Parts of a Play

There are certain elements you’ll want to include if you want to make your play interesting. One important concept to understand is the difference between the story or scenario and the plot. This difference is not always so easy to understand, however.

**Story**  
Story describes the things that really happen; it is the chain of events that take place according to a time sequence. It is sometimes referred to as the scenario.

**Plot**  
Plot refers to how the events in the story relate to one another and cause things to happen in the story. In order for a plot to begin, some sort of catalyst is necessary. A famous writer named E. M. Forester once clarified a plot and its relationship to causality by explaining:

“‘The king died and then the queen died’ is a story. ‘The king died and then the queen died of grief’ is a plot. The time-sequence is preserved, but their sense of causality overshadows it.’

The action and emotional ups and downs of a plot determine the plot type.

Plots have been classified in many ways, starting with the basic concept of comedies and tragedies used in ancient Greece. You can make up any type of plot, but a few examples might help you get started.

- **Episodic plot**: involves several events linked together with each event or ‘episode’ containing a possible climax.
- **Rising action**: contains a conflict, tension, and climax to resolve the conflict.
- **Quest**: involves an adventurer who sets off on a journey and reaches a goal.
- **Transformation**: a plot in which a person changes character because of an experience.
- **Revenge or Justice**: In a revenge story, a bad thing happens, but eventually everything works out evenly.

**Exposition**  
The exposition is the part of the play (normally in the beginning) in which the writer “exposes” the background information that the audience needs to understand the story. It is an introduction to the setting and characters.

**Dialogue**  
The dialogue of a play is the part that allows you to show your creativity. A play is carried along through conversations, called dialogue. Writing dialogue is a challenging task, but it is your chance to flaunt your artistic side.

Things to consider when writing dialogue are:

- Habits or accents that provide insight to the character
- Actions or behaviour the character displays while talking

**Characters**  
The characters are any representation of an individual being presented in a play. We are able to know what the personality of the character is by what they say (dialogue) and what they do (action).
**Conflict**

Many plots involve a struggle to make things interesting. This struggle or conflict can be anything from a concept in one person’s head to a battle between characters. Struggle can exist between good and evil, between one character and another, or between a dog and a cat.

**Complications**

If your story is going to have a conflict, it should also have complications that make the conflict even more interesting.

For instance, a struggle between a dog and a cat can be complicated by the fact that the dog falls in love with the cat. Or the fact that the cat lives in the house and the dog lives outside.

**Climax**

The climax happens when the conflict is resolved in some way. It is the most exciting part of a play, but the journey toward a climax can be choppy. A play can have a mini-climax, a setback, and then a bigger, final climax.