

30 Drama Terms You Need to Know

- 1) Act-A major division in the action of a play.
- 2) Anachronism-something or someone that is not in its correct historical or chronological time, esp. a thing or person that belongs to an earlier time
- 3) Antagonist-A character or force against which another character struggles.
- 4) Aside-Words spoken by an actor directly to the audience, which are not "heard" by the other characters on stage during a play.
- 5) Catharsis-The purging of the feelings of pity and fear that, according to Aristotle, occur in the audience of tragic drama.
- 6) Climax-The turning point of the action in the plot of a play or story. The climax represents the point of greatest tension in the work.
- 7) Denouement-The resolution of the plot of a literary work.
- 8) Dialogue-The conversation of characters in a literary work.
- 9) Dramatic Irony-a character speaks in ignorance of a situation or event known to the audience or to the other characters.
- 10) Dramatic monologue-A type of poem in which a speaker addresses a silent listener.
- 11) Foil-A character who contrasts and parallels the main character in a play or story.

12) Foot-A metrical unit composed of stressed and unstressed syllables. For example, an iamb or iambic foot is represented by "˘", that is, an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one.

13) Foreshadowing-Hints of what is to come in the action of a play or a story.

14) Gesture-The physical movement of a character during a play. Gesture is used to reveal character, and may include facial expressions as well as movements of other parts of an actor's body.

15) Monologue-A speech by a single character without another character's response.

16) Pathos-A quality of a play's action that stimulates the audience to feel pity for a character. Pathos is always an aspect of tragedy, and may be present in comedy as well.

17) Personification-The endowment of inanimate objects or abstract concepts with animate or living qualities.

18) Protagonist-The main character of a literary work

19) Reversal-The point at which the action of the plot turns in an unexpected direction for the protagonist.

20) Soliloquy-A speech in a play that is meant to be heard by the audience but not by other characters on the stage. If there are no other characters present, the soliloquy represents the character thinking aloud.

21) Stage direction-A playwright's descriptive or interpretive comments that provide readers (and actors) with information about the dialogue, setting, and action of a play.

22) Staging-The spectacle a play presents in performance, including the position of actors on stage, the scenic background, the props and costumes, and the lighting and sound effects

23) Symbol-An object or action in a literary work that means more than itself, that stands for something beyond itself.

24) Theme-The idea of a literary work abstracted from its details of language, character, and action, and cast in the form of a generalization

25) Tone-The implied attitude of a writer toward the subject and characters of a work

26) Tragedy-A type of drama in which the characters experience reversals of fortune, usually for the worse, catastrophe and suffering await many of the characters, especially the hero.

27) Tragic flaw-A weakness or limitation of character, resulting in the fall of the tragic hero.

28) Tragic hero-A privileged, exalted character of high repute, who, by virtue of a tragic flaw and fate, suffers a fall from glory into suffering.

29) Understatement-A figure of speech in which a writer or speaker says less than what he or she means; the opposite of exaggeration

30) Verbal Irony-characters say the opposite of what they mean