

## *Dramatic Purpose of a Scene*

Dramatic purpose or significance is a term which is applied to the importance a scene or speech may have in the fulfillment of the writer's objective.

1. A scene may **reveal character** or it may show development of a character. An early scene may reveal character traits which a later scene **may develop or change**.
2. It may **give background information** about events occurring before the action of the play. If the events are of significant importance, we say the play begins "in media res" (in the middle of action).
3. It may **give information about events occurring off stage** which cannot be shown on stage.
4. It may **present dramatic contrast** in **character** or in **mood** or in **atmosphere**.
5. It may **show parallels between characters and plot** of a previous or forthcoming scene.
6. It may **foreshadow** coming events.
7. It may **advance the plot** (as most scenes do).
8. It may **create suspense**. (There are a number of methods suspense may be created. See Literary Devices note.)
9. It may **establish atmosphere**.
10. It may **establish relationships between characters** or **show these relationships changing**.
11. It may afford a **relief from tension (comic relief)**.
12. It may **direct the audience's sympathies toward a certain character**, or conversely, **withdraw sympathy from a character**.
13. It may **reveal imagery**.
14. It may **reveal a theme**.
15. It may **contain irony or dramatic irony**.
16. It may **contain pathetic fallacy**.
17. It may **contain a motif**.
18. It may **develop pathos**.

