

6

common core

# Performance Coach



Sample Lesson

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### Standards

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# Drama Student Edition pages 28–41

## LESSON OVERVIEW

### Objectives

Students will:

- identify the elements of drama.
- analyze the plot of a drama.
- use dialogue and stage directions to make inferences about characters.
- recognize figures of speech and use them to make inferences about characters.
- analyze the theme of a drama.
- use context clues to determine the meaning of antiquated language.

### Discussion Questions

- ▶ How is reading a drama different from watching a drama?
- ▶ What does a reader need to know to read a drama effectively?
- ▶ Which elements of drama are also present in narrative writing?

### Differentiation

**Lesson Support** If students struggle to identify theme in a drama, guide them to focus on dialogue and stage directions to learn about the characters, setting, and plot. Help them use prior knowledge about how these elements can affect the theme by asking questions such as: “What does each character want? What is the conflict, and how is it solved? How have the characters changed—or not changed—at the end of the drama? How does the resolution hint at the theme, or message?”

If students struggle to identify the setting(s) of a drama, tell them to reread the stage directions, especially those at the beginning of each scene. Have them note details about characters’ clothing and language, and how they interact. Students should also note descriptions of landscapes, buildings, and weather. For practice, have students write stage directions to describe a local place. Have partners identify each other’s settings.

### Standards

RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RL.6.4, RL.6.5, SL.6.6,  
L.6.1.e, L.6.4.a, L.6.5.a

### Key Terms

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| act                 | figure of speech |
| allusion            | hyperbole        |
| antiquated language | metaphor         |
| cast of characters  | mood             |
| climax              | plot             |
| conflict            | pun              |
| dialect             | resolution       |
| dialogue            | rising action    |
| drama               | scene            |
| exposition          | setting          |
| falling action      | simile           |
| figurative language | stage directions |
|                     | theme            |

**Lesson Extension** Show students posters advertising plays and discuss the details they convey, such as characters, setting, title, and author. Explain that there may also be a sentence that makes viewers want to see the play, but does not give away the ending. Have students use these elements to design a poster for one of the dramas in the lesson.

## 1 GETTING THE IDEA

### Understanding Drama

In this lesson, students study the structure and elements of **drama**. They learn to focus on stage directions and dialogue to recognize character traits and themes.

Encourage students to share past experiences viewing or reading plays. Ask them how reading a play is different from reading a story.

Review the Elements of Drama chart on Student Edition page 28. Then show students the script of a drama and point out each element. Have volunteers identify the section designations, for example: **Act I, Scene 3**.

#### ► Setting

Explain that the **setting** may stay the same or it may change throughout a drama. Playwrights may divide a play into acts in order to change settings. The stage directions describe the setting. Write: *a park on a sunny, fall day*. Have students underline the place (a park) and circle the time (fall, day). Discuss the **mood** the word *sunny* creates (happy). Write *cheerful, angry, and fearful* on the board. Work with students to describe a setting that would create each mood.

#### ► Plot

Explain that **acts** are large divisions within a play, and **scenes** are divisions within an act. Define each element of **plot** structure: **exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution**. If possible, give examples of each from a well-known play, such as *Romeo and Juliet*. Have students read the first sample passage on Student Edition page 29 to identify the incident that affects the plot. (Traffic makes Dad get out of the cab, and he leaves his speech in his coat pocket.)

#### ► Characters

Explain that a **cast of characters** may give descriptions of each character. When students read long plays with many characters, they can return to this list as a review. Have two students perform the second sample passage on Student Edition page 29, following the **stage directions** and reading the **dialogue** expressively. Then have them answer the questions. (Latoya's words show that she is upset by Dina's reaction to her invitation. When Dina realizes what Latoya thinks, she explains her obligation to her grandmother. This reaction shows her kindness.)

- Review the meaning of **figure of speech**. Have volunteers explain the idioms *I'm booked* (I have plans) and *touch base* (contact). Work with the class to list other idioms on the board.

▲ **ELL Support** *If students struggle with idioms, ask them to state an idiom from their native language and explain its meaning. If possible, give an English idiom that has a similar meaning. Explain additional idioms, and have students complete sentence frames. For example: I'm feeling blue because \_\_\_\_\_. He drives me bananas when he \_\_\_\_\_.*

- Explain that characters may speak in **dialect** to make dialogue authentic. Discuss the examples and give one more, such as regional words for a large sandwich (*sub*: New England, *hoagie*: Philadelphia, *hero*: New York).

#### ► Figurative Language

Explain that students can use context clues in dialogue and stage directions to interpret **figurative language**. Have students generate examples of figurative language based on the examples shown. For example, This is the worst day of my life! (**hyperbole**) The cars crawled like snails. (**simile**) The sun is a fiery ball. (**metaphor**) We're like Batman and Robin. (**allusion**) The teddy bear didn't eat dinner; he was already stuffed. (**pun**)

#### ► Theme

Work with students to write titles for the two sample passages on Student Edition page 29 that give clues to their **themes**. (Possible responses: *Racing Against Bad Luck, A Helping Hand*) Explain that titles often give clues to the theme. Then give examples of symbols and their meanings, such as a cage that symbolizes imprisonment. Explain that if a character is always tending a caged bird, the writer might be suggesting a theme having to do with that character being trapped.

#### ► Putting It All Together

Have pairs of students perform part of a play you have recently read in class. Remind them to recite the dialogue with expression and to follow stage directions.

▲ **Journal Prompt** *Write down examples of dialect or slang you might use if you were writing dialogue between teenagers from your town. Write a few lines of dialogue using the examples.*

## Language Spotlight • Antiquated Language

Explain that **antiquated language** refers to old words that have changed spelling or fallen out of use. Have students underline the antiquated words in the king's line. Ask, "When you refer to someone's eyes, what type of word do you use before eyes?" (pronoun) "What pronoun replaces *thine*?" (*your*) "What part of speech is *thou*?" (pronoun) "What is the modern word?" (*you*) Have partners find antiquated language in the knight's line (*'tis, Sire, thee*) and rewrite it in modern language. (*It's true, Sir . . . I am ready to serve you again.*)

## Standards Focus

### Adapt Speech to a Variety of Contexts

To cover standards **SL.6.6** and **L.6.1.e**, have small groups do Readers Theater versions of a play from the lesson. Discuss departures from standard English in each play. Note that *The Boy Comes Home: A Comedy in One Act* is by British author A. A. Milne. Explain that *solicitor* and *barrister* are synonyms for *lawyer*, *have a row* means "argue," and a *Brigadier* is a military officer. Have students find antiquated language in *How the Peacock Got His Tale* (*thou, thinkest, art, Sire, thine, dost, thy, thee, thine, wilt, speakest, verily*). Model reading lines from each play with correct pronunciation and intonation. Then have students rehearse and perform their plays.

## 2 COACHED EXAMPLE

### Using the Passage

Students will read a drama about a young man who has just returned from the war and must decide on a career. Encourage students to draw on what they learned in **Getting the Idea** to identify elements of a drama, figurative language, and theme.



**Text Complexity Details**  
excerpted from "The Boy Comes Home:  
A Comedy in One Act" by A. A. Milne

### Qualitative

LOW MIDDLE LOW **MIDDLE HIGH** HIGH

Multiple layers of meaning; simple structure; contains somewhat complex, unfamiliar language and figurative language; explores many themes of varying complexity; requires moderate levels of cultural knowledge

**Quantitative** N/A

**Reader-Text-Task** The dramatic structure and topic may be unfamiliar to students. Students will consider how dramatic elements combine to produce a coherent text, identify figurative language and theme, and analyze how setting affects the characters and plot.

### Answers

1. Students will identify types of figurative language.  
A-4; B-2; C-3; D-1

Students can use context clues to determine that "which side your bread was buttered" is an idiom that means where one's support comes from; "see the butter for the jam" is a pun that relates to the uncle's jam-making business; "have a row" is a British expression that means to have a fight; "allow rudeness from an impertinent young puppy" compares the young man, Philip, to a puppy.

2. This item has two parts. Students will use evidence from the play to answer questions about the characters.

**Part A** B

**Part B** C

The phrases *obey orders* and *recognize authority* give clues for Part A. For Part B, the word *if* in choice C indicates that there is no difference.

3. Students will identify which theme is supported by the pay.

**Part A** Life isn't always fair.

**Part B** Possible response: Philip doesn't want to work in the family business and wants to study to become an architect. When his uncle says, "The power of the purse goes a long way," Philip realizes he needs his uncle's financial support. He ends up having to choose between money and his dreams.

4. Students will explain how the setting affects the characters and plot.  
Possible response: The war is over. Philip returns to his uncle's house to decide what to do with his life.

The setting shows that the uncle is in control: It is his home, and he pays the bills. He thinks the war would have changed Philip. He uses his power to persuade Philip to join the family business.

## 3 LESSON PRACTICE

### Using the Passage

Students will complete the **Lesson Practice** independently. The **Reading Guide** helps students monitor their comprehension while they read and apply the skills and strategies they learned in this lesson. Students can take notes in the margins, mark up the text, or think about key ideas.

#### **Text Complexity Details** "How the Peacock Got His Tail"

##### Qualitative

LOW MIDDLE LOW **MIDDLE HIGH** HIGH

Multiple layers of meaning; largely simple structure; contains figurative language or irony; somewhat complex, unfamiliar, and archaic language; explores multiple themes of varying levels of complexity; requires moderate levels of cultural knowledge

**Quantitative** N/A

**Reader-Text-Task** Students may find this myth's setting, character names, and archaic vocabulary challenging. They will analyze figurative and archaic language, plot, and theme, and compare and contrast characters from the two dramas in this lesson.

▲ **Common Errors** Students may struggle to follow dialogue in plays with large casts of characters. Remind students to note each character's name before reading his or her dialogue. They may also color-code each character's lines.

### Answers

1. A–3; B–4; C–1
2. **Part A** Students should underline *thy, Thou shalt, thee, Thine, shan't, and thou wilt*.  
**Part B** B; C  
**Part C** Possible response: Here is your punishment. You shall remain awake at night while other creatures sleep. Look around you then. Your eyes will not have much to see

and enjoy. And each sound you will greet with, "Who?"

### 3. Part A D

**Part B** Students should underline "Appearances can be deceiving" and "True beauty shines from within."

4. Possible response: The lines show that Bird Carver isn't quick to judge. He speaks loudly to give the birds a chance to stop judging his new bird before it is finished. The lines advance the plot because they act as a warning to the birds. They hint that there will be consequences for the birds' judgments.
5. **Exposition:** Bird Carver carves a new bird as Owl, Emperor Penguin, and Parrot watch. The animals criticize the bird, unaware that Bird Carver can hear them. **Rising Action:** As they judge the new bird, the other birds bicker about who has the best features. Bird Carver is annoyed by what he hears. **Climax:** Bird Carver steps in and stops the fight. **Falling Action:** Bird Carver punishes each bird for its vanity and for judging the new bird. **Resolution:** Bird Carver reveals his creation, Peacock.
6. Responses will vary. Refer to the scoring rubric on page xxiv. Top-scoring student responses should:
  - compare and contrast Uncle James and Bird Carver.
  - include relevant details that tell how the actions of these characters affect others and reveal the theme.
  - follow a logical pattern of organization.
  - express ideas clearly and concisely.
  - use correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

# Drama

## 1 GETTING THE IDEA

A **drama** is a story written to be performed by actors. Like other types of fiction, dramas have settings, characters, plot, and theme. Most of the story, however, is told through **dialogue**, or the characters' spoken words. A written drama has a specific structure with elements arranged in a certain way.

Elements of Drama	Definition
cast of characters	a list of the people or animals in a play (the cast)
act	the main sections of a drama
scene	smaller sections within an act
setting	the time and location where the action takes place
dialogue	the words spoken by the characters or narrator preceded by the character's name in capital letters
stage directions	directions telling characters how to speak or act; directions telling how sound, lighting, or props are used

### Setting

The **setting** is the time and place of a story. A setting helps create the **mood**, or the general atmosphere of a drama. A walk through a park on a sunny fall day, for example, creates a light-hearted mood. In contrast, the same walk on a moonless, windy night may create tension or fear.

### Plot

As in all stories, a drama's **plot** is the series of events in which the main character or characters try to solve a problem or attain a goal. In a drama, the plot develops over the course of one or more acts. One **act** may be divided into multiple **scenes**. Acts and scenes usually signal a change in the setting or to which characters are on the stage. They can also signal changes in the plot.



A traditional play has the following structure.

- The **exposition** introduces the characters, setting, and initial **conflict**, or the problem the main character or characters face.
- The **rising action** includes all the events that lead to the climax. The author develops the characters, and the conflict becomes more apparent.
- The **climax** is the turning point of the story. This is when the tension and conflict is at its height, and the events take a dramatic turn.
- The **falling action** is the result of the climax and leads to the story's resolution.
- The **resolution** tells how the conflict is or is not resolved.

Events in the plot can move the action forward, trigger a character to make a decision, or do both. What incident affects the plot in the following example?

DAD: (*anxiously*) This traffic is terrible. We're going to be late, and I have the opening speech.

JUAN: (*helpfully*) The school's only two blocks away. Let's get out and walk.

DAD: Great idea, Juan. (*to cab driver*) Sir, excuse me, but we'll get out here. (*Dad and Juan hastily exit cab and hurry down sidewalk.*)

JUAN: Don't worry, Dad. We'll make it in time for your speech.

DAD: (*groans*) My speech! It's in my coat pocket, and my coat's still in the cab!

## Characters

Most of what you learn about the characters comes from dialogue and stage directions. You can figure out how characters think and feel by what they say and how they say it. You can infer what characters are like from how they act, how they respond to events or other characters, and how other characters respond to them.

Read the following dialogue. How does Latoya react to Dina's frown and comment? What does Dina do when she realizes that Latoya has misunderstood her? What does this tell you about Dina?

LATOYA: Thanks for asking me to join you and your friends at lunch, Dina. I was dreading the cafeteria, being the new kid and all. How about we do something after school?

DINA: (*frowns*) Uh . . . I'm booked in the afternoons, Latoya.

LATOYA: (*hesitantly*) Oh, I just thought . . . Well, never mind . . .

DINA: (*quickly*) It's not that I don't want to. You see, after school I help Abuela restock the produce at the bodega. (*smiles*) I know. Why don't you come with me, and we can do something afterward.

LATOYA: (*smiling*) Great! Let me just touch base with my mom.

Like most conversations, dialogue contains idioms. An idiom is a **figure of speech**, or common expression, in which the words have a different meaning from the meaning of the individual words. In the dialogue between Latoya and Dina, “I’m booked” and “touch base” are idioms. What do the idioms mean?

Idioms are often unique to a culture. For example, “touch base” is an idiom that comes from American baseball. When a baseball player touches base, he meets a player from the opposing team. Today, the expression means to talk to or meet up with someone. Context clues can help you figure out an idiom’s meaning. Authors include idioms to make the dialogue more realistic and to indicate the setting and culture.

Dialogue can do more than reveal characters’ feelings and traits. Sometimes, you can infer a person’s nationality from their dialogue. We can infer, for example, that Dina’s family is Hispanic because she uses the words *Abuela* and *bodega*. Similarly, dialect can reveal a person’s origins. **Dialect** is the words, phrases, or grammar commonly used in a certain area. For example, you might stand in line to buy a pop in Seattle, but in New York City, you stand on line to buy a soda.

### Figurative language

**Figurative language** is language that is used beyond its literal meaning for effect or to create an image in the reader’s mind. Figurative language can also reveal aspects of a character’s traits. Depending on the context, figurative statements can show humor or sarcasm. Read each definition and the example made by a character commenting on a newly broken arm.

Type of Figurative Language	Example
<b>hyperbole:</b> an exaggeration to make things appear greater or lesser than they really are	It was <u>the only bone in my body</u> I hadn’t broken yet.
<b>metaphor:</b> a comparison that says one thing is another	The <u>cast</u> is a <u>cocoon</u> for the transformation of my arm.
<b>simile:</b> a comparison using the words <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	My arm <u>snapped like a popsicle stick</u> .
<b>pun:</b> a joke based on the different possible meanings of a word or what a word sounds like	As you can see, I like to do things <u>single-handedly</u> .
<b>allusion:</b> a comparison to a historical, mythical, or literary person or event	Mom is taking good care of me. She’s a regular <u>Florence Nightingale</u> .

## Theme

The **theme** is the central message the author wants to convey to readers. In a drama, the theme is often alluded to in the title and at the beginning of the play. As the play progresses, the way characters respond to other characters, plot events, the setting, and the conflict can reveal the theme.

Authors may also use repeated details or symbols to allude to the theme. A symbol might be a prop, a color, or a sound that appears at different times in a play. For example, sunlight might be a symbol of hope in a play about characters struggling to overcome fear. When you try to identify the theme, think about what the main character wants to accomplish and how the characters do or do not change as the story progresses.

## Putting It All Together

Remember, plays are written to be performed. When you read a drama, pay attention to the dialogue and stage directions, and recognize when and where acts and scenes begin and end. If you have difficulty understanding part of a drama, read the dialogue aloud and try to picture the play being acted out on stage.

## Language Spotlight • Antiquated Language

Plays that were written long ago, such as the plays of William Shakespeare, or plays set in the past, such as a play set in the Middle Ages, often have **antiquated language**, or old-fashioned language. When you see words and phrases that are unfamiliar to you, use context clues and what you know about language to determine what the words or phrases mean. Also, think about what you know about related words to try to understand the meanings of antiquated words.

Read the following passage. Underline the words or phrases that are antiquated. Then, discuss their meanings with a partner.

KING: Thine eyes have regained their spark. I trust thou art well.

KNIGHT: 'Tis true, Sire. The wound is healed. I am ready to serve thee again.

Read the play.

*excerpted from*

# The Boy Comes Home: A Comedy in One Act

*by A. A. Milne*

## Cast of Characters

UNCLE JAMES

PHILIP

*SCENE.*—A room in Uncle James's house in the Cromwell Road.

*TIME.*—The day after the War.

**JAMES:** . . . You make too much of this war. All you young boys seem to think you've come back from France to teach us our business. You'll find that it is you who'll have to learn, not we.

**PHILIP:** I'm quite prepared to learn; in fact, I want to.

**JAMES:** Excellent. Then we can consider that settled.

**PHILIP:** Well, we haven't settled yet what business I'm going to learn.

**JAMES:** I don't think that's very difficult. I propose to take you into my business. You'll start at the bottom of course, but it will be a splendid opening for you.

**PHILIP:** (*thoughtfully*) I see. So you've decided it for me? The jam business.

**JAMES:** (*sharply*) Is there anything to be ashamed of in that?

**PHILIP:** Oh no, nothing at all. Only it doesn't happen to appeal to me.

**JAMES:** If you knew which side your bread was buttered, it would appeal to you very considerably.

**PHILIP:** I'm afraid I can't see the butter for the jam.

**JAMES:** I don't want any silly jokes of that sort. You were glad enough to get it out there, I've no doubt.

**PHILIP:** Oh, yes. Perhaps that's why I'm so sick of it now. . . . No, it's no good, Uncle James; you must think of something else.

**JAMES:** (*with a sneer*) Perhaps *you've* thought of something else?

**PHILIP:** Well, I had some idea of being an architect—

**JAMES:** You propose to start learning to be an architect at twenty-three?

**PHILIP:** (*smiling*) Well, I couldn't start before, could I?

**JAMES:** Exactly. And now you'll find it's too late.

**PHILIP:** Is it? Aren't there going to be any more architects, or doctors, or solicitors, or barristers? Because we've all lost four years of our lives, are all the professions going to die out?

**JAMES:** And how old do you suppose you'll be before you're earning money as an architect?

**PHILIP:** The usual time, whatever that may be. If I'm four years behind, so is everybody else.

**JAMES:** Well, I think it's high time you began to earn a living at once.

**PHILIP:** Look here, Uncle James, do you really think that you can treat me like a boy who's just left school? Do you think four years at the front have made no difference at all?

**JAMES:** If there had been any difference, I should have expected it to take the form of an increased readiness to obey orders and recognize authority.

**PHILIP:** (*regretfully*) You are evidently determined to have a row. Perhaps I had better tell you once and for all that I refuse to go into the turnip and vegetable marrow<sup>1</sup> business.

**JAMES:** (*thumping the table angrily*) And perhaps I'd better tell *you*, sir, once and for all, that I don't propose to allow rude rudeness from an impertinent young puppy.

**PHILIP:** (*reminiscently*) I remember annoying our Brigadier once. He was covered with red, had a very red face, about twenty medals, and a cold blue eye. He told me how angry he was for about five minutes while I stood to attention. I'm afraid you aren't nearly impressive, Uncle James.

**JAMES:** (*rather upset*) Oh! (*recovering himself*) Fortunately, I have other means of impressing you. The power of the purse goes a long way in this world. I propose to use it.

**PHILIP:** I see. . . . Yes . . . that's rather awkward, isn't it?

**JAMES:** (*pleasantly*) I think you'll find it very awkward.

**PHILIP:** (*thoughtfully*) Yes.

<sup>1</sup> **vegetable marrow** the fleshy parts of vegetables, especially squashes, used in cooking and as a basis for jams and chutneys

## Answer the following questions.

- 1 Read each sentence of dialogue from the play on the left. Then, match each underlined word or phrase with a type of figurative language on the right.

A. If you knew which side your bread was buttered, it would appeal to you very considerably.

1. metaphor

B. I'm afraid I can't see the butter for the jam.

2. pun

C. You are evidently determined to have a row.

3. dialect

D. I don't propose to allow rude rudeness from an impertinent young puppy.

4. idiom

**Hint** Look closely at what each underlined phrase says and look back at the play to reread the sentences in context. Remember, an idiom is a common phrase with a figurative meaning, while a pun is a play on words.

- 2 Read the following dialogue and answer the questions below.

**PHILIP:** Look here, Uncle James, do you really think that you can treat me like a boy who's just left school? Do you think four years at the front have made no difference at all?

**JAMES:** If there had been any difference, I should have expected it to take the form of an increased readiness to obey orders and recognize authority.

### Part A

How does Uncle James think the war should have changed Philip?

- A. Philip should be more courageous.
- B. Philip should be more obedient and respectful.
- C. Philip should be ready to start a new business.
- D. Philip should go back to the front.

### Part B

Which of these excerpts from the play reveal that Uncle James does not think Philip has changed?

- A. like a boy who's just left school
- B. four years at the front
- C. If there had been any difference
- D. obey orders and recognize authority

**Hint** Think about the way Uncle James responds to Philip's comments. What does this tell you about their past relationship and how they are acting now?

- 3 This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Below are three possible themes for *The Boy Comes Home: A Comedy in One Act*. Underline the theme that is **best** supported by the details and dialogue in the play.

<b>Themes</b>	It's never too late to learn something new.
	Life isn't always fair.
	You should respect and obey your elders.

**Part B**

Explain the theme you underlined in Part A, using evidence from the play.

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**Hint** Remember that a theme is the message that an author wants to share with the reader. To help you determine the theme, think about what Philip wants and what his uncle wants.

- 4 How does the setting of the play affect the characters and the plot?

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**Hint** Remember, the setting is often described in stage directions. Its effect on the characters and plot may be revealed through dialogue. What does the setting mean to Philip and to James?

Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the drama.

## How the Peacock Got His Tail

### Reading Guide

What is the setting? How might it affect the plot and characters?

The Bird Carver uses antiquated language. Use context clues to figure out the meaning of the words.

Why do you think the Bird Carver uses antiquated language but the birds do not?

### Cast of Characters

**BIRD CARVER**, the maker of all the birds

**PARROT**, one of the Bird Carver's creations

**OWL**, one of the Bird Carver's creations

**EMPEROR PENGUIN**, one of the Bird Carver's creations

**PEACOCK**, the Bird Carver's latest creation

*(Setting: A clearing in the woods, long before there are humans on Earth. Owl, Parrot, and Emperor Penguin are partially concealed, spying on Bird Carver, who is working in the open clearing on his latest creation, Peacock.)*

**BIRD CARVER:** *(hums as he works)* Thou art becoming a fine bird. Splendid, in fact. Just a few more touches, and thou shalt be complete.

**PARROT:** *(whispers)* The Carver creates yet another bird. *(peers into the clearing)* He thinks that . . . *(laughs)* He thinks that the bird is almost done? Why, look! Only its neck is colored properly, and that tail . . . Why, it's far too long.

**OWL:** I quite agree, Parrot. That bird will never fly with such a monstrosity weighing him down.

**EMPEROR PENGUIN:** *(flaps wings as if in flight)* Well, Parrot, as I can attest, not being able to fly isn't the end of the world. I must admit, however, that the rest of its body is rather dull. *(peers into clearing)* That brown is as dull as dirt.

**PARROT:** *(nodding)* Yes, Emperor Penguin. I agree wholeheartedly. Boring.

**OWL:** *(smooths feathers on body)* Careful, Emperor Penguin and Parrot. Brown suits some of us very well.

**BIRD CARVER:** *(lifts head and speaks loudly)* Appearances can be deceiving. There's so much more to consider. *(lowers head and continues working)*

**PARROT:** Is another bird really necessary?



## Reading Guide

Pay attention to what the birds say about one another. What do you learn about Owl, Emperor Penguin, and Parrot from their dialogue?

How does Bird Carver's punishment fit Owl?

**OWL:** My thoughts exactly, Parrot. When Carver made me, he created the wisest bird. Why make yet another?

**EMPEROR PENGUIN:** Come now, Owl. When Carver made me, he created elegance and class. (*turns around gracefully*) Why bother with anything less?

(*Bird Carver turns and watches the birds, clearly irritated. Birds don't notice.*)

**OWL:** (*laughs*) Elegance! Class! Who, you? Surely you jest. I can spin my head and see all around me, which makes me the wise bird that I am. (*turns head from side to side*) Perfection does not lie in elegance or class. Perfection lies in wisdom.

**PARROT:** (*raises voice*) Of course, Owl. You would say that. You're just jealous because you're not especially . . . outstanding in your appearance. I may not be smart or classy, (*prems and preens*) but my bright, colorful feathers make me the cream of the crop. Beauty is the epitome of perfection.

**OWL:** (*sternly*) Wisdom!

**EMPEROR PENGUIN:** Elegance! Class!

(*Bird Carver stands and stares at Owl, Emperor Penguin, and Parrot. The birds don't notice.*)

**PARROT:** Beauty!

**OWL:** Hmmph. If you were smarter, you'd understand, Parrot. I'd be happy to explain in simpler terms.

**EMPEROR PENGUIN:** (*nose in air*) Showy, that's what you are, Parrot. All that color makes you dizzy. You're a rainbow, beautiful to behold but nothing at the end of the line. You're not classic, like my stylish black and white. (*spins*)

**BIRD CARVER:** So! (*booms loudly, startling the three birds*) So thou each thinkest thou art the best. Thou thinkest thou art better than my newest bird, Peacock, too?

(*Birds exchange nervous glances.*)

**OWL:** No, no, Sire . . .

**EMPEROR PENGUIN:** Of course not, Sire. No, of course not.

**PARROT:** Uh-uhn. No way, your . . . Sire-ness.

**BIRD CARVER:** I shall punish thine vanity. (*points to Owl*) Owl, thou art the wise one? Dost thou not know that a truly wise bird

## Reading Guide

Why does Bird Carver single out each bird in turn? What repeated message is he sending?

Notice the pattern in Bird Carver's address to the birds. He tells each one why he is upset and then explains the punishment.

How does each bird's punishment help to explain how owls, emperor penguins, and parrots acquired some of their features and determined where they would live?

judges not a work in progress? Here is thy punishment. Thou shalt remain awake at night, while other creatures sleep. Look around thee then. Thine eyes shan't have much to see and enjoy, and each sound thou wilt greet with, "Who?"

**OWL:** (*sighs miserably*) Yes, sire.

**BIRD CARVER:** Thou, (*points to Emperor Penguin*) thine appearance is elegant indeed. But elegance is class only when manners and attitude complement the dressing. One must look deep within to find true class. To punish thee, I send thee where few will see thee—inside or out! I banish thee to Antarctica.

**EMPEROR PENGUIN:** (*hugs himself and shivers*) Yes, sire.

**BIRD CARVER:** And lastly, thou, Parrot. (*points to Parrot*) Thou art bright and beautiful, but thy beauty is only skin deep. True beauty shines from within and echoes with every word thou speakest. Verily, thy feathers art a beauty to behold, but thine words and heart lack beauty. Thy punishment? One day creatures will put thee in a cage to behold thy beauty. They will ask thee over and over, "Polly want a cracker?" To which, thou wilt parrot a response.

**PARROT:** (*shudders*) Yes, Sire.

**BIRD CARVER:** Now, behold, my newest creation! (*gestures to Peacock*) I call him Peacock. His tail may be long and cumbersome, and he may not be attractive at first glance, but watch! (*Peacock slowly opens tail.*) One day he will grace the most elegant of palaces and gardens. He will be admired by all as one of the most beautiful and remarkable animals to walk on Earth!

(*Light fades. Curtain falls.*)

### Answer the following questions.

- 1 Read each sentence on the left. Then, match the underlined phrase with its figurative language on the right.

A. That brown is as dull as dirt.

B. . . . but my bright, colorful feathers make me the cream of the crop.

C. You're a rainbow, beautiful to behold but nothing at the end of the line.

1. metaphor

2. pun

3. simile

4. idiom

- 2 This question has three parts. First, answer Part A. Next, answer Part B. Then, answer Part C.

**Part A**

Underline the antiquated language in this excerpt from the play.

**BIRD CARVER:** . . . Here is thy punishment. Thou shalt remain awake at night, while other creatures sleep. Look around thee then. Thine eyes shan't have much to see and enjoy, and each sound thou wilt greet with, "Who?"

**Part B**

Which words mean "you"? Circle **all** that apply.

- A. thy
- B. thee
- C. thou
- D. thine

**Part C**

Rewrite the excerpt using modern English.

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- 3 This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Which sentence **best** states one theme of *How the Peacock Got His Tail*?

- A. No bird is better than another.
- B. Beauty is the epitome of perfection.
- C. Elegance isn't the same as class.
- D. Don't judge on appearance alone.

**Part B**

Look back at the play and underline two sentences to support your answer to Part A.

- 4 Read the following excerpt from the play and answer the question.

**BIRD CARVER: (*lifts head and speaks loudly*) Appearances can be deceiving. There's so much more to consider. (*lowers head and continues working*)**

What do these lines reveal about Bird Carver? How do they advance the plot of the play and hint at the theme?

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- 5 Consider how the plot develops over the course of the play. Complete the chart to identify the major events of the play.

Exposition	
Rising Action	
Climax	
Falling Action	
Resolution	

- 6** Both *The Boy Comes Home: A Comedy in One Act* and *How the Peacock Got His Tail* have characters who are father figures, Uncle James and Bird Carver. Compare and contrast these two characters. Explain how their words and actions affect the other character or characters in each play and help reveal the theme of the play.

Use details from both plays to support your response.

Write your answer on the lines provided.

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