**Studying Literature and Drama**

- Novels, short stories, plays are *art*. They require a different study approach than other subject areas.

In literature and drama:

- The writer usually is trying to make a statement about life in general which may or may not be obvious.

- The writer is trying to create a certain feeling in the reader; he may want the reader to draw a conclusion.

- Objectives When Studying Literature and Drama:
  1. Understand what the writer is telling you. Who is who? What happened?
  2. Understand what the writer wants you to see or feel.
  3. Understand how the writer got you to see or feel what you did.

- Traditional Organization of Literature:

  **Beginning:**
  1. Where and when story takes place.
  2. Introduction to important characters and (possibly) something about their past.
  4. Problems of main character may be told.

  **Middle:**
  1. Plot unfolds.
  2. Mood or setting may change.
  3. New problems arise.
  4. Some characters may change.
  5. Characters may try to solve problems.

  **End:** Learn outcome: Who won? Who lost? Were the problems solved?
Some modern literature and drama does not follow this organization; the writer may jump right into the action and introduce the characters later.

- **GUIDELINES FOR STUDYING literature and drama:**

  **General Rule:** Do not survey

  **Beginning:**
  1. Think about mood and setting.
  2. Think about characteristics.
  3. If there’s no beginning, ask yourself why the writer skipped that part.

  **Middle:**
  1. Keep track of action. What happens to whom and what happens as a result of the action?
  2. Be on the alert for changes in setting and mood and changes in the way characters feel and behave.

  **End:**
  Draw your conclusions. What is the writer trying to get you to feel and see (even if his characters do not)?

  **General Rule:** Be very sensitive to words. Why does a certain group of words make you feel happy? Read aloud poetic sections.

  **For difficult and/or lengthy selections:**
  1. Write out sketches of characters.
  2. Write chapter summaries.
  3. Make up an outline.

  **General Hint:** If all else has failed, survey. Look for names of new characters, highlights of action.

- **For Drama:**
  Since it is mostly dialogue, mood and setting are not always detailed, therefore:
  1. Use imagination when reading plays.
  2. Try to visualize what characters are doing.