

## POWERPOINT PRESENTATION # 12 (For Eighth Grade)

### DRAMA: THE STAGE

Drama has been a source of entertainment for far longer than movies, television, or even books.

Some types of drama include tragedies and comedies. A **play**, or drama, is a story brought to life by real people in front of an audience. Besides being viewed on a stage, plays are usually based on a written script that can be read. Plays can tell all kinds of stories: of kings and queens, of great battles, or of the everyday lives of ordinary people.

#### Types of Drama

The Greeks performed two types of plays: tragedies and comedies.

1. **Tragedy** tells a serious story about important people and situations; tragedies always have unhappy endings. A tragedy usually ends with the death of at least one of the main characters.
2. **Comedies** are the opposite of a tragedy. While you might think of a comedy as a play that is meant to make you laugh, many comedies are also written to make you think. A comedy's humor might focus on a character's crazy attempts to win over his love. Once you've finished laughing, you may start to think about the difficulty of finding your perfect match. The parts of a play that make you laugh include: wordplay, misstatements, exaggeration, and comic actions.

Wordplay is humor that results from silly verbal exchanges or puns—jokes based on words with similar sounds but different meanings. The humor in misstatements arises when a character uses wrong words or says the opposite of what he or she means. Exaggeration is a type of humor in which a character overstates something, making that thing seem like a bigger deal than it really is. Comic actions, such as unexpected behavior and exaggerated facial expressions, are based more on what a character does and less on what he or she says. Humorous falls and funny faces are common examples of comic actions.

#### Elements of Drama

Several basic elements work together to create a drama.

1. **Dramatic Structure** - Like stories, plays are about characters who have conflicts, or problems with which they struggle. As characters work to resolve their conflicts, they face obstacles that complicate their struggles. The action in the play rises to a climax, the most dramatic point in the action and the turning point in the plot. The play ends with a resolution that wraps up the action and shows how the conflict ends.
2. **Dialogue** - The conversations that take place among the characters in a play are called dialogue.

Most plays don't have a narrator to describe what is happening, so you must learn about the characters by paying close attention to their dialogue.

In addition to dialogue, plays may contain other kinds of lines, or spoken words. A monologue is a long speech that a character makes to at least one other character. A soliloquy is a long speech given by a character that is alone on stage. Soliloquies help playwrights reveal characters' thoughts and secrets. An aside is a brief comment that a character makes to the audience. Though other characters are onstage, they cannot hear the aside.

3. **Stage Directions** - Stage directions explain what is happening onstage. They may include information about the following: setting, props, characters' actions, and characters' emotions. Stage directions are usually printed in italic type. Sometimes they appear at the beginning of a scene. Stage directions may also appear in parentheses next to the dialogue.

**Answer the following questions:**

1. Was the play or movie a comedy or a tragedy? How could you tell?
2. What conflict did the main character face? How was the conflict resolved?
3. What did you learn about the main character through the play's dialogue?