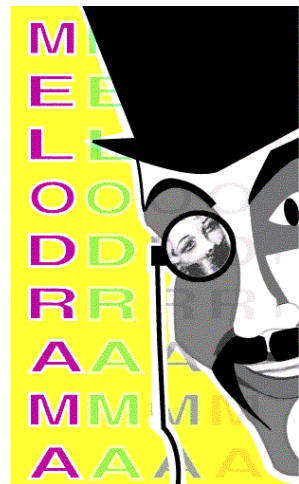


UNIT 4 Melodrama

Melodrama is the style of theatre popular a couple of hundred years ago. You can tell you are watching a melodrama because of the certain kinds of characters and the style of acting. In this unit you will learn about the main features of melodrama, and the assessment, if your teacher chooses to use it, will be on how well you can develop your own ideas to create a piece of melodrama.



A The Main Features of Melodrama

Melodrama was very popular when it first appeared in Britain in the 1800s. The actors became very famous, and the style of the storylines soon became well known. Lots of the stories focussed on emotions such as suffering and romance. Let's learn more about these features.

1. Vocabulary

a. Learn these terms and definitions, as they apply to drama.

Melodrama – style of theatre which was a popular form of entertainment.

Asides – the actor speaks to the audience in role but other characters cannot hear him/her.

'Time running out' – device used to create tension. Someone, usually the heroine, would need to be rescued quickly.

NB: When a question asks you to 'compare and contrast' you're being asked to find what is the same (compare) and what is different (contrast).





2. Planning


a. Complete this table. On the left are the main features of the melodrama style of theatre. In the other two columns, compare and contrast that feature to theatre or acting today. The last one is done for you.


features of melodrama	compare (similarities)	contrast (differences)
Large gestures used e.g. with arms and hands.		
Slapstick forms of comedy e.g. falling being clumsy.		



<p>Stock characters e.g. villain, hero, heroine.</p>		
<p>Storylines where the villain appears to have won but is then defeated by the hero.</p>		
<p>Acting towards the audience e.g. the voice is projected outwards instead of to each character.</p>		
<p>Use of sidekicks for both hero and villain e.g. little 'helper' who tends to cause more problems!</p>		
<p>Use of <i>asides</i>, where a character speaks directly to the audience to let them know their ideas or intentions.</p>	<p>In some TV shows, especially in comedies, the actors turn and talk to the camera but others can't hear them e.g. "Scrubs".</p>	

3. Reflection

 a. How could you use your voice in an *aside*? (Remember features of voice are *pace, pause, pitch, volume, tone, projection*).

 b. Describe how you would make a gesture with your hands and arms to show you were the villain and pleased with yourself about your evil plan?



c. Describe where you think there are most features of melodrama in today's world. For example, are there some styles of movies or TV programme than have more features than others?

B Style of acting

The style of acting in a melodrama could be described as *stylised*. If you were to watch one today you could call it "over the top"! Audiences flocked to see melodrama plays though as they enjoyed the spectacle and the storylines took them away from their ordinary lives. Even today a lot of our entertainment has the same function as the melodrama had in its day.



1. Vocabulary

a. These definitions were explained in *Drama to Go* Book 1. Record what these definitions mean here.

Facial Expression	–
Movement	–
Gesture	–

2. Planning

a. Here is a list of drama techniques and a sample script from a melodrama. Annotate the script showing where you will use the dramatic techniques, remembering that the techniques were big, often exaggerated, and that the voice was well projected and used to show emotions.

i. List of Drama Techniques

Voice: Pitch, Pause, Volume, Tone, Accent, Articulation, Pace

Posture: Levels of where your body is positioned, stance, non-locomotor movement

Movement: timing, energy, direction, locomotor - did you write this in your vocab list?

Facial expression: } See ideas from your vocab list


Gesture:

Unit 4 Melodrama

ii. Sample melodrama script

From <i>Rosebud in Danger</i> by ...	Drama techniques and how they will be used to really go “over the top!”
<p>Rosebud: Please Sir Jasper. Kind Sir Jasper, don't put my mother out into the rain and snow. We have nowhere to go! Be kind!</p> <p>Everybody: Yes let them stay, don't be mean!</p> <p>Sir Jasper: Kind! Do you think I'm a fool? Still...yes I will be kind. You can stay here without paying the rent. How does that sound?</p> <p>Rosebud :I knew you were a good, kind man, Sir Jasper.</p> <p>Sir Jasper (aside): She thinks I'm a fool! Lovely little Rosebud, I want you to marry me and come and live up at the Big House. Your poor mother can live here – rent free.</p> <p>Everybody: Boooo! Don't go!</p> <p>Rosebud: Marry you? I'm going to marry Sailor Jack when he comes home from sea. I promised.</p> <p>Sir Jasper: Silly Sailor Jack is dead and gone. He was shot through with a cannon ball, I read it in the paper. Now, you must marry me. I'm rich and good-looking and...</p> <p>Everybody: Boooo! Booooo! You're mean and ugly!</p> <p>Rosebud: I'll wait forever for my Sailor Jack. I'll never marry a man like you!</p>	



 b. Choose 4 decisions that you made when annotating your script and explain why you made those decisions

- *
- *
- *
- *