

## Grade 7 Playlist: Structure of a Drama

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.5*:

- Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

### Welcome

Novels, poems, and plays each have unique structures, or ways that they are organized. These structures help tell the stories and convey the writer's messages. For example, most plays contain **scenes** that are grouped together to form **acts**.

The play *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw is divided into five acts with one scene in each act. Each scene contains interactions between the characters that reveal the play's themes and move the story forward.

### Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn and practice how to:

- explain that plays are divided into acts and scenes.
- explain how dialogues and monologues contribute to the meaning of a play.

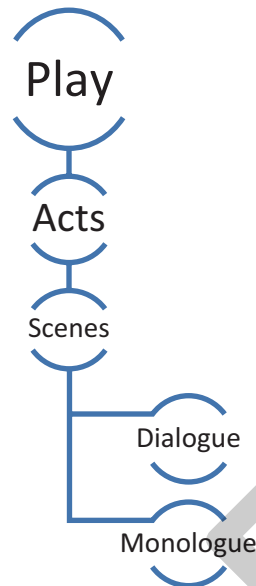
### Review

#### Key Terms

- A **scene** is a part of a play that occurs in one specific time or place (e.g., someone's house). Scenes usually change when the location changes or when the characters exit the stage.
- An **act** in a play is made up of one or more scenes and contains major plot points that move the story forward.
- Dialogue** is when two or more characters speak to each other.
- A **monologue** is when one character speaks for an extended period of time in the presence of other characters.
- A **soliloquy** is when one character speaks for an extended period of time to him- or herself.



Read this chart to understand how dialogues, monologues, scenes, and acts relate to each other:



### Watch!

Watch this video to review these elements of drama and more:

- <https://www.opened.com/video/introduction-to-drama/1040744>

*Pygmalion* is about a language professor named Henry Higgins who makes a bet that he can teach a lower-class flower girl named Eliza Doolittle to be a proper lady by making her speak with a proper English accent. Although this starts off as just an experiment, Higgins grows to like Eliza and tries to control the rest of her life. At the end of the play, Eliza refuses him and keeps her independence.

The play is divided into five acts. Each act is one large scene that moves the story forward through dialogue and monologue. Many monologues in the play show the characters' frustrations with each other, but Shaw also uses these monologues to comment on Victorian social classes.

### Major Characters in *Pygmalion*

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliza Doolittle: A flower girl from a lower economic class who does not speak what is considered proper English.</li> <li>• Henry Higgins: A professor who studies languages and accents of people in different parts of the world. He teaches people how to speak proper English.</li> <li>• Colonel Pickering: A language scholar who wants to learn more about Higgins' work and persuades him to teach Eliza.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Higgins: Henry Higgins' mother</li> <li>• Freddy Eynsford Hill: Falls in love with Eliza, writes letters to her, and becomes a marriage option for her by the end of the play</li> </ul> |
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## Teacher Notes: Structure of a Drama

The goal of RL.7.5 is for students to be able to explain how the structure of a text contributes to its meaning. This playlist focuses on the structure of plays in particular. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom instruction.

### “Applying the Standard” Matching Answers

1. d; 2. c; 3. e; 4. a; 5. b

### “Applying the Standard” Paragraph Sample Answer

In this monologue, the main character is worried and rushed because she is late for work. She did not have time to eat or fix her hair before arriving at work, so she wonders if she has time to do both before her boss arrives. As the monologue continues, she reveals her thoughts about Miss Malcahey and shows that she does not like to stay angry with people, but she also will not go out of her way to talk to someone who does not want to talk to her. In general, the character has strong opinions about what traits are good or bad. This reveals that she has strict expectations about how she should look and behave. However, her society also expects her to follow the same rules. She hints several times that the boss is coming soon and if she does not meet his expectation, she might get in trouble.

### Activities

1. If students have trouble understanding the difference between monologue and dialogue, explain that *mono* means “one” for just one character and *di* means “two” for two characters. Have them identify monologues and dialogues in these *Pygmalion* passages or in other parts of the play.
2. Show students a few minutes of the *Pygmalion* film and ask them to analyze what the scene, dialogue, and/or monologue reveals about the play’s larger themes.  
<https://archive.org/details/Pygmalion>
3. Many of Shakespeare’s plays, such as *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, include monologues, asides, and soliloquies. Find examples of these dramatic structures to analyze as a class. First work with students to understand what the speaker is saying. Then discuss why Shakespeare might have chosen to use each structure to convey certain information.
4. Have students compare the structure of dramas to the structure of poems. If necessary, review terms related to poetic structure, such as *stanza*, *sonnet*, and *couplet*. Then read examples of poems with different structures. Discuss how the structure of the poem helps convey the author’s message.

### Writing Prompt

1. *Pygmalion* is based on a Greek myth. As an extended project, ask students to write their own play based on a myth or folktale. The play must include acts, scenes, dialogue, and monologues. Have students give short presentations about their plays in which they explain why they chose the structure they did.

