

An objective is the reason for our actions. What are we trying to achieve? Life, people and circumstances constantly put up barriers in our way. Each of these barriers presents us with the objective of getting through them. You shouldn't try to express the meaning of your objective in terms of a noun, always use a verb, eg 'I wish to...'

The super-objective is an over-reaching objective, probably linked to the overall outcome in the play. We use the word super-objective to characterise the essential idea, the core, which provided the impetus for the writing of the play. A character's objectives are likely to be stages in the journey towards the super-objective. If that journey is perceived as a clear path to the super objective, then you have your through line.

Working towards a super-objective

In Keith Waterhouse's famous play, *Billy Liar*, Billy yearns to escape from his provincial life and his family in a Yorkshire town. So this is his super-objective. Billy is faced with many barriers throughout the play, often of his own making. His objectives change during the play according to a new barrier or circumstance, eg 'I wish to retrieve the engagement ring from Barbara'. But ultimately all his objectives throughout the play are working toward the single super-objective, 'I wish to escape' so there is a **through line**. Sometimes Billy does this through fantasy and sometimes by constructing mini dramas to liven up his dull existence. This through line of action galvanises all the smaller units and objectives and directs them toward the super-objective. From then on they all serve the common purpose.

Context is the situation and world of the play and it is how the character fits into this.

The world of the play means a variety of things. It's the relationships between the different characters, their personalities and the situation in which they find themselves. It's also the social, historical and cultural context of the play when it was written – the background or setting. In a theatrical production there will also be the added context of when it is set and performed. These differences can produce layers of interest for the audience. To understand the context of your scene and how it fits into the play as a whole you may need to look at the background on the writer himself and how society and what was happening politically and socially at the time and how that might have influenced his interests and his ways of thinking.