BEATS

Things you should know about beats:

* Plays are divided into acts, acts into scenes, scenes, into “beats,” each with its beginning, middle, and end.
* Each beat is a single unit of conflict.
* In each beat, the character(s) leading the scene will have an objective change.

How do you find the beats?

* Look for a change of subject
* Look for a change in who is leading the scene.
* Look for where somebody enters or leaves.
* Look at where someone, in own speech, finished with one problem and takes up another.

Can you find the where the beat changes?

Example: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Mrs. Dubose: Don’t you contradict me! If you aren’t sent to reform school before next week, my name’s not Dubose. *(The sound of a hymn being sung offstage gradually swells. Reverend Sykes, a Negro minister, is coming on.)*

Scout: Why’s she so mean?

Mrs. Dubose: Reverend Sykes, please. You must confine your choir to the colored church.

Reverend Sykes: Excuse us, Mrs. Dubose. We’re making a special visit to our parishioners.