

PLAY: *The Brave Boys of Greensboro* • SKILL: Literary Elements and Devices, page 1 of 4

Back to Basics: Literary Elements and Devices

Identifying the basic elements of a literary work can help you understand it better. Use this activity to help you understand the play *The Brave Boys of Greensboro*. See *Scope's "Glossary of Literary Terms"* for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

Section 1: Characters

1. For the characters of Ezell Blair Jr., Jo Spivey, and one character of your choice: (1) decide whether the character is **major** or **minor**; (2) briefly describe the character, including his or her appearance, personality, and background; and (3) decide whether the character is **static** or **dynamic** and explain why.

A. EZELL BLAIR JR. is a **major** **minor** (check one) character.

Description: _____

He is a **static** **dynamic** (check one) character. I think so because:

B. JO SPIVEY is a **major** **minor** (check one) character.

Description: _____

She is a **static** **dynamic** (check one) character. I think so because:

C. is a **major** **minor** (check one) character.

Description: _____

He/She is a **static** **dynamic** (check one) character. I think so because:

2. Who is the **protagonist** of the play? (There can be more than one.) Explain your answer.

3. Who is the **antagonist** of the play? (There can be more than one.) Explain your answer.

4. What purpose does Jo Spivey serve in the play? Hint: Think about the kinds of information she provides.

Section 2: Setting

5. During what time period does the play take place? _____

6. What was happening in America at that time?

7. How is the **setting** a factor in the boys' rise to fame? That is, what about the time period may have contributed to their success?

Section 3: Conflict

8. One major **conflict** in this play is person versus society. Explain how this conflict is demonstrated in the play as well as how that conflict is resolved.

Section 4: Tone and Mood

9. List at least two adjectives that describe the **tone** of the play.

Now explain how the author established that **tone**. Which words and details tell you how the author feels about the characters and the subject matter?

10. What is the **mood** of the play? Does it stay the same throughout the play, or does it change? Explain.

Now explain how the author established the **mood**. Which **imagery**, words, ideas, and aspects of the **setting** or **plot** caused you to feel the way you did?

Section 5: Plot

3 CLIMAX: Describe the moment when the problem reaches its greatest intensity. What happens to make this a turning point?

2 RISING ACTION: What happens that causes the situation to escalate, or intensify?

4 FALLING ACTION: What is the solution to the problem? How is it carried out?

1 OPENING: What is the main problem?

5 RESOLUTION: What is the ultimate outcome?