The Theatre of the Absurd

Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose

It's a designation for particular plays of absurdist fiction.
written by a number of primarily European playwrights in the late 1950s,
The plot may also revolve around
  1. an unexplained metamorphosis,
  2. a supernatural change,
  3. a shift in the laws of physics.
  4. Plots are frequently cyclical:
  5. Nonsense may also be used abusively

Work focused largely on the idea of existentialism and expressed what happens when human existence has no meaning or purpose and therefore all communication breaks down.
Critic Martin Esslin coined the term in his 1960 essay "The Theatre of the Absurd".
He grouped these plays around the broad theme of the Absurd
  The Absurd in these plays takes the form of
1 man's reaction to a world apparently without meaning,
2 or man as a puppet controlled or menaced by invisible outside forces. This style of writing was first popularized by the Eugène Ionesco.
aims are to
1. shock its audience out of complacency, t
2. bring it face to face with the harsh facts of the human situation as these writers see it.

Playwrights commonly associated with the Theatre of the Absurd
1. Samuel Beckett,
2. Eugène Ionesco,
3. Jean Genet
4. Arthur Adamov

The mode of most "absurdist" plays is tragicomedy.

As Nell says in Endgame, "Nothing is funnier than unhappiness ... it's the most comical thing in the world"

Theatre of the Absurd does not provoke tears of despair but the laughter of liberation.

central features in many Absurdist plots
1. Absence,
2. emptiness,
3. nothingness
4. and unresolved mysteries

Often there is a menacing outside force that remains a mystery; Much of the dialogue in Absurdist drama reflects this kind of evasiveness and inability to make a connection. When language that is apparently nonsensical appears, it also demonstrates this disconnection. Plots can consist of the absurd repetition of cliché and routine,
plays within this group are absurd in that they focus

1. not on logical acts,
2. realistic occurrences
3. traditional character development;
   they, instead, focus on human beings trapped in an incomprehensible world subject to any occurrence, no matter how illogical

The theme of incomprehensibility is coupled with the inadequacy of language to form meaningful human connections. According to Martin Esslin, Absurdist drama asks its viewer to

1. "draw his own conclusions,
2. make his own errors".

Though Theatre of the Absurd may be seen as nonsense, they have something to say and can be understood and drama's understanding of the Absurd: Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless".

Characters are frequently

1. stereotypical,
2. archetypal,
3. flat character types
The plots of many Absurdist plays feature characters in

1. interdependent pairs,
2. commonly either two males
3. a male and a female.

Despite its reputation for nonsense language, much of the dialogue in Absurdist plays is naturalistic. The moments when characters resort to nonsense language or clichés—when words appear to have lost their denotative function, thus creating misunderstanding among the characters—make the Theatre of the Absurd distinctive. Language frequently gains a certain phonetic, rhythmical, almost musical quality, opening up a wide range of often comedic playfulness.