

The Devil and Daniel Webster (page 412)

Active Reading SkillBuilder

Visualizing with Stage Directions

Visualizing is an attempt to imagine what something looks like based on written or spoken information. To visualize while you are reading a play, look for the following in the stage directions:

- details about the sets, furniture, props, and lighting
- descriptions of the characters' appearances and actions

As you read the stage directions in this play, pause to visualize the scenes being described. Choose one and then draw or sketch it in the box below. Then write a few words to describe how you might feel if you were in such a scene.

Scene



How I might feel:

The Devil and Daniel Webster (page 412)

Literary Analysis SkillBuilder

Historical Drama

A play set in the past is a **historical drama**. In drama, plot and character are developed through dialogue and action, which is described in the stage directions. Dialogue is written conversation between characters. Stage directions are notes included in the script to help performers put on the play or to provide information to the reader. Use the chart below to record the major points you learned from the dialogue and stage directions.

	Through Dialogue	Through Stage Directions
What I learned about Stone's character		
What I learned about Webster's character		
What I learned about plot events		

The Devil and Daniel Webster (page 412)**Words to Know SkillBuilder****Words to Know**

bias	discordant	feigned	insinuatingly	oppressor
contemptuously	fanaticism	homage	intimidation	placidly

A. Decide which word from the word list belongs in each numbered blank. Then write the word on the blank line on the right.

The trumpets sounded sour and their tunes were all (1),
As if they'd gone to war, each with the other.

_____ (1)

Then there were boring speeches showing (2) to the guest,
One speech and then another and another.

_____ (2)

The people seemed attentive, but their interest was (3).
They faked concern so they would not seem rude.

_____ (3)

They all were sitting (4), as still as blocks of wood,
And watching waiters carry in the food.

_____ (4)

Then, at the end of all the speeches, there was wild applause.
The people whistled, clapped, and stamped their feet.

Did this show their (5) for the speaker's cause?

_____ (5)

No, they were glad that it was time to eat!

B. Fill in each blank with the correct word from the word list.

1. If you hint that someone is dishonest without actually accusing that person, you are speaking _____.
2. If you describe only the good things about something and skip over any bad things, your description shows your _____.
3. People who have used force to get their way in the past can often get their way in the present just through _____.
4. If you refer to someone as a worm or a toad or an insect, you are describing that person _____.
5. A ruthless boss, a political dictator, and a schoolyard bully—each is just a different type of _____.

C. Write a short newspaper article describing Daniel Webster's defense against Scratch (the devil). Use at least **four** of the Words to Know.

The Devil and Daniel Webster (page 438)

Grammar SkillBuilder: Contractions

Key Concept: To make prose or dialogue seem like natural speech, writers often use contractions, which create an informal tone.

Contractions

A **contraction** is formed by joining two separate words and substituting an apostrophe for letters left out of one of the words.

Contractions are used throughout this excerpt of dialogue from *The Devil and Daniel Webster*. Read the excerpt through as it is, and then reread it substituting the original words for the contractions. Notice how the language becomes more formal.

"And meanwhile—well, **there's** Mary and me (*takes her hand*)—and, if you folks **don't** have a good time, well, we **won't** feel right about getting married at all. Because I know **I've** been lucky—and I hope she feels that way, too. And, well, **we're** going to be happy or bust a trace."

Activity

A. Rewrite the following sentences, replacing the contractions with the words from which they were formed.

Example: Jabez isn't completely honest with Mary before the wedding.

Rewritten: Jabez is not completely honest with Mary before the wedding.

1. He doesn't tell her of his deal with the devil.
2. He's hoping for a reprieve.
3. He worries that he'll lose her forever.
4. Suddenly the fiddler can't play a note.
5. "I'm afraid that the devil's in this fiddle," he cries.
6. "Here's Daniel Webster," someone shouts.
7. "Let's hear what he has to say."
8. "I'd like to hear that, too," says Scratch.
9. Daniel Webster tells Scratch they'll need a trial with an American judge and jury.
10. There's no worse judge to be found than Judge Hathorne.

B. Rewrite each sentence, using a contraction whenever possible.

Example: He would hang anyone who came before his bench.

Rewritten: He'd hang anyone who came before his bench.

1. I have asked for an exception.
2. You had better answer the questions truthfully, Stone.
3. You are sure that that is your signature?
4. What is the verdict?
5. They have let Stone go free.

The Devil and Daniel Webster (page 412)**Selection Quiz**

Recall the events in Benét's play. Then answer the questions in phrases or sentences.

1. As the play opens, neighbors are gathered at Jabez Stone's house. Why?

2. What does Mr. Scratch have in his metal box?

3. How did Jabez become wealthy?

4. What main point does Webster make that influences the jury's verdict?

5. What does Webster make the devil promise?

The Devil and Daniel Webster (page 412)

Selection Test

A. Think about how the dialogue and stage directions reveal information about the plot and the characters. For each character listed below, write notes describing something you have learned about the character and the character's role in the plot of this drama. (6 points each)

Character	What You Have Learned About the Character	Character's Role in the Plot
1. Jabez Stone		
2. Mary Stone		
3. Scratch		
4. Daniel Webster		

B. Write the letter of the best answer. This exercise is continued on the next page. (6 points each)

- _____ 1. The crowd's gossip during the square dance does all of the following **except**
- explain Jabez's good fortune.
 - create a feeling of expectation.
 - cast doubt on Jabez's accomplishments.
 - suggest that people may be jealous of Jabez.
- _____ 2. When Mary expresses her pride in Jabez, he feels uncomfortable **mainly** because he
- doesn't believe her.
 - is a very humble person.
 - is embarrassed by her love.
 - hasn't told her the truth about himself.
- _____ 3. The first sign that the devil (Scratch) is at the wedding occurs when
- the dancing begins.
 - the old couple starts arguing.
 - there is trouble with the fiddle.
 - Daniel Webster walks in the door.

- _____ 4. Scratch agrees to a trial when Webster
- offers money to break the contract.
 - offers to let Scratch choose the jury.
 - says that Scratch isn't an American.
 - challenges the signature on the contract.
- _____ 5. To prove that he is an American, Scratch mentions all of the following **except**
- slavery.
 - church beliefs.
 - the Declaration of Independence.
 - wrongs that were committed against Indians.

C. Words to Know. Write the letter of the best answer. (4 points each)

- _____ 1. You would be **most** likely to pay homage to a
- cashier.
 - hero.
 - blackmailer.
- _____ 2. A smile that was feigned would be
- fake.
 - friendly.
 - fierce.
- _____ 3. A boat floating placidly would be **most** likely to
- tip over.
 - move quickly.
 - move slowly.
- _____ 4. Intimidation usually involves
- threats.
 - favours.
 - hints.
- _____ 5. An oppressor controls people's behavior by using
- power.
 - persuasion.
 - reason.

D. Answer **one** of the following questions based on your understanding of the play. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (13 points)

- Do you think Daniel Webster's speech to the jury would be as appropriate for an ordinary criminal as it is for Jabez Stone? Explain your opinion.
- The writer uses poetic language in the repetition of phrases by the crowd and jury, in Scratch's song and his summoning of the jury, in Webster's speech to the jury, and so on. How do you think this poetic language contributes to the effect of the play? Support your answer with reference to the play.

E. Linking Literature to Life. Answer the following question based on your own experience and knowledge. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (13 points)

Is there anything that you would trade for your freedom? If so, what would you trade it for, and why? If not, why not?