

DRAMA

- Drama comes from Greek words "dram" meaning "to do" or "to act." It also referred to as "play".
- It is a prose or verse composition, especially one telling a serious story that was intended for representation by actors impersonating the characters and performing the dialogue and action and a serious narrative work or program for television, radio, or the cinema.



Elements of drama

- **Plot:** The events in a play.
- **Setting:** The time and place of a literary work.
- **Characters:** People or creatures in a play.
- **Dialogue:** Conversation in a play.
- **Theme:** The central thought of a play; the idea or ideas with which a play deals.
- **Scenery:** The various elements that are used to create a particular visual setting for a play.

Types of Drama



Types of drama

- **Tragedy:** In the Greek sense, a play that ends with the death of at least one of the main characters. In modern usage, it refers to a play that doesn't have a happy ending.
- **Comedy:** In the Greek sense, it is a play that doesn't end in death. In modern usage, it refers to a play that ends happily or that is humorous.
- **Tragicomedy:** a play in which serious and comic elements are mixed.

Origin & Development of Drama:

In literature, a drama is the portrayal of fictional or non-fictional events through the performance of written dialog (either prose or poetry). Dramas can be performed on stage, on film, or the radio. Dramas are typically called plays, and their creators are known as “playwrights” or “dramatists.”

Performed since the days of **Aristotle (c. 335 BCE)**, the term “drama” comes from the **Greek word to act/ to take action**. The two iconic masks of drama—the laughing face and the crying face—are the symbols of two of the ancient **Greek Muses: Thalia, the Muse of comedy** and **Melpomene, the Muse of tragedy**.

Tragedy

Tragedy shows the audience the downfall of a once prominent and powerful hero. Like comedy, tragedy also supposedly originated as part of a religious ritual--in this case a Dionysian ceremony with dancers dressed as goats or animals (a "goat-song) pantomiming the suffering or death-rebirth of a god or hero.

Greek Origins

Tragedies are first heard of, as stage plays, in the Dionysiac celebrations in Athens at the turn of the fifth century and comedies appear as a contrasting type of play a century later. **Aristotle** said that tragedies dealt with spoudaia (serious matters) and comedies with phaulika (trivial subjects). Tragedies aimed at arousing and then purging emotions such as pity and fear.

The **chief Greek authors of tragedies** were **Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides** The **father of Comedy** was **Aristophanes**.

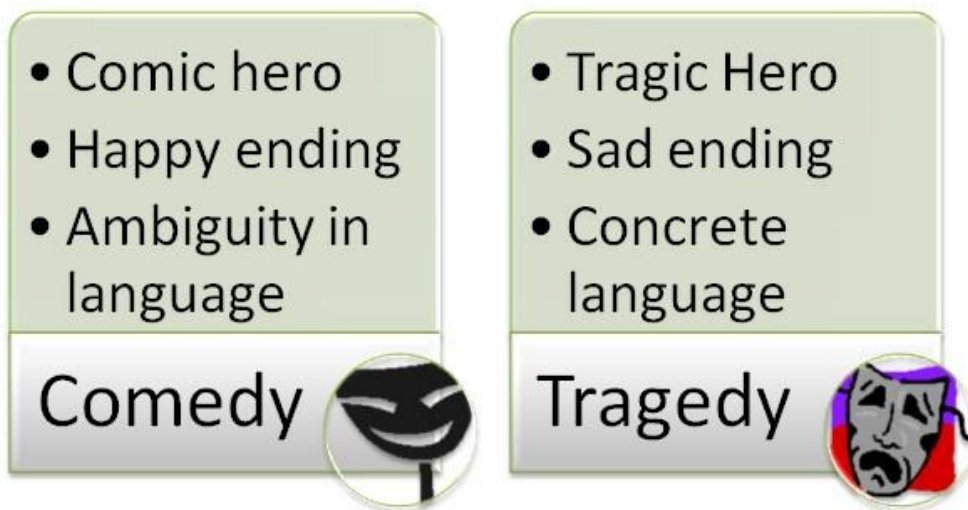
Medieval Contributions:

The most important medieval writer of comedy was **Dante** (*The Divine Comedy*).

The Renaissance

Shakespeare (1564–1616) himself does not say what he means by comedy and tragedy, but one can deduce from his characters that comedy has the general meaning of a pleasant or mirthful play, and that tragedy more often refers to an event than to a play, and more often concerns the downfall of an innocent than a guilty person.

Types of Drama



Dramatic performances are generally classified into specific categories according to the mood, tone, and actions depicted in the plot. Some popular types of drama include:

Comedy: Lighter in tone, comedies are intended to make the audience laugh and usually come to a happy ending. Comedies place offbeat characters in unusual situations causing them to do and say funny things. Comedy can also be sarcastic in nature, poking fun at serious topics. There are also several sub-genres of comedy, including romantic comedy, sentimental comedy, a comedy of manners, and tragic comedy—plays in which the characters take on tragedy with humor in bringing serious situations to happy endings.

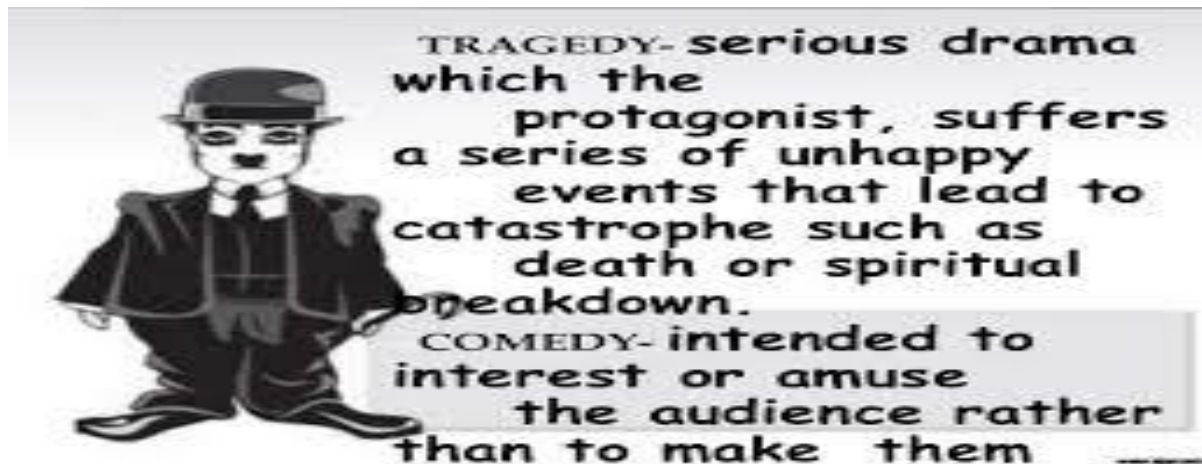
Tragedy: Based on darker themes, tragedies portray serious subjects like death, disaster, and human suffering in a dignified and thought-provoking way. Rarely enjoying happy endings, characters in tragedies, like Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, are often burdened by tragic character flaws that ultimately lead to their demise.

Tragedy – features

A protagonist with a tragic flaw

- ❖ Circumstances that quickly get out of control – and not in a funny way
- ❖ Darker themes than a melodrama, such as human suffering, hatred, or poverty
- ❖ Features the downfall of a previously heroic or well-liked character
- ❖ An irredeemable ending that results in one or more characters' deaths
- ❖ Reaches a tragic catharsis

Shakespeare has any number of tragedies to choose from. But *Othello* is known for its cruel villain, its hero's tragic downfall, and its desperately sad ending. Othello loses everything he has ever loved or wanted because he can't trust that he deserves the life he has.



Farce: Featuring exaggerated or absurd forms of comedy, a farce is a nonsensical genre of drama in which characters intentionally overact and engage in slapstick or physical humor.

Melodrama: An exaggerated form of drama, melodramas depict classic one-dimensional characters such as heroes, heroines, and villains dealing with sensational, romantic, and often perilous situations. Sometimes called “tearjerkers,” examples of melodramas include the play *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams.



Types of Drama



1. **Comedy**—a light and amusing play with a happy ending
2. **Fantasy**—a make-believe play that could not possibly exist
3. **Farce**—A highly comic, light-hearted drama, usually involving stock situations and characters and based on a far-fetched humorous situation.
4. **Folk play**— a play about such folk legends and heroes as Robin Hood, Saint George and the Dragon, etc. or a certain group/nationality of people
5. **Melodrama**—a dramatic form that exaggerates emotion and emphasizes plot or action at the expense of characterization
6. **miracle and mystery plays**—plays that depicted stories about the life of Christ and saints or stories from the Bible to encourage religious devotion
7. **morality play**—medieval drama designed to teach a lesson. The characters were often allegorical and represented virtues or faults.



Comedy

Comedies are usually humorous plays. But being funny isn't the only way to define a comedy!

The elements of a comedy include:

- Lighthearted tone
- Clever wordplay or turns of phrase
- Serious topics addressed in a humorous way
- Comical misunderstandings
- Happy ending
- Silly, offbeat characters
- Often ends with a wedding, especially in romantic comedies

One of the most famous examples of a comedy is William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Beatrice and Benedick transition from foes to lovers with clever banter and more than a few silly misunderstandings. And, like all proper Shakespearean comedies, it ends with a wedding!

Farce

A farce is a type of broad comedy. It depends less on a narrative storyline and more on physical humor and silly jokes. Here are the parts of a farcical comedy:

- ❖ Exaggerated humor
- ❖ Slapstick gags
- ❖ Nonsensical storyline
- ❖ Improbable events
- ❖ One or two settings
- ❖ Humor is often crude and inappropriate

Melodrama

Melodramas tell a serious story in serious ways. The features are:

- ❖ Variety of Characters such as heroes, heroines, villains, mentors, etc.
- ❖ Sweeping stories of romance or serious topics
- ❖ Larger-than-life plots and circumstances (or very small stories told in big ways)
- ❖ Exaggerated character reactions
- ❖ Clear literary themes
- ❖ Flawed characters who must overcome their faults in order to reach their resolution
- ❖ Ending that is sometimes happy, sometimes unhappy

Comedy of manners – features:

- the use of double role and other forms of vulgar language.
- elaborate plots.
- cross-dressing (usually women in men's clothing)
- physical seduction.
- extramarital affairs.
- cynicism.
- the meeting of the aristocracy and common folk.
- intrigues such as forgeries and spying.