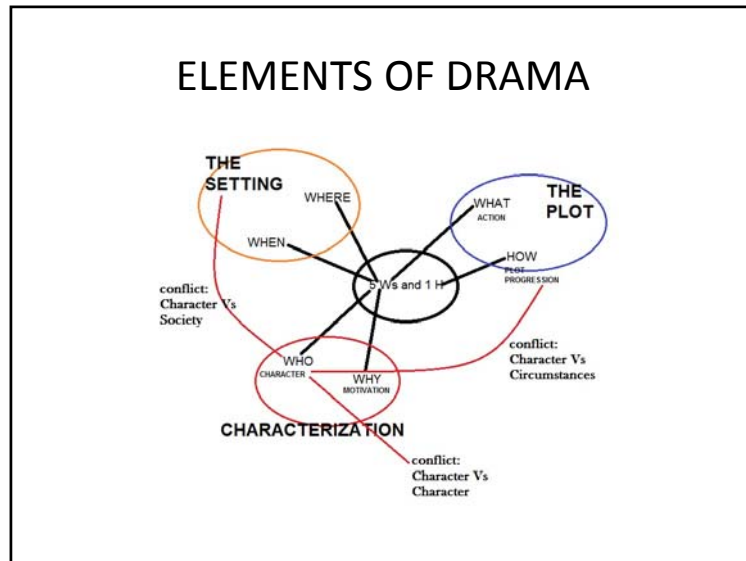
## IMPROVISATION

- Improvisation is a kind of activity done **without preparation**. Much of the speaking is done with preparation--even if it's just a couple of minutes. However, in improvisation, students must create a scene, speak, act, react, and move without preparing. The decisions for what to say or do are made on the spot.

## IMPROVISATION

In improvisation:

1. Students do not necessarily know what comes next.
2. The scene is created as they go.
3. Participants must pay attention to their partners in order to react appropriately.
4. This forces them to listen carefully, to speak clearly, and to use language in an authentic (i.e., unplanned) way.



### PLOT

- Plot is a literary term that refers to how narrative points are arranged to make a story understandable to the reader or observer.
  - Literary term: it is major concept in literature.
  - Narrative points: what characters do at different times and moments in the story.
    - Exposition: laying background to the actions
    - Climax: peak of actions
    - Denouement: resolution of conflicts
  - Understandable: should be reasonable to the audience.

### CHARACTER

A person in a literary narrative or piece of art; a person in a book, play, film etc. Every other elements revolve around the character in the following manner:

- Character vs. character
- Character vs. circumstances (plot)
- Character vs. society (setting)

Title : \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Character's Problem

What do you know about the character?  
(few adjectives)

How did the character solve the problem?

Character

Character's name

Character Traits  
(choose from the adjectives on the back)

How did the character change over time?

# LANGUAGE

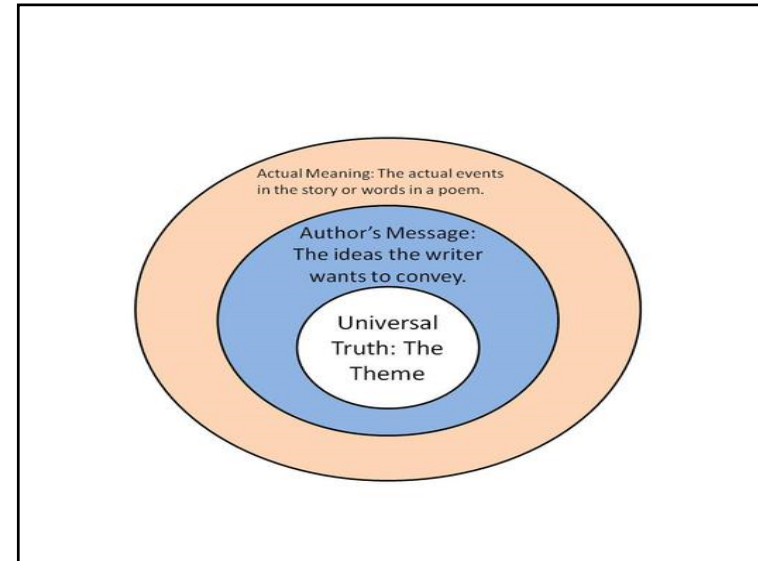
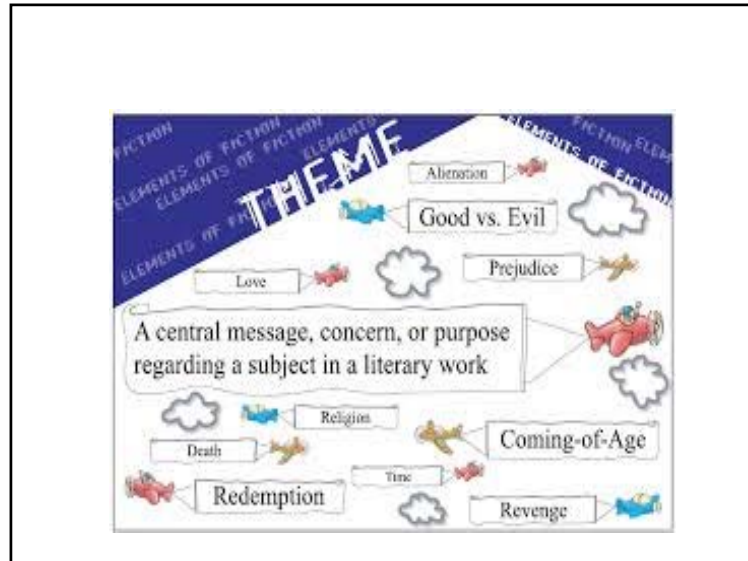
- Language: In drama, the particular manner of verbal expression, the diction or style of writing, or the speech or phrasing that suggests a class or profession or type of character

# RHYTHM/MUSIC

- While music is often featured in drama, in this case Aristotle was referring to the rhythm of the actors' voices as they speak. But today, music has played a great role in the theatre that we have a genre: Musical Theatre. Musical theatre is very suitable for children.

# 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.**



# SPECTACLE

- **This refers to the visual elements of a play: sets, costumes, special effects, etc. Spectacle is everything that the audience sees as they watch the play.**

## ELEMENTS OF DRAMA IN MORDERN THEATRE

- In the modern theater, this list has changed slightly, although you will notice that many of the elements remain the same. The list of essential elements in modern theater is as follows:
  - Characters
  - Plot
  - Theme
  - Dialogue
  - Convention
  - Genre
  - Audience

## MODERN THEATRE VARIATION

- **Convention:** These are the techniques and methods used by the playwright and director to create the desired stylistic effect.
- **Genre:** Genre refers to the type of play. Some examples of different genres include comedy, tragedy, mystery and historical play.
- **Audience:** This is the group of people who watch the play. Many playwrights and actors consider the
  - audience to be the most important element
  - of drama, as all of the effort put in to
  - writing and producing a play is for the
  - enjoyment of the audience.

## How would you apply dramatic technique and elements to Drama in ECE?

ELEMENT/TECHNIQUE	APPLICATION IN ECE
Improvisation	To enhance Creativity, Imagination and self expression
Movement	To enhance Psychomotor skills mime- gross motor skills gesture- fine motor skills
Dialogue	Language and communication skills
Plot	To plan cognitive activities
Theme	Draw out behavioral objectives
Spectacle/Music	To retain attention and motivate pupils
Genre	To select a suitable play for the theme
Characterization	To enhance expression