

Why Read Literature?

People do not always read a dramatic work for just a single purpose. You might read a play for multiple reasons. You might wish to know more about the historical setting of a play, you might read to be moved by its subject, or you might pick up the play because you have enjoyed other works by the same playwright. Preview a list of purposes you might choose for reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*, page 700.

1

Read for the love of literature.

Anne Frank had no idea when she was writing her diary that her words would reach millions of people. Left behind when the police arrested her family, the diary was found after the war and published. Since

then, this compelling story of a young girl in hiding has been adapted as a play and made into a documentary. See why Anne's story inspires in all its forms when you read the play *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

2

Read for information.

The abrupt changes in mood in Anne Frank's story make no sense without the historical backdrop of World War II and the Holocaust. The Allies' military successes against Hitler in 1943 and 1944 gave Anne's family some cause for hope in the midst of a desperate situation. Understand how historical events can have a crucial impact on lives when you read *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

3

Read to be inspired.

Since it was first published in 1947, *The Diary of Anne Frank* has sold over twenty-five million copies in fifty-five languages. One factor in its success is that Anne gives a human face to the millions who died from Nazi brutality. As you read, think of the turbulent events swirling around Anne Frank—and how she retained her faith and courage even in the face of fear and prejudice.



Take It to the Net

Visit the Web site for online instruction and activities related to each selection in this unit.

www.phschool.com

How to Read Literature

Strategies for Reading Drama

The one thing that distinguishes dramas from other types of literature is that they are meant to be performed. The written script is merely a blueprint, or guide, that allows the actors and you, the reader, to understand the playwright's vision. When you read a drama, use the following strategies to interact with the text:

1. Analyze the historical context.

When playwrights write dramas, they frequently assume that you have basic knowledge of the historical events behind the play's action. To increase your awareness of context:

- Identify the time and place in which a play takes place.
- Research the period. Some sources for historical information are encyclopedias, Web sites, and historical documentaries.
- Determine how the politics and culture of the time may have influenced the attitudes of characters in the play. Establish relationships between historical events (causes) and characters' actions (effects).

2. Picture the action.

Part of the challenge and fun of reading a play—instead of seeing it on stage—is visualizing the action.

- Read stage directions closely for clues about setting, how characters are moving, and, occasionally, the way that characters will say a particular line.
- Use details in the stage directions and dialogue to help you form a mental picture of the way the characters look, move, talk, and interact with one another. Use the chart shown to help you picture the character.
- Imagine you are the director of the play. Think about stage sets, characters' clothing, and how you would tell the actors to play their parts and relate to each other.

As you read the play in this unit, review the reading strategies in order to interact with the text.

Character: Peter Van Daan

Details Provided: Spends a lot of time in his room with his cat, only kissed a girl once.

Character Profile:

- Awkward and shy
- Has bad posture
- Blushes easily when talking to girls