

Appendix IV.1.7.
September 18 Lesson

Thursday, September 18th Lesson

As of this moment, you are a playwright!

“The single attraction that jumps out of every script I like is honesty. The kind of ext that attracts me is one that comes right from the writer’s gut... I respond to writing that comes from the heart and isn’t essentially literary.” -Arvin Brown

“Never fear [the audience] nor despise it. Coax it, charm it, interest it, stimulate it, shock it now and then if you must, make it laugh, make it cry, but above all... never, never, never bore the living hell out of it.” - Noel Coward

Journal write:

What human traits do you value because you think they are praiseworthy? List them. What actions show those values? Give illustrations.

What personality traits strike you as negative? List them. Describe actions that show those qualities.

In class activity: Divide binder into historical (renaissance) research, literary info, calendar/deadlines & assignments, ideas (clippings, random thoughts, etc...), character, plot, dialogue...

What is drama?

-Review ideas of what makes drama unique as a genre

Key concepts to keep in mind while writing drama:

I) A play must **compel** the audience - you must have something to say & all your characters must compel the audience’s attention

Drama = **humans in extremes**/ under pressure, in trouble, within conflict (all dramatic questions must have high stakes)

1. Audience will then find what character made of
2. Story will move forward

II) Plot must **begin at very last possible moment**, near entrance ramp of greatest problem and most exciting journey of character’s life. In your play, the characters must face greatest test, toughest battle. All characters must be pursuing a goal!

IV) Drama is:

1. **People doing things**, performing acts, to affect other people and cause other actions

Dramatic story = 1 event/action linked to next - **everything connects!**

2. A **conflict** of people, ideas & wills that must result in a resolution of the conflict
3. A contest between **opposing forces**
4. Imitated **actions** that tell a story

V) Good drama creates **suspense!** Suspense means knowing more, not less, about a situation. The crafty playwright always holds back the most vital information and the final, most important answers until the very last moment.

Activity: (page 19, Hatcher) List a real life drama w/ events witnessed, experienced, theatrical activity or news story and identify actions that have the potential for drama.

Homework (due Monday, September 22nd):

Make a list of the best scenes from plays (preferably) or film. Pick a scene with strong dramatic characteristics (strong characters with clear motivations, costumes, dialogue, plot, etc...) not cinematic (action, music, close-ups, etc...). Describe why these scenes stand apart as above others. How does the scene compel you (as the audience)? How does the scene grasp your attention? Does this scene show humans in extremes? How? What are the stakes to this character's choices? Does the scene begin at the last possible moment? What is the conflict, test, battle the character is undergoing? What is the character's goal? What is the character's main obstacle? What acts are performed in this scene? How is suspense created in this scene? How do they connect to the next action/overall story? What makes this character interesting? How does dialogue contribute to the scene?

Over the next 3 weeks, you will be required to bring in a scene to show the class that emphasizes the elements of drama that we are studying.

Character biography due next Tuesday, September 23rd.

By this **Wednesday**, you must have your first one-act play picked out and in class.