

French Scene Outline

French scene outline refers to a new configuration of actors onstage. Whenever a new character enters or exits the theatrical space, that's a new French scene. The name comes from French rehearsal practices. It's a way of knowing which actors to call for which blocks of rehearsal, and it's used by stage directors to this day. It includes the setting, all entrances & exits, who is onstage together at any given time, and what key actions take place in the scene.

Act One, Scene One

John and Mary's living room

1. John / Mary
John tells Mary he's leaving their marriage
Mary pulls a gun on him

2. Mary's father Joe enters
John/Mary/Joe
Joe tells Mary her lover Frank is at the door
Mary gives Joe the gun
Mary tells Joe to keep John in the room

3. Mary exits
John/Joe
Joe gives John the gun

Remember the principle of *action verbs*.

Example: "I love you," "if you *leave* his room, I'll *call* the police," "I *confess*"...

- What are my characters doing to each other? What are their actions and reactions? What are the stakes? Are the characters smart, clever, resourceful? Do they make good combatants? Can they strategize? Are they funny? Are they likable? Are their actions part of a larger whole – does every action underscore the ideas of the play, illustrate the ideas I want the audience to "get" when the final curtain drops?

Actions cause a reaction! Good drama builds a chain of actions which in turn causes another character to perform yet another action from the beginning of the play right up to the end.

When deciding a character's choices/actions, make them *believable!*