

# Drama / Theatre

- **What is Drama?**

**Drama** is a theatrical work (play) meant to be performed on stage by actors. It is the genre of literature represented by works intended for performance on stage. Usually the plays performed are highly emotional, tragic, or turbulent.

- Drama is the most dependent of art forms – director, actors, scene and costume designers.
- Drama – as an art of communication – conveys life itself.


# Drama

- Difficulties in reading drama are connected with works being:
  - 1- scripts intended for performance
  - 2- records of actual performances
- Playwrights or dramatists create plays and hand them over to actors – medium through which the play reaches the public.
- Plays involve human beings moving about, talking, and doing things spontaneously.
- Actors must hold the audience's attention and the play is affected by the audience's response to it.

# Drama

Playwright  actors  audience

to be contrasted with

author  reader

- The difference between reading a play and attending a performance is the former is a private activity and the latter is a public activity and involves diversity of response.

# Fiction and Drama

Fiction	Drama
Little action takes place – mostly consists of people's reaction to certain events or situations.	More action takes place – audience must analyze characters' personalities and feelings through their performance on stage.
Greater choice of characters.	Less choice of characters.
Provides insight to minds of characters through omniscient narrator (the author).	Absence of omniscient narrator – hence no direct description, comments. Only first person dialogue.

# Poetry and Drama

Poetry	Drama
Less dialogue – if there is any.	Play is based on dialogue
Less characters.	More characters.
Poems are more intellectual and concerned more with meaning.	Drama is less intellectual and deals more with feelings and interpretations.

# Categories of Drama

● **Tragedy**: is a kind of drama that deals with suffering, grief, and death. Tragedy stirs powerful emotions and its prevailing tone is serious. In general, tragedy involves the ruin of the leading characters.

1- **Greeks**: destruction of some noble person through fate.

2- **Elizabethans**: death and the destruction of some noble person through a flaw in his character.

3- **Modern tragedy**: shows the tragedy not of the strong and noble, but of the weak and mean.

# Categories of Drama

● **Comedy**: is lighter drama and its tone varies: it can be merry, heartless, bitter-sweet, or savage.

Comedy is:


- 1- amusing and entertaining.
- 2- may focus on serious matters and deal with them thoughtfully and provoke its audience to profound questioning.
- 3- accomplish its goals through its liveliness, high spirits, wit, and humor.

# Types of Tragedies and Comedies

Types of Tragedy	Types of Comedy
Greek Tragedy	Satiric Comedy
Senecan Tragedy	Comedy of Intrigue
Shakespearean Tragedy	Comedy of Manners
Heroic Tragedy	Comedy of Humors
Domestic Tragedy	Romantic Comedy
Revenge Tragedy	Burlesque and Parody
Political Tragedy	Black Comedy



# Elements of Drama

- **Plot:**
  - gives the play unity and identity
  - inferred from the characters' actions
  - order of presentation of events
  - angle from which events are shown
- **Action:**
  - action + actors  performance
  - changes occurring situations
  - general movement forwards in time

# Elements of Drama

- **Characters:**
  - most vivid and concrete element of a play
  - shown through attitudes, manners, and impressions
  - protagonist – antagonist – minor
  - function to fulfill in a play
  - the more a character contributes in a play, the richer it becomes

# Elements of Drama

- **Dialogue:**
  - provides material for a play
  - word choices made by the dramatist and accent of the actors delivering the lines
  - colloquial / everyday speech
  - conversation between characters
  - presented in verse form
  - distinguishing feature of drama
  - principal medium through which dramatists communicate their dramatic ideas and sense of life

# Elements of Drama

- **Spectacle:** - visual element of the production of a play: scenery, costumes, lighting, audio effects (props)
- **Themes:** - idea of the play – meaning hidden behind the literal level
- **Symbols:** - interpreted embodiments in a play
- **Images:** - visual form on stage conveying an image through dialogue