

Before diving into a play, get some background information that will help you understand it better and make it more interesting and enjoyable!

Skim the entire play to look for the answers to the following:

1. How is the play **divided**? (How many acts, how many scenes? Is there an intermission? Are the acts broken up by music?)
2. Where does the play **take place**? Are there multiple locations? Does the scenery change, or will the audience have to imagine the changes in setting? Are there stage directions at the beginning of the scene (usually in *italics*) that can give you clues to any changes?
3. Does the **time change** from one act to the next? How does the playwright show this?
4. Who are the **characters**? Are characters married? Related? Connected in other apparent ways? Do they have titles? Are there names that are difficult to pronounce? Use the Character Chart on the back to help you map out who they are, how they are connected, and what they do!

Now that you know some key information for the play, you can read the play with the following tips!

While you are reading a play you should:

1. **Read with a pencil.** It best to experience the text by jotting down notes, reactions, and questions as you go along.
2. **Now that you have skimmed, visualize the characters.** Think of the play as a movie so you can see the play in a more visual way; this is a way to stay tied to the characters and the story.
3. **Research the historical context.** If time and place is an essential component to the story or to you visualizing the play, do some research on the time period and people in that area.

Character Chart

Use this chart to help you keep track of characters in a play or in a novel!

Character's Name	Key Traits	Relationships with	Role/Job Responsibilities	Other Important Info