

***Long Day's Journey Into Night* by Eugene O'Neill**

(Published by Yale University Press)

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts IV

Summary

The Tyrone household is plagued with dysfunction, and the family members find it ever so difficult to exist together in their summer vacation home. As the title implies, the action of the play takes place over a very short period of time during which James and Mary Tyrone attempt to face their demons of alcoholism and drug addiction while their children, James, Jr., and Edmund, deal with alcoholism and consumption respectively. Set in 1912, this play in four acts models the contemporary dysfunctional family but recognizes that times have not changed all that much. The human condition is such that what undermines society in 1912 still undermines the society of the twenty-first century.

Connection to the Curriculum

This Eugene O'Neill play satisfies the objective of introducing students to the genre of American drama. Given that the Advanced Placement IV class requires analytical thinking, this play allows the reader to experience vicariously several social issues and analyze their causes and their effects upon the nuclear family. It requires complex reading and evaluation that is the cornerstone of Advanced Placement classes.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.3.5- The student discusses how figurative language contributes to the piece as a whole.

1.4.8- The student reviews and reinforces reading comprehension through varied and appropriate modes such as writings, performances, projects, graphic displays, and available technology.

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

1.4.15- The student uses paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (stated and implied main ideas, main events, important details, underlying meaning) from appropriate-level narrative, clearly preserving the author's intent.

1.4.17- The student analyzes and evaluates how an author's style and use of literary devices work together to achieve his or her purpose for writing a text.

Literature:

2.1.3- The student analyzes and evaluates how the author uses various plot elements to advance the plot and make connections between events.

2.2.7- The student discusses themes depicted in literature.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

As the play is centered around a dysfunctional family, the reader will encounter situations involving alcohol and other drug abuse. It also contains mild profanity associated with the topic. The play maintains an element of hope in spite of the obvious negatives that the Tyrone family must endure.

AP Connections

O'Neill's play underscores the correlation between families of the early twentieth century and those of the twenty-first century. While understanding the problems of the Tyrone household are unique to the characters, they are not unique to society. Such a concept is, indeed, part of the advanced analysis required of college-bound students and Advanced Placement students in particular.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon