

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Script or Scraps? Sophomore Playwriting Challenge

Subtext, non-linear structure, and stagecraft terminology. These 10 items challenge students to apply dramatic theory to diverse theatrical scenarios.

1. A playwright decides to start a play 'In Media Res' during a high-stakes heist. What is the primary analytical advantage of this structural choice?

Answer: B) It forces the audience to piece together character motivations through immediate action.

Starting 'in the middle of things' (In Media Res) creates immediate engagement and requires the audience to use inference to understand the backstory and character dynamics.

2. In contemporary drama, when a character says one thing but means another, the playwright is utilizing _____, which reveals the internal conflict underneath the dialogue.

Answer: C) Subtext

Subtext is the unspoken meaning or intention 'between the lines' that drives a performance and character depth.

3. True or False: In a play script, 'Parentheticals' refer to the long descriptions of the set and lighting found at the beginning of an act.

Answer: B) False

Parentheticals are brief instructions within dialogue that suggest how a line should be delivered; larger descriptions are simply called stage directions or scenic descriptions.

4. Which of these is an example of an 'Inciting Incident' in a script about a corporate whistleblower?

Answer: B) The protagonist discovers a shredded document revealing illegal activity.

The inciting incident is the specific event that disrupts the character's world and launches the main conflict of the story.

5. If a playwright includes the instruction [Beat] in the middle of a heated argument, they are calling for a _____ to create tension or shift the emotional energy.

Answer: D) Brief silence or pause

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A 'beat' indicates a short pause in dialogue, often used to signify a change in thought or to let a moment resonate with the audience.

6. True or False: A 'protagonist' in a sophisticated 10th-grade level play must always be a morally 'good' person to be effective.

Answer: B) False

A protagonist is simply the central character who drives the action; they can be flawed, morally ambiguous, or even an anti-hero.

7. In August Strindberg's naturalistic style, a playwright might focus on 'Unitary Setting.' What is the primary purpose of keeping the entire play in one room?

Answer: B) To heighten the sense of claustrophobia and psychological pressure on the characters.

Limiting the setting (unity of place) often intensifies the drama and forces characters into unavoidable confrontations.

8. A monologue delivered by a character alone on stage to express their inner thoughts directly to the audience is known as a _____, a technique famously used by Sophocles and Shakespeare.

Answer: C) Soliloquy

A soliloquy is a specific type of monologue where the character is alone, providing a window into their private psyche.

9. When writing stage directions, which term would a playwright use to tell an actor to move toward the audience?

Answer: C) Downstage

Because stages were historically raked (slanted), moving toward the audience was moving 'down' the hill, hence 'Downstage'.

10. True or False: 'Stasis' in a play refers to the period of chaos that occurs right after the climax.

Answer: B) False

Stasis refers to the state of equilibrium or 'normalcy' at the beginning of the play before the inciting incident or at the very end when a new balance is found.