

Drama

Definition of Drama

Drama is a mode of fictional representation through [dialogue](#) and performance. It is one of the literary genres, which is an imitation of some action. Drama is also a type of a play written for theater, television, radio, and film.

In simple words, a drama is a composition in [verse](#) or [prose](#) presenting a story in pantomime or dialogue. It contains [conflict](#) of characters, particularly the ones who perform in front of [audience](#) on the stage. The person who writes drama for stage directions is known as a “dramatist” or “playwright.”

Types of Drama

Let us consider a few popular types of drama:

[Comedy](#) – Comedies are lighter in tone than ordinary works, and provide a happy conclusion. The intention of dramatists in comedies is to make their audience laugh. Hence, they use quaint circumstances, unusual characters, and witty remarks.

[Tragedy](#) – Tragic dramas use darker themes, such as disaster, pain, and death. Protagonists often have a [tragic flaw](#) — a characteristic that leads them to their downfall.

[Farce](#) – Generally, a farce is a nonsensical [genre](#) of drama, which often overacts or engages slapstick [humor](#).

[Melodrama](#) – Melodrama is an exaggerated drama, which is sensational and appeals directly to the senses of the audience. Just like the farce, the characters are of a single dimension and simple, or may be stereotyped.

Musical Drama – In musical dramas, dramatists not only tell their stories through acting and dialogue, but through dance as well as music. Often the story may be comedic, though it may also involve serious subjects.

Examples of Drama in Literature

Example #1: *Much Ado About Nothing* (By William Shakespeare)

Much Ado About Nothing is the most frequently performed Shakespearian comedy in modern times. The play is romantically funny, in that love between Hero and Claudio is laughable, as they never even get a single chance to communicate on-stage until they get married.

Their relationship lacks development and depth. They end up merely as caricatures, exemplifying what people face in life when their relationships are internally weak. Love between Benedick and Beatrice is amusing, as initially their communications are very sparky, and they hate each other. However, they all of sudden make up, and start loving each other.

Example #2: *Oedipus Rex* (By Sophocles)

Tragedy:

Sophocles' mythical and immortal drama *Oedipus Rex* is thought to be his best classical tragedy. Aristotle has adjudged this play as one of the greatest examples of tragic drama in his book, *Poetics*, by giving the following reasons:

The play arouses emotions of *pity* and *fear*, and achieves the tragic [*catharsis*](#).

It shows the downfall of an extraordinary man of high rank, Oedipus. The central [character](#) suffers due to his tragic error called [*hamartia*](#); as he murders his real father, Laius, and then marries his real mother, Jocasta.

[Hubris](#) is the cause of Oedipus' downfall.

Example #3: *The Importance of Being Earnest* (By Oscar Wilde)

Farce:

Oscar Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, is a very popular example of Victorian farce. In this play, a man uses two identities: one as a

serious person, Jack (his actual name), which he uses for Cesily, his ward, and as a rogue named Ernest for his beloved woman, Gwendolyn.

Unluckily, Gwendolyn loves him partially because she loves the name Ernest. It is when Jack and Earnest must come on-stage together for Cesily, then Algernon comes in to play Earnest' role, and his ward immediately falls in love with the other "Ernest." Thus, two young women think that they love the same man – an occurrence that amuses the audience.

Example #4: *The Heiress* (By Henry James)

Melodrama:

The Heiress is based on Henry James' novel the *Washington Square*. Directed for stage performance by William Wyler, this play shows an ungraceful and homely daughter of a domineering and rich doctor. She falls in love with a young man, Morris Townsend, and wishes to elope with him, but he leaves her in the lurch. The author creates melodrama towards the end, when Catherine teaches a lesson to Morris, and leaves him instead.

Function of Drama

Drama is one of the best literary forms through which dramatists can directly speak to their readers, or the audience, and they can receive instant feedback of audiences. A few dramatists use their characters as a vehicle to convey their thoughts and values, such as poets do with personas, and novelists do with narrators. Since drama uses spoken words and dialogues, thus language of characters plays a vital role, as it may give clues to their feelings, personalities, backgrounds, and change in feelings. In dramas the characters live out a story without any comments of the author, providing the audience a direct presentation of characters' life experiences.