

I. **Hamlet Part One:**

Guiding Question: How does Shakespeare use elements of drama to draw the audience into the play?

A. A **drama** is a text that is meant to be performed. The structure of a drama differs from structures of other genres.

B. Structural elements of a drama:

- Acts (All Shakespeare plays have 5 acts)
- Scenes
- Lines (All Shakespeare plays of have lines #)
- Stage directions

Other elements of drama:

- Setting
- Characters
- Dialogue

C. William Shakespeare:

- 1564-1616
- Lived during the Elizabethan era
- Was a writer and actor and producer
- Wrote at least 38 plays and many poems
- Was a shareholder in a theater company that performed at the Globe Theater
- Was highly regarded in his time and achieved fame and wealth from his writing.
- Is one of the most influential and popular authors of all time.

D. **Characterization:** the way in which a character is presented and developed. To understand characterization in a drama, weigh a character's words against other information in the text.

In a drama, audience learns about a character through:

- In a character's own words
- What other characters' say
- The actions the character takes
- The actions others take toward the character

E. A **tragedy** is a serious drama that ends with the downfall of the main character.

Features of a Shakespearean tragedy:

- A tragic hero
- A conflict
- Suspense

- An unhappy ending

Elements of tragedy in Hamlet:

Tragedy:

- Conflict: Murder of Hamlet's Father
- Tragic Hero: Hamlet
- Suspense: What will Hamlet do?
- Unhappy ending: death of a hero

Q: Consider Shakespeare's use of the elements of drama and tragedy in Act One of Hamlet: What overall effect do Shakespeare's choices have on the audience?

A: The audience is drawn into a suspenseful story.

II. Hamlet Part Two:

Guiding question: What strategies can you use to decode Shakespeare's language?

- Shakespeare manipulates language structures to create rhythm and emphasize ideas.
- Contraction: omission of a letter or sound. Example: "O ermavster 't as you may" Over master it as you may (do your best to overcome it)
- Ellipsis: Omission of one or more words. Example: "Tis told me" = Tis told to me. = It is told to me
- Inversion: nonstandard order of words. Example: "Good my brother" = My good brother.

A. Determining Word Meaning:

- Context Clues can help you determine the meanings of challenging words in Hamlet.
- Identify an unknown word = analyze the context = predict the meaning = consult a reference

B. **Tone** is the attitude of a text or speaker towards the subject being discussed.

- When analyzing the tone of dialogue in a play, consider:
- The speaker
- The topic
- Diction or word choice
- Connotations, or the qualities or ideas associated with words

C. A nuance is a small or subtle difference in meaning.

- To determine the precise meaning of a word in the text, consider:
 - Word choice
 - Context clues
 - tone

III. Hamlet Part Three

Guiding Question: How do figurative language and familiar stories affect Hamlet?

- A. **Figurative Language** is language that expresses something beyond its literal meaning.
- *Apostrophe*: an address to an object, an idea, or an absent person. (Frailty, they name is woman!)
 - *Personification*: The attribution of human qualities to an objects or an abstract concept. (the sepulchre...hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws)
 - *Metaphor*: A direct comparison of two unlike things (within the book and volume of my brain)
 - *Simile*: a comparison uses "like" or "as" (and each particular hair to stand an end,/Like quills upon the fretful porpentine)
- B. Figurative Language is effective because:
- It helps readers understand things in new and surprising ways
 - Makes images or ideas more vivid
 - Heightens emotions
 - Reveals layers of complex meaning
- C. An **allusion** is a reference to a person, place, event, or idea from history or literature.
- Writers use allusion to:
 - Engage the audience by reminding them of familiar stories
 - Convey a lot of information quickly
 - Reveal layers of meaning

IV. Hamlet Part 4

Guiding Question: How can watching different adaptations help you see a play in new ways?

- A. Soliloquy:
- Is a long speech in a play
 - Is delivered by a character who is alone
 - Reveals a character's inner thoughts and feelings
 - "To be or note to be, that is the question," is Shakespeare's most famous soliloquy
- B. An adaptation of Shakespeare's play may include changes to important elements such as:
- Which words does the actor emphasize?
 - How does the actor vary the volume and tone of his/her voice?
 - What gestures and movements does the actor make?
 - What emotions does the actor convey?
- C. Analyzing A Performance
- Pay attention to:
 - Staging, scenery, and costumes

- How each character portrays Hamlet
- Ways performances are similar and different

V. Hamlet Part 5

Guiding Question: How does Hamlet illustrate what makes Elizabethan drama different from earlier forms of drama?

A. English Drama in the Middle Ages

- During the medieval period (ca. 900-1500 CE) many different types of drama were performed in England.
- Mystery plays depicted biblical figures as if there were alive in the present
- Miracle plays told stories of saints
- Morality plays taught lessons and included characters who symbolized and represented abstract concepts. For examples, characters might represent death, pity, or imagination.

B. English Drama during Shakespeare's Time

1. During Queen Elizabeth I's reign (1558-1603), drama had evolved to:

- Developed a more secular, or non-religious themes
- Extend its focus beyond stories from the Bible and religious instructions
- Explore human emotion and experience, political issues, and philosophical issues
- Use professional actors who performed in theaters and for audiences of all classes.

2. Representing a Dramatic Performance

- In Act III of Hamlet, a troupe of actors performs a play for the court of Denmark.
- The *play-within-a-play* serves as a device to advance the plot (Hamlet wants the actors to perform this particular play so he can watch Claudius' reaction)
- Provides a behind the scenes look at the theater (Hamlet gives direction to the actors which give the audience a sense of how Shakespeare himself might have staged the play)
- Focuses viewers' attention on the experience of being an audience member (it gives the audience a different perspective).

3. How does Hamlet illustrate what makes Elizabethan drama different from earlier forms of drama?

- **Characterization** is the way an author presents and develops a character.
 - Flat characters are simple, static and one-dimensional
 - Round characters are complex, dynamic, and three dimensional.

- Character types in medieval drama:

Medieval drama generally uses flat characters. Common character types in medieval drama include:

- Characters from traditional or folk stories (such as Robin hood)
 - Biblical figures, saints, and other religious figures
 - Allegorical characters that represented abstract concepts (like death or fear)
 - Stock characters (wicked step mother or damsel in distress)
- Shakespeare often creates round characters who:
 - Do not represent a single concept or idea
 - Grow and change over the course of the play
 - Display a range of emotions and personality traits
- How does Hamlet illustrate what makes Elizabethan different from earlier forms of drama?
 - Everyman is a medieval morality play.
 - The characters in this play represent abstract concepts.

Comparing Medieval and Elizabethan Drama

VI. Hamlet Part 6

Guiding Question: How can changing your focus help you see a story in new and interesting ways?

A. Viewing Literature through a critical lens

- A critical lens is a tool for analyzing and evaluating literature.
- Using a critical lens allows you to read with a particular point of view and deliberate focus.
- Three types of critical lens through which we will examine and analyze Hamlet:
 - Formalist: focuses on the form, structure and use of language
 - Historical: concerned with the culture and historical context in which the text was written.
 - Feminist: concerned with looking at the role of women, as well as gender stereotypes and inequalities

B. Formalist Criticism looks at a work of literature as a unique creation apart from its author or historical context.

- Formalism focuses on questions such as:
 - How is the structure of the text related to the content?
 - How do the parts of the text relate to the whole?
 - How do literary devices such as figurative language contribute to the texts meaning?
 - How does the text use motifs, or repeated images and ideas?
 - How can changing your focus help you see a story in new and interesting ways?

C. Historical Criticism uses historical context to analyze and interpret literature.

- It focuses on questions such as:
 - What was going on during the time period in which the work was written?
 - How does the work reflect or comment on the culture in which it was written?
 - How would the work have affected its original audience?

- Factors that historical criticism would take into account:
 - Beliefs that were common during the period the text was written
 - Major political events that occurred when the text was written
 - The original audience for the text.

▪ Historical Context of Hamlet

Historical Lens:

- A. **Culture:** Renaissance/humanism (a renewed interest in Greek and Roman culture, literature and philosophy. Concerned with human nobility and intellectual ability of human kind. Concerned with reason to study and improve the world)
- B. **Politics:** Queen Elizabeth I (Had no husband or children, so questions about who would inherit the throne persisted throughout her rule.)
- C. **Audience:** Elizabethan theater (comprised of all classes of people – poor to rich. Rowdy environment because it was open.)

- Feminist criticism considers gender when analyzing and interpreting literature. It focuses on questions such as:
 - What is the role of women in society?
 - How are women portrayed in literature?
 - How does literature reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes?
 - How are gender roles defined?

When using the Feminist lens, here are some things to consider:

- Patriarchy (refers to a society that is dominated by men. Consider the ways in which women are marginalized socially, politically and economically.)
- Power dynamics (who has the power and how is that power being used? This lens seeks to correct this imbalance of power.)
- Gender stereotypes (how are men and woman roles defined. Does this literature reinforce these roles or challenge them?)

VII. Hamlet Part 7

Guiding Question: How do plot and character development work together to build excitement in a drama?

A. The **plot** is the sequence of events in story.

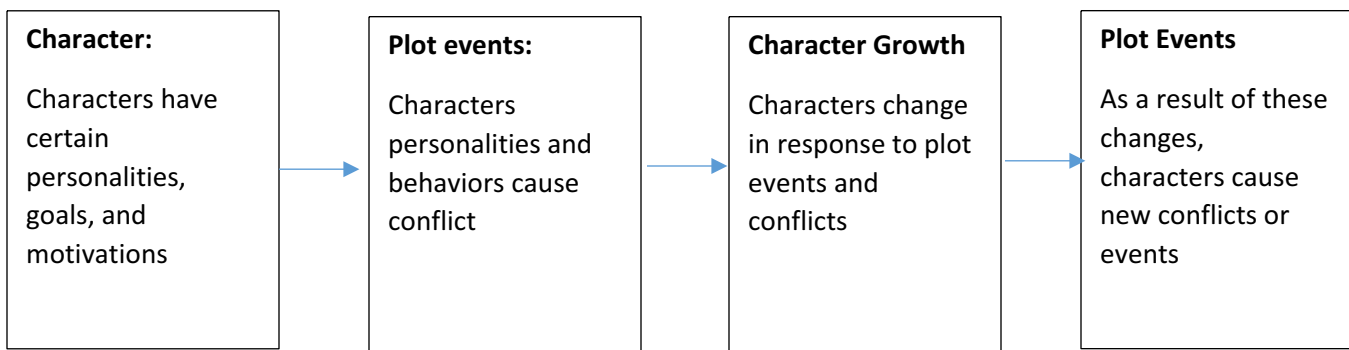
- The plot often revolved around a central conflict of struggle between forces.
- One or more conflicts move the plot forward. (Central Conflict - Hamlet v. Claudius)

B. Basic elements of plot:

- Exposition (gives us background information; introduces us to characters and setting. We are also introduced to the central conflict.)
- Rising Action (events that build the suspense as the action escalates towards the climax)
- Climax (the most tense part of the story)
- Falling Action (events after the climax)
- Resolution (end of the story)

C. The impact of plot on character development:

Character development is the way a character changes over the course of the text.



D. Building Suspense in a Tragedy:

- The twists and turns of the rising action build suspense around the central conflict, leading to the climax.

VIII. Hamlet Part 8

Guiding Question: How do the themes in Hamlet interact to communicate complex ideas?

A. A theme is a message a text conveys about a topic.

B. A theme is:

- Not explicitly stated in a story or play
- A universal idea or observation about life
- Examples:
 - Theme: Truth can be hard to discern.
 - Not a theme: Truth (this is a topic)

C. To determine a theme in a play:

- Identify an important topic in the play.
- Determine what the play says about this topic.
- Formulate a single sentence that states the message about the topic.

D. Summarizing the Development of a Theme:

- State the themes.
- Use specific examples how the theme is developed.
- Use objective language (language that is free from opinion, and does not provide an personal commentary.)