Doctor Faustus Chronology

Chorus [Prologue] The background to Dr. Faustus is given

1. Act 1 Sc. 1
   1. Faustus speaks his first soliloquy in which he shows his dissatisfaction with traditional studies which he has conquered already and which are lacking for various reasons.
   2. Faustus swears to study magic.
   3. The Angels make their first appearance and try to sway Faustus to their own ends.
   4. Valdes and Cornelius appear and conference with Faustus on the dark arts
2. Act 1 Sc. 2
   1. The Scholars seek information about Faustus’ activities
   2. Wagner teases the Scholars
3. Act 1 Sc. 3
   1. Faustus conjures Lucifere and the demons
   2. Mephistophilis appears in bestial form and is ordered to reappear as a monk
   3. Mephistophilis Faustus have a discussion of the nature of heaven and hell
4. Act 1 Sc. 4
   1. Wagner conjures the demons
   2. Robin (the Clown) serves Wagner
5. Act 2 Scene 1
   1. Faustus confirms his wish to serve Lucifer
   2. The Good and Bad Angels appear and attempt to persuade Faustus
   3. Faustus attempts to sign the oath, but his blood congeals.
   4. The devils appear and dance around Faustus to seduce him.
   5. Faustus signs his soul away.
   6. Faustus begins to exercise his powers and has Mephistophilis conjure a she-devil for his pleasures
6. Act 2 Sc. 2
   1. Faustus threatens to repent.
   2. The Good and Bad Angels appear.
   3. Mephistophilis and Faustus play with the magical powers.
      1. Lucifer and Belzebub appear when Faustus gets dangerously close to repenting
      2. The Seven Deadly Sins appear and delight Faustus
      3. Faustus is satisfied and Lucifer and Belzebub retreat.
7. Act 2 Sc. 3
   1. Robin conjures for Dick
   2. Dick and Robin go off to drink

Chorus The passage of time and the ways in which Faustus has used his powers are revealed

1. Act 3 Sc. 1
   1. Faustus and Mephistophilis discuss the magical powers and it is clear that Faustus’ purposes have changed
   2. Bruno (in chains) argues his rightful place as the Pope
   3. The Pope sends for the cardinals for their research on the punishment to be given to a Papal imposter.
   4. Mephistophilis and Faustus appear as the cardinals
      1. They report that Bruno and the German emperor are heretics who must be sentenced.
      2. The Pope will decide the matter tomorrow, but first must have a feast.
2. Act 3 Sc. 2
   1. Mephistophilis and Faustus are invisible at the banquet
      1. They ridicule the Papal court through their rather slapstick antics.
3. Act 3 Sc. 3
   1. Robin and Dick have stolen a cup from the pub
   2. They toss the cup back and forth to fool the Vintner
   3. Robin conjures Mephistophilis who is rather put out with Robin and turns the two into an ape and a dog

Chorus It is revealed that Mephistophilis and Faustus have traveled to the court of Carolus

1. Act 4 Sc. 1
   1. Benvolio, Frederick and Martino discuss the arrival of Dr. Faustus
2. Act 4 Sc. 2
   1. Benvolio is given horns
3. Act 4 Sc. 3
   1. Faustus duels with Benvolio
   2. Faustus loses his head, but lives again.
4. Act 4 Sc. 4
   1. Benvolio, Frederick and Martino return to court blood and with horns
5. Act 4 Sc. 5
   1. Faustus tricks the Horse-courser into buying a horse
   2. He warns against taking to horse to water.
   3. The horse-courser returns having been tricked and pulls off Faustus’ leg as he sleeps
6. Act 4 Sc. 6
   1. Robin, Dick, Horse-courser and Carter compares notes on having been tricked by Faustus
7. Act 4 Sc. 7
   1. The Duke and Duchess are entertained with grapes
   2. The humorous characters confront Faustus
8. Act 5 Sc. 1
   1. Wagner and Scholars approach Faustus in fear of the events that are unfolding
   2. The Old Man appears to try to save Faustus’ soul
   3. Mephistophilis and Faustus converse
   4. Faustus meets Helen of Troy
9. Act 5 Sc. 2
   1. Lucifer, Belzebub and Mephistophilis meet to fetch Faustus
   2. Wagner and Faustus discuss Faustus’ will
   3. The Scholars appear and try to persuade Faustus to repent
      1. Faustus reveals his bargain with the devil
   4. The Good Angel and the Bad Angel make one last attempt
   5. Mephistophilis appears to assure Faustus he has no hope
   6. Faustus gives his last soliloquy at the ‘eleventh’ hour
   7. The devils come to take Faustus away
10. Act 5 Sc. 3
    1. The Scholars come into Faustus’ study and find it in great disarray
    2. They find his limbs
    3. They agree to bury his mangled limbs

Chorus The final chorus offers the audience the opportunity to know the lesson to be learned from Faustus

Please note that there are many ways in which these parts of the play are divided in different editions of the play. Remember that there was and A and a B text of the play and that the Signet Classic Edition that we read relies heavily on the B text with occasional additions or replacements from the A text. Some editions make this a 5 Act play, some a sequence of scenes.