

Sample High School Fundamentals / Learning Plan

Big Idea/ Topic

Characters, Genre, and Plot

Connecting Theme/Enduring Understanding:

Exploring the connection between the theatre arts including performances with language arts and literature.

Essential Questions:

What is the difference between dramatic and traditional literary writing?

What is a dramatic plot structure?

Why are dramatic characters, dramatic dialogue, and dramatic plot structure necessary for a theatrical script?

What are the technical concerns of a script?

Standard Alignment

CREATING

TAHSFT.CR.1 Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.

- Recognize and/or employ realistic and conventional speech patterns within dialogue or dramatic verse.
- Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation.

TAHSFT.CR.2 Develop scripts through theatrical techniques.

- Differentiate between dramatic and traditional literary writing and utilize common steps of the playwriting process.
- Assess the need for script analysis, concept development, and directorial and technical concerns of a theatrical script.
- Construct and critique elements of dramatic structure, character, and dialogue.
- Create and perform scenes for audiences.

RESPONDING

TAHSFT.RE.2 Critique various aspects of theatre and other media using appropriate supporting evidence.

- Generate and use the terminology for critiquing theatre presentations.

CONNECTING:

TAHSFT.CN.1 Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content.

- Explore various careers in the theatre arts (e.g. performance, design, production, administrative, education, promotion)

TAHSFT.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.

- Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures.
- Explore the works of milestone playwrights and plays, and the relevance of historical theatre.
- Recognize historical events that have influenced the role of theatre and how theatrical events have impacted cultural development.

Instructional Design

***This lesson has a flexible timeline but can be accomplished in 1-2 days.**

This lesson is intended to reach students in a virtual setting, whether plugged or unplugged. See the bottom of the lesson for a list of unplugged supplies.

FOUNDATIONAL INFORMATION:

Plot structure, dramatic dialogue, theatrical genres, dramatic characters, and play formatting

CONCEPTS:

- The role of the playwright
- Strengthening plot structure
- Capturing unique character voice
- Dynamic Dialogue
- Writing a play
- The process of the playwright
- Establishing characters, conflict, and the path to conflict resolution.

VOCABULARY:

Relationship, character, importance, beats, objectives, tactics, conflict, moment before, plot, character, theme, lexicon, music, spectacle, plot structure, Freytag Pyramid, Exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement, dramatic dialogue, dramatic characters, dramatic structure, genres, scripts.

LINKS:

[Dramatic Characters and Theatrical Genres Video](#)

[Dramatic Structure Video](#)

[Plays and Playwrights PowerPoint](#)

Part 1:

Student Journal Prompt:

Lesson Plan 3 Part I: Characters, Genres, and Plot:

Student Journal Prompt:

Just as dramatic plot structure refers to a plot structure full of events or activities, dramatic characters are likewise active characters that convey information to the audience. The dramatic characters are sources of information for the audience through their appearance, dialogue, monologues or soliloquies, and action. Characters are abstractions of humanity that create the illusion of life. In addition to the traditional protagonist and antagonist, several types of dramatic characters are found in different genres of theatre.

Journal for five minutes about the following topic before engaging in the lesson:

What characters stand out to you from the film, theatre, or television? What makes a good protagonist, antagonist? What Genres do you find more appealing and why?

Part 2:

Presentation

In a live or recorded session present the information from the example lesson video, and the PowerPoint, on a synchronous digital platform such as Google Meet ([How it Works: Google Meet](#)), or create an asynchronous video of your own.

Sample Videos:

Georgia Department of Education

THIS WORK IS LICENSED UNDER A CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION - NONCOMMERCIAL - SHAREALIKE 4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE

8.15.2020 Page 1 of 8



To ensure understanding, check-in with students throughout the presentation. Engage the students in conversation about each of the topics presented in the lesson.

Unplugged Variation: Have the student read the information about Dramatic Character, Theatrical Genres, and Dramatic Structure along with the slides provided in the unplugged packet.

Part 3:

Student Assignment:

Quiz:

1. What is the first step of the writing process once the subject, focus, purpose, and point of view have been established?
2. Match the item to the most appropriate Aristotelean Element:
A written soliloquy
The set
The sound of a rooster crowing on stage
The moral
The Antagonist
The point of no return
3. What do dramatic dialogue, dramatic characters, and dramatic structure all have in common?
4. Place the terms on the Freytag Pyramid:
Exposition
Rising action
Climax
Falling Action
Denouement
5. Place the following actions in the most logical position on the plot map
Jack is chased by the giant.
Jack sells the cow for magic beans.
Jack chops down the beanstalk to escape the giant.
Jack is seen by the giant when Jack tries to steal the treasure.
The beans grow into a magical stalk leading to a giant's castle.
The giant is dead, and Jack and his mother have plenty of money.
Jack and his mother are poor.
6. Which dramatic character types were typically found in classical tragedy?
7. Despite the differences in formatting and structure, how the audience of traditional literature and theatrical literature interact with the text is the same. (true/false)



8. Which two of Aristotle's elements are not necessarily contained in the selection of the subject/purpose, dramatic structure, dramatic characters, or dramatic dialogue?

9. Which portion of the script would contain information not related to the subject/purpose, dramatic structure, dramatic characters, or dramatic dialogue?

Evidence of Student Success

Diagnostic: Journal Entries

Formative: Teacher Observation and Discussion during and after the presentation.

Summative: Genres, Character, and Plot Quiz

Distance Learning Supports

Ideas for Differentiation:

Our goal is for all students to be actively engaged using the body, the voice, speaking, reflecting, and writing. Below are changes to the lesson to help achieve that goal for students who need additional support. or increased rigor. Note: Be careful using these lessons for all students.

- Consider allowing students to record their thoughts in a variety of ways: using the talk to text/dictate feature, making an audio recording of their responses, drawing pictures, circling and/or labeling on their diagram or PowerPoint printouts, etc.

- Students requiring a simplification will use a simplified version of the quiz or can respond to questions related to the material verbally.

- For low-tech and unplugged adaptation students can work one-on-one with teachers on the phone discussing any notes that were taken during the reading phase of this lesson.

- In addition to adapting the literary text into a theatrical format, students needing an extra technical challenge use the information in the lesson to draft and an original scene in the proper format for a theatrical script.

Unplugged Supplies: Lesson checklist, Journal, printed PowerPoint slides, and/or copy of lecture notes, quiz

Engaging Families

Materials included to support unplugged learners: Lesson checklist, Journal, printed PowerPoint slides, copy of lecture notes, quiz

Optional materials to support learning:

[School Theatre: Acting Resources](#)

[Theatre & Film: Fundamentals I: Unit 4: Lesson Plan 1: Playwrights and Plot Structure.docx](#)

[Theatre & Film: Fundamentals I: Unit 4: Playwrights and Genres PowerPoint](#)



Georgia Department of Education

THIS WORK IS LICENSED UNDER A CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION - NONCOMMERCIAL - SHAREALIKE 4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE
8.15.2020 Page 1 of 8



Lesson Checklist

Part 1:

- 1. Complete Part I Journal Prompt

Part 2:

- 2. Read, watch, or listen to the information about Dramatic Characters, Theatrical Genres, and Plot Structure.
- 3. Ask questions for clarification on any of the information presented.

Part 3:


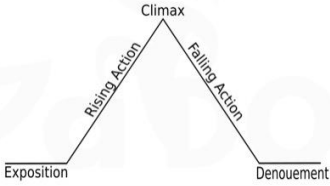



- 4. Take Quiz

Georgia Department of Education

THIS WORK IS LICENSED UNDER A CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION - NONCOMMERCIAL - SHAREALIKE 4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE
8.15.2020 Page 1 of 8



Example PowerPoint for Dramatic Character, Theatrical Genres, and Plot Structure:

<h3>Freytag's Pyramid</h3>  <p>Gustav Freytag</p>  <p>Georgia Department of Education</p> <p>7/6/20 6</p>	<h3>Dramatic Characters</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters are abstractions of humanity which create the <u>illusion</u> of life • Sources of information: appearance, dialogue, monologues or soliloquies, action • Aristotle on tragic characters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • neither good nor bad, but "better than average" • appropriate in status • lifelike • consistent • marked by <i>hamartia</i> - a "fatal mistake"  <p>Georgia Department of Education</p> <p>7/6/20 7</p>
<h3>Dramatic Characters</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extraordinary ("larger than life") <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shakespeare's King Lear • Representative or quintessential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miller's Willy Loman • Stock <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arlecchino (Harlequin)/any sitcom character • Dominant trait <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moliere's Harpagon (The Miser) <p>Georgia Department of Education</p> <p>7/6/20 8</p>	<h3>Dramatic Characters</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in <i>Hamlet</i> and in Tom Stoppard's <i>R&G Are Dead</i> • Narrator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage Manager in Wilder's <i>Our Town</i> • Nonhuman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skriker in Caryl Churchill's <i>The Skriker</i> <p>Georgia Department of Education</p> <p>7/6/20 9</p>
<h3>Common Genres</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classical Tragedy • Modern Tragedy • Comedy • Tragicomedy • Docudrama  <p>New Play Exchange</p> <p>Georgia Department of Education</p> <p>7/6/20 10</p>	<h3>Classical Tragedy</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hero is of high social status • He/She is a symbol of humanity • The hero is caught in a difficult situation • An action is done that causes a series of reversals • Realization and acceptance/ accountability, of these actions is the most important part of the tragedy. • Verse is the traditional language of tragedy • Aristotle states: Tragedy purges us of Pity and fear. • While it makes the audience sad, there is a sense of affirmation, a sense of defiance in the face of the truth.  <p>Oedipus Rex</p> <p>Georgia Department of Education</p> <p>7/6/20 11</p>



Modern Tragedy

- Late 1800s to now.
- Lower classes are also, and more often than not, heroes.
- Miller argues that his character is a hero because of the dignity of his action. He argues that this capacity makes him inherently a person of stature and therefore a hero.
- Changes from five-part structure to three-part.



Henrik Ibsen



Arthur Miller



Richard Woods,
Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"
#GaBOE

7/6/20

12

Modern Comedy

- This is now a humorous drama written to provoke amusement incite and laughter.
- The central aspect of a comedy is human folly and the ridiculous, sometimes they make us laugh.
- In classical comedy, the main characters were not of a high status



Oscar Wilde



Richard Woods,
Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"
#GaBOE

7/6/20

13

TragiComedy

- Shakespeare was the first successful tragicomic
- The tragicomedy mixes elements of tragedy and comedy together.



The Winter's Tale, by William Shakespeare



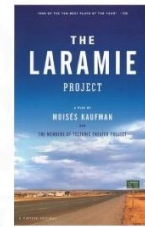
Richard Woods,
Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"
#GaBOE

7/6/20

14

Docudrama

- This format is a play wherein specific factual events make up the plot.
- *I Am My Own Wife*
 - Docudrama by Doug Wright
- *The Laramie Project*
 - Docudrama by Moisés Kaufman
- *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*
 - Docudrama by Anna Deavere Smith



Richard Woods,
Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"
#GaBOE

7/6/20

15

Outline Notes From the Videos

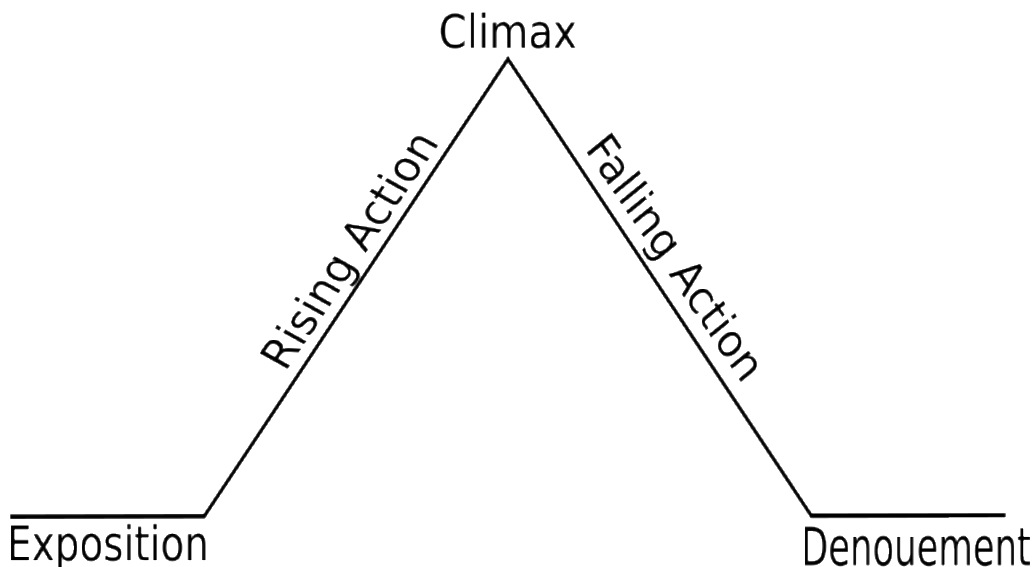
Presentation Notes: Dramatic Structure Recap

Dramatic Structure Recap

As discussed in earlier modules, the term drama comes from the Greek *dran*, which is to do or to act. In this way drama is related to action. Dramatic Structure then refers to an active structure where events happen in a particular sequence. All theatrical scripts have conflict. Typically the progression of how characters deal with the conflict follows a basic story structure with a clear beginning, middle, and end. When engaged in the plot mapping stage of the writing process it is a good idea to remember this beginning, middle, and end structure for laying out when you want specific actions to take place.

The Freytag Pyramid is a useful tool when looking at the organization of events in the play and can be helpful with plot mapping. The Freytag Pyramid is a modification of Aristotle's structure where he transformed the triangle into a pyramid. It includes an exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and a denouement or resolution.

Example:



Placing scenes titles or events along this structure can be a useful tool in building a play outline. It is important to note that while a classically structured play may be shaped like this, often the falling action in modern plays is not so evenly balanced with the rising action.

Another way to look at discussing the dramatic structure is to break down the Beginning, Middle, and End.

Characteristics of the Beginning:

- The Point of Normalcy-the state of the world as it is, often broken, imperfect, and unsustainable.
- The Interruption of Normalcy-the point at which something occurs, forcing the characters into action to deal with a conflict

Georgia Department of Education

THIS WORK IS LICENSED UNDER A CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION - NONCOMMERCIAL - SHAREALIKE 4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE
8.15.2020 Page 1 of 8



Presentation Notes: Dramatic Character and Theatrical Genres

Just as dramatic plot structure refers to a plot structure full of events or action, dramatic characters are likewise active characters that convey information to the audience. The dramatic characters are sources of information for the audience through their appearance, dialogue, monologues or soliloquies, and action. Characters are abstractions of humanity that create the illusion of life. In addition to the traditional protagonist and antagonist, several types of dramatic characters are found in different genres of theatre.

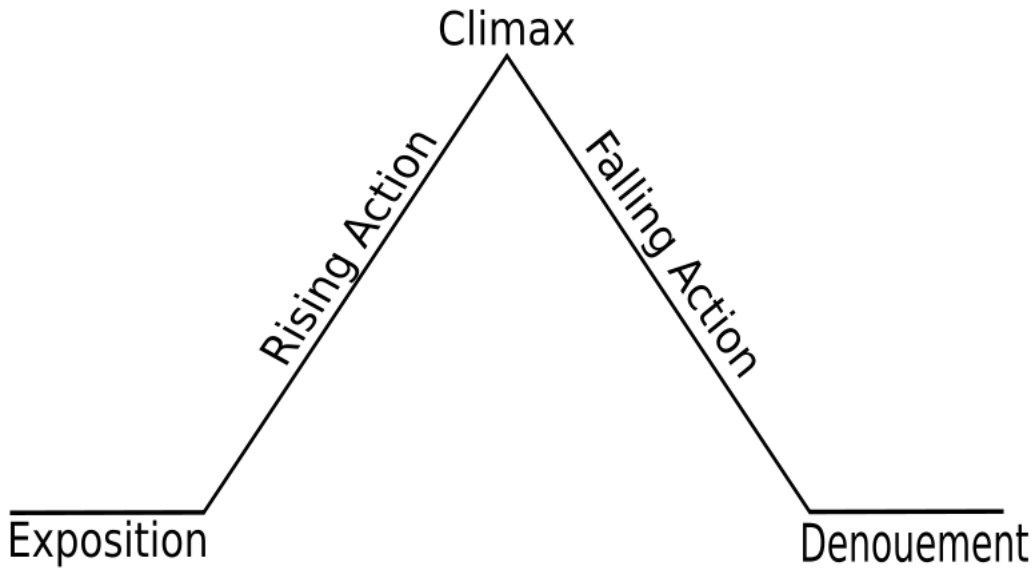
Types of Dramatic Characters:

- **Extraordinary Characters** - These characters are “larger than life.” They are typified by gods and kings that exist beyond the realm of the daily life of common man.
Examples include:
 - Shakespeare’s King Lear
 - Euripides’ Dionysus
- **Representative or Quintessential Characters** – These characters are more like common man. They have concerns and lives to which the audience can readily relate or empathize.
Examples include:
 - Miller’s Willy Loman
 - Ibsen’s Nora
- **Stock Characters** – These are stereotypical fictional characters that are often two dimensional and repeated often as tropes in multiple stories.
 - Arlecchino (Harlequin)/any sitcom character
- **Dominant Trait Characters**- These characters are governed by a specific singular personality trait such as greed, nervousness, or confusion, but do not fall into a common stock type.
 - Ebenezer Scrooge
 - Moliere’s Harpagon (The Miser)
- **Minor Characters** – These characters exist to further the larger plot.
 - Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in *Hamlet* and in Tom Stoppard’s *R&G Are Dead*
- **Narrator** - These characters often break the fourth wall and directly interact with the audience to either tell or comment on the plot.
 - Stage Manager in Wilder’s *Our Town*
- **Nonhuman** - These characters often have the personalities and communication capabilities of human characters but are written as nonhumans.
 - Animals in *The Lion King*

Quiz Answer Key:
Answer Key:



Question: What is the first step of the writing process once the subject, focus, purpose, and point of view have been established?



Answer: Prewriting

Question: Match the item to the most appropriate Aristotelean Element:

A written soliloquy (Lexicon)

The set (Spectacle)

The sound of a rooster crowing on stage (Music)

The moral (Theme)

The Antagonist (Character)

The point of no return (Plot)

Question: What do dramatic dialogue, dramatic characters, and dramatic structure all have in common?

Answers: Action

Question: Place the terms on the Freytag Pyramid:

Exposition

Rising action

Climax

Falling Action

Denouement

Answer:

Question: Place the following actions in the most logical position on the plot map

Jack is chased by the giant.

Jack sells the cow for magic beans.

Jack chops down the beanstalk to escape the giant.

Jack is seen by the giant when Jack tries to steal the treasure.

Georgia Department of Education

THIS WORK IS LICENSED UNDER A CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION - NONCOMMERCIAL - SHAREALIKE 4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE

8.15.2020 Page 1 of 8



The beans grow into a magical stalk leading to a giant's castle.
The giant is dead, and Jack and his mother have plenty of money.
Jack and his mother are poor.

Answer:

Exposition: Jack and his mother are poor

Rising Action: The beans grow into a magical stalk leading to a giant's castle

Climax: Jack tries to steal the giant's treasure but is caught in the act.

Falling Action: Jack is chased by the giant, Jack chops down the beanstalk to escape the giant

Resolution: The giant is dead, and Jack and his mother have plenty of money

Question: Which dramatic character types were typically found in classical tragedy?

Answer: Extraordinary Characters

Question: Despite the differences in formatting and structure, how the audience of traditional literature and theatrical literature interact with the text is the same. (true/false)

Answer: False

Question: Which two of Aristotle's elements are not necessarily contained in the selection of the subject/purpose, dramatic structure, dramatic characters, or dramatic dialogue?

Answer: Music, Spectacle

Question: Which portion of the script would contain information not related to the subject/purpose, dramatic structure, dramatic characters, or dramatic dialogue?

Answer: Stage directions

