

Parts of a Dramatic Analysis of a Theatrical Work -
from Francis Hodge's Directing, Prentice Hall

- 1) Aristotelian Action Statement - What is the dramatic action of the work? Who is the main character moving the action forward?
 - a) The statement should be one sentence and should include the main actors, main goal, main action taken and main obstacle to achieving the goal. It is best to complete this after the rest of the analysis is complete.

- 2) Given Circumstances of the theatrical work - What are the environmental facts, previous activity, and polar attitudes for each character in the work?
 - a) Environmental Facts
 - i) Geographical location including climate - Where does it take place?
 - ii) Date - Year, season, time of day - What time does it take place in?
 - iii) Economic Environment - What is the economic circumstance of the characters?
 - iv) Political Environment - What are the political viewpoints of the period and the characters?
 - v) Social Environment - What do you know about the place where the characters live?
 - vi) Religious Environment - What is the religious affiliation of the characters?
 - b) Previous Action
 - i) Describe any activity or events that happened before the theatrical work begins that are essential to the plot, the characters, or the audience's understanding
 - c) Polar Attitudes
 - i) For each character, state the beginning attitude and ending attitude to help identify how the character changes (if he/she does)

- 3) Plot Analysis - Identify and title each unit given by the author, pages, locale/setting, time, characters, and scenario.
 - a) Unit and title
 - i) Act number and Scene number(s)
 - ii) Give a nominative phrase as a title for each unit
 - b) Pages
 - i) Starting page to ending page in script or score
 - c) Locale/Setting
 - i) Where the unit takes place
 - d) Time
 - i) Time of day, date, day of week, or period of time
 - e) Characters
 - i) Write a list of characters in the unit

- f) Scenario
 - i) A paragraph narrative of what happens in the unit
- 4) Character Analyses - Detail the desire, will, moral stance, decorum, and character/mood intensity as well as a summary list of adjectives for each character in the theatrical work. In addition complete an analysis of the characters dialogue.
- a) Desire - This is the character's objective or greatest desire in the work
 - b) Will - The character's resolve or strength to obtain their desires and reach their goals. What are some obstacles that show you what kind of will the characters has?
 - c) Moral Stance - Does your character know the difference between right and wrong? Where does he/she stand on ethical issues?
 - d) Decorum - What is the physical makeup of the character? What does he/she look like? How does he/she carry him/herself?
 - e) Character/Mood Intensity - intensity at the scene opening expressed by:
 - i) Heartbeat: rate
 - ii) Perspiration: heavy, light, etc.
 - iii) Stomach condition
 - iv) Muscle tension
 - v) Breathing: rate, depth
 - f) Dialogue
 - i) Choice of words - Everyday or formal? Long or short?
 - ii) Choice of phrases and sentence structure
 - iii) Choice of images - Does the character use images which evoke emotion?
 - iv) Choice of peculiar characteristics? - Dialect? Accent?
 - v) The sound of the dialogue - does the character use "hard" sounding words or "soft"sounding?
 - vi) Structure of lines and speeches - How does the structure support the delivery of the subtext?
- 5) Dramatic Action - Break the work into workable dramatic units of action. Sometimes you can find a break where an entrance or exit occurs, while at other times it is a change of mood or subject. A one-act play can have as many as 15 units or more.
- a) Title the units - give a nominative phrase as a title of each unit
 - b) Verbing - express the action of each line (spoken or sung) by using the initial of each character followed by a present tense verb. The verb chosen should express the dramatic intent of the character reciting the dialogue or lyrics.
 - c) Summary of the action - summarize the action of each unit by following the number of the unit with a compound sentence expressing the reciprocal action. Example: A (present tense verb) to B and B (present tense verb) to A.