

# [Essence of drama essay sample](https://assignbuster.com/essence-of-drama-essay-sample/)

Drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance.[1] The term comes from a Greek word “ dran” meaning “ action” (Classical Greek: δρᾶμα, drama), which is derived from “ to do” or “ to act” (Classical Greek: δράω, draō). The enactment of drama in theatre, performed by actors on a stage before an audience, presupposes collaborative modes of production and a collective form of reception. The structure of dramatic texts, unlike other forms of literature, is directly influenced by this collaborative production and collective reception.[2] The early modern tragedy Hamlet (1601) by Shakespeare and the classical Athenian tragedy Oedipus the King (c. 429 BCE) by Sophocles are among the masterpieces of the art of drama.[3] A modern example is Long Day’s Journey into Night by Eugene O’Neill (1956).[4] The two masks associated with drama represent the traditional generic division between comedy and tragedy. They are symbols of the ancient Greek Muses, Thalia and Melpomene. Thalia was the Muse of comedy (the laughing face), while Melpomene was the Muse of tragedy (the weeping face).

Considered as a genre of poetry in general, the dramatic mode has been contrasted with the epic and the lyrical modes ever since Aristotle’s Poetics (c. 335 BCE)—the earliest work of dramatic theory.[5] The use of “ drama” in the narrow sense to designate a specific type of play dates from the 19th century. Drama in this sense refers to a play that is neither a comedy nor a tragedy—for example, Zola’s Thérèse Raquin (1873) or Chekhov’s Ivanov (1887). It is this narrow sense that the film and television industry and film studies adopted to describe “ drama” as a genre within their respective media.[6] “ Radio drama” has been used in both senses—originally transmitted in a live performance, it has also been used to describe the more high-brow and serious end of the dramatic output of radio.[7]

Drama is often combined with music and dance: the drama in opera is generally sung throughout; musicals generally include both spoken dialogue and songs; and some forms of drama have incidental music or musical accompaniment underscoring the dialogue (melodrama and Japanese Nō, for example).[8] In certain periods of history (the ancient Roman and modern Romantic) some dramas have been written to be read rather than performed.[9] In improvisation, the drama does not pre-exist the moment of performance; performers devise a dramatic script spontaneously before an audience.[10]