

Chapter 6

The Structure of Drama

Aristotle's Key Elements of a Play

- Spectacle – the visible part of a play
- Sound – the audible part of a play
- Diction – language
- Character – a person in a play
- Reasoning – the way a speech is used to present all aspects of the play, including the production of emotions such as pity, terror and anger
- Plot – the action and events of a play

Four Narrative Essentials of Drama

Exposition

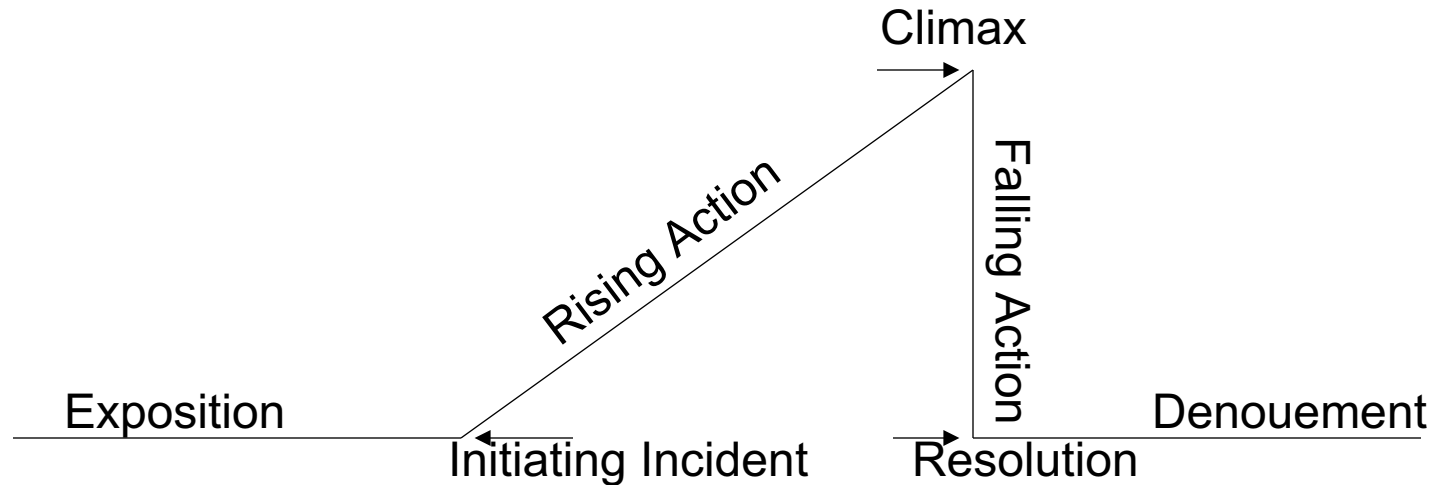
The information put before an audience that gives the where, when, why and who.

- Brief and unobtrusive
- Where, when, why and who
- Setting – time and place (often printed in program)
- Atmosphere – the environment of the play created by staging and lighting
- Mood – emotional feeling of the play
- Preliminary Situation/Antecedent Action – explanation of events which occurred prior to the start of the play

Plot

The series of related events that take place in a play

- Conflict – a struggle between two opposing forces



Characters

The people in the narrative or play

- Protagonist – the main character(s) in a play
- Antagonist – the person or force working against the protagonist
- Character's Motivation
 - What does this character need or want?
 - Who or what stands in the way of the character's needs or wants?
 - What conditions affect the character's thoughts, words and actions?
 - Why does this character say or do certain things?

- Dialogue (how we get to know the characters) – lines of the play
 - Direct Characterization – what we are told
 - Indirect Characterization – what we infer
- Soliloquy – a speech delivered by an actor alone onstage that reveals the character's innermost thoughts
- Monologue – a speech by a single actor

★ A soliloquy can be a monologue, but a monologue is not necessarily a soliloquy.

Theme

The central message or insight of a play.

- Sometimes the playwright states the theme of the play within the dialogue, but often you must find it on your own.
- Moral – a lesson or principle contained within a play or taught by a play.
- ★ A theme is not necessarily a moral!!