

# Drama- Elements

- **Comedy**

Dramatic works which use humor to explore various themes and characters. Comedies usually end on a happy note.

- **Tragedy**

Drama which treats serious subjects and often focuses on the tragic hero's character. Tragedies end with death.

# Drama- Characters

Tragic Hero- The *central figure* of tragedy; this is someone who serves as a cautionary tale, someone we typically would *admire and respect* except for his...

# Drama- Characters

Tragic Flaw- The singular *weakness*\*  
that brings the tragic hero to his  
*downfall*

*\*Examples:*

Hubris- excessive pride and arrogance

Obsession – jealousy, lust, greed, etc.

# Drama- Characters

Foil- A character that defines certain characteristics of the tragic hero by exhibiting opposite traits, providing contrast that emphasizes the other character (Mercutio)

Confidante- A character upon which another character relies for guidance (the Nurse and Friar Laurence)

# Drama- Elements

- Plot stages of a Shakespearean Tragedy (as well as many Greek tragedies)-
  - Exposition
  - Rising Action
  - Peripetia (Turning Point)
  - Anagnorisis (Falling Action)
  - Denouement (Resolution)

# Drama- Elements

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Exposition- tragic hero introduced; flaw is hinted at, but not yet fully developed

# Drama- Elements

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Rising Action- tragic flaw becomes more apparent or pronounced; leads to events which set the stage for downfall

# Drama- Elements

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Peripetia- “Sudden Change”  
Reversal of fortune brings  
tragic hero down from his  
elevated state



# Drama- Elements

Anagnorisis (falling action)–

“Recognition” by the tragic hero of his flaw, leading to

- Catharsis -purging of audience’s emotions through pity and fear.
- Epiphany- purging of audience’s emotions through empathy and understanding.

# Drama- Elements

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## Dénouement - “Untying”

Resolution- In Shakespearean tragedies, this often involves a restoration of the social order

# Drama- Devices

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Dialogue- two characters speaking in conversation.

# Drama- Devices

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Monologue – an extended speech by one character.

“For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.”  
-Prince of Verona

# Drama- Devices

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Soliloquy – an extended speech by one character, alone on stage.

Soliloquies are used to express the private thoughts of one character.

(*Romeo & Juliet*, the balcony scene)

# Drama- Devices

Aside – a character's direct address to the audience, which is not heard by the other characters (unless directed at one other character so that another can't hear)

Caesar: "Be near me, that I may remember you."

Trebonius: "Caesar, I will (*aside*) and so near will I be,  
That your best friends shall wish I had been further."

II.ii.123

# Drama- Devices

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## Dramatic Irony-

- When the audience knows information that the character is unaware of...  
adds element of suspense  
(*Romeo & Juliet*, final scene)

# Drama- Devices

Anachronism- something that is out of the time period of the play's setting

Caesar: "What is't o'clock?"

Brutus: "Caesar, 'tis strucken eight." II.ii.114

Pun- A play on words; usually capitalizing on homonyms or double meanings

"A cobbler... A mender of bad soles." I.i.11



# Drama- Devices

Poetic devices: **Alliteration** and Assonance-  
“**W**hy, now blow wind, **s**well billow, and **s**wim **b**ark” V.i.67

Review-

- Metaphor- “Young ambition’s ladder” II.i.22
- Simile- “He doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus”  
I.ii.135
- Symbol- “Let us bathe our hands in Caesar’s blood” III.i.106
- Foreshadowing- “Beware the Ides of March” I.ii.18

# Drama- Elements

- Prose- normal writing
  - usually spoken by servants & commoners (Brutus's funeral speech)
- Blank Verse- Unrhymed iambic pentameter (poetry)
  - usually spoken by noblemen and central characters (Antony's funeral speech)

# Text analysis (explication)

- Purpose: To study the nuances of language and practice critical thinking and writing skills
- Process: To explain in detail the particulars within a given passage of text, and examine its value and effectiveness
  - Why do it? Roughly 50% of assignments in a freshmen composition class involve some form of explication
  - Text analysis is important for developing critical thinking skills

# Drama- Text Analysis

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Choose a piece of text-

- Monologue or Soliloquy
- Minimum 10 lines of unbroken text
- Examine the entire block of text

# Analysis- In your writing piece:

- Identify the Act, scene, and line numbers (e.g.: I.ii.14-24)
- Identify the speaker and the situation
- Identify and explain any devices
  - Metaphor, simile, personification, verbal irony, pun, aside, anachronism, alliteration, internal rhyme, etc.
- Identify and explain curious diction (word use)
- Identify and explain curious syntax (word order)
- Comment on the overall effectiveness of the passage on the part of the character or Shakespeare

# ***The Tragedy of Julius Caesar***

## **Parallel Text**

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For use as an aid to understanding the meaning of your block of text:

<http://nfs.sparknotes.com/juliuscaesar>