

***Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller (Published by Viking Press)**

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts IV, Communication Arts IV, and Contemporary Communications

Summary

Willie Loman is an aging salesman who is finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. In fact, he is no longer able to support himself and his wife Linda without borrowing money weekly from his next door neighbor Charley. Linda is a supportive 1950's wife who seeks to comfort and encourage Willie, but he is bordering on senility and is deeply depressed. He has attempted suicide on more than one occasion. Biff and Happy, the two grown boys, unfortunately are not real grown-ups. Biff is jobless, and although Happy has a job, he is not being promoted as rapidly as he would like. Linda summons them home to try to decide what to do about Willie. This play is a poignant examination of the American Dream, family values, aging, and the life and death of a salesman.

Connection to the Curriculum

Death of a Salesman is a classic play that examines a middle-class family of the 1950's. In Contemporary Communications students read the play to examine life in the business world and discuss what happens to people in business as they age. In Communication Arts IV each character is examined as to how he/she relates to other family members. The psychological aspects of the family and the values that Willie unwittingly teaches his boys can also be studied.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text.

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4.7- The student identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive text

1.4.10- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

1.4.11- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions

1.4.13- The student compares and contrasts varying aspects (character traits and motives, ideas, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints, authors' purposes, themes, persuasive techniques, use of literary devices, thoroughness of supporting evidence) in one or more appropriate-level texts.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student identifies and describes different types of characters (protagonist, antagonist, round, flat, static, dynamic) and analyzes the development of characters.

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and their influence on characters and events in the story of literary text.

2.2.6- The student recognizes ways that literature from different cultures presents similar themes differently across genres.

Writing:

3.1.1- The student uses the writing process in various formats such as journal entries, research reports, speeches, business letters, scripts, essays, lab reports, critical analysis of current events and reaction papers in all content areas.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)
This play includes mild profanity in conjunction with the characters' frustrations. In addition, the end includes a death (as noted in the title).

AP Connections

Papers of literary analysis are written after examining critical reviews of the play.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon