

# South African Drama

## Plot and timeline

In real life, it is sometimes difficult to see how particular events came about and what causes relate to these events or results. But, in a play, the playwright chooses events that are important and arranges them in a way that takes on a particular meaning and helps to show how one event led to the next. This lesson focuses on plot and timeline and looks at which details and events playwright James Ngcobo included in “*The Suitcase*”.

### Lesson Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- define the terms plot and timeline
- explain why the plot of “*The Suitcase*” was arranged in a certain way

### Curriculum Links

**LO2: Reading and Viewing**

- describe plot, subplot, character portrayal, conflict and dramatic purpose


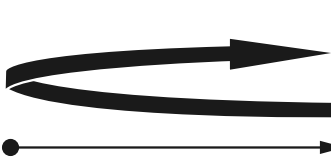

### Lesson Notes

**Plot refers to the events that occur in a story, or what happens in the story.**

**Timeline refers to a sequence of related events in the order in which they occurred over time.**

The passing of time from one moment to the next can not be disputed but often, in plays and other literature, the events of the plot are not revealed to the audience in chronological order.

The following diagrams show three ways in which plot can be revealed to the audience in relation to the ever constant timeline. (In the diagrams the thick arrow represents the plot and the thin arrow represents the time line.)

	Plot and timeline can work together so that events in the story are revealed to the audience as the timeline of the story unfolds.
	The play can start off by revealing a future event to the audience and can then return to the present to reveal the events that led up to that future event. OR We can be shown an event in the present. The plot then takes us back in time to reveal the events that led to the event we were first shown.
	A play can be written in such a way that the plot is revealed to the audience in a spiral-like series of events from the future, present and past which eventually lead to an understanding of the story and characters.

#### Tip!

When you are reading or watching a play, pay attention to the way in which the writer organises the events of the plot along the timeline as it will help you to follow the action and understand the story.

### TASK

“*The Suitcase*” begins by showing us Timi deciding to steal the suitcase. Write a paragraph in which you explain why you think this incident is shown at the beginning of the play, even though this is not the first event on the timeline.