

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Scripting the Stage: College Playwriting Mastery

Ditch the clichés and dissect non-linear narratives, subtextual nuance, and the rhythmic architecture of contemporary dramatic literature.

1. In Paula Vogel's **How I Learned to Drive, the use of a non-linear structure and the 'Greek Chorus' serves primarily to perform which dramatic function?**

Answer: B) To create aesthetic distance and facilitate the protagonist's subjective memory retrieval.

Vogel utilizes 'Epic Theatre' techniques, such as the chorus and fragmented chronology, to engage the audience's intellect and manage the emotional weight of the subject matter through alienation (Verfremdungseffekt).

2. True or False: Caryl Churchill's **Top Girls utilizes 'overlapping dialogue' as a purely chaotic device rather than a scripted, rhythmic technique requiring precise timing.**

Answer: B) False

Churchill's overlapping dialogue is meticulously notched in the script to represent power dynamics, social interruption, and a specific sonic texture; it is highly controlled by the playwright.

3. In Suzan-Lori Parks' **The America Play, the use of _____ — a technique of repeating a scene or phrase with slight variations — challenges the audience's perception of history and identity.**

Answer: C) Rep & Rev (Repetition and Revision)

Parks draws from jazz aesthetics to create 'Rep & Rev,' a structural device where themes return with strategic shifts, forcing the audience to re-evaluate the previous context.

4. When analyzing Harold Pinter's **The Homecoming, the 'Pinter Pause' is best evaluated as a tool for:**

Answer: C) Articulating the unspoken power struggles and subtextual menace between characters.

Pinter's silences are as loaded as the dialogue; they represent moments where characters are jockeying for dominance or where the threat of violence is most palpable beneath the surface.

5. True or False: In a 'post-dramatic' script, the traditional primacy of the fable (plot) is often deconstructed in favor of atmosphere, fragment, and shared space.

Answer: A) True

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Post-dramatic theatre, as defined by Hans-Thies Lehmann, moves away from the 'drama' as a literary text and focuses on the performance event itself, often abandoning linear narrative.

6. In Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit*, the character of 'El Pachuco' functions as a _____ who bridges the gap between the historical reality of the Sleepy Lagoon murder and the audience's consciousness.

Answer: B) Metatheatrical commentator

El Pachuco is a personification of an ideal and an internal voice who breaks the fourth wall, making the play self-aware of its own theatricality.

7. Which of the following describes the 'inciting incident' in a high-stakes dramatic structure?

Answer: B) The event that upsets the status quo and forces the protagonist into the central conflict.

The inciting incident is the 'point of attack' that launches the story's motor, requiring the protagonist to take action to restore balance or achieve a goal.

8. When a playwright creates a secondary character whose traits directly contrast with the protagonist to highlight specific qualities, that character is known as a _____.

Answer: B) Foil

A foil, such as Laertes to Hamlet, serves to illuminate the protagonist's character through significant differences in their responses to similar situations.

9. True or False: 'Verbatim Theatre' is a genre of playwriting where the script is constructed entirely from the recorded words of real people, such as in Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*.

Answer: A) True

Verbatim theatre uses documentary evidence and interviews to create the text, prioritizing the exact phrasing and speech patterns of the subjects to convey authenticity.

10. In the context of the 'Well-Made Play' (la pièce bien faite), a 'scène à faire' refers to:

Answer: C) The 'obligatory scene' where the secret is revealed and the protagonist faces their adversary.

The obligatory scene is the logical climax of a well-made play's plot, where the audience's expectations for a confrontation or revelation are finally met.