What is Drama?

A drama is also known as a *play*. This type of text is different from prose and poetry.

Characteristics of Drama:

- Tells a story and is divided into parts called **scenes**
- Written so that it can be performed as a play
- Includes story elements of fiction — setting, characters, plot
- **Cast of characters** that tells who will be in the play
- **Description of the setting** and what the stage should look like
- **Stage directions** tell the actors what to do, how to speak, and where to be on the stage
- Characters' **dialogue** tells the actors what to say

A playwright is someone who writes a drama or play.

Directions: Read the excerpt below and answer the questions that follow.

What Was That?

Cast of Characters
TATIANA
ELIAS
MIKAEL
DYANA

*

Scene One

On a hot afternoon in July, the smoke from an explosion rises into the sky. The kids stand in the middle of their street, staring. The kids are dirty, wearing clothes with holes in them. They all have backpacks on.

ELIAS *(pointing to the sky)*
Guys, do you see that?

MIKAEL
Oh, I definitely see that. But can you smell it?

DYANA *(plugging her nose)*
Oh, I definitely smell that. That's the worst odor I've ever smelled!
What happened? Where is that coming from?

TATIANA
I don't know, but it I think we had better get out of here. This doesn't seem like the best place for four kids to be hanging out.

The kids turn and start walking quickly down the street, periodically looking back at the smoke in the sky.

*   *   *   *   *   *

1. How does a drama get its ideas across differently than prose, like a novel, or poetry?

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2. How is drama different from other types of literature?

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3. What do you notice about the formatting that makes a drama something that can be performed?

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Challenge: **On a separate sheet of paper, write your own play with:**

- A cast of characters
- One scene
- Description of the setting
- Dialogue
- Stage directions

* **Remember:** A drama has the same story elements as a story. Your play should have a setting, characters, and a plot with a problem and solution.