

Chapter 2: The Text

2-1 Multiple Choice Questions

2-1.1

You are at your local theatre witnessing a play about a king. This king wields much power and is liked by his subjects, but he has insatiable greed. His greed causes him to lose what matters most in his life, and the play ends with a soliloquy about how he wishes he could change what he did. You leave the theatre feeling pity for the king, even though he caused his own fate. According to Aristotle's *The Poetics*, what genre of play did you just witness?

- a. historical epic
- b. tragedy
- c. tragicomedy
- d. comedy

Page Ref: Tragedy

Skill: Applied

Topic: Characteristics of a tragedy

Answer: b.

2-1.2

Which of the following is an example of "text"?

- a. a website
- b. a play
- c. a screenplay
- d. all of these choices

Page Ref: Introduction

Skill: Factual

Topic: Types of text

Answer: d.

2-1.3

You are watching a performance in which there seems to be no linear narrative. The story has fragmented language and there is no clear closure at the end, only your own interpretations. Which type of plot structure are you most likely seeing?

- a. climactic
- b. episodic
- c. postmodernism
- d. the “Well-Made-Play” format

Page Ref: Plot

Skill: Applied

Topic: Types of plot structure

Answer: c.

2-1.4

You are in the audience of a production in which the protagonist comments on how he wants to raise money for his hometown to save it from a giant corporation. This statement would most likely give us a look into which of the four character information types?

- a. physical or biological
- b. social
- c. psychological
- d. moral/ethical

Page Ref: Character

Skill: Applied

Topic: Characteristics of types of characters

Answer: c.

2-1.5

When given a play to read for an assignment in class, you wonder if there is one thing you can skip in reading. Which of the following could you not read?

- a. the title
- b. the cast list
- c. the stage directions
- d. none of these choices

Page Ref: Reading and Analyzing a Play

Skill: Applied

Topic: Script analysis

Answer: d.

2-1.6

You are watching a play. You are at the point toward the beginning when information is being given about various aspects of the characters and the action. Where in the plot is the play right now?

- a. inciting incident
- b. exposition
- c. point of attack
- d. denouement

Page Ref: Plot

Skill: Applied

Topic: Characteristics of plot points

Answer: b.

2-1.7

You see a performance in which one theme is clearly stated in the dialogue between the characters. Since it was so obvious, you feel that this is the only theme from the play. Is this a valid response?

- a. yes, shows only have one theme
- b. no, themes are never stated directly in dialogue
- c. yes, playwrights try to make their themes very clear like such
- d. no, there is a chance there is another, less obvious, theme

Page Ref: Thought

Skill: Applied

Topic: Themes

Answer: d.

2-1.8

A sad tale dealing with the lesser social class being suppressed by a higher class but ultimately resolving in a happy ending will have which of the following characters in the story?

- a. tragic hero
- b. harlequin
- c. narrator
- d. a cross-dressing character

Page Ref: Comedy

Skill: Conceptual

Topic: Characteristics of different genres

Answer: b.

2-1.9

In his work *The Poetics*, Aristotle defines the six elements of theatre. What are they?

- a. plot, character, theme, language, music, spectacle
- b. plot, character, theme, theory, sound, spectacle
- c. plot, theme, theory, language, music, setting
- d. character, theme, language, spectacle, resolution, theory

Page Ref: Aristotle's Six Elements

Skill: Factual

Topic: *The Poetics*

Answer: a.

2-1.10

What is a denouement?

- a. the point in a play where something takes a turn for the worse
- b. some silly French word
- c. the point in a play where all the loose ends are tied up; resolution
- d. an occurrence that sets the dramatic action of the play in motion

Page Ref: Plot

Skill: Factual

Topic: Plot points

Answer: c.

2-1.10

What is often the most accurate way to convey information about a character?

- a. what the character does
- b. what others say about the character
- c. what the character says
- d. description (e.g. stage directions)

Page Ref: Character

Skill: Factual

Topic: How to identify character traits

Answer: a.

2-1.11

What is catharsis?

- a. a purging of emotion caused by a tragedy
- b. pride in a tragic hero
- c. an ending to a play that leaves questions unanswered
- d. the playwright's implied theme

Page Ref: Tragedy

Skill: Factual

Topic: Characteristics of genres

Answer: a.

2-1.12

In a scene from the famous Sophocles play *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus begins one of his many lines with "You are at prayer, and in answer,/if you will heed my words/and minister to your own disease,/you may hope for help and win relief". He then continues to speak for another 70 lines.

He is not the only person on stage and he is directly speaking to another character. What kind of language element is this?

- a. soliloquy
- b. aside
- c. narration
- d. monologue

Page Ref: Diction or Language

Skill: Applied

Topic: Characteristics of types of language

Answer: d.

2-1.13

While analyzing a script you decided that you could skip over analyzing one item that is not crucial to the play. Which element was it?

- a. the exposition
- b. the minor characters
- c. the logic
- d. none of these choices

Page Ref: Reading and Analyzing a Play

Skill: Applied

Topic: Script analysis

Answer: d.

2-1.14

After reading the play *Antigone*, by Sophocles, you interpret it as a story of six girlfriends who begin to feud with one another when a popular boy says he's moving across town. This interpretation of the play is

- a. right, the old story could be translated to a new context for other audiences.
- b. wrong, a better interpretation would be one where the boy dies.
- c. right, there are no wrong interpretations.
- d. wrong, this interpretation is hard to support.

Page Ref: Reading and Analyzing a Play

Skill: Applied

Topic: Play interpretation

Answer: d.

2-1.15

_____ reimagined the concept of “music” as “organized noise” in 1966.

- a. Edgard Varèse
- b. Aristotle
- c. Henrik Ibsen
- d. Sharon Bridgforth

Page Ref: Music

Skill: Factual

Topic: Analyzing music

Answer: a.

2-1.16

Based on the timing with which Aristotle wrote *The Poetics* (c. 335 B.C.E.), we can deduce that his writings on ancient Greek tragedy are founded on

- a. his experiences seeing performances.
- b. predictions about future theatre works.
- c. treatises written by other theorists.
- d. artifacts from past performances.

Page Ref: Approaches to Play Analysis

Skill: Applied

Topic: Historical play analysis

Answer: d.

2-2 True/False Questions

2.2.1

Texts can be a book, story, poem, play, screenplay, website, visual art, video game, film, TV show, or performance of a play; even the body can be read as a text.

Page Ref: Introduction

Skill: Factual

Topic: Types of text

Answer: True.

2-2.2

The two-dimensional script is all that is needed for a show; you are experiencing a complete theatrical production when you read a script.

Page Ref: Introduction

Skill: Factual

Topic: Page to stage

Answer: False.

2-2.3

Characters are always people.

Page Ref: Character

Skill: Factual

Topic: Fundamentals that create a character

Answer: False.

2-2.4

Dramatic action is found in the stage directions written in the play.

Page Ref: Introduction

Skill: Factual

Topic: Page to stage

Answer: False.

2-2.5

When assessing a character, you can simply make a list of physical traits.

Page Ref: Character

Skill: Factual

Topic: How to analyze character

Answer: False.

2-2.6

During the initial performances of his work, Shakespeare's actors had weeks to prepare with the complete script.

Page Ref: Reading and Analyzing a Play

Skill: Factual

Topic: Sides versus scripts

Answer: False.

2-2.7

The historical emphasis on the play as text is shifting over to the performance as text.

Page Ref: Reading and Analyzing a Play

Skill: Factual

Topic: Page to stage

Answer: True.

2-2.8

You just bought tickets to see *The Bacchae* with a friend; you should tell your friend that the show is action-packed, with little exposition because it has a climactic plot structure.

Page Ref: Plot

Skill: Applied

Topic: Difference characteristics of different plot structures

Answer: False.

2-2.9

Sexual comedy as we see the genre today (*American Pie*, *Not Another Teen Movie*, *Scary Movie*) was frowned upon by all ancient Greeks. In fact, the first comedy including sex and debauchery didn't exist until the Middle Ages.

Page Ref: Comedy

Skill: Factual

Topic: History of comedy

Answer: False.

2-2.10

Euripides won only four contests for his plays, perhaps because his often violent, melodramatic, sexual subjects were thought unsuited to the Greek stage, but he was extremely popular in later periods.

Page Ref: Tragedy

Skill: Factual

Topic: History of genre popularity

Answer: True.

2-3 Completion (fill-in-the-blank) Questions

2-3.1

Comedy of _____ shows the ludicrous results of placing characters in unusual circumstances.

Page Ref: Comedy

Skill: Factual

Topic: Characteristics of different types of comedy

Answer: situation

2-3.2

_____—the most popular theatrical form of the nineteenth century in Europe and America—grew out of the nineteenth century Industrial Revolution.

Page Ref: Melodrama

Skill: Factual

Topic: History of melodrama

Answer: Melodrama

2-3.3

During a show in which characters are trying to solve a murder mystery, the characters find a note left by the murderer and are about to discover the murderer's identity. This moment is mostly likely the _____.

Page Ref: Plot

Skill: Applied

Topic: Characteristics of different plot points

Answer: climax

2-3.4

_____ plays have a direct linear arrangement.

Page Ref: Plot

Skill: Factual

Topic: Plot structures

Answer: Climactic

2-3.5

_____ plays are ordered into episodes by the exploration of a theme.

Page Ref: Plot

Skill: Factual

Topic: Plot structures

Answer: Episodic

2-3.6

When a character speaks to the audience for an extended time, such a speech is called a _____.

Page Ref: Diction or Language

Skill: Factual

Topic: Types of language within a play

Answer: soliloquy

2-3.7

It is vital that you support your reading and analysis of any play with specific _____ from the text.

Page Ref: Approaches to Play Analysis

Skill: Factual

Topic: Play analysis; reading a play

Answer: evidence

2-3.8

In classical Greek tragedies, the _____ is a serious personal misjudgment in the character that leads to the climax.

Page Ref: Tragedy

Skill: Factual

Topic: Elements of a tragedy

Answer: tragic flaw or hamartia

2-3.9

_____ conveys character, plot, and theme and is the playwright's primary tool.

Page Ref: Diction or Language

Skill: Factual

Topic: Characteristics of language

Answer: Language

2-3.10

The _____ are the fictional people who perform the actions in the play and are the primary elements out of which plots are created.

Page Ref: Character

Skill: Factual

Topic: Characteristics of character

Answer: characters

2-4 Short Answer/Essay Questions

2-4.1

Use Aristotle's six elements to analyze a contemporary work of dramatic fiction (play, film, etc.). Identify how the work arranges the six elements (which ones play a larger role in the production) and suggest how that arrangement can help audiences better understand the main idea or theme of the production.

Page Ref: Aristotle's Six Elements

Skill: Conceptual

Topic: Aristotle's six elements

Answer: A student may choose to look at a movie such as *Moulin Rouge* and note that the movie is structurally different than most other films in that after plot, the most important elements of the movie are music and spectacle, as the movie theme centers around the ideas of romantic, ideal love.

2-4.2

Compare a contemporary comedy to an ancient one and identify how each work is similar or different from the other. Identify the structure of each script (how long are the scenes or acts, where is the climax, how is the conflict resolved), and suggest how the ancient work could be presented to a contemporary audience.

Page Ref: Comedy

Skill: Conceptual

Topic: Comedy

Answer: A student could compare *Lysistrata* to *American Pie* and show that *American Pie* seeks to do little more than glorify the naïve male fantasy of losing one's virginity while *Lysistrata*, though in its original production had male actors playing women, has throughout history exposed the follies of man in regard to war and masculinity when in reality it is better to make love, not war.

2-4.3

Identify three melodramas (historic or contemporary, film or theatre) and compare how each work follows the rules of melodrama (or not). Which one speaks most strongly to you, and why?

Page Ref: Melodrama

Skill: Conceptual

Topic: Melodrama fundamentals

Answer: Students could discuss any type of melodrama beginning with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and moving into classic motion pictures such as *Gone with the Wind* or *Star Wars*. A student could show how *Uncle Tom's Cabin* focused more on the ideas of good versus evil and how *Gone with the Wind* more epitomizes the romantic, idealist nature of melodramas rather than setting out to achieve all the goals that the play *Uncle Tom's Cabin* planned.

2-4.4

Use Aristotle's six elements to analyze a non-traditional text (like a painting, five minutes watching a street corner, or your own clothes). How do each of the elements highlight aspects of this non-linear text?

Page Ref: Aristotle's Six Elements

Skill: Conceptual

Topic: Aristotle's six elements

Answer: Students could discuss pants with writing on the back side and the effects an article of that nature has socially, the sounds of a street corner when the walk sign is green versus when a car is attempting to turn left as other cars zoom past, or how a Norman Rockwell painting tells a story through spectacle that also makes you care about his characters.