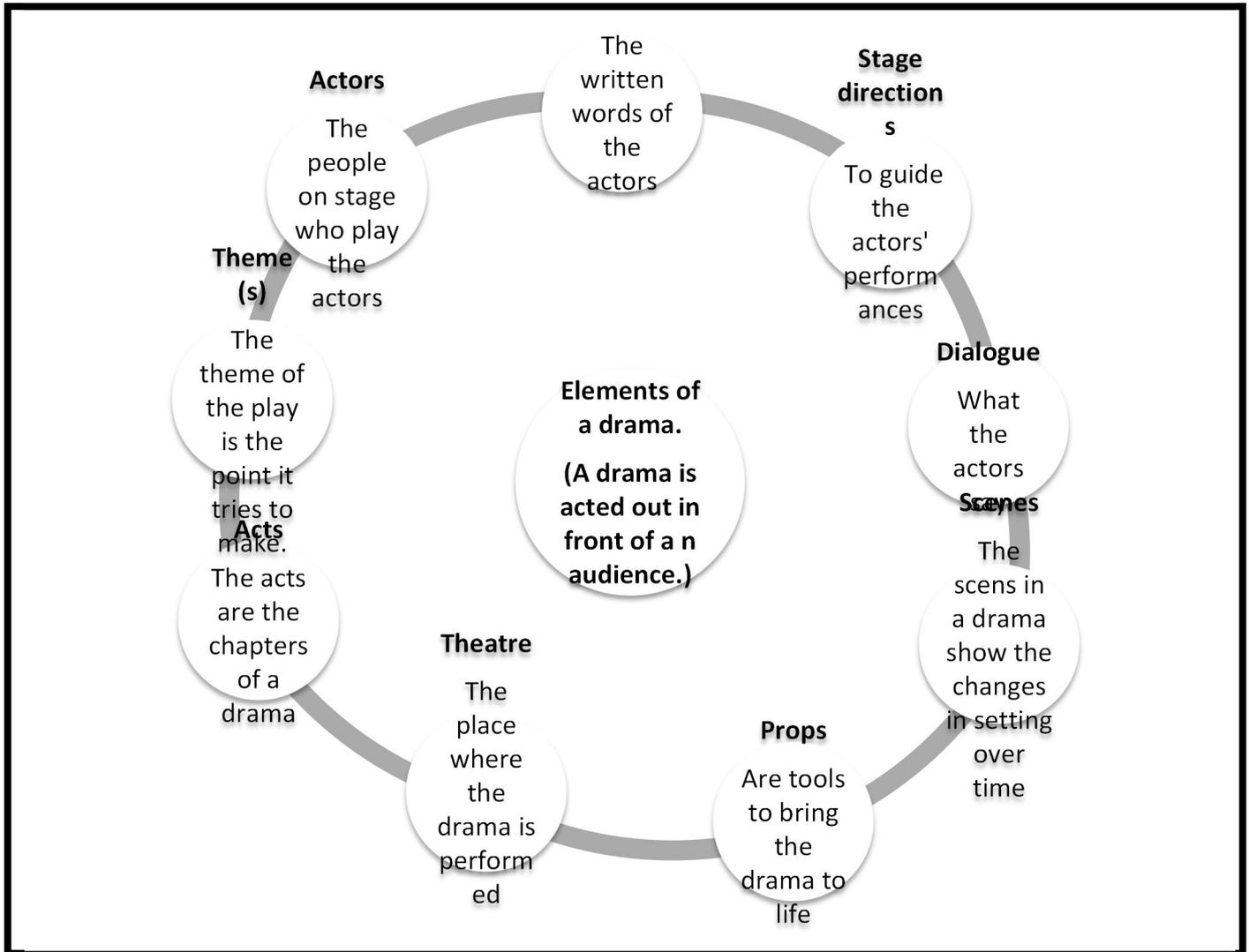
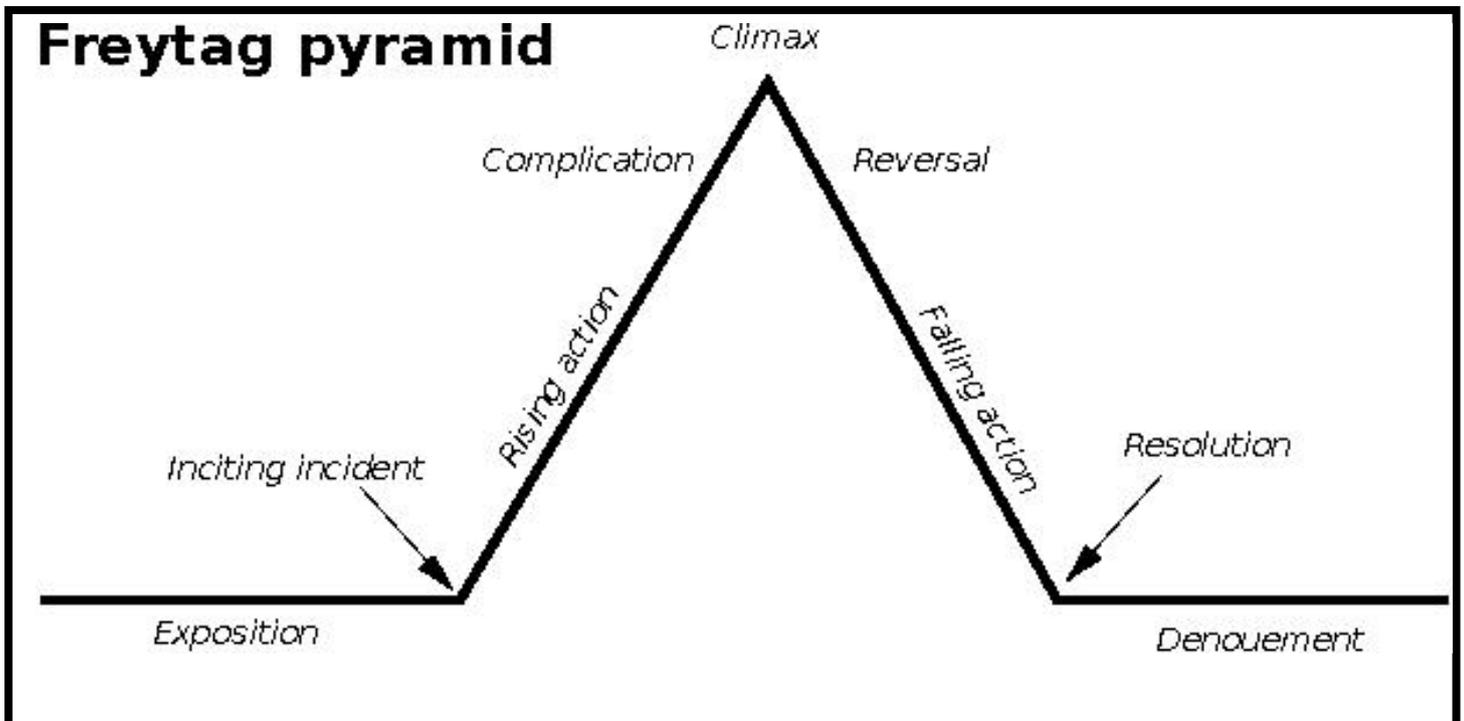


The Lighthouse Keeper's Wife

Elements of a drama



Structure of a drama



	Explanation	The Lighthouse Keeper's Wife
The exposition	Introduces setting, characters and background information.	Act I and II. The purpose is to acquaint us with the four characters and their attitudes to each other.
Rising actions	Series of events that begin after the exposition and build up to a climax. The rising action is usually the result of either internal or external conflict.	Begins in Act III with Barney's destruction of Plaatjes' boat and it rises further in Act IV where the tensions mount during Barney's visit to the Lamprechts.
The climax	The turning point, which changes and decides the protagonist's fate.	Lamprecht's cutting out of Plaatje's tongue in Act V is the climax of the play. It is a dreadful fulfilment of Lamprecht's jealousy and the turning point in Stella's grip on sanity.
The falling action	The conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist unravels in favour of one of them.	During the falling action in Act VI we see how Stella has responded to Plaatjes' inability to speak by using the very words he used earlier in the play. They are united in being victims of captivity.
The dénouement	This concludes the play. Conflicts are resolved and there is release of tension and anxiety	Stella being fitted with a strait jacket is the dénouement that concludes the play.

Characters and characterisation

- **We get different types of characters:**

1. **Major versus minor characters:**

A major character is central to the development of the plot and to the resolution of the conflict and minor character less so.

2. **Round versus flat characters:**

Round characters are complex and undergo development. They are often conflicted. A flat character usually has a single character or personality trait and is likely to be static.

3. **Dynamic versus static characters:**

A dynamic character changes during the course of the play, usually through facing a crisis or resolving a conflict. Static characters do not change during the course of the play.

4. **Protagonist and antagonist:**

The protagonist is the main character, faced with a conflict that he she must resolve. The protagonist is not necessarily virtuous or admirable, but if the play is to succeed, the audience should feel involved in his or her conflict and, if possible empathetic. The antagonist represents the opposite – the obstacle in the protagonist's way.

- **Characters are revealed in various ways:**

1. Stage directions.
2. How characters behave towards or speak about other characters.
3. The action of the characters.
4. Their body language.
5. The words of the characters.

Themes

1. Imprisonment and freedom
2. Jealousy, fear and isolation
3. Sanity and insanity
4. Human rights and dignity
5. Love

About the setting

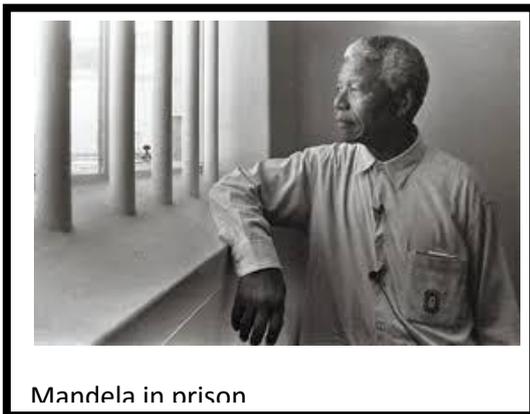
- **Robben Island**

Before Robben Island was used as a prison for political prisoners like Mandela, it was used to isolate various people considered undesirable. This included prisoners such as the Khoi Khoi in 1591 and Xhosa captives during the Frontier Wars between 1779 and 1878. It was also used for tuberculosis patients during the early 1800s and later that century for lepers and the mentally ill. The island was a hospital for lepers and the mentally ill. The lighthouse itself was built in 1864. One of the characters, Barney, refers to strongman Tromp van Diggelen who was born in 1885. This places the time of the play as the early 1900s.

What makes it suitable as a prison is that it is surrounded by icy, shark-infested water, and the Cape mainland is seven kilometres away.

- **The lighthouse**

Jan van Riebeeck arranged for a bonfire to be kept alight on the top of Fire Hill, the highest point on Robben Island. The current lighthouse was built on the same hill, now called Minto Hill, in 1864 and converted to electricity in 1938. Where all the other lighthouses along the South African coast use revolving lights, the Robben Island lighthouse uses a flashing light. Despite the warning light, over the past three and a half centuries many ships have struck the rock surrounding the island and nearby Whale Rock. The heavy Atlantic Ocean surf has pounded them to pieces. It is planks from these shipwrecks that Plaatjes collects on the rocky shore and uses his boats.



Mandela in prison



Prisoners arriving at Robben Island



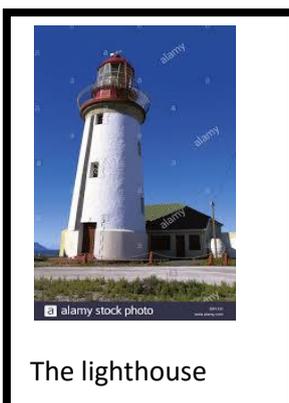
Robben Island



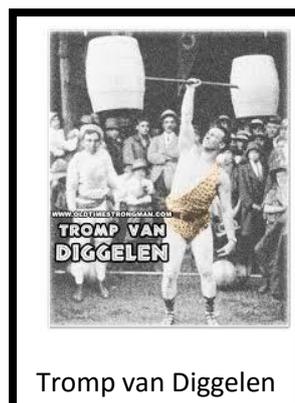
Minto Hill



View of mainland from Robben



The lighthouse



Tromp van Diggelen



Tromp van Diggelen