



Basic Terminology

Stage Directions

Upstage (US)	The area of the stage furthest from the audience.
Downstage (DS)	The area of the stage closest to the audience.
Stage Right (SR)	The actor's right when facing the audience.
Stage Left (SL)	The actor's left when facing the audience.
Center Stage (CS)	The middle of the stage.
Apron	The area of the stage that extends beyond the proscenium arch.
Wings	The offstage areas on either side of the stage.
House	The area where the audience sits.

Performance Elements

Blocking	The precise staging of actors in order to facilitate the performance of a play, ballet, film or opera.
Pace	The rate at which actors speak or move.
Diction	The clarity and effectiveness of speech.
Projection	The strength of speaking or singing voice to be audible to the audience.
Ensemble	A group of actors working together cooperatively.
Improvisation	Acting without a script, spontaneously creating scenes.

Technical Elements

Lighting	The use of lighting instruments to illuminate the stage and create mood.
Sound	The use of sound effects, music, and microphones to enhance the performance.
Set Design	The creation of the physical environment of the play on stage.
Costume Design	The design and creation of clothing for the actors.
Props	Objects used on stage by the actors.
Scrim	A gauze-like curtain that can appear opaque or transparent depending on how it is lit.

Key Roles in Theater

Creative Team

Director	Responsible for the overall artistic vision of the production.
Playwright	The author of the play.
Set Designer	Designs the physical environment of the play.
Costume Designer	Designs the costumes for the actors.
Lighting Designer	Designs the lighting for the production.
Sound Designer	Designs the sound for the production.
Composer/Lyricist	Writes the music and lyrics for musicals.

Production Team

Stage Manager	Oversees all aspects of the production during rehearsals and performances. Calls cues.
Technical Director	Responsible for the technical aspects of the production, including set construction and lighting.
Costume Shop Manager	Manages the costume shop and oversees the construction of costumes.
Master Electrician	Responsible for hanging, focusing, and maintaining the lighting equipment.
Sound Board Operator	Runs the sound board during performances.

Performance Roles

Actor/Performer	Portrays a character in the play.
Understudy	Learns a role in case the original actor is unable to perform.
Ensemble Member	Part of the chorus or a smaller group of performers.
Dancer	Performs dance numbers in musicals or plays.
Musician	Plays musical instruments during the performance.

Dramatic Structure

Classical Structure

Exposition: Introduction of setting, characters, and initial conflict.
Rising Action: Events leading to the climax.
Climax: The turning point of the play.
Falling Action: Events following the climax.
Resolution/Denouement: The conclusion of the play.
Many plays, especially those written before the 20th century, adhere to this structure, derived from Aristotle's analysis of Greek tragedies.

Variations in Structure

Episodic Structure	A series of loosely connected scenes or episodes.
Cyclical Structure	The play ends where it began, emphasizing repetition or futility.
Minimalist Structure	Focuses on essential elements, often with ambiguous or suggestive storytelling.
Fragmented Structure	Non-linear, disjointed scenes that challenge traditional narrative.
Absurdist Structure	Lacks clear causality, purpose, or logical progression.

Dramatic Devices

Foreshadowing	Hints or clues about future events.
Dramatic Irony	Audience knows something the characters do not.
Soliloquy	A character speaks their thoughts aloud, alone on stage.
Aside	A character speaks directly to the audience, unheard by other characters.
Deus ex machina	An unexpected power or event saving a seemingly hopeless situation, often considered contrived.

Genres and Styles

Major Genres

Tragedy	Deals with serious and important themes, often ending in the downfall of the protagonist.
Comedy	Aims to amuse and often features humorous characters and situations.
Drama	A serious play that is not necessarily a tragedy.
Musical Theatre	Combines music, songs, spoken dialogue, and dance.
Farce	An exaggerated comedy with absurd situations and characters.
Melodrama	Exaggerated emotions and sensational events.

Theatrical Styles

Realism	Aims to depict life as it is, with realistic characters and settings.
Naturalism	An extreme form of realism that emphasizes the influence of environment on character.
Expressionism	Distorts reality to express inner emotions and experiences.
Surrealism	Explores the subconscious mind through dreamlike and irrational imagery.
Absurdism	Highlights the meaninglessness of existence through illogical and nonsensical events.
Epic Theatre	Breaks the fourth wall to engage the audience intellectually and critically.

Contemporary Forms

Performance Art	Live art that incorporates a variety of media and performance elements.
Devised Theatre	A collaborative process where the script is created by the performers.
Immersive Theatre	The audience is placed within the world of the play, often interacting with the performers.
Site-Specific Theatre	Performed in a non-traditional theatre space that is relevant to the play's content.