

Rutgers Learning Centers

At Camden Campus

READING: DRAMA

Drama is different from other types of literature -- it is written to be performed. Use your imagination to see and hear the play as you read the text.

Get the big picture.

- ◇ Read the introductory material to learn:
 - ◆ When was the play written?
 - ◆ How was it staged?
 - ◆ Who was the audience intended by the author?
 - ◆ Were the theatrical conventions of the time different from today?
 - ◆ What kind of play is it? Tragedy? Romantic comedy? Satire? Realistic drama?

- ◇ Briefly skim the play to determine:
 - ◆ Is it written in verse, or in regular prose?
 - ◆ Is it divided into acts and scenes, or arranged by another method?

See the action.

- ◇ Visualize the setting. Sometimes the setting is described in the stage directions; sometimes you must infer the setting from what characters say and do.
- ◇ Imagine the characters. How old are they? What do they look like? How are they dressed? The text will give you clues.
- ◇ Picture what the actors might do as they say the lines. The same words with different actions could have different meanings.

Hear the voices.

- ◇ Read the first scene aloud, using an expressive voice. Whenever the text begins to confuse you, read the text aloud.
- ◇ Remember that the way a person speaks is as meaningful as what s/he says. Imagine how the lines might change depending on the actor's delivery.
- ◇ If possible, listen to a recording or watch a video of the play. Good actors bring the words to life.

For more information, visit or call your nearest Rutgers Learning Center, or visit our website:<http://rlc.rutgers.edu>

Camden
Armitage 231
856/225-6442

College Ave
Kreeger LRC
732/932-1443

Cook/Douglass
Loree 124
732/932-1660

Livingston
Tillett 111
732/445-0986

Newark
Conklin 126
973/353-5608

Reading Drama Worksheet

Jot down a brief summary of the action after you read each scene.

Use your notes to answer these questions:

- √ Who is the protagonist?
- √ What does the protagonist want?
- √ Which obstacles keep him/her from achieving this goal? Is there an antagonist or are there other obstacles?
- √ At what point is the conflict introduced?
- √ Which setbacks does the protagonist encounter?
- √ When is the climax -- the point just before the ultimate success or failure of the protagonist?
- √ What is the resolution? What happens to the protagonist and the other characters?
- √ Are there subplots in addition to the main plot? How are the subplots and main plot related?