



Drama

Plays are written to be performed by actors in front of an audience. A play typically has three or five acts and each act has several scenes.



1 Language and stage directions

Read the text and fill in the gaps.

set stage directions (2x) dialogue narrator props

Most plays don't have a narrator. The story is usually told through the actors' actions and their spoken language. This can be a dialogue between two or more characters or one character's monologue.

If you're reading a play, there are usually stage directions. These describe some of the actions, how the actors move on the stage, how they speak, and what props (e.g. a guitar, a weapon, a bucket) they use. Sometimes stage directions also give information about what the set looks like or how much light there is on the stage (e.g. for day or night).

2 Characters and typical roles

Read the text and fill in the gaps.

villain gestures voices suspense hero / heroine against good guy / bad guy
facial expressions dilemma

In plays you can often find a set of typical roles, e.g. a hero / heroine with good motives and a villain with bad motives. This is called the 'good guy / bad guy' concept. The suspense of the drama rises when these opposing powers work against each other. This often puts the protagonist in a dilemma, a situation in which he or she faces a difficult decision.

To find out about the characters' motives, listen carefully to what the actors say but also to *the way* they say things: What do their voices sound like? You should watch the actors' body language as well: Pay close attention to their gestures and facial expressions.

act [ækt] Akt ○ opposing [ə'pəʊzɪŋ] gegnerisch ○ monologue ['mɒnələʒ] Monolog; Selbstgespräch



3 Getting into character

- a) Which voice can go with which facial expression and body language?
Match the adjectives with the pictures.

angry nervous excited sweet worried horrified arrogant sad



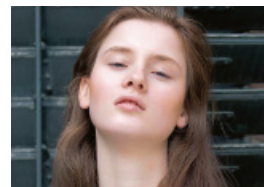
worried



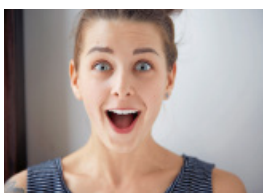
angry



horrified



arrogant



excited



sweet



nervous



sad



- b) Work with a partner. Each of you picks one of the voices from a). Read the scene out loud in that voice and then guess what your partner was trying to express. Try different voices and facial expressions and give each other feedback.

(Sarah Sandal and Mr Rich are standing at the edge of a forest.)

Sarah Sandal: What did you just say?

Mr Rich: I said I'm going to cut down these trees.

Sarah Sandal: You can't be serious, Mr Rich!

Mr Rich: I'm sorry, but I've made a decision.

Sarah Sandal: Where are all the bears supposed to live?

Mr Rich: Ms Sandal, I'm not going to change my mind. So stop trying!
I'm going home now.

Sarah Sandal: No! Don't move!

Mr Rich: What's wrong with you, Ms Sandal? I've had enough of this.

Sarah Sandal: You don't understand. Behind you ... There's a big, brown b...
It's coming closer.

Mr Rich: What? Oh no! Help!

Sarah Sandal: No! Don't run, Mr Rich! ... That's a really bad idea ...

(Mr Rich runs away. We can hear the bear follow him.)

- c) Rewrite the scene with new, helpful stage directions for voices and body language.