

Standards Focus: Elements of Drama

Literary Terms to Know

Drama is a form of literature designed to be performed in front of an audience. There are two main types of drama: *comedy* and *tragedy*. Like fiction, dramatic works have a *plot* (action of the story), *characters* (those who take part in the action of the story), *setting* (the time and location of the story), *conflict* (the struggle[s] within a story), and a *theme* (the lesson or moral of the story). It is essential to know the elements of drama when reading a dramatic work.

1. **act**: a division within a play, much like the chapters of a novel
2. **aside**: lines that are spoken by a character directly to the audience
3. **cast of characters**: a listing of the characters who appear on the stage
4. **comedy**: a humorous work of drama
5. **dialogue**: conversation between two or more characters
6. **drama**: a work of literature designed to be performed in front of an audience
7. **dramatic irony**: when the audience or reader knows something that the characters in the story do not know
8. **foil**: a character who is much like another character in class, rank, and background, but has opposite traits which provide a contrast and conflict between the two characters
9. **monologue**: a long speech spoken by a character to himself, another character, or to the audience
10. **scene**: a division of an act into smaller parts
11. **stage directions**: italicized comments that identify parts of the setting or the use of props or costumes, give further information about a character, or provide background information
12. **tragedy**: a serious work of drama in which the hero suffers catastrophe or serious misfortune, usually because of his own actions
13. **tragic hero**: a protagonist with a fatal flaw which eventually leads to his demise

Activity: Using the words from the list above, create a 10-question Multiple-Choice quiz. You must use the information/definitions from this page, but you may also add your own knowledge to create your questions. Be sure to create an answer key and keep it on a separate piece of paper. For example:

1. The two main types of drama are:
 - a. plays and monologues
 - b. comedies and tragedies
 - c. histories and biographies
 - d. monologues and soliloquies

When you have finished, give the "quiz" to a partner and take his or her quiz. Then, check each other's answers, and turn in your quizzes, your answer key, and your scores to your teacher. Your teacher can even find the best questions and use them on a real quiz.