

DOUGLAS ANDERSON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
THEATRE DEPARTMENT

MAJOR DRAMATIC CURVE

Point of Commencement: The VISUAL AND AURAL ELEMENTS that create the FIRST MOMENT we, as audience, join the story.

Inciting Incident: A MOMENT in the story when the relative balance of the present is disturbed by SOMETHING from the OUTSIDE entering the life and consciousness of the central character, clearly identifying the story's protagonist and Major Dramatic Question.

Major Dramatic Question: The super-objective of the story. The central journey of the play. This must be phrased as a:

1. QUESTION to begin with the interrogative "Will" (as in "Will Eddie get the money from Frank?")
2. Feature the PROPER NAME of the protagonist.
3. Feature the CENTRAL ACTIVE VERB that most specifically captures the protagonist's central goal.

Rising Action: A SERIES OF TACTICS AND MINOR CRISIS that span from the Inciting Incident to the Climax. This is the bulk of the play. It is comprised of a series of tactics by the protagonist and minor crises that call for adaptations and new tactics--all to reach the objective and answer the Major Dramatic Question.

Major Crisis: That MOMENT immediately prior to the Climax that forces the story into INEVITABILITY. It begins the most crucial moment of the story.

Climax: The MOMENT that the Major Dramatic Question is answered.

Falling Action: The SPAN OF EVENTS between the Climax and the Point of Termination. This section, usually brief, is where all of the details of the story are wrapped up and a sense of balance is restored to the world of the protagonist.

Point of Termination: The VISUAL AND AURAL ELEMENTS that create the LAST MOMENT we, as audience, are a part of the story.

Protagonist: The ONE central character that is most profoundly affected by the Inciting Incident. This character DOES more than any other character. This character is ACTIVELY DOING throughout the story, not merely reacting to stimuli. The struggle of this character creates the central plot.