

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Sizzling Scripts: Senior Playwriting & Dramatic Theory

Can you master the subtext and structural rhythm of professional drama? Analyze non-linear plots, stichomythia, and Ibsen-style character motivations.

1. In contemporary British drama, such as Caryl Churchill's 'Top Girls', the technique of 'overlapping dialogue' is primarily used to achieve which dramatic effect?

Answer: B) To create a naturalistic, polyphonic texture that mimics real-world chaos

Churchill pioneered the use of specific notation for overlapping speech to create a hyper-realistic, fast-paced 'wall of sound' that reflects complex social dynamics.

2. True or False: Henrik Ibsen's 'A Doll's House' utilizes a 'closed' dramatic structure where the protagonist's internal arc dictates the final scene rather than traditional genre conventions.

Answer: A) True

Ibsen shifted drama away from the 'Well-Made Play' formula toward psychological realism, where character growth (Nora's awakening) transcends expected plot resolutions.

3. When a playwright uses a character's dialogue to reveal the opposite of their internal reality, they are masterfully employing _____.

Answer: B) Subtext

Subtext is the unspoken or less obvious meaning or message in a literary composition, drama, or speech; it is what the character is really thinking or feeling behind their words.

4. In Paula Vogel's 'How I Learned to Drive', the use of a non-linear plot structure serves to:

Answer: C) Mirror the way trauma and memory operate in the human mind

Contemporary playwrights often use non-linear structures to represent psychological states or the fragmented nature of memory, moving away from chronological storytelling.

5. Which term describes the rapid, one-line exchanges between characters used to intensify conflict, frequently seen in the works of Sophocles or Harold Pinter?

Answer: C) Stichomythia

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Stichomythia is a technique in verse drama in which sequences of single alternating lines are given to alternating characters, heightening the emotional tension.

6. True or False: In Bertolt Brecht's concept of 'Epic Theatre,' stage directions are designed to immerse the audience emotionally in the story until they forget they are in a theater.

Answer: B) False

Brecht used the 'Verfremdungseffekt' (alienation effect) precisely to prevent emotional immersion, encouraging the audience to remain critical and objective observers.

7. The 'inciting incident' of a play is the specific moment that _____.

Answer: C) Upsets the status quo and launches the protagonist's journey

The inciting incident is the event or decision that begins a story's problem; without it, the characters would stay in their 'normal' world.

8. When writing a character arc for an 'Anti-Hero' like the protagonist in 'The Pillowman' by Martin McDonagh, the playwright must ensure the character has:

Answer: B) Clear, relatable motivations that drive their questionable actions

Effective anti-heroes require logical motivations (even if twisted) to maintain 'dramatic buy-in' from the audience, allowing for a complex character arc.

9. True or False: In playwrighting, 'Exposition' should ideally be delivered through long, descriptive monologues early in Act I to ensure the audience has all necessary data.

Answer: B) False

Modern playwrighting favors 'including' or 'weaving' exposition into active dialogue and action rather than relying on 'info-dumps,' which can stall dramatic momentum.

10. An 'objective' in playwrighting refers to what a character _____.

Answer: B) Wants to achieve in a specific scene to overcome an obstacle

An objective (often associated with Stanislavski's system) is the goal a character is pursuing, which provides the 'engine' for the scene's action and conflict.