

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Subtext and Scenography: Advanced 11th Grade Playwriting Quiz

Can you hear what isn't being said onstage? Evaluate the mechanics of dramatic tension through subtext analysis and non-linear structural evaluation.

1. In Sophocles' 'Antigone', the protagonist's decision to bury her brother despite a royal decree serves as the 'inciting incident.' From a structural standpoint, what does this specific beat accomplish regarding the play's dramatic arc?

Answer: B) It creates the 'point of no return' that necessitates the rising action.

The inciting incident is the event that upsets the status quo and launches the protagonist into the main conflict, making the subsequent dramatic struggle inevitable.

2. True or False: In Bertolt Brecht's theory of 'Verfremdungseffekt' (alienation effect), the primary goal of the playwright is to encourage the audience to emotionally identify with the characters' plight.

Answer: B) False

Brecht sought the opposite; he wanted to distance the audience emotionally so they could critically and intellectually analyze the socio-political structures presented on stage.

3. When a playwright includes a long speech by a single character that is directed toward the audience or used to reveal internal thoughts while alone on stage, it is technically defined as a _____.

Answer: C) Soliloquy

While a monologue is a long speech to others, a soliloquy is specifically characterized by the character being (or appearing to be) alone, speaking their inner thoughts aloud.

4. Consider Harold Pinter's use of the 'Pinter Pause.' What is the primary function of these silences within the dialogue of a play like 'The Birthday Party'?

Answer: C) To emphasize the subtextual power struggle and menace hidden beneath mundane speech.

Pinter used silence to heighten tension and indicate that the real communication—often involving aggression or fear—is happening in what is NOT being said.

5. In playwriting, the concept of 'Chekhov's Gun' suggests that if a specific _____ is introduced in the first act, it must be used or 'fired' by the final act to ensure narrative cohesion.

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Answer: B) Dramatic prop

Anton Chekhov's dramatic principle emphasizes that every element in a play must be necessary; an irrelevant prop that is highlighted early on creates a false promise to the audience if it is never utilized.

6. True or False: The 'Proscenium Arch' refers to the imaginary 'fourth wall' that separates the actors from the audience in a traditional theater space.

Answer: A) True

The proscenium arch is the frame that surrounds the stage opening, which creates the physical boundary required for the 'fourth wall' convention in realistic drama.

7. In Lorraine Hansberry's 'A Raisin in the Sun', the recurring imagery of Mama's struggling plant is an example of how a playwright utilizes _____.

Answer: A) Objective Correlative

An objective correlative is a physical object or set of events that serves as a formula for a particular emotion or internal state of the characters.

8. When writing stage directions for a 'Thrust Stage' configuration, a playwright must be aware that the audience is seated on _____ sides of the acting area.

Answer: B) Three

A thrust stage extends into the audience, meaning viewers surround the performers on three sides, which drastically alters how a playwright conceptualizes blocking and sightlines.

9. True or False: 'In media res' is a playwrighting technique where the story begins at the absolute chronological beginning of the characters' lives.

Answer: B) False

'In media res' is Latin for 'in the midst of things,' referring to a play that starts in the middle of the action, often skipping lengthy exposition.

10. Which term describes the moment in a tragedy where the protagonist recognizes their true nature or the reality of their situation, often leading to their downfall?

Answer: C) Anagnorisis

Anagnorisis is the critical discovery or a 'change from ignorance to knowledge,' a staple of Aristotelian tragic structure.

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