

# Drama Structure



## Links to the Digital Resources

[Google Slides](#)

[Lesson Video on YouTube](#)

[Lesson Video on Vimeo](#)



## Part 2 - Drama Plot Structures

### Series Objective

Students will be able to explain significant differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

### Essential Questions:

- How does the structure of a drama, including casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, and stage directions, contribute to the overall impact and understanding of the story?
- What are the major differences between drama and other forms of literature, such as prose and poetry?
- How does the arrangement of scenes and acts in a drama contribute to the overall structure and flow of the story?
- How does understanding the structural elements of drama, such as casts of characters and stage directions, help us analyze and interpret the intentions of the playwright?
- How can we apply our knowledge of drama structure to our own interpretations and performances of dramatic works?

### Teaching Standard

RL.4.5: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

RL.5.5: Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

## Vocabulary

**drama:** Drama is a type of writing performed on stage. It usually involves characters speaking to each other in dialogue and often has a plot, setting, and stage directions. Many different styles, from comedies to tragedies, often characterize the writing of dramas.

**casts of characters:** the people or animals who act in a play or a movie

Example: "Harry Potter / Hermione Granger / Ron Weasley / Albus Dumbledore / Lord Voldemort" (from "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" by J.K. Rowling)

**settings:** the time and place where a story happens

Example: "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away..." (from "Star Wars" by George Lucas)

**descriptions:** The words that tell what something looks like, sounds like, smells like, etc.

Example: "The sky was dark and stormy. The wind howled and the rain poured down." (from "The Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank Baum)

**dialogue:** the words characters say to each other in a story or a play

Example: "'I'm late! I'm late! For a very important date!' said the White Rabbit as he ran past Alice." (from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll)

**stage directions:** the words that tell how the characters should move or speak in a play or a movie

Example: "Simba enters from the right and climbs up Pride Rock. He roars loudly. The animals cheer." (from "The Lion King" by Disney)

# Lesson Plan

## Hook

Introduce students to drama through a short video clip showcasing a powerful and emotionally charged dramatic performance.

Suggestions

**The Lion King:** This is a popular musical based on the Disney animated film. The musical tells the story of Simba, a young lion prince who runs away from home after his uncle Scar kills his father. Simba meets new friends and learns to embrace his destiny as the rightful king of the Pride Lands.

[The Lion King Trailer](#)

[The Lion King Videos from Broadway.com](#)

### Discussion Question:

How does the drama use costumes, masks, puppets, and music to create the characters and the setting?

**Sample Answer:** The drama uses costumes, masks, and puppets to represent the different animals and their personalities. For example, the lions wear golden masks and capes to show their royalty and power, while the hyenas wear ragged clothes and distorted masks to show their evil and cunning. The drama also uses music to create the mood and atmosphere of the scenes. For example, the song "Circle of Life" uses African rhythms and chants to introduce the setting of the Pride Lands and the diversity of life.

**Matilda:** This is a charming musical based on the novel by Roald Dahl about a girl who loves reading and has extraordinary powers. She uses her intelligence and imagination to overcome her cruel parents and school principal, Miss Trunchbull. She also finds a friend and mentor in her teacher, Miss Honey.

[Matilda The Musical Trailer](#)

[Matilda The Musical on YouTube](#)

### Discussion Question:

How does the play use cast of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, and stage directions to bring the story to life? Share specific examples from the clips to support your answer.

**Sample Answer:** The dialogue between Matilda and Miss Trunchbull showcases their contrasting personalities and their conflicts. Additionally, the stage directions guide the actors on how to move, like Matilda performing magic tricks or Miss Trunchbull striding across the stage with authority.

How did the drama structure enhance your understanding and enjoyment of the story? What specific moments or elements stood out to you and made an impact?

**Sample Answer:** The use of settings, like the classroom and the school assembly hall, helped to create a realistic environment for the characters.

## Activity #1 - Organizer [Found in the Student Packet]

Print out the organizer provided in the "Student Packet" section of this handout or online through Google Slides. Students will complete the organizer while watching the video lesson. The pages following the lesson plans illustrate how to fold these organizers for easy storage in an interactive notebook.

Three versions of this organizer are provided depending on the needs of your students.

- Students will write definitions and examples.
- Students will fill in key words in the definitions and write examples which are provided.
- The third copy of the organizer may be used as an answer key, for differentiated instruction, for students who were absent during instruction, or if you wish for the students to have the sentences already completed.

## Activity #2 – Watching a Video Clip of a Drama

### Middle School Dramas Playlist

This is a fantastic playlist with approximately 40 videos of dramas performed by students. Many favorites are included. The films range from 1 to 2 hours in length and the sound and video quality varies greatly. I recommend showing selected scenes from one of your favorites for discussion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9vrP2Xdh4E&list=PLYwSWZ0jkljihkbyhXxFVFyqYcNjH3ZsV>

### Included Activity

In this activity, students will apply their knowledge of drama structure to analyze an excerpt from a musical drama called *Into the Woods Jr.* This musical is based on the stories of Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood, and Rapunzel, but with a twist. It also introduces new characters, such as a baker and his wife trying to break a witch's curse. The musical explores the themes of wishes, choices, consequences, and happy endings.

Give students the script excerpt from the musical found in the "Student Packet." Students will watch a video clip of the same scene from a performance of the musical. The video clip can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CadMDVs1aLs>

The script excerpt starts at 15:15 and ends at 18:40 in the video. Students should watch the video clip and compare it to the script excerpt. They should consider how the actors use their voices, expressions, movements, and costumes to bring the characters and the story to life.

Students should also notice how the script uses special text to indicate different elements of drama structure. For example:

- Characters are written in all caps and bold to show who is speaking or singing.
- Stage directions are written in italics to show how the characters should act or feel.
- Stage directions that indicate cues such as exit or enter are written in all caps and italics to show when the characters should move on or off the stage.
- Words to songs are written in all caps to show when the characters are singing instead of speaking.

Students should explain why these special text features are important for drama structure. They should also share their opinions on how well the video clip matches the script excerpt and how effectively the drama tells a story.

Optional Links for finding the play version of *Into the Woods Jr.*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjtjxtQm\\_vQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjtjxtQm_vQ)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plIPAYll-XE>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU\\_MsMbKV7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU_MsMbKV7A)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbS739\\_2qG0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbS739_2qG0)

## General Instructions for How to Create the Organizers





I love interactive notebooks. I have found students return again and again to their notebooks to find rules and examples. The only problem is foldable organizers take a lot of time to create. Because of this, I played around with paper to come up with a design that is quick and easy for students to make.



Note: The organizers in the photos are for demonstration purposes only. Not all are included in this unit.

# PRINTABLE VERSION -- Organizers

Three versions of most organizers are offered: one with blanks where students write definitions and create examples; one with the definitions provided but with blank spaces for students to write in key words; and one with the answers provided. The third copy of the organizer may be used as an **answer key**, for differentiated instruction, for students who were absent during instruction, or if you wish for the students to have the organizers already completed.

## STEP 1 - Print the organizers.

Print the organizers directly from this packet.



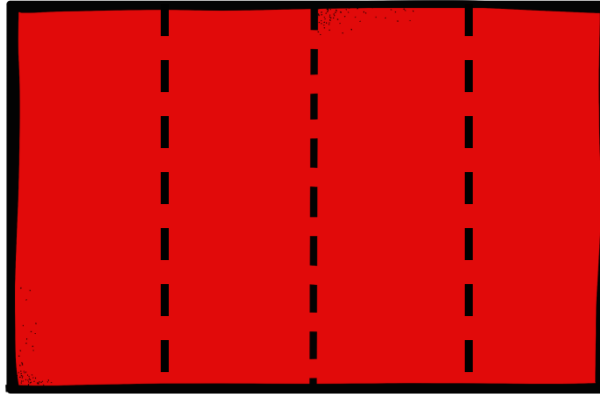
## STEP 2 - Using the Organizers:

Have students watch the instructional video that goes with the organizer. Pause the video when instructed to do so. Have students complete the organizer. Next, have students watch the remainder of the video to check their answers. Many organizers ask students to give examples. Tell students that just because their examples don't match the video examples doesn't necessarily mean their examples are wrong.



### STEP 3 - Fold the Organizer.

This organizer requires no cutting or coloring. I recommend telling students that they can color the blackline drawings at home if they wish to, but it is not necessary. The organizer folds like a fan. Make sure the first fold is under, so the definitions are on top and will be visible when flipping through the interactive notebook.



**STEP 4 - Gluing the Organizer** Flip the organizer over with the text box containing the definition face down. Have students place a single line of white school glue down the back right-hand side of the organizer. Glue the organizers two to a page (four to an open notebook). See photos on the next page.



# Print

**Fun**

Fill in the blanks to complete the definition of pun.

A pun is a missing, the different possible \_\_\_\_\_ of a word or the fact that there are words which \_\_\_\_\_ alike but have \_\_\_\_\_ meanings.







**Example**

A chicken farmer's favorite car is a coupe.

I was struggling to figure out how lightning works when it struck me.

She had a photographic memory but never developed it.

Read the word or phrase in each sentence that makes it a pun. Under the sentence, write this word and then explain its two meanings.

 I am a baker because I knead the dough. Dough: _____ OR _____	 It's pointless to write with a broken pencil. Pointless: _____ OR _____	 What do you call a sleeping bull? --- A bulldozer. Dozer: _____ OR _____
 A chicken farmer's favorite car is a coupe. Coupe: _____ OR _____	 I was struggling to figure out how lightning works when it struck me. Struck: _____ OR _____	 What do you get from a pampered cow? --- Spoiled milk. Spoiled: _____ OR _____

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# Fan Fold

**Fun**

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# Glue

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 What do you call a sleeping bull? --- A bulldozer. Dozer: _____ OR _____
 What do you get from a pampered cow? --- Spoiled milk. Spoiled: _____ OR _____

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**Hyperbole**

Fill in the blanks to define hyperbole.

Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which \_\_\_\_\_ is used for emphasis or \_\_\_\_\_. It may be confused with a \_\_\_\_\_ because it often compares two items. The difference is that with a hyperbole the comparison is an \_\_\_\_\_ as long as they don't fit the sound pattern.

**Example**

The fish I caught was so big that I couldn't get it inside the house.

**Alliteration**

Fill in the blanks to define alliteration.

Alliteration is when several words in a row begin with the \_\_\_\_\_. [You may have words in between alliterated words that don't start with the same \_\_\_\_\_ as long as they don't fit the sound pattern.]

**Examples**

Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer rose rapidly into the air.

The snake slithers secretly across the sand.

**Assonance**

Fill in the blanks with words to show the definition of assonance.

Assonance is the repetition of \_\_\_\_\_ words. It is used to reinforce the meanings of words or to set the \_\_\_\_\_. It's the \_\_\_\_\_ that is important and not the \_\_\_\_\_ sound.

**Example**

It beats \_\_\_\_\_ as it sweeps \_\_\_\_\_ as it cleans! - slogan for Hoover vacuum cleaners.

**Onomatopoeia**

Fill in the blanks with words to show the definition of onomatopoeia.

Onomatopoeia is the \_\_\_\_\_ of natural \_\_\_\_\_ in word form. These words help us form mental \_\_\_\_\_ about the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ that are described.

**Examples**

BOOM

BAM

# Student Packet



# Understanding Drama Structure:

Drama is a form of storytelling that comes to life through performances on a stage. It includes acts, scenes, dialogue, stage directions, and character development.

## Genres

In addition to the common genres that are found in novels, dramas also come in some unique formats.

### Opera:

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### Musical:

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### Mime:

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Casts of characters: \_\_\_\_\_

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Example: \_\_\_\_\_

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Settings: \_\_\_\_\_

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Example: \_\_\_\_\_

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Descriptions: \_\_\_\_\_

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Example: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dialogue: \_\_\_\_\_

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Example: \_\_\_\_\_

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Stage directions: \_\_\_\_\_

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Example: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Acts and Scenes: \_\_\_\_\_

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Example: \_\_\_\_\_

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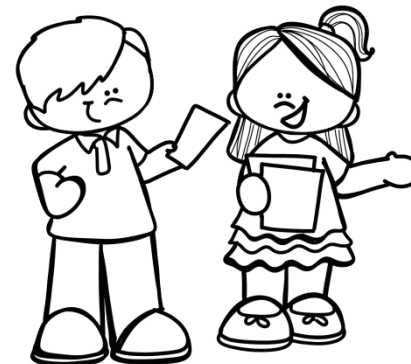
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Sample Drama:

(Scene: A living room)

(Enter JOE and SARA)

Joe: Hey Sara, what's up?

Sara: Not much, just thinking about life.

Joe: Yeah, me too. Sometimes it feels like we're just going through the motions, you know?

Sara: Yeah, I know exactly what you mean. It's like we're living in this never-ending cycle, and we can't seem to escape it.

Joe: But we have to remember that life is what we make of it. We can choose to be happy or choose to be sad.

Sara: That's true. We can live life to the fullest, to make every moment count.

Joe: Exactly. So let's make a pact to live life to the fullest, to never settle for anything less than what we deserve.

Sara: I'm in!

(They high-five)

# Understanding Drama Structure:

Drama is a form of storytelling that comes to life through performances on a stage. It includes acts, scenes, dialogue, stage directions, and character development.

## Genres

In addition to the common genres that are found in novels, dramas also come in the following:

**Opera:** combines music, singing, and \_\_\_\_\_ to tell a story - The characters usually \_\_\_\_\_ all or most of their dialogue, accompanied by an \_\_\_\_\_.

**Musical:** combines songs, dialogue, and \_\_\_\_\_ to tell a story - The characters usually sing some of their dialogue, combined with \_\_\_\_\_ words.

**Mime:** uses only facial expressions and body \_\_\_\_\_ to tell a story - The characters do not \_\_\_\_\_ any words, but rely on gestures and movements to convey their actions and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Casts of characters:** the list of people or animals who act in a drama

Example: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Settings:** the time and place of the story

Example: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Descriptions:** words that provide details about what something looks like, sounds like, smells like, and more. They help to paint a vivid picture in the minds of the audience.

Example: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Dialogue:** the words characters say to each other in a story or drama

Example: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Stage directions:** the words that tell how the characters should move or speak in a drama

Example: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Acts and Scenes:** Acts are the larger divisions of a play that usually mark a change in time or place. Scenes are the smaller parts of an act that show a specific event or situation.

Example: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Drama:

(Scene: A living room)

(Enter JOE and SARA)

Joe: Hey Sara, what's up?

Sara: Not much, just thinking about life.

Joe: Yeah, me too. Sometimes it feels like we're just going through the motions, you know?

Sara: Yeah, I know exactly what you mean. It's like we're living in this never-ending cycle, and we can't seem to escape it.

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## Understanding Drama Structure:

Drama is a form of storytelling that comes to life through performances on a stage. It includes acts, scenes, dialogue, stage directions, and character development.

### Genres

In addition to the common genres that are found in novels, dramas also come in some unique formats.

**Opera:** combines music, singing, and acting to tell a story - The characters usually sing all or most of their dialogue, accompanied by an orchestra.

**Musical:** combines songs, dialogue, and dance to tell a story - The characters usually sing some of their dialogue, combined with spoken words.

**Mime:** uses only facial expressions and body language to tell a story - The characters do not speak any words, but rely on gestures and movements to convey their actions and emotions.

**Cast of characters:** the list of people or animals who act in a drama

Example: In the play "The Three Billy Goats Gruff," the cast of characters includes Big Billy Goat Gruff, Middle Billy Goat Gruff, Little Billy Goat Gruff, and the Troll.

**Settings:** the time and place of the story

Example: In "The Three Billy Goats Gruff," the setting is described as "a bridge over a stream in the woods."

**Descriptions:** words that provide details about what something looks like, sounds like, smells like, and more. They help to paint a vivid picture in the minds of the audience.

Example: In the play "The Lion and the Mouse," a description is used to introduce the lion: "He was a very big lion with a very big roar."

**Dialogue:** the words characters say to each other in a story or drama

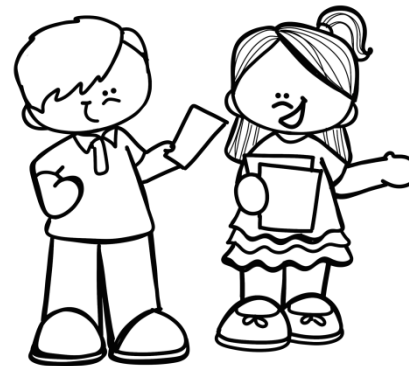
Example: In "The Lion and the Mouse," the dialogue includes the mouse pleading, "Please let me go. Someday I will help you."

**Stage directions:** the words that tell how the characters should move or speak in a drama

Example: In "The Three Billy Goats Gruff," a stage direction might read, "(Little Billy Goat Gruff enters from the left and approaches the bridge)." This direction guides the actor playing Little Billy Goat Gruff on when and how to enter the scene.

**Acts and Scenes:** Acts are the larger divisions of a play that usually mark a change in time or place. Scenes are the smaller parts of an act that show a specific event or situation.

Example: In the drama "The Three Billy Goats Gruff", there are two acts: Act 1 is when the goats decide to cross the bridge, and Act 2 is when they confront the troll. Each act is broken down into smaller segments known as scenes.



### Sample Drama:

(Scene: A living room)

(Enter JOE and SARA)

Joe: Hey Sara, what's up?

Sara: Not much, just thinking about life.

Joe: Yeah, me too. Sometimes it feels like we're just going through the motions, you know?

Sara: Yeah, I know exactly what you mean. It's like we're living in this never-ending cycle, and we can't seem to escape it.

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Sara: I'm in!

(They high-five)



# Into the Woods Jr

## Scene 2 (#13-14)

### **BAKER**

*(Hands JACK the beans, counting out five and keeping one for his pocket; BAKER'S WIFE then takes MILKY-WHITE)*  
Good luck there, young lad.

### **JACK**

*(Tearful, to MILKY-WHITE)*  
I GUESS THIS IS GOODBYE, OLD PAL,  
YOU'VE BEEN A PERFECT FRIEND.  
I HATE TO SEE US PART, OLD PAL,  
SOMEDAY I'LL BUY YOU BACK.  
I'LL SEE YOU SOON AGAIN.  
I HOPE THAT WHEN I DO,  
IT WON'T BE ON A PLATE.

*(EXITS, overcome with emotion MUSIC continues under)*

### **BAKER**

*(Angry)*  
Take the cow and go home!

### **BAKER'S WIFE**

I was trying to be helpful.

### **BAKER**

Magic beans! Are we going to dispel this curse through deceit?

### **BAKER'S WIFE**

IF YOU KNOW  
WHAT YOU WANT, THEN YOU GO AND YOU FIND IT AND YOU GET IT-

### **BAKER**

*(Spoken, pointing off)*  
HOME.

### **BAKER'S WIFE**

*(Spoken)*  
DO WE WANT A CHILD OR NOT?

**BAKER'S WIFE**

*(Sung)*

-AND YOU GIVE  
AND YOU TAKE  
AND YOU BID  
AND YOU BARGAIN,  
OR YOU LIVE  
TO REGRET IT.

**BAKER**

*(Spoken)*

WILL YOU PLEASE GO HOME.

**BAKER'S WIFE**

*Sung)*

THERE ARE RIGHTS AND WRONGS  
AND IN-BETWEENS-  
NO ONE WAITS  
WHEN FORTUNE INTERVENES.  
AND MAYBE THEY'RE REALLY MAGIC,  
WHO KNOWS?

**BAKER**

Go home. I will carry this out in my own fashion!

*(BAKER'S WIFE takes MILKY-WHITE and BAKER and BAKER'S WIFE EXIT in different directions.*

*NARRATOR ENTERS.*

*RAPUNZEL is heard SINGING off in the distance.*

*RAPUNZEL's tower APPEARS)*

**NARRATOR**

And so the Baker continued his search for the cape as red as blood.

*(WITCH ENTERS)*

As for Rapunzel, the Witch was careful not to lose this beauty to the outside world, and so shut her within a doorless tower that lay deep within the forest. And when the old enchantress paid a visit, she called forth:

*(EXITS as WITCH crosses to tower. RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE ENTERS, kneels to hide from WITCH)*

**RAPUNZEL**

AHHH...

**WITCH**

Rapunzel. Rapunzel. Let down your hair to me.

*(RAPUNZEL stops singing and her hair descends. The WITCH climbs up, struggling as RAPUNZEL leans forward in pain. RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE comes from around a tree)*

**RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE**

*(To himself)*

Rapunzel, Rapunzel. What a strange but beautiful name. And fit for a Prince! Tomorrow, before that horrible Witch arrives, I will stand before her window and ask her to let down her hair to me.

*(EXITS as BAKER ENTERS and steps into LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD'S path; the girl is eating a sweet as SHE ENTERS)*

**BAKER**

Hello there, little one. Where did you get that beautiful cape? I so admire it.

**LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD**

My granny made it for me.

**BAKER**

Is that right? I would love a red cloak like that.

*(Examines the cape)*

**LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD**

*(Giggling)*

You'd look pretty foolish.

*(BAKER goes to her and takes her cape)*

**BAKER**

May I take a look at it?

**LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD**

*(In panic)*

I don't like to be without my cape. Please, give it back!

**WITCH'S VOICE**

Forget the little girl and get the cape!

*(BAKER suddenly dashes away with the cape under his arm. LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD stands numb for a moment, then lets out a bloodcurdling scream, followed by hysterical weeping)*

**BAKER**

*(Sheepishly, returning with cape, placing it on LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD'S SHOULDERS)*

I just wanted to make certain that you really loved this cape. Now you go to your granny's-and you be careful that no wolf comes your way.

**LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD**

I'd rather a wolf than you, any day.

*(Stomps BAKER'S FOOT and EXITS)*

## Into the Woods Jr

1. How does watching the scenes from Into the Woods Jr. enhance your understanding of the script? What additional information or elements do you notice when seeing the play come to life?

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2. How does the use of costumes, props, and set design in the play contribute to the overall storytelling? How do these visual elements enhance the audience's experience and understanding of the script?

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3. In what ways does the performance of the actors bring the characters to life and add depth to the story?

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4. How does the use of lighting and sound effects enhance the dramatic impact of the scenes? Give specific examples from the performance.

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5. Compare the experience of reading the script to watching the play.

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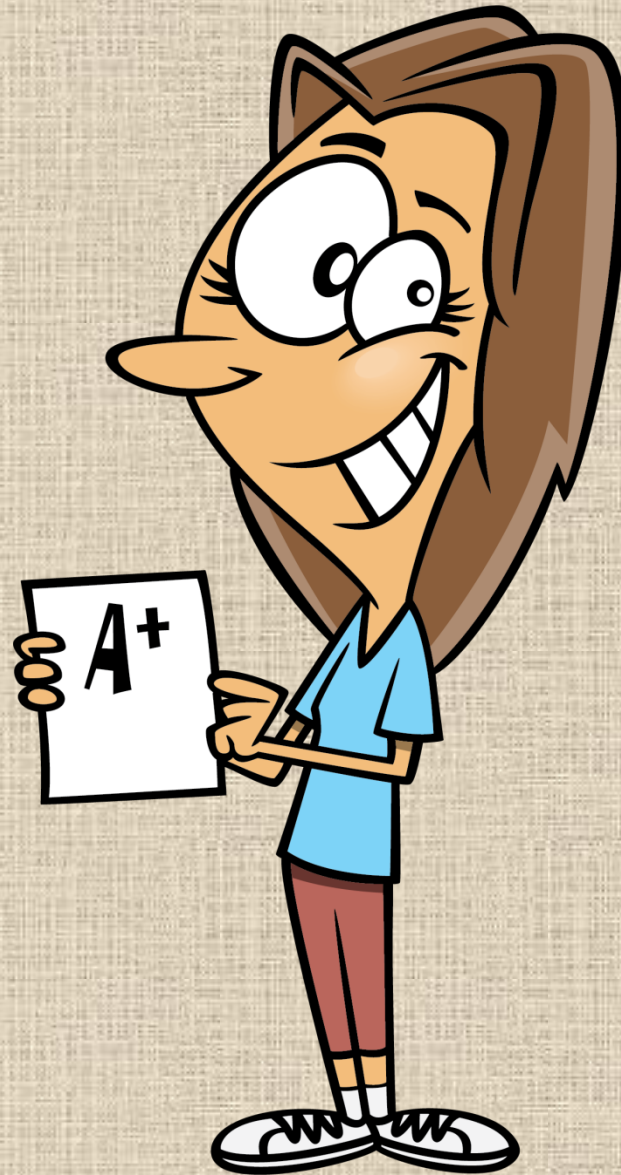
6. Reflect on the pacing and timing of the scenes in the play. How do the actors' performances and the direction contribute to the flow of the story? Provide examples from the scenes you watched.

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# Answer Key



## Into the Woods Jr

1. How does watching the scenes from Into the Woods Jr. enhance your understanding of the script? What additional information or elements do you notice when seeing the play come to life?
  - The play provides visual representations of the characters, settings, and actions described in the text.
  - We can see the actors' expressions, movements, and interactions, which add depth and emotion to the story.
  - The use of music, choreography, costumes, and set design further engages the audience.
2. How does the use of costumes, props, and set design in the play contribute to the overall storytelling? How do these visual elements enhance the audience's experience and understanding of the script?
  - The use of costumes, props, and set design in the play adds visual cues that help define the characters and settings.
  - Viewers can clearly see time periods and the social status of a character.
3. In what ways does the performance of the actors bring the characters to life and add depth to the story?
  - Through facial expressions, body language, and vocal delivery, the actors show the emotions and intentions of their characters, making them more relatable and engaging.
4. How does the use of lighting and sound effects enhance the dramatic impact of the scenes? Give specific examples from the performance.
  - Lighting helps create the mood, emphasizing key moments and building tension. For example, the use of the spotlight on the Witch as she delivers her lines emphasizes her presence and adds intensity to her character.
5. Compare the experience of reading the script to watching the play.
  - A reader must use imagination to interpret the characters and settings based on the descriptions.
  - Watching the play brings the story to life with the help of actors, costumes, sets, and music, engaging the audience through a multi-sensory experience.
6. Reflect on the pacing and timing of the scenes in the play. How do the actors' performances and the direction contribute to the flow of the story? Provide examples from the scenes you watched.
  - The pacing and timing of the scenes help maintain the flow of the story and keep the audience engaged.
  - The actors' performances, including their delivery of lines and physical movements, contribute to the rhythm and tempo of the scenes. For example, the quick exchanges of dialogue between the Baker, Jack, Cinderella, and Little Red Riding Hood create a sense of urgency and excitement.

# Comparing Poems, Drama, and Prose



This lesson is one in a series of three. Have students complete this culminating activity after studying the different structures for poems, drama, and prose.

Since different classrooms may study these story types in different orders, I am adding this activity to all three lessons as an add-on for your convenience.



## Teacher Instructions

This lesson is one in a series of three. The following activity should be completed after students have studied the different structures for poems, drama, and prose. Since these can be studied in different orders, I am adding this activity to all three lessons as an add-on for your convenience.

### Activity Instructions

- Tell the students they will read three different versions of the same story: a poem, a narrative, and a drama. Explain that each version has a different structure and style and that they will compare and contrast them using some questions.
- Divide the students into small groups and assign each group one version of the story to read. Provide them with copies of the story, ask them to read it carefully, and discuss it with their group members.
- After students have read the assigned version of the story, have them complete one column of the chart for the story type of the version they read.
- After each group has finished reading their version of the story, ask them to share it with another group that has read a different version. Have them exchange copies of the stories and read them together. Repeat this process until each group has read all three versions of the story.
- Once all the groups have read all three versions of the story, give them copies of the questions and ask them to answer them individually or in pairs. Remind them to use evidence from the stories to support their answers.
- Collect the students' answers and review them as a class. Discuss the similarities and differences between the three versions of the story and how they affect the reader's understanding and enjoyment.

# The Case of the Sneaky Janitor

## Chapter 1: The Mysterious Disappearance

The sun was shining brightly over the small town of Oakville, and the students of Oakville Elementary School were looking forward to a new day of learning and fun. They hopped off their buses and bikes and ran towards the school building. They were eager to see their friends and favorite teacher, Mrs. Johnson.

But as they approached the classroom, they stopped in their tracks. Something was wrong. The door was locked, and the lights were off. There was no sign of Mrs. Johnson anywhere.

"Where is she?" one of the students asked, puzzled.

"Maybe she's sick," another suggested.

"Or maybe she's stuck in traffic," a third chimed in.

But none of these explanations made sense. Mrs. Johnson never missed a school day. She always arrived early to prepare for her lessons. She was the kindest and most caring teacher in the school and loved her students dearly. She always greeted them with a warm smile and a hug. She made them feel special and important.

The students knocked on the door, hoping to hear her voice. But there was only silence. They looked at each other with worry and confusion.

Where could Mrs. Johnson be?

The school principal, Mr. Harris, noticed the commotion and came over to see what was happening. He tried to open the door with his master key, but it didn't work. He looked at the students with a serious expression on his face.

"Something's not right," he said. "I'm going to call the police."

## Chapter 2: The Clues

The students of Oakville Elementary were determined to find out what had happened to Mrs. Johnson. They knew she wouldn't leave them without saying goodbye or giving them a reason.

They decided to form a detective club and investigate the mystery themselves. They split into groups and searched for clues around the school and the town.

They interviewed people who had seen or spoken to Mrs. Johnson on the day she disappeared. They checked her car, house, phone records, and social media accounts. They collected every information they could find to help them solve the case.

As they analyzed the clues, they began to notice some strange patterns. They discovered that Mrs. Johnson had left her house at 7:00 a.m., as usual, but had never arrived at school.

They found out she had received a phone call from an unknown number at 7:15 a.m., but they couldn't trace who it was or what it was about.

They also learned she had been seen talking to the school janitor, Mr. Smith, in the parking lot before she vanished. The students realized that something was fishy about Mr. Smith. He had been working at the school for only a few months and didn't seem to like anyone or anything. He was always grumpy and rude and never smiled or said hello. He also had a habit of sneaking around the school after hours as if he was hiding something. The students confronted Mr. Smith and asked him questions about Mrs. Johnson's disappearance. But when they approached him, he acted nervous and defensive. He refused to answer their questions and told them to mind their business. The students were convinced that Mr. Smith knew something about Mrs. Johnson's disappearance and were determined to find out what it was.

### Chapter 3: The Solution

The students of Oakville Elementary were close to cracking the case of Mrs. Johnson's disappearance. They had gathered all the clues and were ready to assemble them.

They met in their secret clubhouse after school and reviewed their findings. They drew a map of Mrs. Johnson's route from her house to the school and marked where she had been seen or heard from last. They also wrote down all the facts about Mr. Smith and his possible motives for taking Mrs. Johnson. They soon realized that there was only one logical explanation for what had happened: Mr. Smith had kidnapped Mrs. Johnson!

They remembered that Mrs. Johnson had caught Mr. Smith stealing school supplies a few weeks ago and had reported him to Mr. Harris. Mr. Smith had been furious and had sworn revenge on Mrs. Johnson.

They figured that Mr. Smith had called Mrs. Johnson from a burner phone and lured her into a trap in the parking lot by pretending to have some critical information for her. They guessed that Mr. Smith had then locked Mrs. Johnson in his van and driven away to an unknown location, where he planned to hold her hostage until he got what he wanted: money, freedom, or both.

The students knew they had to act fast and save Mrs. Johnson before it was too late. They called the police and told them everything they had discovered. They also gave them Mr. Smith's license plate number and a description of his van.

The police congratulated the students for their detective skills and thanked them for their help. They quickly tracked down Mr. Smith and his van and arrested him.

They also found Mrs. Johnson inside the van, tied up and gagged but alive and well.

The students were overjoyed to see Mrs. Johnson again. They hugged her and told her how much they missed her and how worried they were about her. Grateful, Mrs. Johnson thanked the students for saving her life.

That day, the students learned a valuable lesson: teamwork makes the dream work. They also learned how to use their detective skills to solve a mystery and how to persevere and never give up on their goals. They celebrated their victory by throwing a surprise party for Mrs. Johnson, who was happy to be back with her students. She told them they were the best class she ever had and that she was proud of them.



## The Case of the Sneaky Janitor Play

**Scene 1: The Mysterious Disappearance** (The stage is set as the classroom of Oakville Elementary School. The students are seated, waiting for their teacher, Mrs. Johnson, to arrive. Suddenly, the door opens, and the school principal, Mr. Harris, enters the room.)

**Mr. Harris:** Good morning, students. I have some bad news. Mrs. Johnson is not here today, and we don't know where she is. (The students look at each other in shock and confusion. One student, JASON, stands up.)

**Jason:** What do you mean she's not here? Where is she?

**Mr. Harris:** We're not sure, Jason. But don't worry; we're doing everything possible to find her.

(The students begin to whisper amongst themselves, worry written all over their faces. Suddenly, the sound of a police siren is heard offstage.

Two officers, OFFICER 1 and OFFICER 2, enter the room.)

**Officer 1:** Good morning, everyone. We're here to investigate the disappearance of Mrs. Johnson. Can anyone tell us anything that might help us find her?

(The students shake their heads, looking scared and unsure. JASON steps forward again.)

**Jason:** We want to help find Mrs. Johnson. Can we help with the investigation?

**Officer 2:** Of course, kids. Any information you have could be helpful.

(The scene ends with the students and the police officers working together to find Mrs. Johnson.)

**Scene 2: The Clues** (The stage is set as the classroom, with the students gathered in small groups, talking and working together. JASON is in charge of one group and is leading the investigation.)

**Jason:** OK, guys. We must find as much information as possible about Mrs. Johnson's disappearance. Did anyone see or talk to her before she disappeared?

(One student, KATIE, raises her hand.)

**Katie:** I talked to her yesterday before school. She was her usual happy self.

**Jason:** Good work, Katie. Did she say anything that could help us find her?

**Katie:** No, not really. She just said she had a lot of grading to do last night.

(Another student, MIKE, steps forward.)

**Mike:** I found this. (Holds up a clue) I think it's essential.

Jason: What is it, Mike?

**Mike:** It's a note in Mrs. Johnson's handwriting. It says, "I need to talk to you. Meet me at the old oak tree at 10 a.m."

(JASON takes the note and looks at it closely.)

**Jason:** This is a big clue. We need to go to the old oak tree and see if we can find anything.

(The scene ends with the students leaving the classroom to visit the old oak tree.)

**Scene 3: The Solution** (The stage is set as the old oak tree. The students have gathered around, looking for any signs of Mrs. Johnson. JASON is leading the investigation.)

**Jason:** OK, guys. We must look for clues that might help us find Mrs. Johnson.

(Suddenly, the school janitor, MR. SMITH enters the scene.)

**Mr. Smith:** What are you kids doing here?

**Jason:** We're looking for Mrs. Johnson. She's disappeared, and we're trying to find her.

**Mr. Smith:** (nervously) I don't know anything about that. I just came here to water the flowers.

(JASON steps forward, holding the note they found in Scene 2.)

**Jason:** Mr. Smith, did you know about this note? Mrs. Johnson wrote it, and it says she wanted to meet someone here at this tree.

**Mr. Smith:** (pauses) Well, now that you mention it, she came to see me yesterday morning. We disagreed about something, and she left upset. That's the last time I saw her.

(The students look at each other excitedly, realizing they have found crucial evidence.)

**Jason:** Mr. Smith, we need to call the police and tell them what you told us. They can help find Mrs. Johnson.

(MR. SMITH nods in agreement, and JASON turns to the students.)

**Jason:** Good job, guys. We solved the mystery of Mrs. Johnson's disappearance.

(The scene ends with the students and MR. SMITH is leaving the old oak tree to call the police and tell them what they have found. The stage goes dark as the sound of the police sirens is heard, signaling the end of the drama.)

## The Case of the Sneaky Janitor Poem

At the old oak tree,  
The students gathered with glee.  
A mystery they sought to solve,  
Of a teacher lost and involved.

They found a note—oh, what a find!  
Written by Mrs. Johnson, in a state of mind.  
She wanted to meet someone here;  
that much was clear.

Mr. Smith was next, with a tale to tell,  
Of a disagreement and a farewell.  
The last time he saw her was here,  
This old oak tree is now so clear.

Jason stepped forward with the note in hand;  
he knew what needed to be planned.  
They must call the police; they must unite,  
To find Mrs. Johnson and end this fright.

The students cheered; they had done their part;  
the mystery was solved with a beating heart.  
Police sirens were heard, ringing in the air;  
a victory for the students without care.

At the old oak tree, the case was closed,  
Mrs. Johnson found a well-deserved repose.  
The students smiled, and they solved the crime  
with this mystery now just a fading rhyme.



# Comparing Different Versions of the Story

Comparison Criteria	Poem Version	Narrative Version	Drama Version
Structure			
Characters			
Setting			
Dialogue			
Mood and Tone			

# Comparing Different Versions of the Story

1. How is each version of this story structured?

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2. How does the poem version of the story use rhyme and rhythm to tell the story?

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3. How do the narrative and drama versions of the story use different elements to tell the story?

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4. How does the poem version of the story condense the events and details of the story into a few lines? How do the narrative and drama versions of the story expand on the events and details of the story?

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5. How does each version of the story create mood and tone?

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6. How does the poem version of the story convey the emotions and thoughts of the characters? How do the narrative and drama versions of the story do that differently?

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7. Which version of the story do you enjoy most and why?

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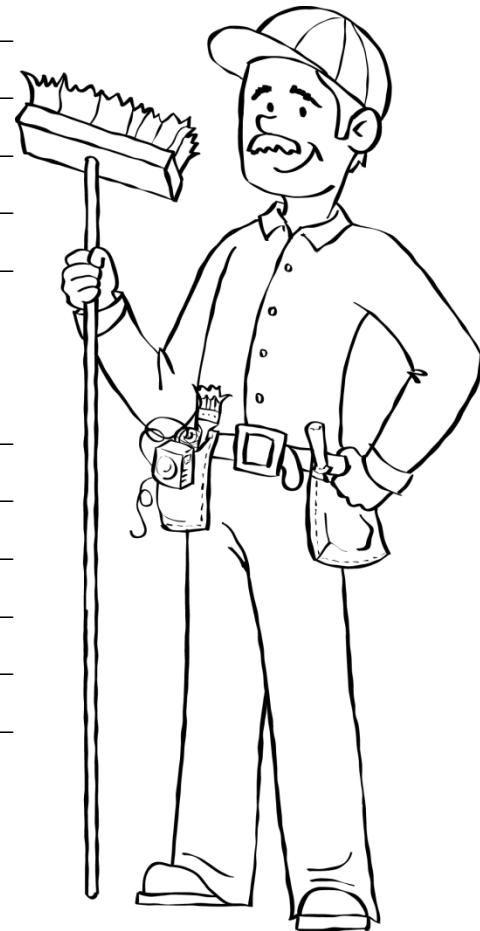
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# Comparing Different Versions of the Story

Comparison Criteria	Poem Version	Narrative Version	Drama Version
<b>Structure</b>	four stanzas with four lines and AABB rhyme scheme	three chapters with headings and numbers	three scenes with scene titles and transitions
<b>Characters</b>	introduced by name and role	introduced by narration and description	introduced by stage directions and character names
<b>Setting</b>	implied by words and phrases	described by descriptive language and sensory details	suggested by props, costumes, lighting, and sound effects
<b>Dialogue</b>	minimal and indirect	shown by quotation marks and dialogue tags	shown by colons and line breaks
<b>Mood and Tone</b>	created by rhyme, rhythm, figurative language, and imagery	created by descriptive language, sensory details, and word choice	created by props, costumes, lighting, sound effects, and facial expressions

# Comparing Different Versions of the Story

1. How is each version of this story structured?

Each version of this story is structured differently according to its genre and format.

The poem version of this story is structured into six stanzas, each with four lines and an AABB rhyme scheme.

The narrative version of this story is structured into three chapters, each with a heading and a number.

The drama version of this story is structured into three scenes, each with a scene title and a transition.

Each version of this story also has a beginning, a middle, and an end, where the problem is introduced, developed, and resolved.

2. How does the poem version of the story use rhyme and rhythm to tell the story?

The poem version of the story uses rhyme and rhythm to tell the story by creating a musical and catchy effect that helps the reader remember the story's main points.

3. How do the narrative and drama versions of the story use different elements to tell the story?

The narrative and drama versions of the story use different elements to tell the story, such as narration, description, dialogue, stage directions, and scene transitions.

4. How does the poem version of the story condense the events and details of the story into a few lines? How do the narrative and drama versions of the story expand on the events and details of the story?

The poem version of the story condenses the events and details into a few lines by using summary and generalization. The narrative and drama versions of the story expand on the events and details of the story by using specific examples and elaboration.

5. How does each version of the story create mood and tone?

The poem version of the story uses figurative language and imagery to create a mood and tone for the story by using words and phrases that appeal to the senses and evoke emotions.

The narrative and drama versions of the story use different techniques to create a mood and tone for the story, such as descriptive language, sensory details, props, costumes, lighting, and sound effects.

6. How does the poem version of the story convey the emotions and thoughts of the characters? How do the narrative and drama versions of the story do that differently?

The poem version of the story conveys the emotions and thoughts of the characters by using words that express their feelings and attitudes. The narrative and drama versions of the story do that differently by using dialogue tags, facial expressions, body language, and actions.

7. Which version of the story do you enjoy most and why?

The answer to this question may vary depending on personal preference, but students should provide reasons for their choice based on their understanding of poem, narrative, and drama structures.

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VOCABULARY LIST

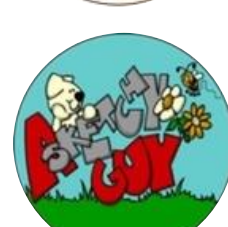
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horde	diffuse
ambiguity	stagnant
path	granted
reproduction	sanctuary
permeant	granted
uplift	sanctuary
evolution	sanctuary
frustrated	sanctuary
frustrated	sanctuary

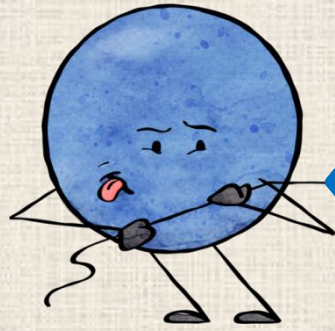
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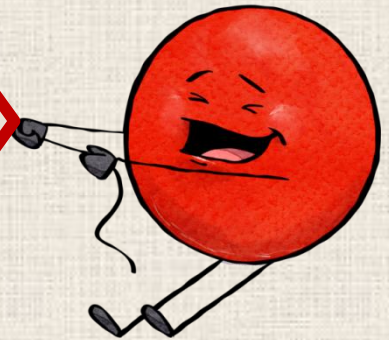




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