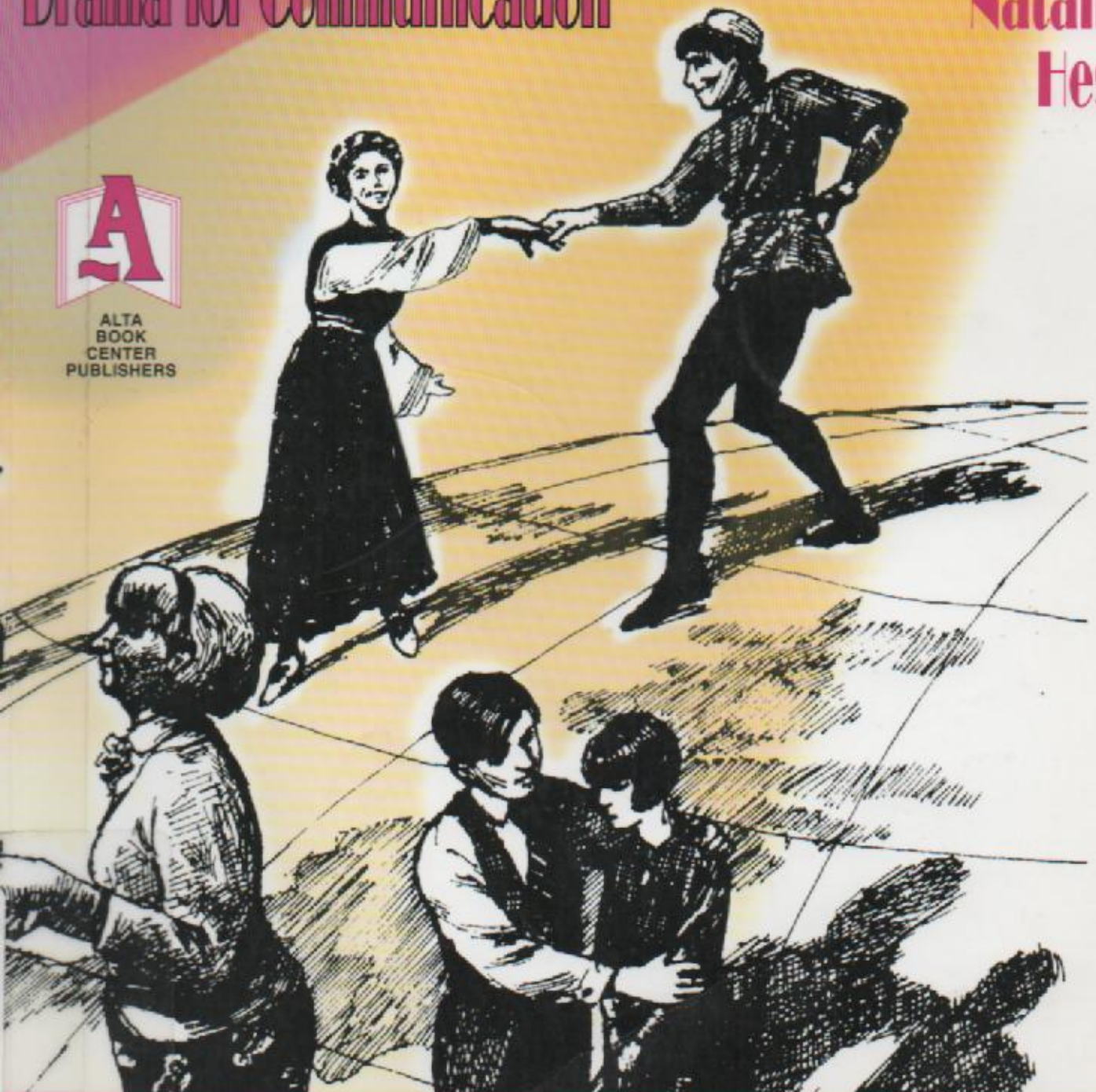
ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

Drama for Communication

Natalie Hess



ALTA BOOK CENTER PUBLISHERS

Acquisitions Editor: **Aaron Berman**
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Production Editor: **Jamie Ann Cross**
Cover Art: **Dave Itchkawich**
Interior Art: **Dave Itchkawich, Kathy Peterson**
Interior Design: **Martie Bateson Sautter**

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ISBN 1-882483-66-9

Acknowledgments

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Susan Glaspell. ***A Jury of Her Peers***. Mankato, Minn.: Creative Education Press, 1992.

To Lenore M. Cupp, a brilliant teacher, actor, and director—also my good friend, mentor, sometimes mom, and my first teacher of English through Drama.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts.

Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

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Pygmalion

Trifles and A Jury of Her Peers

To the Teacher

Introduction

I have written *All the World's a Stage* because for many years now, I—like other teachers who use the real life language of drama to enrich language learning in EFL and ESOL classes—have used plays and movies as natural sources of language. Plays work well in the language learning classroom because there seems to be something festive about a performance; drama both captivates the imagination and employs all the senses. Plays also work well because mentally students assume the personae of the characters—a process of projection and identification which serves to lower their anxiety levels and helps to develop target language egos.

Drama functions successfully in the communicative classroom because it gives us many voices to listen and talk to. When we interpret a play, we are, in a sense, doing just what the actors, the producer, and the director of the play had to do: get inside the characters and find out how these characters experience life. When we read a play, we converse with a body of creative artists rather than with a single author, allowing us to look at a text from a great variety of perspectives.

Organization of the text

In *All the World's a Stage*, key scenes from five well-known, high-interest plays form the core of each chapter. The scenes form complete units, so that students can get a feel for the entire drama without actually reading the whole text. The focus points of these dramas are the themes of family, success, romance, independence, and a search for identity—all of high relevance to every audience.

The scenes chosen for study are central in the creation of character, the forwarding of plot, and the establishment of mood in each play. Each pivotal scene is introduced by pre-reading activities, structured around in-reading strategies, and followed by post-reading techniques. Each play is preceded by a summary of its plot. This summary serves as a reading comprehension passage and as an overview that helps students understand the pivotal scenes. The last play, *Trifles*, by Susan Glaspell, is accompanied by its short story version, *A Jury of Her Peers*. The analysis of how drama differs from narration, I believe, adds to the flavor and interest of *All the World's a Stage*.

Tips for the teacher

- **Watch the scenes on video.** All of the plays in this book have been made into at least one film (some have been produced various times in various ways). Encourage

students to watch videos of the scenes they have been working on in order to compare their "imaginary stage" with the film director's vision. Because the filmed version becomes the only possible version once it is seen, I don't show the films in entirety until students have had a chance, in the pre-reading activities, to produce their own imaginary play script.

Note: There are several ways you can obtain copies of the videos. I recommend checking at a library or local video store. There are also video distributors (some deal with libraries only). A few resources to try are ***Video Finders***, 800-343-4727; ***Midwest Tape***, 800-875-2785; and ***Movies Unlimited***, 800-523-0823. Further information is included in the video sections of the plays.

- **Use the videos for listening comprehension.** Although *All the World's a Stage* can certainly be used on its own, viewing the films adds a valued listening component and an additional level of interest.
- **Encourage students to read the entire plays.** Such extensive reading together with the viewing of the entire video tape can form the core of outside assignments for the course.
- **Invite students to act out scenes.** Once the play has been read, viewed, and understood on many levels, invite students to act out scenes for their own enjoyment and for the entertainment and edification of their classmates. I have found that unrehearsed plays read by students in class do not work as well. The first reading of the play should ideally be done with the teacher or native speakers. They can take on key roles while the students learning English participate with occasional short speeches.
- **Encourage some memorizing.** Memorizing helps the students feel a sense of fluency. Do not require, however, that students memorize lines. Ask them to follow the development of the scene and to use their own words to get the same message across to the audience.

The philosophy behind this book

The aim of *All the World's a Stage* is to foster interesting and genuine communication. Teaching drama is different from the teaching of any other literary form largely because drama is never meant just to be read. A play is written in order to be produced, acted, and seen. When we use a play for classroom reading, we are, therefore, actually creating a highly artificial situation. Nevertheless, once we become aware of what we are doing, our subversion can become a useful communicative tool for language teaching and learning.

When we read a play, we are, in a sense, asked not just to be readers but also to become actors, directors, producers, stage-designers, and the audience. Such a multiplicity

of roles may well serve pedagogical and creative purposes. In addition to being a story, a play is a set of directions for actors who will then experience the emotions, dilemmas, triumphs, and resolutions recorded within it. When we read a play, we must also contemplate the emotional tone of the lines. How loud are the words said? Which words are emphasized? What gestures accompany the words? How do props and the stage set engender a sense of meaning and reality to the drama? Such diverse tasks help us to create a three dimensional feeling for the dramas we study and make the readings perhaps even more helpful to language acquisition than most flat texts.

How this book works

Before teaching with this book, you need to read the plays and watch the videos. This is the best preparation for teaching the scenes. Though *All the World's a Stage* requires this preparation, it is nevertheless intended to be a user-friendly book. The margin questions, vocabulary explanations, and cultural side notes help guide students through the first readings of the plays. Judicious teachers will not use all the activities following each scene, but see in them a suggested menu from which they may pick and choose those appropriate for their classes, those best done as class work, and those better suited for homework. To promote genuine communication in the classroom and to give students the feeling that they are in charge of their own progress, most of the exercises have been set up as group work or pair work. Teachers of students who are not used to following such a structure might find it a bit uncomfortable at first. I strongly urge all teachers to give it a try! However, activities proposed as group or pair work can easily be shifted to individualized work.

In monolingual classrooms, I advise you to appoint, or better yet ask the group to appoint, a secretary, a discussion leader, and a language monitor for each of the group activities. The language monitor sees that English is spoken, the discussion leader gives everyone a chance to participate, and the secretary takes notes and asks group participants to sign their names at the bottom of finished group projects. Such guidance adds the sense of control that both teachers and learners in monolingual classes sometimes need. The use of positive reinforcement is crucial to the promotion of good group work, so be sure to praise the groups who have managed to stick to English.

All the World's a Stage can be used as a main text in a reading, speaking, drama, and/or film class, or as a supplementary text in a conversation and/or communication class. I have found that teaching a few key scenes intensively and assigning the rest of the play for extensive reading works best. I have arranged this book with such a procedure in mind.

I encourage students to read aloud and act out entire scenes or parts of scenes. I also emphasize that students take the time to read the entirety of some of the plays This makes enjoyable extensive reading assignments. I warmly recommend class viewing of as many of

the films as possible and encourage you to investigate the legal ways in which movies can be shown in educational settings.

Suggested plan for a forty-five minute lesson

1. Introduce the title of the play and ask students to speculate about its content.
2. Read aloud the *What this play is about* section and ask basic comprehension questions.
3. Have students, in pairs, read the rest of the introductory section to each other (they alternate reading paragraphs out loud). Work through the exercises in this section.
4. Have students work through one or two pre-reading activities.
5. Do a dramatic reading of a small section of the first scene (no more than one page of reading).
6. Divide the class into pairs or small groups and get the students to take on parts and act out the section that you just read (encourage them to read dramatically—preferably while standing up).
7. In different pairs or small groups, have students take on different roles and act out the same section again.
8. Now view the video portion of the scene that the students have acted out.
9. In small groups, have students talk about the discussion topics relevant to the section they have read.
10. For homework, ask students to read the remainder of the scene and do one or two post-reading activities.

To the Student

Do you enjoy seeing a play or going to the movies? Most of us do because plays and films help us to relax and perhaps to see our own lives from a new perspective. Plays and films are different from other kinds of writing because they are closer to real life. We get to know the people in a play or a film from the way they look, the way they act, and from what they say to one another. Some of us get so involved in the theater or at the movies that we cry, we hide our eyes, and even have emotional outbursts like shouting. We feel emotional in the theater because drama speaks directly to our feelings, and hence we see reflections of ourselves in the actors.

When we have seen a good film or a fine play, we often like to spend some time talking about it. We discuss why certain scenes made an impression on us, why certain speeches seemed real or not, how certain events reminded us of our own lives, and why we would behave exactly like or completely different from the characters in the drama.

I have written this book with one purpose: to enjoy watching outstanding plays while getting an inside look at some of the scenes. The plays in this book were selected due to their worldwide popularity and famous authors. Because these plays have stirred emotions in audiences and stimulated thoughts about how people live their lives, they have won prestigious prizes and been made into fascinating films.

As you read the scenes and work your way through the exercises, you and your classmates might experience some of the same emotions felt by other audiences. The exercises will also take you "backstage" to explore how the actors felt playing the character parts they did and what the director may have worried about in producing the play. I encourage you to study the scenes carefully and take the time to read the plays in their entirety, as well as watch their film versions. Mostly, I hope that the plays inspire you to improve your conversation in English. I wish you good luck and the best of progress with your studies!

Death of a Salesman

by Arthur Miller

Death of a Salesman

What this play is about

Willy Loman is a salesman with a great dream life. In his dreams he sees himself as a super salesman with a sparkling personality. People in homes and businesses welcome him and happily buy his products. He travels from city to city from state to state, and everywhere he goes people know him and like him. He makes his living with a firm handshake and a friendly smile.

In reality, Willy sells very little and barely manages to make a living for his family. He is not as well-liked as he would like his family to think he is. Actually, people make fun of him; he is a pathetic character. However, Willy's vision of himself as Mr. Wonderful Salesman is so strong that he convinces both his wife Linda and his sons Biff and Happy that the "dream Willy" is the real Willy.

Willy's wife Linda loves him unconditionally. She suspects the truth, but she loves Willy so much that she is willing to live together with him in his dream. With his two sons, the situation is more complex. As young boys, they adore their father. They believe him when he tells them that all you need in life is a great smile, a firm handshake, and a great personality. Willy seems to be the ideal father. He spends a great deal of time with his children, he is unreasonably proud of them, and he never stops talking to them about his vision of the world. But actually Willy does his sons much harm. He overindulges them by giving them what they want, and he gives them a bad example: when Biff steals a football from school, Willy just laughs the matter off.

Also, it doesn't bother him that his sons don't study. He is always making fun of Bernard, the son of his friend Charlie. Bernard is a serious boy who makes straight A's in school and takes no interest in sports. To Willy the only thing of any importance in school is games and sports. Biff plays football and baseball in school, and Willy is sure that his son will get an athletic scholarship to a university and maybe become a great professional ballplayer.

Willy himself never had a father; his father died when he was very young. He has an older brother Ben who shows up and offers Willy a chance to go with him to Alaska where the chances for making money are better. Willy doesn't accept the offer simply because he has talked himself into thinking that there is a great future for him as a super salesman. Since Linda has joined Willy in his dream life and believes this dream too, the Loman

family misses its one chance to get ahead.

When Biff, the older son, flunks an important math test at the end of his senior year in high school, he takes a train to where his father is working in Boston. Biff is sure that his wonderful father will be able to talk to the teacher and change things. But things turn out very differently.

In Boston, Biff discovers his father in a hotel room with a scantily dressed woman. Biff's world falls apart. Suddenly he understands that his dad is a phony. From then on Biff isn't able to function. He goes from bad to worse. He grows up to be a small-time thief who serves time in prison. Happy does a little better; he manages to hold down a small job, and he is able to attract many girlfriends. Happy has always felt that Willy loved Biff more than him, and he unsuccessfully tries to gain his father's attention.

When Willy is in his 60's, he feels that his life has been a total failure. He has failed his wife, and his life has been one long mistake. Meanwhile, his old friend Charlie has created a successful business, and Charlie's son, Bernard, has become a great lawyer who argues cases before the Supreme Court.

The final blow comes to Willy when he is fired from his job. He then feels that his only way out is suicide. Charlie tries to rescue Willy by offering him a job, but Willy, who has always secretly competed with Charlie, is too proud to accept the offer.

Linda has long suspected that Willy had suicide in mind. She still adores him and tries in all possible ways to salvage Willy's self-esteem. Linda has a deep sense of justice. Pleading for Willy with his sons, she tells them that although their father never made a great deal of money, he is a fine human being who needs their love and attention.

Willy's sons make some sort of attempt at cheering him up, but they are both so angry at all the lies that they have lived with—the lies that were always inspired and promoted by their father—that they only further insult Willy. Under the illusion that his life insurance might help his sons, Willy finally does commit suicide. Ironically, he kills himself on the day when the payments on his house are finally finished.

One of Willy's last dreams was that his funeral would be a great affair to which all the customers who once loved him would show up. But actually the only people present are Linda, Biff, Happy, Charlie, and Bernard. The dreams of the salesman remain just dreams. "We are free," Linda tells her dead husband. She means that their house has finally been paid for, but the audience, having followed Willy's difficult life, can only hope that death has indeed made the poor salesman free.

We see this play through a set of flashbacks. The stage set is Willy's house. When we are in reality, the actors walk through doors, but when we shift to memories and dreams, which very often happens, the actors walk through walls to demonstrate the dreamy quality of the scene.

Sharing Ideas

Re-read the introduction to the play, and underline one sentence that you found especially meaningful. Maybe you disagreed with it; perhaps you found it especially sad or true; perhaps it reminded you of something; or maybe you thought it was interesting, and it made you want to read the play. When you have found your sentence, share your ideas with classmates.

Before you read Scene IV: What is success?

Death of a Salesman deals with the meaning of success and failure. Before you read Scene IV, consider your ideas about success through the following activities.

Defining Success

All of us want to enjoy success in life, but to each one of us the word *success* means something different. Below are some definitions of success; choose the one that suits you best. Then follow the directions after the list.

The success list

To be successful means that . . .

you have made plenty of money.
you have a good family.
you have many friends.
your children love you.
you are able to give love.
you get a lot of love.
there is romance in your life.
you have a job you like.
you are healthy.
you are able to be creative.
you have adventure in your life.
you have been lucky.

1. Get up and speak to several classmates. Explain to your classmates why you have chosen your particular version of success and listen to their explanations.
2. Find one or two people who agree with your definition. Tell one another why this definition is important to you, and check if your reasons for making the same choice are the same or different.
3. Talk to a classmate who disagrees with you, and try to convince each other that your position is the right position.
4. On your own, complete the following sentence:
   To me being successful means that

   _____

   _____.
5. Read your sentence out loud to the class and listen to the sentences of other students. If you feel that some of the sentences are particularly interesting, ask the students who composed them to write them up on the board so that everyone can copy them down.

When you read the first scene, remember to notice how Willy Loman and his sons define success.

Journal writing: Success

What is your own personal plan for success? Write a page or two outlining your strategies. Decide whether you want to share this plan with your teacher and/or your fellow students and how you think the sharing should be done.

Consulting the "Success Experts"

To make a better life plan, you are given a chance to consult a "success expert!" Carefully read about what the experts in the following list have to offer you.

List of experts

Ken Mik Yamoney: He knows the world's stock markets inside out and will give you excellent advice on how to invest money and make your fortune.

Ima Gorgeous: She knows the best way for you to improve your looks. She will tell you exactly which kinds of clothes to wear and where to buy them. She also knows how to put you in touch with the world's best known plastic surgeons and the world's most renowned dietitians. She guarantees that you will be able to change your face or figure in any way you wish.

Ad Venturesome: He can plan the world's most exciting adventures for you. From space-travel to wild animal hunts to under-earth exploration, this man knows his way around and will not only plan, but make sure that you experience the most thrilling adventures you can imagine.

S. P. Ritual: He knows the world of the inner spirit like the palm of his own old and gnarled hand. He will help you to discover your soul and to find the true meaning of life.

Ned B. Longing: This expert will make you feel right at home with any group of people. No matter where you go or whom you meet, you will always feel like you belong. You will always say the right things and make everyone in the group want to be your friend and take you out to dinner.

Shurta Getabout: She can plan trips around the world or trips in your home city. Wherever you want to travel and whatever your taste in travel is, Ms. Shurta Getabout will arrange things for you just the way you like them and make sure that you are on your way.

Ken B. Friendly: This expert guarantees that you always have many friends. He will teach you how to make and keep good friends for your entire life.

Sheza Socialbee: Ms. Socialbee is the world's foremost expert on placing people in society. She will ensure that you have an extremely active social life. You will constantly be invited to parties, and your own parties will be the talk of the town.

Heeza Leader: Mr. Leader will teach you qualities of excellent leadership and will ensure that you are in a position of leadership no matter where life places you.

Crea Tiv: Ms. Tiv will teach you how to be original and creative in any field or fields you choose. Your ideas will be cherished and many people will benefit from the creative processes you start.

Noel Idgeable: Mr. Idgeable is the foremost authority on how to obtain and store knowledge. He will ensure that you know more things than any other human being you might have dealings with.

Carrie Through: After just one single session with Ms. Through, you will never again procrastinate (delay) a project. You will always finish the projects you start and finish them completely and on time.

Ura Wisewoman: Dr. Wisewoman will give you great insight. She will teach you wisdom. The world will seek your advice, and whatever you say will be praised and quoted in the newspapers.

Organ Ization: Once you have had a chat with Mr. Ization, you will never lose anything again. All your files and all your belongings will be well organized. You will always be on time, and your home will always be neat and tidy.

Ohso Famous: This expert makes you well known all over the world. Wherever you go, people will want to see you, talk to you, and get your autograph.

Phil Anthropist: This wonderful, caring expert will help you do good deeds and serve humanity. Wherever you go, you will touch people with your helpfulness and kindness, and the world will be a better place because you were a part of it.

1. Choose two of the experts that are most important to you. Also choose two experts that are of absolutely no interest to you.
2. In small groups, explain to one another why you have chosen the experts, and why some experts mean so little to you.
3. Determine what life value each of the sixteen experts sells. For example, Ken Mik Yamoney sells *financial success* and Ima Gorgeous sells *good looks*. Then decide which of these life values is most important to you (number 1), which is the next most important (number 2), and so on.
4. Each of these life values is likely to have a saying about it in nearly every culture. According to American culture, for example, there are the sayings "money cannot buy happiness" and "beauty is only skin deep." Work with your group to find cultural sayings about all of the life values.

Interview: Parent–children relationships

Death of a Salesman deals with the influence of parents on children. Do you believe, as Arthur Miller did, that parents have a strong influence on their children? Before you read the scene, use the following questions to interview a classmate. As soon as you have finished, have your partner interview you. Then sit with another pair and tell the group what you have learned about your partner. There may also be class discussion.

List of interview questions

1. Do you believe in the saying, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again?" Explain why or why not.
2. Who do you think is the person who has influenced your life the most?
3. Tell me about something that you are proud of in your life.
4. Do you think that children must be proud of their parents in order to do well in life? Explain why or why not.
5. Do you think that one very traumatic (hurtful; shocking) event in a person's life can change that person's entire life? Explain why or why not.
6. Do you think that parents should take an active interest in the lives of their children? Why or why not?
7. Can children forgive parents who do something immoral (very bad) that goes against everything that the parents have always tried to teach the child? Explain your reasons.

Journal writing: Parent–children relationships

Relations between parents and children are often difficult even though the parent and the child love each other. Write a paragraph or two about this topic. You may use your personal experiences and/or ideas you have heard or read about.

Reading Scene IV: The Other Woman

The scene you are about to read is very significant to the play. It shows us how Biff discovers his father's infidelity and how the boy's entire world changes because his wonderful father is suddenly no longer his hero, but a phony. Because Biff has always worked only to please his father, he suddenly has nothing to strive for. Willy, of course, can never forgive himself. As you read, ask yourself where the real guilt is in this play and what Arthur Miller is teaching us through this drama.

The scene begins just as Biff has made a dreadful discovery. Biff has taken a bus to Boston where he knows his father is on a sales trip. He hurries to his father's hotel with only one thought in his mind: "Dad must come back home and help me talk to my math teacher. If Dad talks, the teacher will listen. Dad can talk anyone into anything!"

When Biff arrives at the hotel, he finds his father with a scantily dressed woman. Willy first makes up all kinds of stories to fool his son, but nothing works. Biff understands that his father is cheating on his mother, and suddenly Biff sees the world differently. All of his

father's stories fall apart. His perfect father is a liar and a cheat. Furthermore, if his father is a phony, then Biff himself can no longer do well in the world. Biff has always trusted himself just because his wonderful father believes in him. Now that Biff no longer believes in his father, he can no longer believe in himself either. The following scene starts just as Willy has succeeded in making the woman leave the hotel room. This is the tragic turning point in Biff's life. Until this moment he has been a success; from this moment on, everything he touches will fail.

Death of a Salesman

Scene IV

The Other Woman

WILLY: *(After a pause.)* Well, better get going. I want to get to the school first thing in the morning. Get my suits out of the closet. I'll get my **valise**. *(Biff doesn't move.)* What's the matter? *(Biff remains motionless, tears falling.)*

What is Willy trying to do?

valise = suitcase

Why doesn't Biff move?

She's a buyer. Buys for J. H. Simmons. She lives down the hall—they're painting. You don't imagine—*(He breaks off. After a pause.)* Now listen, pal, she's just a buyer. She sells merchandise in her room and they have to keep it looking just so . . . *(Pause. Assuming command.)* All right, get my suits. *(Biff doesn't move.)* Now stop crying and do as I say. I gave you an order, Biff. I gave you an order! Is that what you do when I give you an order? How dare you cry! *(Putting his arm around Biff.)* Now look, Biff, when you grow up you'll understand about these things. You mustn't—you mustn't overemphasize a thing like this. I'll see Birnbaum first thing in the morning.

How does Willy try to explain the situation?

How does Willy feel?

How does Biff feel?

Why does Willy suddenly give a command?

How does Willy change his approach?

Can you understand Willy's situation?

Is Biff really going to understand when he grows up? Why or why not?

BIFF: Never mind.

WILLY: *(Getting down beside Biff.)* Never mind! He's going to give you those points. I'll see to it.

BIFF: He wouldn't listen to you.

WILLY: He certainly will listen to me. You need those points for the U. of Virginia.

BIFF: I'm not going there.

WILLY: Heh? If I can't get him to change that mark, you'll make it up in summer school. You've got all summer to—

BIFF: *(He's weeping, breaking from him.)* Dad . . .

What has happened?

Why is Willy so sure?

What does Biff mean?

Is going to the University of Virginia a good reason for getting the points?

Why has Biff decided that he is not going to the university?

What is Biff trying to do?

WILLY: *(Infected by it.)* Oh, my boy . . .

Can you understand Willy?

BIFF: Dad . . .

Can you understand Biff?

WILLY: She's nothing to me, Biff. I was lonely. I was terribly lonely.

BIFF: You—you gave her Mama's stockings! *(His tears break through and he rises to go.)*

WILLY: *(Grabbing for Biff.)* I gave you an order!

BIFF: Don't touch me, you liar!

Is Biff being fair to his father?

WILLY: Apologize for that!

Why is Willy on his knees?

BIFF: You fake! You phony little fake! You fake! *(Overcome, he turns quickly and weeping fully goes out with his suitcase. Willy is left on the floor on his knees.)*

WILLY: I gave you an order! Biff, come back here or I'll beat you! Come back here! I'll whip you!

What is Willy trying to do? Why doesn't it work?

Actor Dustin Hoffman as Willy, admonishing his son in the video *Death of a Salesman.*

Let's think about it

Here are six questions. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Ask one person in your group to be secretary and take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answer.

List of questions

1. Why has Willy started the relationship with the woman in the hotel?
2. What really happens to Biff in this scene? Make a list of the things Biff learns and feels. Do you think that Biff makes a decision to fail in life just to punish his father? If that is the case, then whom, besides his father, does Biff punish? Explain your answer.
3. Biff shouts at his father, "You fake! You phony little fake!" Is Biff justified in shouting such words? Why or why not?
4. Biff has always cheated in school and gotten away with it. As a matter of fact, his father encouraged such cheating as he felt that only sports were really important. Why then is Willy so disturbed when he finds that his father is cheating on his mother?
5. Biff and his brother Happy have always obeyed their father, but in this scene Willy tries to command Biff, and Biff refuses to obey. Why does Biff refuse this time?
6. Willy's wife, Linda, never has enough money to buy herself new stockings. Rather, she is always mending an old pair. How does Linda's mending become important in the scene you have just read?
7. Willy tries to tell Biff how lonely he gets on his business trips. Why can't Biff understand such an excuse? Why is it impossible for Biff to forgive his father?

Working with the video

There is a Roxbury Punch production of *Death of a Salesman* starring Dustin Hoffman, Kate Reid, Charles Durning, Stephen Lang, and John Malkovich. The movie was produced by Robert F. Colesberry and directed by Volker Schlondorff. It follows the play almost exactly line for line. Dustin Hoffman, an actor of great stature who has won many awards, called this film "the greatest experience in my life as an actor." *The New York Times* called the film "powerful and magnificent," and *The Chicago Sun Times* called it "a masterpiece." Castle Hill Productions presently holds the rights to the motion picture film version (1414 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10019 USA). Before you view the entire movie, work through the following pre-viewing activities.

Pre-viewing activities

Choosing a character

Your teacher will divide the class into six groups. Each group will be assigned a character. In your group decide how your character looks, how old he/she is, what kind of clothes he/she wears, what kind of gestures and language he/she might use, and how he/she

would behave in a stressful situation. Later, as you watch the film, keep your eyes on "your" character to see if your imagination matches that of the film maker's.

List of characters in *Death of a Salesman*

Willy Loman: A salesman in his late years. He is seen in his young adult years and as a young parent.

Linda Loman: The salesman's wife.

Biff Loman: The salesman's older son and most favored son.

Happy Loman: The salesman's younger son who has always been jealous of Biff.

Charlie: Willy Loman's only friend and a man who has been successful in business.

Bernard: Charlie's son. He is an "A" student in school who later becomes a successful lawyer.

Uncle Ben: Willy's older brother who goes away to Alaska and becomes rich there.

What's happening?

Your teacher will divide your class in half. Those in one group will sit with their backs to the television set. The others will stand in front of their seated partners. They will be watching the first scene of the film without the sound. The standing partners will tell the seated partners what is happening on the screen. During the activity your teacher will tell the seated partners when to change places with the standing partners.

When the first scene is over (at the point in the film when reality shifts to memory), sit in small groups and review what you have seen. Then watch the scene again, this time with the sound on.

In-viewing activity

As you watch the video, check the correct answers on the chart below.

1. When her two boys are home Linda is happy that . . .	they have become successful	the house smells of shaving cream	they get along with their father
2. "Be liked and you'll never want." Which character says this?	Willy	Ben	Charlie
3. When Bernard is young, Willy feels that . . .	Bernard is popular	Bernard will do well	Bernard is a dull boy who will never do as well as Biff
4. Who is the person who is always trying to get his parents' attention?	Biff	Happy	Bernard

5. "Willy, you are the handsomest man alive." Who says this?	Linda	the other woman	Biff
6. Who is the person who becomes rich in Alaska?	Charlie	Howard	Ben
7. When he becomes a lawyer, Bernard gets to argue a case . . .	before the Supreme Court	in New York	for Willy
8. Willy will not work for Charlie because . . .	Charlie doesn't offer enough money	Charlie will not be a good boss	Willy is jealous of Charlie
9. When Willy goes to see Howard, what happens?	Howard fires him.	Howard offers him a new job.	Howard is glad to see him.
10. Who is Dave Singleton?	a salesman	a farmer	a lawyer

Post-viewing activities

Mutual dictation

Here are two paragraphs. Pair up with a partner. One of you will use Paragraph 1. The other one will use Paragraph 2. Move your chairs so that you are sitting back to back. Look only at the page that has the paragraph assigned to you. The person with Paragraph 1 will dictate words and phrases to the person with Paragraph 2. Write these down in the appropriate empty spaces in Paragraph 2. When the person with Paragraph 2 has filled in all the spaces, it is his or her turn to dictate the words and phrases that he or she has been given in Paragraph 2. When both of you have finished, compare your paragraphs to see that you have the same result. Then, check your answers with the complete paragraph on page 14.

Paragraph 1

Death of a Salesman _____ _____ _____ an American tragedy. It is a story _____ _____ _____ _____ who struggles and fails. Somehow Willy Loman has been given the _____ _____ _____ _____. He firmly believes in the cult of personality—a fine smile, a firm handshake, and lots of friends—these are the secret to a life of _____ _____ _____. Nowhere in Willy's formula do we hear about hard work, honesty, or dedication. Still, Willy is in many ways a _____ human being. He clearly adores his boys, and _____ _____ _____ _____ infidelity to Linda, we believe that he loves her. Why do things go so wrong for Willy?

Is he to blame, or do certain things in life just _____? Do we all start out with a script for our lives? If we do, then who writes the _____? Do we as individuals? Is it our _____, or is it destiny? These are some of the questions that Arthur Miller asks in *Death of a Salesman.*

Paragraph 2

Death of a Salesman has been called _____ _____ _____. It is a story about a little man who struggles and _____. Somehow Willy Loman has been given the wrong recipe for life. He firmly believes in the cult of personality—_____ _____ _____, a firm handshake, and lots of friends—these are the secret to a life of happiness and success. Nowhere in Willy's formula do we hear about _____ _____, honesty, or dedication. Still, Willy is in many ways a lovable human being. He clearly _____ _____ _____, and in spite of his infidelity to Linda, we believe _____ _____ _____ _____. Why do things go so wrong for Willy? Is he to blame, or do certain things in life just happen? Do we all start out with a _____ for our lives? If we do, then who writes the script? Do we as individuals? Is it our parents, or is it destiny? These are some of the _____ that Arthur Miller asks in *Death of a Salesman.*

Complete Paragraph for Mutual Dictation

Death of a Salesman has been called an American tragedy. It is a story about a little man who struggles and fails. Somehow Willy Loman has been given the wrong recipe for life. He firmly believes in the cult of personality—a fine smile, a firm handshake, and lots of friends—these are the secret to a life of happiness and success. Nowhere in Willy's formula do we hear about hard work, honesty, or dedication. Still, Willy is in many ways a lovable human being. He clearly adores his boys, and in spite of his infidelity to Linda, we believe that he loves her. Why do things go so wrong for Willy? Is he to blame, or do certain things in life just happen? Do we all start out with a script for our lives? If we do, then who writes the script? Do we as individuals? Is it our parents, or is it destiny? These are some of the questions that Arthur Miller asks in *Death of a Salesman.*

Further activities

Off-the-wall discussion

Following these directions is a list of ideas for you and your classmates to think about. To make your discussion more interesting, read the directions closely.

1. Copy the questions in the *List of ideas* on slips of paper. Post them on the classroom walls.
2. Invite a classmate to walk around the room with you. As you walk, stop at each slip of paper and discuss the idea on it.
3. When everyone in the class has had a chance to walk and talk, one person in your pair will take one of the slips of paper from the wall, and you will sit down together.
4. Your teacher will ask each of you to read the slip of paper you have chosen and to ask for reactions from the class.
5. Listen to the reactions of your classmates and contribute your own thoughts to the discussion.

List of ideas

1. Willy is not aggressive enough to be a salesman.
2. We never learn what Willy sells. Do you think that he is really trying to sell himself? Why or why not?
3. Willy's great fault is that he has an overactive imagination.
4. Children should never be allowed to think their parents are heroes.
5. Biff is very childish and selfish. He should try to understand his father.
6. The names given to characters in *Death of a Salesman* are very interesting. "Willy" is short for "William," which means "protection." "Loman" is just like it sounds: "low man or little man." "Linda" means "graceful and pretty." "Biff" means "strike or hit." Willy's brother is Ben; "Ben" is short for Benjamin, which means "son of my right hand." Happy, ironically, is the name of the most unhappy person in the play. Do you think that the names of these characters add to the meaning of the play?
7. Willy's suicide clearly shows that he is an immoral person.
8. *Death of a Salesman* has often been called "An American tragedy." In a tragedy, events often occur because of some fundamental weakness in the character of the hero. If Willy is the tragic hero of *Death of a Salesman*, then what is his tragic flaw? Explain.

Let's act it out: Role play

Imagine that Biff, after his terrible discovery, decides to go to Alaska to talk with Uncle Ben. He explains how he feels about his father and asks Ben if he may stay with him in Alaska. Ben is sympathetic, but he tries to persuade Biff to return home and to understand and forgive his father. To do the role play between Biff and Ben, follow the instructions below:

1. Half of the class joins a group that will act the part of Biff.
2. The other half joins a group that will act the part of Ben.
3. The "Biff Group" brainstorms for all the possible things Biff will say.
4. The "Ben Group" brainstorms for all the possible things Ben will say.
5. Get together in pairs of one Biff and one Ben and act out the conversations.
6. If any pair wants to present their conversation to the entire class, they may do so.

Writing obituaries

An obituary is a short newspaper article written in the memory of someone who has recently died. Here is an example of an obituary:

> Smith, James (Jay) died on March 13, 1998 of unknown causes. He is survived by his widow, Isabella; his three sons: James Jr., Steven, and Robert; and nine grandchildren. In 1950, Smith married his childhood sweetheart, Isabella Garcia. Together they created a strong force for good in the community. Smith is especially known for his outstanding efforts on behalf of the homeless. It is his efforts that enabled the construction of Elmwood Shelter for the Homeless.

With classmates, in groups of three to five, write an obituary for Willy Loman. Read your obituary to the class.

Discussion

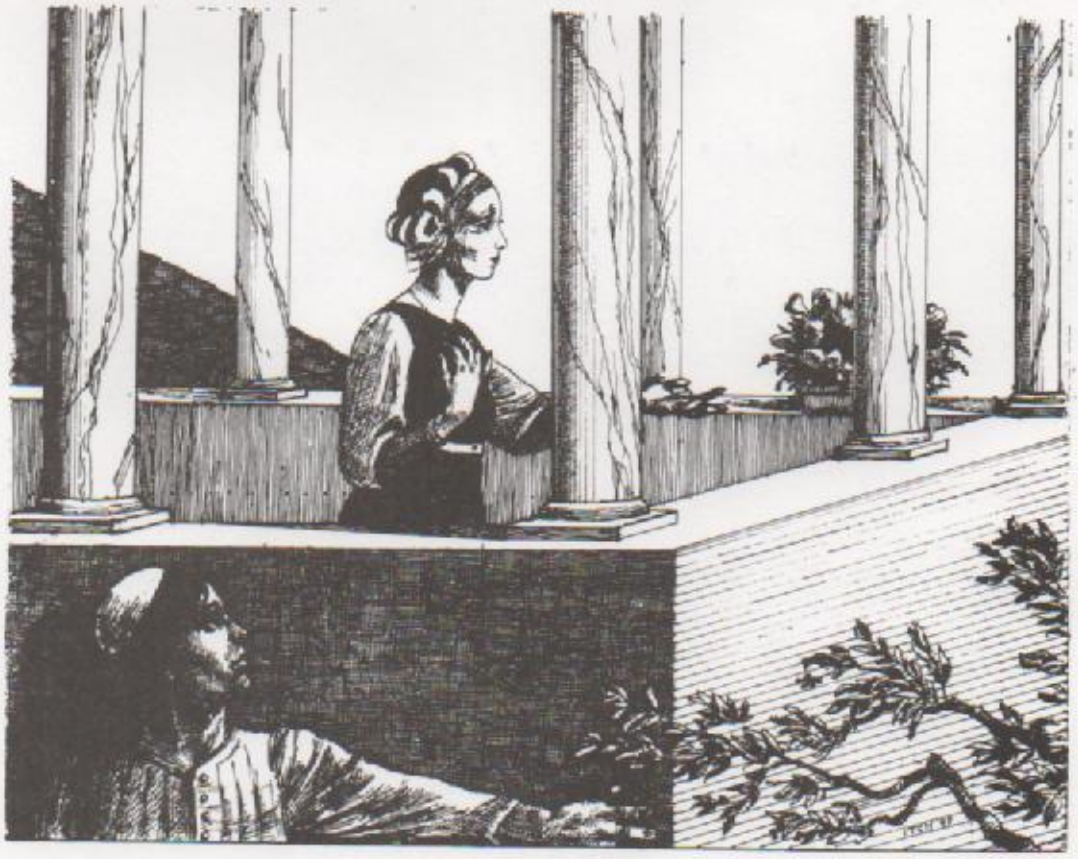
Here is a list of questions to talk about. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Ask one person in your group to be secretary and take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answer.

List of questions

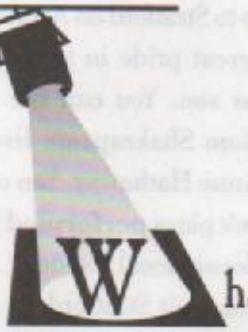
1. How did the filmmaker show us that he was moving from present reality into Willy's dreams and memories? Did you find this way effective? Why or why not?
2. Do you think that Willy's insurance company paid the money that he wanted to give his wife and sons? Why or why not?
3. Many people feel that Happy Loman is the saddest person in this play. Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. Could anyone have prevented Willy's suicide? If so, who? How could his suicide have been prevented?
5. Should Biff have told his mother about the other woman? How might the story have changed if he had told his mother?
6. Why does Bernard become a success while the Loman boys become failures?
7. What does *Death of a Salesman* teach us about American life and American ethics?

Romeo & Juliet

by William Shakespeare



Romeo & Juliet



What this play is about

The writer

William Shakespeare is probably the world's most famous poet and playwright. Although he wrote his thirty-seven plays about four hundred years ago, they are still best sellers in modern theaters. Next to the Bible, the works of Shakespeare continue to be the world's most read and sold literature. Actors love to play the parts written for them by Shakespeare. Dramatic directors and producers find continued inspiration and joy in his drama, perhaps because Shakespeare wrote about the kind of human **aspirations** and emotions that are universal and timeless. Even though our ideas have changed about how a play should work, and even though the English language has changed, the way Shakespeare described human happiness, human agony, and human longings has not altered. Many will agree that there is no one who has written about these **themes** better than William Shakespeare.

Shakespeare has had enormous influence not only on the way people think but even on the way they speak. Today most of us **quote** Shakespeare without even realizing that we are doing it. Some of Shakespeare's expressions have simply become part of the English language. When you say "To be or not to be," you are quoting Shakespeare. When you say, "Sweets to the sweet," you are quoting Shakespeare. When you say, "We were born to die," you are quoting Shakespeare. You are also quoting Shakespeare when someone says something you don't understand and you tell him, "It's Greek to me;" or if when you can't find something, you tell people that, "It vanished into thin air;" or if someone supports you and you call this person "a tower of strength."

Considering the great influence of Shakespeare, it is amazing that we know so little about his personal life. In fact, there are people who claim that Shakespeare didn't really write all the wonderful works **attributed to him**. These people simply can't believe that a person about whom we know so little could have produced such wonderful art. Of course, William Shakespeare did exist, and he was a remarkable genius, although we aren't sure that he **perceived himself** in such a light.

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford on Avon, England. His father, John Shakespeare, was a glove maker. William was educated in an elementary school in Stratford. When he

was eighteen years old, he married Anne Hathaway who was eight years older. Six months later their daughter, Susanna, was born.

Evidently, William went to London to seek his fortune. There he became an actor and a dramatist. His company built the famous Globe theater, and both Queen Elizabeth and her successor, King James I, enjoyed watching many of his plays. In 1612 Shakespeare was a wealthy man. He was able to retire from his work in the theater and return to Stratford where he bought himself the second largest house in town and **apparently** lived a **respectable** life as an **understanding** and **admired** citizen of Stratford. He died in 1616.

If you ever visit England, you should definitely go to Stratford on Avon. The people there take great pride in telling you about their famous son. You can see the houses where William Shakespeare lived and the cottage of Anne Hathaway. You can also see Shakespeare's plays **performed** by great actors in the lovely local theater.

If you visit Stratford on Avon, don't tell the folks there that some people think William Shakespeare didn't write all of his works. The people of Stratford don't have much patience for such a theory.

The play

The tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* is one of Shakespeare's most loved plays. This popularity is in part due to the names, Romeo and Juliet, which are associated with youthful love and passion. Anyone who has ever fallen in love or been in love can well understand the strong emotions that **motivate** this desperate young couple.

In most tragedies, **dreadful** things happen to people because they have a certain character **flaw**—maybe they can't make up their minds, maybe they believe everything too easily, or maybe they are just too suspicious. In the case of Romeo and Juliet, however, there are no flaws. Romeo and Juliet's tragedy happens not because something is wrong with either one of the young lovers, but because of the wrong believed by their families.

Romeo's family name is Montague, and Juliet's is Capulet. The Montagues and the Capulets are two **ancient** and powerful families in Verona, Italy. Members of these two families have carried on a **feud** for many years. The Montagues and Capulets hate one another and are constantly picking fights which sometimes result in killing one another. The Prince of Verona does his best to control these two feuding clans, but he does not always succeed. Of course, no Montague would ever dream of marrying a Capulet.

Romeo is trying to get over his feelings for Rosaline, a lady who did not return his love, when a friend talks him into **crashing** a big party given by the Capulets. Romeo goes masked so that no one will recognize him. At the party he takes one look at fourteen-year-old Juliet, and she, in turn, takes one look at him. It's love at first sight.

Romeo isn't sure that Juliet is as **smitten** as he is for her, so later that night he sneaks into the back of her house hoping to get to talk to her. He discovers Juliet awake at her window, talking to the moon and the stars about how madly she has fallen in love with Romeo and how she wishes that Romeo had a different last name. In this scene, the two get together and their love grows stronger from moment to moment. Before the night is over, they have promised to love only each other for all eternity and to be married as soon as possible.

The man who marries them is Friar Lawrence, a wise **monk** who understands their deep love for each other and who also hopes that this marriage will serve to end the dreadful feud between the Montagues and the Capulets. The marriage between these two beautiful young people should be the beginning of much happiness, but, unfortunately, luck just isn't with the young lovers.

Soon after their marriage, two things happen. First, Romeo becomes involved in a fight with Tybalt, a violent member of the Capulet family who holds a **grudge** against our hero. Romeo truly doesn't want to do **harm**, but he kills his new **in-law**, Tybalt, in their struggle. As a result, Romeo is banished from his homeland and goes far away to Mantua.

Soon afterwards, Old Capulet, Juliet's father, decides to marry his daughter to an **eligible** young man, Count Paris. He gets **furious** when Juliet refuses. No one in the family, of course, realizes that Juliet already is married—and married to their enemy. Juliet becomes absolutely **frantic**. Her **devoted** nurse, the woman who has taken care of her since she was a baby, knows all about the marriage to Romeo. She advises Juliet to marry Paris. After all, reasons the nurse, Juliet's marriage to Romeo is a secret, and under the circumstances, Friar Lawrence will not say anything. The nurse thinks that Juliet should simply take the easiest way out.

Of course, the nurse doesn't realize how deeply and sincerely Juliet loves Romeo. In **desperation**, Juliet turns to Friar Lawrence for advice. She tells the monk that she would rather **commit suicide** than marry Count Paris. Friar Lawrence understands that she is serious, and, therefore, he offers a rather **radical** solution. He gives Juliet a **potion** that will make her appear dead. He suggests that she drink this potion on the eve of what is supposed to be the day she marries Count Paris. **To all appearances**, she will seem dead and will be taken to the family **vault**. There, the friar promises, she will soon wake up. In the meanwhile, the friar will notify Romeo, who, no doubt, will come and take his bride away to Mantua. Of course, Juliet is **terrified**; nevertheless, she doesn't have any other **options**, and so she does exactly as the friar has advised.

Unfortunately, things do not exactly follow the plan. Juliet does her part—what was supposed to be a joyful wedding day ends up as a **funeral procession**. But Friar Lawrence's letter to Romeo—the letter that was supposed to explain everything—doesn't arrive in Mantua. Instead, Romeo gets the news that Juliet is dead, and in his despair, he decides to take his own life so that he can sleep **for all eternity** next to his beloved **bride**. Romeo manages to get some poison and travel to Verona, where he finds Juliet, whom he believes to be dead, in the family vault. Romeo swallows the poison and, slowly dying, lies next to his beloved sleeping bride. When Juliet awakens, she sees her dead **bridegroom**, realizes what has happened, and uses Romeo's **dagger** to put an end to her life.

The play ends with the two families gathered around the tomb of the desperate lovers. The Montagues and the Capulets finally understand how foolish their feud has been. They make peace among themselves, promising always to remember Romeo and Juliet, who were called **star-crossed** lovers because their fate had been so tragic.

Working with words

The vocabulary of a Shakespearean play is somewhat different from the ordinary meanings of the words today; four hundred years of language use has changed some of the meanings. Together with a partner, read the words, explanations, and example sentences in the following list. Then quiz your partner on the meanings of the words. When you think that you understand all of the words, re-read the information on the life of Shakespeare and the summary of the play before you go on to the next exercise.

List of words

aspirations: hopes. Shakespeare hoped that he would do well in Stratford. He had high *aspirations* to become an honored citizen of his home town.

theme: subject. The *theme* of *Romeo and Juliet* is love.

quote: to say exactly what someone else has said. Because Shakespeare's works have become so famous, people *quote* Shakespeare without knowing that they are doing it.

attributed to him: assigned to him. Maybe Shakespeare wrote the poem. No one is sure, but it has been *attributed to him.*

perceived himself: thought of himself. People thought that Shakespeare was a genius, but he probably didn't *perceive himself* as a genius.

apparently: obviously. *Apparently,* Shakespeare enjoyed living in Stratford when he grew older. Everyone in town liked him and admired him.

respectable: having a good standing in society. After he had bought his expensive house, Shakespeare became a very *respectable* citizen in Stratford.

upstanding: honorable. All the people of Stratford admired and looked up to William Shakespeare. They thought that he was an *upstanding* citizen of their town.

admire: have high regard for. Romeo thought that Juliet was the most beautiful girl in the world. He *admired* her very much.

performed: acted. In Shakespeare's days young boys acted the parts of women in the plays. Sometimes they *performed* very well, making it easy for the audience to believe that the young boys were women.

motivate: push to do something. We hope that reading these plays will make you want to see them and *motivate* you to go to the theater.

dreadful: terrible. Romeo thought that Juliet was dead so he committed suicide because he didn't want to live without her. His action was a *dreadful* mistake.

flaw: a weakness; an imperfection. Juliet was very eager to marry Romeo, and she worried that Romeo might think she was too eager and think that her eagerness was a *flaw* in her character.

ancient: very old. There are some two-thousand-year-old buildings in Rome. They are truly *ancient.*

feud: ongoing fight due to hatred between two sides. Sometimes when parents from two families fight with one another, their children continue the *feud.*

crash: go to a party uninvited. Romeo was feeling so sad that he decided to go to the Capulets' ball even though he had not been invited. He and his friend Horatio *crashed* the party.

smitten: in love. Romeo was *smitten* by love the instant he looked at Juliet.

monk: priest. In the Catholic church, *monks* do not marry; they often live isolated from society in monasteries.

grudge: a strong sense of anger or resentment that people feel for a long time. Because Romeo had once been unfair to Tybalt, Tybalt carries a *grudge* and doesn't want to forgive Romeo.

harm: hurt; damage. Juliet's nurse loves Juliet dearly and would never knowingly do her any *harm*.

in-law: a relative through marriage. After Romeo marries Juliet, her parents become his *mother-in-law* and *father-in-law*.

eligible: to be just right for; to be ready. Juliet's father considers Juliet *eligible* for marriage, but her mother thinks that she is too young.

furious: very angry; full of intense feeling. If Juliet's family discovered that Romeo had visited Juliet's garden, they would certainly become *furious*.

frantic: very nervous, greatly excited by anger or pain. When Romeo thought that Juliet was dead, he grew *frantic*.

devoted: faithful and loving. Dogs are usually *devoted* to their masters.

desperation: hopelessness. Romeo's suicide by what he thought was the grave of Juliet was an act of complete *desperation*.

commit suicide: to kill oneself. In many religions committing *suicide* is considered a sin.

radical: very unusual; extreme. Once only *radical* politicians wanted to allow women to vote. Now women take an active role in the politics in most countries, and the idea of women voting is no longer *radical*.

potion: medicine; drink; mixture of liquids. When the young man told the witch that he wanted the young woman to fall in love with him, the witch gave him a magic *potion* in a green bottle. "If your loved one drinks this *potion*," said the witch, "she will certainly be smitten by you."

to all appearances: as an outward impression. *To all appearances*, Juliet still seemed an unmarried young girl, and her father thought that she should marry Count Paris. Actually, Juliet was already married to Romeo.

vault: a burial room for the dead. Juliet was just sleeping in the family *vault*, but Romeo thought that she was dead.

terrified: to feel very much afraid. Sometimes after we see a frightening movie, we feel so *terrified* that we can't sleep.

options: possibilities, choices. Knowing English opens up many *options* for work.

funeral procession: a parade-like walk that is part of a ceremony of accompanying the body of someone who has died to its burial place. On the morning when Juliet was supposed to marry Count Paris, everyone thought that she had died. Instead of a wedding march, there was a *funeral procession*.

for all eternity: always and forever. Romeo and Juliet promise to love each other *for all eternity*.

bride: a woman right before and after she is married. People say that all *brides* are beautiful.

bridegroom: a man right before and after he is married. In some traditions, the *groom* is not supposed to see the bride on the day of the wedding until the marriage ceremony.

dagger: very sharp knife. Hunters used *daggers* to kill and skin animals.

star-crossed: unlucky. People often talk about Romeo and Juliet as "the *star-crossed* lovers."

What did you understand?

Complete the sentences below according to the introduction you have just read. Then compare your sentences with those of a classmate.

1. Shakespeare's plays continue to be popular because _____.
2. Shakespeare writes about _____.
3. Many people quote Shakespeare without _____.
4. It is amazing that _____.
5. Shakespeare was born in _____.
6. After he retired, Shakespeare bought _____.
7. Romeo's and Juliet's last names are important because _____.
8. Romeo meets Juliet at _____.
9. Before the night is over Romeo and Juliet have decided to _____.
10. Friar Lawrence marries them because he hopes that _____.
11. Romeo is banished from Verona because _____.
12. Juliet kills herself with a dagger when _____.

The way Shakespeare spoke English

The English language, like all languages, has undergone many changes. It is still changing even now as we speak it and study it. In Shakespeare's time, certain forms of English were different from what they are today. It will help you to understand the play better if you know about Shakespearean grammar.

Shakespearean grammar

Study the following "rules" of Shakespearean grammar.

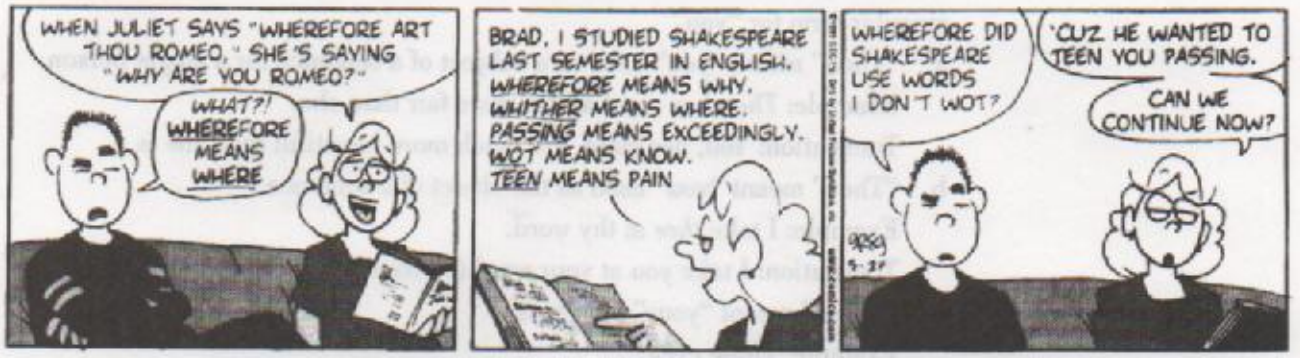
1. In Shakespeare's time there were many ways of saying "you," and there was a singular form for "you."
   a. "Thou" meant "you" used as a subject of a sentence for a single person.
      Example: *Thou* her maid art far more fair than she.
      Translation: You, her maid, are much more beautiful than she is.
   b. "Thee" meant "you" used as the object of a sentence.
      Example: I take *thee* at thy word.
      Translation: I take you at your word (I believe you).
   c. "Thine" meant "your" or "yours."
      Example: *Thine* eyes . . .
      Translation: Your eyes . . .
2. In Shakespeare's time some verbs were different.
   Examples:
   thou art = you are
   doth, dost = does
   wilt = will
   canst = (you) can
   mayst = (you) may
   wouldst = (you) would
   hath, hast = has
3. In Shakespeare's time some verbs had "be" at the beginning.
   Example: As a winged messenger of heaven when he *bestrides* the lazy-pacing clouds.
   Translation: As a winged messenger (angel) of heaven when he *strides* (walks) over the lazy-pacing (slow-moving) clouds.
4. In Shakespeare's time an "if sentence" (a conditional) would often leave out the "if" and move the verb to the front of the sentence.
   Example: So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd, retain the dear perfection which he owes without the title.
   Translation: If Romeo were not called Romeo, he would be just as perfect. It's not his name that makes him perfect.

Understanding Shakespearean language

Luann is a comic strip that is published in many newspapers. It is about a girl in high school, her brother, and her friends. In the following cartoon, Luann's brother has been told that he has to write an essay about *Romeo and Juliet* for his English class. Luann's brother is not very good at English so he has asked his sister to help. When you read the comic strip, you will notice that people who speak English as their first language also have a hard time understanding Shakespeare.

First listen to your teacher read the comic strip. Then read it by yourself. When you

are finished, read it with a partner. Have one of you read the part of Luann and the other read the part of her brother. Switch parts and read the comic strip again. Finally, answer the questions.



List of Questions

1. How did Shakespeare say *think?*
2. How did Shakespeare say *where?*
3. How did Shakespeare say *why?*
4. Can you remember any other words in Shakespearean English? Tell them to your partner.
5. How do you think Luann feels?
6. Do you think that Luann's brother often asks for help from Luann? Why or why not?
7. Do you think that Luann enjoys helping her brother? Explain.

Before you read Scene II: What is love?

Romeo and Juliet is centered around the feeling of love. Before you read the scene, consider your ideas about love through the following activities.

Defining love

In small groups, talk about the following questions. Report your conclusions to the rest of the class.

1. Do you believe in love at first sight?
2. What does the expression "to fall in love" really mean?
3. Is true love really necessary for a good marriage?
4. In some cultures, it is the responsibility of the parents to find a good wife or husband for their child. How do you feel about such an arrangement?
5. How old should people be before they marry? Should the man and the woman be the same age?

Visualizing love

This activity involves something called a "visualization." Close your eyes while your

teacher reads the paragraph below. Think about your teacher's words and, using your imagination, draw a picture in your mind. When you have finished your visualization, tell the details of your picture to a classmate and listen to his/her description.

The visualization (teacher's script)

Imagine two seventeen-year-old boys sitting on the steps of an old building. One of them is Romeo; the other is his good friend, Benvolio. Romeo is depressed. He has been telling his friend all about a girl called Rosaline who just won't have anything to do with him. Imagine what Romeo is saying to his friend. Imagine what his friend says.

Suddenly Benvolio has an idea. "Hey, buddy, cheer up!" he tells Romeo. "The Capulets are throwing a big party tonight. Everybody is supposed to wear masks. What do you say we go? It'll be cool! You really need a distraction, man."

Romeo doesn't really like the idea. Those Capulets are nasty people. But Benvolio is very persistent. "Come on," he says. "Don't forget that we'll be wearing masks. Nobody is going to recognize us. Don't be chicken. Don't be afraid."

Now they're at the party. There's loads of food and all kinds of people in beautiful costumes. With your imaginary vision, take a good look around. Don't forget that everyone is wearing masks. Wow! There's Romeo. He's dancing. He really looks like he's having a fine time. Then suddenly he looks up and sees her. What do you imagine she looks like? Does she have long or short hair? What color? What color are her eyes? Where is she? What is she wearing? How do her eyes meet Romeo's? What does she like about Romeo?

Now Juliet's mother is calling her, and Romeo just knows . . . he just knows that he must, must, must see her again.

Now open your eyes. Let's read the play!

Reading Scene II: The Balcony Scene

The scene that you will read is perhaps the best known scene from the play because it is in this scene that the lovers first declare their devotion for each other. Romeo discovers that Juliet loves him as much as he loves her. Juliet wants to forget that she is a Capulet as willingly as Romeo is to give up his name. This scene has been acted out in practically every spoken language. Some of the world's greatest actors have played the roles of Romeo and Juliet. Two of the most quoted lines from Shakespeare come from the balcony scene: "That which we call a rose, by any other word would smell as sweet," and "Parting is such sweet sorrow."

The scene takes place right after the great Capulet ball where Romeo first saw and danced with Juliet. At the party the two talked and kissed. When all the guests leave, Romeo quietly climbs over the wall of an orchard behind Juliet's house, hoping to get a last glimpse of the girl he loves. Romeo speaks to himself about how taken he is with his new love. He compares her beauty to the light of the sun—her eyes being the two brightest stars in heaven, her presence that of a bright angel. He wishes that he were a glove on Juliet's hand so that he might touch his beloved's cheek.

Then he sees Juliet on the balcony next to her window. This is the first time that Juliet has fallen in love, and she is overwhelmed with the emotion. She has stepped out on her

balcony because she needs to speak of the strong feelings that possess her. Juliet thinks that she is completely alone and confesses her love for Romeo to the night. She fervently wishes that he were not a Montague so that she could love him freely.

Of course, Romeo overhears her words and is overjoyed to know that she returns his love. After listening to her for a while, he speaks to her. At first Juliet is frightened. Then she is overjoyed. But she is afraid that one of her relatives might show up and murder her beloved. Romeo tells her that love has directed him to her and that he would rather die than to live a life separated from her. Juliet, although she is passionately in love with Romeo, worries that perhaps she has given in too easily. Romeo assures her that his love for her is true, and they pledge to marry each other as soon as possible. Romeo leaves in search of a priest who will marry them.

Translation

Before you read the balcony scene in Shakespeare's language, read the modern translation below. Read it quietly to yourself first, then read it with a partner. Read the scene twice. Each of you should have a chance to read the part of Romeo and the part of Juliet.

ROMEO: *(Enters the garden and speaks to himself.)* If you have never been hurt, it's easy to make fun of someone else's pain. *(Pauses.)* I better keep quiet. Hey, there is a light in the upstairs window. Could it be Juliet? She is my sunshine. That moon up there isn't nearly as bright as my Juliet is beautiful. The moon could be jealous of my sweet lady. *(Pauses and sees Juliet.)*

There she is, my beautiful lady, my one and only love. She is right there on the balcony. That's wonderful! That's what I wanted! Just to see her again. I only wish that she knew how much I love her. *(Pauses.)* It looks as if she is talking to herself. I wonder what she is saying. Her eyes are so beautiful that the stars could be jealous. If her two eyes were stars, they would make so much light in the sky that the birds would think it was day and start singing. *(Pauses.)* Now she is leaning her cheek against her hand. I wish that I were a glove on her hand, so that I could touch that cheek.

JULIET: I feel so sad and sorry for myself.

ROMEO: My love is beginning to speak—my angel love—she certainly is like those heavenly creatures that ride the clouds.

JULIET: *(Speaking to herself.)* Romeo, my dear Romeo. Why does your name have to be Romeo Montague? Why do you have to belong to a family that my family hates so much? If you would be willing to give up your Montague name, I would certainly give up my own silly Capulet name.

ROMEO: *(Aside to himself.)* Should I say something? Should I let her know that I am here? Should I let her know that I can hear her?

JULIET: What's in a name anyway? A name is just an artificial thing. It's

really not part of a person at all. It's not your hand and not your foot. It's not your arm and not your face. So what is it? Nothing at all, I think. If you call a rose something else, won't it smell just as sweet and look just as beautiful? And you, sweet Romeo, are the most perfect man in the whole wide world. So, let's just get rid of that stupid name, and then you can be mine.

ROMEO: Great! I agree. I'll get baptized again and get another name.

JULIET: Who is there? Who heard what I was saying?

ROMEO: It's me—a man without a name. I have no name because you, my love and my saint, hate that name, so now my name—Romeo Montague—is hateful to me, too.

JULIET: I recognize that voice. Is that you, Romeo Montague?

ROMEO: I am neither Romeo nor Montague because you dislike both of those names.

JULIET: How did you get into our garden? It's a dangerous place for you. If any of my relatives see you, they could kill you!

ROMEO: Love helped me to climb the walls. For love, nothing is too difficult. I love you so much that I can't be afraid of your relatives.

JULIET: But I am terribly afraid. Honestly, if anyone sees you, they will murder you.

ROMEO: Right now I am much more afraid that you won't love me. I fear an angry look from your beautiful eyes more than I fear the anger of your relatives.

JULIET: I am terrified that anyone will see you. I will gladly give everything I have to keep this visit a secret.

ROMEO: Don't worry. The night is dark and hides me from everyone. But if you don't love me, I would just as soon that they find me because my life is not worth living without you. I would rather have their hate kill me than live a long life without your love.

JULIET: Who told you how to get into the garden? Who told you where my window is?

ROMEO: Love was my guide! I could find you anywhere.

JULIET: It's a good thing that it is so dark, or you would see how red my face is. Still, what I said out loud here in the night before you started to speak was the truth—I love you—that is the truth, and I am glad that you overheard it. Do you really love me the way I love you? Don't swear and say you do. So often men say such things and don't really mean them. You have heard that I love you. I have said it out loud, and maybe a young woman shouldn't say such things because then her lover might think that she is too easily won and soon grow tired of her. But I can't help myself, I do love you, dear Montague, and I have told you so. You heard me when I

thought that I was alone. You heard my great passion in the dark—whatever you do, don't make light of it.

ROMEO: I swear by the moon that I love you truly.

JULIET: Oh please, don't swear by the moon. The moon is always changing.

ROMEO: I'll swear by anything. Just tell me what to swear by.

JULIET: But I don't want you to swear at all. I just want to trust you.

ROMEO: My only love!

JULIET: But you must leave me now, my darling. I want our love to be true in the daytime and not hidden in this way by the darkness of the night. Please, my darling, say goodnight to me and leave.

ROMEO: Do you really want me to leave with no assurances of our love?

JULIET: What assurances can I give you?

ROMEO: I want us to exchange promises that we will love each other forever.

JULIET: You had my promise long before you asked for it. Still, I'll take it back to give it again.

ROMEO: I don't understand. Why give it again? Who would you give it to the second time?

JULIET: Why, only to you in holy bonds of marriage. I have as much love for you as there is water in the endless ocean. You cannot empty the ocean. It is constantly refilled, and that is just how my love for you is—endless and constantly refilled. The more love I give you, the more love I will have to give. But now my nurse is calling, and I have to go in. Wait for me a little. I will come out soon again.

ROMEO: What a wonderful night. I just hope that I am not dreaming everything.

JULIET: *(Enters again.)* Goodnight, dearest Romeo. If you are really serious, then please make all the arrangements for marriage. Go and talk to a priest. And then leave word with my nurse where and when I am supposed to be, and I will be there. *(The nurse calls Juliet from inside the house.)* I have to go now, dearest. Please do as I ask . . .

ROMEO: I promise . . . My promise to you is like a promise to God.

JULIET: Goodnight, my darling.

ROMEO: Leaving you, I feel like a kid that is being sent away to school.

JULIET: Really, I am afraid. It's getting dark, and those early hunters might hear us. Again, my darling, I have to warn you. If anyone in my family sees you, it will be the end for us. All I want to do is be an echo and say your name over and over again.

ROMEO: Your voice has become my very own soul, so it is my soul that calls my name.

JULIET: Romeo?

ROMEO: Yes, my love?

JULIET: When do you think that everything will be ready?

ROMEO: By nine o'clock.

JULIET: That's only a few hours away, but it seems like twenty years. I don't want you to go. Just stay. I love being with you and being close to you. But you better hurry off. It's almost morning. I want you to go, but I don't want you to go. I want you to fly away like a bird, but I want to have a silken string tied to that bird.

ROMEO: I wish I were a bird that belongs to you.

JULIET: I wish so, too, but I might choke you with too much love. Please get going. I know that I will see you soon. Goodnight, my love. Goodnight, my love. Maybe I'll just say those words until I see you again in the morning. Parting is such sweet sorrow. But I will see you tomorrow.

ROMEO: Goodnight, my darling. I am on my way to the priest to tell our story.

Now read through the actual scene without looking at any of the vocabulary notes in the margins. When you finish reading, think of one thing that you remember from the scene and talk with a classmate about it. Then, re-read the scene carefully while you study the vocabulary notes and questions in the margins. Afterwards, with a classmate, answer the questions. Next, read the scene aloud with a classmate. One person should read the part of Romeo and the other read the part of Juliet. Finally, join a small group of classmates to do the post-reading exercises.

Romeo and Juliet

Act II, Scene II
The Balcony Scene

ROMEO: *(Enters.)* He **jests** at **scars** that never felt a **wound**.

jests = makes fun of

scars = marks from injuries on one's skin or on one's soul

wound = injury, especially from battle

What might Romeo be talking about? Who might he be talking to?

(Juliet enters at a window above Romeo.)

But **soft**! What light through **yonder** window breaks?
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!
Arise, fair sun, and kill the **envious** moon
Who is already sick and pale with **grief**
That thou her maid art far more fair than she.
Be not her maid since she is envious:
Her **vestal livery** is but sick and **green**
And none but fools do wear it. **Cast** it off.

soft = stop, be quiet
yonder = that
To what does Romeo compare his love?
envious = jealous
grief = sadness
that thou = because you
Why should the moon be jealous of Juliet?
vestal = virgin
livery = clothing
green = pale
cast = throw

It is my lady! O it is my love!
O that she knew she were!
She speaks yet she says nothing. What of that?
Her eye **discourses**; I will answer it.
I am too bold; 'tis not to me she speaks.
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do **entreat** her eyes
To twinkle in their **spheres** till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars?
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the **airy region** stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O **that I were** a glove upon that hand!
That I might touch that cheek!

What does Romeo wish for?
discourses = speaks
entreat = beg; plead; ask
spheres = balls
To what does Romeo compare Juliet's eyes?
airy region = sky
that I were = I wish I were
Why does Romeo want to be Juliet's glove?

JULIET: Ay me!

ROMEO: She speaks.
O speak again bright angel, for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,

As is a **winged messenger** of heaven
Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes
Of **mortals** that fall back to **gaze** on him
When he **bestrides** the lazy puffing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

winged messenger = angel
mortals = living people
gaze = look
bestrides = walks across

JULIET: O Romeo, Romeo! **Wherefore art thou Romeo**?
Deny thy father and **refuse** thy name
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Wherefore art thou Romeo = Why must your name be Romeo?
deny = disown
refuse = say this no longer belongs to you; deny ownership
What does Juliet offer?

ROMEO: *(Aside.)* Shall I hear more or shall I speak at this?

What is Romeo wondering about?

JULIET: 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
Thou are thyself, though not a Montague.
What's a Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection when he **owes**
Without that title. Romeo **doff** thy name,
And for thy name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

What does Juliet mean?
Do you agree with her?
Why might names be important?
owes = owns, possesses
doff = get rid of; take off; remove

ROMEO: I take thee at thy word.
Call me but love and I'll **be new baptized**;
henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Why does Romeo suddenly speak up?
be new baptized = get a new name
henceforth = from now on

JULIET: What man art thou that, thus **bescreened** in night,
So stumblest on my **counsel**?

How does Juliet feel?
bescreened = hidden
counsel = private thoughts

ROMEO: By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am.
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself
Because it is an enemy to thee.
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

How does Romeo identify himself?
Does he tell Juliet his name?

JULIET: My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words
Of thy tongue's uttering yet I know the sound.
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO: Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

Why does Juliet recognize Romeo's voice?

What does Romeo mean?

JULIET: How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The **orchard** walls are high and hard to climb
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my **kinsmen** find thee here.

ROMEO: With love's light wings did I **o'erperch** these walls
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do that dares love attempt,
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

Why is Juliet worried?

orchard = place where fruit trees grow

kinsmen = relatives

o'erperch = climb

Why has Romeo come?

JULIET: If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO: Alack, there lies more **peril** in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords! Look thou but sweet,
And **I am proof against their enmity**.

JULIET: I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO: I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes,
And but thou love me, let them find me here.
My life were better ended by their hate
Than death **prorogued**, wanting of thy love.

peril = danger

What is Romeo really afraid of?

I am proof against their enmity = They can't hurt me.

I would not for the world they saw thee here = I would give all the treasures in the world to keep them from seeing you.

What does Romeo ask for?

prorogued = postpones

JULIET: By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO: By Love that first did prompt me to inquire:
He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot, yet wert thou as far
As that vast shore washed with the farthest sea,
I should adventure for such **merchandise**.

How has Romeo found his way to Juliet's garden?

merchandise = things you buy or sell. The word *merchandise* refers to Juliet.

Does this use of the word *merchandise* tell you something about the life of women in the days of Shakespeare?

JULIET: Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face

Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.
Fain would I **dwell on form**—fain, fain deny
What I have spoke. But farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say "Ay"
And I will take thy word. Yet if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' **perjuries**,
They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.
Or if thou thinkest I am too quickly won,
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay
So thou wilt woo; but use, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond
And therefore thou mayst think my **havior** light,
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overhead'st, **ere I was ware**,
My true love passion. Therefore pardon me
And not impute this yielding to light love
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

Why is Juliet glad that it's dark?

fain = gladly

dwell on form = stick to normal, polite behavior

How does Juliet answer her own question?

What worries Juliet? (two things)

perjuries = lies

Juliet is worried that Romeo will think she is too easily won. How will she overcome that problem?

Why does Juliet worry that her behavior is "light"?

havior = behavior

ere I was ware = before I knew

Why does Juliet ask to be pardoned?

ROMEO: Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—
JULIET: O swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.
ROMEO: What shall I swear by?
JULIET: Do not swear at all;
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self
Which is the god of my **idolatry**,
And I'll believe thee.
ROMEO: If my heart's dear love—

Why doesn't Juliet want Romeo to swear by the moon?

What does Juliet say that Romeo should swear by?

idolatry = worship of a person like a god

JULIET: Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,

I have no joy of this contract tonight.
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,
Too like the lightning which doth cease to be
Ere one can say it lightens. Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May rove a beauteous flow'r when next we meet.
Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

ROMEO: O wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET: What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

ROMEO: Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JULIET: I give thee mine before thou didst request it;
And yet I would it were to give again.

What frightens Juliet?
What is Juliet hoping for?
What does Romeo want?

ROMEO: Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

JULIET: But to be **frank** and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My **bounty** is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.
I hear some noise within. Dear love, **adieu**!

NURSE: *(Calls from within.)*

JULIET: Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true
Stay but a little, I will come again.

(Juliet exits.)

What is "it" in the line, "wouldst thou withdraw it?"
frank = generous, honest
bounty = kindness
How does Juliet describe her love?
Why does Juliet leave?
adieu = good-bye (from the French *à dieu* meaning "to God")

ROMEO: O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be **substantial**.

JULIET: *(Enters again.)* Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,

Why is Romeo afraid?
substantial = real

Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

NURSE: *(From within.)* Madam!

JULIET: I come anon—But if thou meanst not well, I do beseech thee—

NURSE: *(From within.)* Madam!

JULIET: By and by I come—
To cease thy strife and leave me to my grief.
Tomorrow will I send.

What are Juliet's plans?

What does she want Romeo to do?

ROMEO: So thrive my soul—

JULIET: A thousand times goodnight! *(Exit.)*

ROMEO: A thousand times the worse, to want thy light!
Love goes toward love as school boys from their books
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

(Enter Juliet again.)

So thrive my soul = as I hope to go to heaven

What does Romeo compare love to? Do you think that this is a good comparison?

JULIET: Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falc'ner's voice
To lure this tassel gentle back again!
Bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud,
Else would I tear the cave where **Echo** lies
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine
With repetition of "My Romeo!"

ROMEO: It is my soul that calls upon my name.
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

JULIET: Romeo!

ROMEO: My sweet?

JULIET: What o'clock tomorrow shall I send to thee?

ROMEO: By the hour of nine.

JULIET: I will not fail. 'Tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

ROMEO: Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Hist . . . tassel = Juliet warns Romeo to be quiet because other people, like the hunter of birds, might hear them.

Echo = a young girl who fell in love with a selfish young man, Narcissus. She moaned for him and couldn't eat or drink. Finally, all that was left of her was her voice.

JULIET: I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Rememb'ring how I love thy company.
ROMEO: And I'll still stay to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.
JULIET: 'Tis almost morning: I would have thee gone—
And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,
That lets it hop a little from his hand
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silken thread plucks it back again,
So loving—jealous of his liberty.
ROMEO: I would I were thy bird.

JULIET: Sweet, so would I,
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow
That I shall say good night till it be **morrow**.
(Exit.)
ROMEO: Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!
Hence will I to my ghostly friar's close cell,
His help to crave and my dear **hap** to tell.
(Exit.)

What does Juliet mean by "parting is such sweet sorrow"?

morrow = tomorrow

Sleep dwell . . . breast = sleep well

hap = story (what happened to me)

Working with language: How does Shakespeare say it?

Read the balcony scene again with a group of classmates to find how Shakespeare says the following:

1. I only wish that she knew that I love her. _____
_____
2. An angel. _____
_____
3. Why of all the names in the world must the name of the man I have fallen in love with be Romeo Montague? _____
_____

4. Why should names be so important anyway? _____

5. If Romeo were just willing to drop his name, he could trade me for his name. I am all his. My love should be as precious to him as his name. _____

6. I have started to hate my own name because it is a name that is an enemy to the girl I love. _____

7. Nobody could stop me from coming here because love gave me wings. _____

8. Do you really love me? Maybe you think I was too easy to get. Maybe I should play hard to get. _____

9. Maybe I have fallen in love too quickly. _____

10. Please send me a message about when and where we will be married. _____

11. Time will go very slowly until I see you again. _____

12. It isn't easy to leave you, but I am already happy with the thought that I will see you again tomorrow. _____

What is attraction?

We know that Romeo and Juliet fell in love with each other at first sight. But we have no idea how or why they became so attracted to each other. Let's explore the concept of attraction through the following activities.

Defining attraction

In groups of three, tell your classmates about what you notice and like in other people. What kind of person would you choose to talk to in a crowd of people? What is it that attracts you to other people? Is it the way they look? The way they talk? The way they walk? Perhaps they remind you of someone? Is it a matter of personality? Can you think of other reasons?

Picking a person

Below is a picture of eight people. Which person attracts you? Which of these people could you imagine as a friend of yours? Pick one of the people. Look at the person carefully. Then give the person a name, an age, and think of something unusual that might have happened to this person. Tell your story to your group.

Thinking about looks

How do you think Juliet looks? Is she tall or short? What color is her hair? What color are her eyes? How does she walk? How does she talk? What about Romeo? In groups of three try to create a mental picture of these two lovers, and then share your image with the rest of the class.

The language of love

When people feel strong emotions, they often use exaggerated language to describe their feelings. Look over the scene, and find at least three places where either Romeo or Juliet uses exaggerated language. Share your answers with classmates, then do the following activities.

Love songs

Try to remember the words of a modern love song and write them down. Do modern writers also exaggerate when they write about love? Why do you think that people tend to exaggerate? Discuss your ideas with one or two classmates.

Then and now

After the party during which Romeo danced and fell in love with Juliet, Romeo decides to try to get a glimpse of her by standing outside her window. What would a young man in our time most likely do? Look at the statements below. Which one do you think is the most probable? Discuss your choice with classmates.

List of choices

a. He would ask the girl at the party for her phone number.
b. He would ask other girls at the party about this one girl.
c. He would tell his buddies how he felt.
d. He would talk to as many people as possible about this girl to find out as much as possible about her.
e. He would call her up on the telephone.
f. He would make friends with her brother.
g. Other?

About marriage

Romeo and Juliet decide right away that because they are so much in love, they must get married. They make this decision even though they both know that their families hate each other. Today there might be other things that young people consider before they get married. Below is a list of considerations; rank them 1 to 6 according to what you consider important before getting married. Put the most important thing first on your list, and continue in this way. After you have arranged your list, explain your ratings to one or two classmates, and listen to their ratings. Discuss your ideas, and then make a single list (1 to 6) that you all agree on.

List of considerations

___ The two families should like each other.
___ The two people should be of the same religion.
___ The two people should be of the same race.
___ The two people should come from the same social class or the same economic background.
___ The two people should be in love.
___ The two people should have the same level of education.

Journal writing: Family versus love

Both Romeo and Juliet seem willing to give up their connections to their family heritage to gain each other's love. Do you think that such an attitude is wise? Write a paragraph or two describing your feelings on the subject. Use examples from real life.

Working with the video

Romeo and Juliet has been brought to the screen several times. One of the most recent and very successful efforts was achieved by the Italian director, Franco Zeffirelli. In his version of Shakespeare's famous love story, Zeffirelli used very young actors, Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting, to portray Romeo and Juliet.

The film, produced by Paramount Pictures, was nominated for four Academy Awards. As you watch the film, you will enjoy its lively feel and modern flavor. Although Romeo and Juliet speak Elizabethan English, they act very much like modern teenagers. They are impulsive, they often disagree with their parents, they have a strong sense about what is right and what is wrong, and they often become very emotional.

Pre-viewing activity

The drama opens in 17th century Verona, a fairly small Italian city state. In small groups, consider the following questions before watching the video.

1. How does a 17th century city look?
2. What usually happens in the central square?
3. What do the houses and streets look like?
4. Is there a market?
5. What is bought and sold in the market?
6. Where do people go to buy food?
7. What do people use as transportation?
8. How do people dress?
9. What kind of government does the city have?
10. How do people entertain themselves?
11. What do the young people of Verona do for fun?

When you finish your discussion, tell the rest of the class about your ideas and listen to the reports of other groups. Then watch the opening scenes of the production. Talk about how the ways that you imagined were the same and/or different from the vision of the film director.

In-viewing activities

Viewing jigsaw

Your teacher will divide the class into groups of four to five students. Each group will choose a list of questions (A, B, C, or D) from below. As you watch the video, answer only the questions that belong to your group. When you have finished viewing the movie, do the following steps.

1. In your own group (the "home groups"), discuss your questions and the answers you chose.
2. Form new groups ("expert groups"). These groups will have at least one member

from each "home group" in them. Present a summary of your "home group" discussion.

3. Return to your "home group" and report on anything new and interesting you might have learned in your "expert group."

Lists of questions

List A

Who first proposes marriage to Juliet?
Why doesn't Juliet's father agree to the marriage proposal?
When does Romeo first see Juliet?
Who recognizes Romeo as a Montague at the Capulet ball?
What advice does Friar Lawrence give to Juliet?
How does Romeo find out about Juliet's death? What went wrong?

List B

What kind of a man is the Prince of Verona?
How does Romeo discover who Juliet is?
Why isn't Romeo thrown out after the Capulets discover who he is?
Why is Lady Capulet (Juliet's mother) happy at the ball?
Why does Romeo kill Tybalt?
What kind of a woman is Juliet's nurse?
"It was the nightingale and not the lark." Who says this line? What does it mean?
How does Juliet die?

List C

How does Juliet discover who Romeo is?
What is Friar Lawrence doing when Romeo first finds him?
Why is Friar Lawrence angry at Romeo?
Why does Friar Lawrence agree to marry Romeo and Juliet?
"My only love comes from my only hate." Whose line is this? What does it mean?
Why are Romeo's friends annoyed with him?
Why has Juliet's father changed his mind about the marriage to Count Paris?
How does the nurse disappoint Juliet?
How does the camera show us that Juliet is waking up from her long sleep?

List D

What kind of a relationship does Juliet have with her nurse?
Why does Juliet's nurse go to see Romeo?
How do Romeo and Juliet manage to get together at the ball?
What happens when Romeo and Juliet meet each other?
"A rose will bloom and then will fade. So does a youth, so does the fairest maid." Who sings these lines? Why are they appropriate?
Why doesn't Romeo want to fight Tybalt?
How does Romeo behave after he finds out that he is banished?
How does Romeo die?

Missing parts?

Now that you've studied the balcony scene, talk with your classmates about the following:

There are many important aspects of the balcony scene in the movie that were never written into the script. For example: hugs, kisses, close-up pictures of Romeo and Juliet's faces, giggles, tree-climbing, running, and facial expressions. Do these additions help you to understand the play? Explain how and why.

After you have finished your discussion, watch the scene one more time. This time look in your books and try to read the lines together with the actors. When you finish this viewing, join a classmate to read out your favorite lines in the play.

Post-viewing activity

Here is a list of statements. Read each statement carefully. If there are words or expressions that you don't understand, ask your teacher or other students for help.

If you agree with a statement, write "A" by it. If you disagree, write "D." If you are not sure how you feel, write "NS."

List of statements

___ Friar Lawrence enjoys the power he has over the lives of people.
___ Juliet's father is an unreasonable man.
___ Juliet's mother is a hypocritical woman.
___ Juliet's mother should help and defend her daughter.
___ Juliet's nurse is a realist who understands the way the world works.
___ Juliet's nurse is a hypocritical woman.
___ Romeo's great fault is that he is too impulsive.
___ People as young as Romeo and Juliet cannot possibly experience true love.
___ Romeo and Juliet are too young to get married.
___ Juliet would be happier with Count Paris than with Romeo.

When you have finished marking all the statements, stand up with your book in hand. Walk up to another student, and talk to him or her about one of the statements. Explain to each other why you feel the way you do about this statement. Move on to another classmate, and explain your feelings about another one of the statements. Continue doing this until your teacher stops you.

Further activities

Writing letters

Do one of the following letter-writing activities:

1. In small groups, compose a letter Juliet might have written to her parents on the day she goes to marry Romeo. Read your letter to the rest of the class and listen to letters written by other students.

2. After Friar Lawrence has decided to give Juliet the potion that will put her to sleep, he writes a letter to Romeo explaining the situation. In small groups write the letter Friar Lawrence might have written. When you have finished, read your letter out loud and listen to the letters of other groups.

Let's act it out: Role play

This is the first time Juliet has fallen in love. She must act as if she is totally wrapped up in this wonderful new experience, yet still seem more practical and a bit less romantic than Romeo. In pairs, act out one of the following:

1. Juliet tells her nurse that she wants to marry Romeo. The nurse tells her she is too young and that she has no idea what marriage is all about. Juliet tries to convince the nurse that she knows what she is doing.
2. Romeo tells a good friend about his intention to marry Juliet. The friend advises against it. He tells Romeo that he will lose his freedom and make his whole family angry. The friend points out that there are many pretty girls in Verona and that one can fall in love many times.

Comparing videos

In a recent film made of *Romeo and Juliet*, director Matthew Brake places the play in a modern setting. The film stars Leonardo De Caprio as Romeo. View this film and consider the following questions:

List of questions

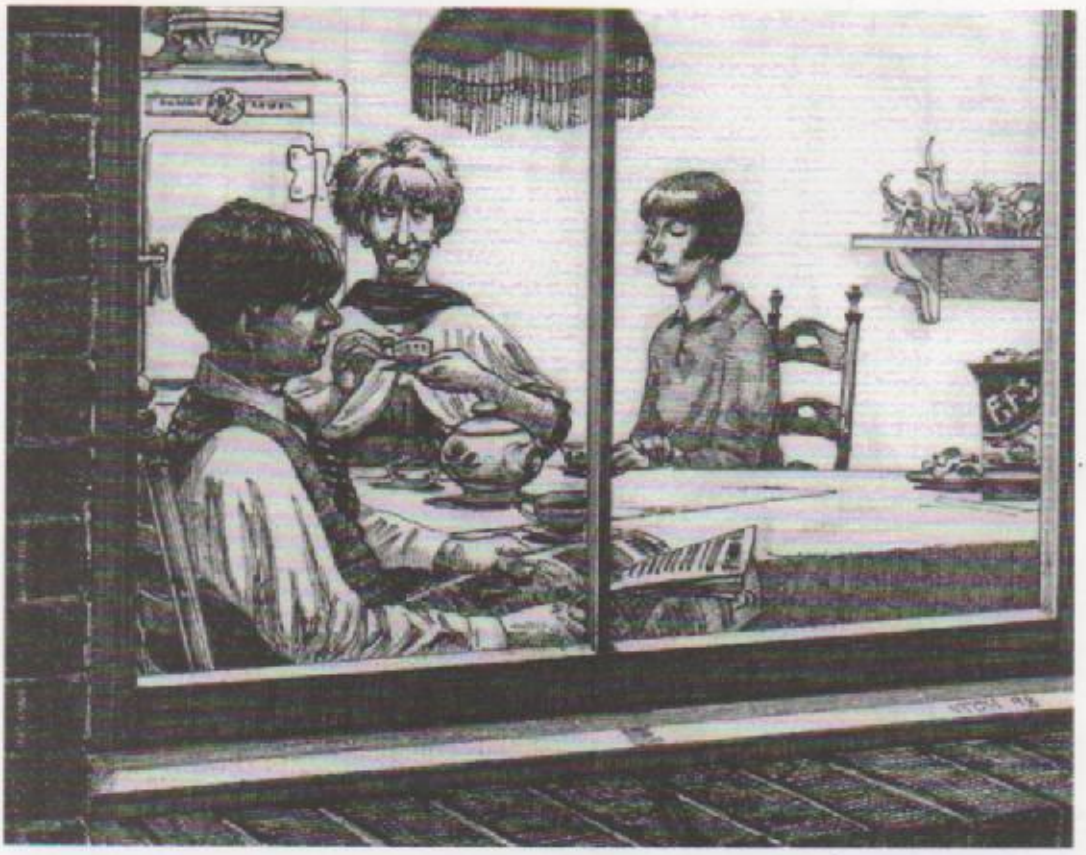
1. Why did Brake choose to place his film in a modern setting?
2. Which version did you like better?
3. Which version did you find more believable?

(Note: This may be used as a homework assignment.)

The Glass Menagerie

by

Tennessee Williams



The Glass Menagerie

What this play is about

Tom, the narrator of the play, tells us that this is a story of his own memories. It is the memory of how he finally made the heartbreaking decision to **abandon** his mother and sister so that he could live a life of his own. It is a decision that Tom has lived with but never been happy about.

Amanda Wingfield, Tom's mother, is a former "southern belle." She is the spoiled daughter of a rich plantation owner—the kind of woman who only worried about her beauty and about how she would dress. She grew up **surrounded** by black servants who fulfilled her every need, and she never had a thought of preparing herself for a life in which she might have to **earn a living**.

Unfortunately, Amanda's life turned out very different from the one she was prepared for. Her father lost all his money, and her husband, whose good looks had so **enchanted** Amanda when she was a young girl, **deserted** her, abandoning her to bring up two children, Tom and Laura, by herself. If we consider all her bad luck, we can certainly admire Amanda for her courage and her **determination**. She brings up Tom and Laura as well as she can, supporting herself through a series of small jobs, and even though she is often **petty** and demanding, she always remains optimistic and hopeful. But Amanda also has many negative qualities. She **nags** her children **mercilessly**. She tells and retells the story of her wonderful youth and continues to tell her children what a dreadful mistake she made when she decided to marry their father.

Tom is a bright young man with a great talent for writing. We soon find out that he is living a life of quiet **desperation**. In other words, he is very, very unhappy. In order to help support his mother and sister, Tom spends his days at a **dreary** job as a shoe clerk in a warehouse. The people on his job find him strange and **aloof**. They know that he secretly writes poetry, and they **taunt** him by calling him "Shakespeare." Tom spends all his evenings at the movies where he finds at least **temporary relief** from his boring and **frustrating** life. Tom feels like dying every morning when his mother shouts, "Rise and shine," meaning that he must face work and the place he **despises**. Tom longs for adventure; eventually he decides to follow the **path** of his father by abandoning his mother and sister.

Laura, Tom's sister, is a pretty, **sensitive**, and intelligent young woman, but she has a club foot. This handicap has made her very **self-conscious**

and fearful.

She has always been terribly shy. Living with her mother, Amanda, who never stops talking about how popular she was as a young girl and how many gentlemen callers she used to have, doesn't help to build Laura's **self confidence**. Laura spends her days polishing a collection of glass animals that she lovingly **displays**. These shining and fragile little animals are her only friends, and, in a way, they represent Laura herself. Like Laura, the glass animals are helpless, fragile, **vulnerable**, and easily hurt.

Amanda has enrolled Laura in a business school. She hopes that Laura will be able to learn some useful skills that will help her **to support herself**. Laura soon finds the business school impossible, and she drops out without telling her mother about it. When Amanda, by chance, one day visits the school and discovers that her daughter is no longer a student there, she is **devastated**. One certainly can't blame Amanda for her worries about Laura's future. Without a profession and without a husband, Laura has nowhere to go in the world. Amanda sees only a **reflection** of her own difficult life for her daughter. Things might even be worse for Laura because she has none of Amanda's courage and **innate** optimism. Amanda finally decides that the only solution for Laura is to find her a husband.

With this goal in mind Amanda starts nagging Tom to bring some nice young man from the warehouse where he works to meet his sister. Amanda, of course, realizes that Tom desperately wants to leave, and she promises him that he will be able to do that as soon as he has helped her to find a husband for Laura.

One day, much to Amanda's surprise, Tom indeed does bring home a friend for supper. The friend is Jim O'Connor who works together with Tom at the warehouse and who also knew both Tom and Laura in high school. What neither Tom nor his mother realizes is that in high school Laura had a mad crush on Jim and that he has always been her secret love. In high school, Jim was a real hero—the most popular boy in the class—admired by the girls and perhaps **envied** by the boys. Everyone in high school was sure that Jim would become a great success in life, but since high school, Jim really hasn't fulfilled his **potential**. At present he is working together with Tom as a shipping clerk in the warehouse.

When Jim arrives at the Wingfield home, he doesn't recognize or remember Laura, but as the evening progresses some unusual things happen. First of all, the electricity goes out. This is because Tom has neglected to pay the bill (he is planning to use the money as his ticket for escape). Because there are no lights, Jim and Laura are left alone in the candle-lit living room, while Tom and his mother do the dishes in the kitchen.

During their time together, Jim and Laura rediscover each other and find that they like being together. Laura is at first very shy, but Jim is so open, direct, and warm that gradually Laura relaxes. Jim, who is engaged to another girl, doesn't take any of this very seriously, but for Laura the evening becomes a magic fulfillment of a secret dream. Jim makes Laura dance; he tells her that she is pretty; he admires her little glass animals; and he inadvertently even gives her a kiss. All this of course, comes to an end when Jim realizes why Tom has invited him for dinner. He tells the amazed Wingfields that he is **engaged** to Betty who happens to be out of town. He quickly says good-bye and takes off. Amanda, of course, is furious. She had prepared the dinner so carefully,

and she had had such high hopes for Laura's first "gentleman caller."

Soon afterwards Tom escapes from home, but wherever he goes, Laura's eyes haunt him, and guilt is his steady companion.

We are supposed to understand the play as taking place in Tom's memory. Soft music, like the tinkling of glass, often accompanies the action to create an effect of dreamy unreality. In addition, somewhere on stage there is a screen on which various images are projected. The images or words on the screen help us to feel the dreamlike quality of the play and to follow the themes of the drama.

What did you understand?

Below are nine questions that will help you to see how much you understand of what you just read. Answer these questions together with a partner. Then join another pair to check your answers. You might need to look up the bolded words in the introduction in a dictionary.

List of questions

1. How was Amanda unprepared for her life?
2. Why can we admire Amanda?
3. Why does Tom want to escape?
4. Why is Laura self-conscious and fearful?
5. Why does Amanda decide that she must find a husband for Laura?
6. Why does the electricity go out?
7. Why does Laura relax?
8. Why does Jim leave?
9. Why is Amanda angry?

Before you read Scene I: Are parents always right?

Most parents feel that it is their job to educate their children and to teach them the kind of morals and manners that will help their children to function better in the world. Today manners and rules for behavior change very quickly. The ways of politeness practiced by parents no longer hold true in the generation of their children. Still there are many parents who insist on educating their children in the ways they themselves practiced when they were young. Does such a practice remind you of anything in your own life? Share your experiences with a small group of classmates.

Reading Scene I: Chew Your Food

Amanda likes to pretend that she is still living the life she once lived when she was a rich girl on a southern plantation. It is hard for her to admit that she is poor now and that life is different. But her son and daughter live in the present, and some of the things their mother says makes them very upset. Still they love their mother, and even when they think that she is very silly, they listen to her stories about the time when she was a young girl and had many boyfriends.

Glass Menagerie

Scene I

Chew Your Food

(Amanda and Laura are seated at a drop-leaf table. Eating is indicated by gestures without food or ***utensils****. Amanda faces the audience. Tom and Laura are seated in profile.)*

(The interior has lit up softly and through the ***scrim*** *we see Amanda and Laura seated at the table in the upstage area.)*

utensils = plates, knives, forks, and spoons

scrim = a fabric screen or divider that can be seen through or not, depending on the lighting

Why has the director decided to use imaginary utensils?

Why do you think that the writer has decided to use a scrim?

AMANDA: *(Calling.)* Tom?

TOM: Yes, Mother.

AMANDA: We can't say grace until you come to the table!

TOM: Coming, Mother. *(He bows slightly and* ***withdraws****,* ***reappearing*** *a few moments later in his place at the table.)*

What do we learn about Amanda?

withdraws = goes away

reappearing = coming back

AMANDA: *(To her son.)* Honey, don't *push* with your *fingers.* If you have to push with something, the thing to push with is a crust of bread. And chew—chew! Animals have sections in their stomachs which enable them to **digest** food without **mastication**, but human beings are supposed to chew their food before they swallow it down. Eat food leisurely, son, and really enjoy it. A well-cooked meal has lots of delicate flavors that have to be held in the mouth for **appreciation**. So chew your food and give your salivary glands a chance to function!

What kind of a mother is Amanda?

How would you feel if you were Tom in this situation?

digest = absorb food into the body

mastication = chewing

appreciation = knowing what is good value

(Tom deliberately lays his imaginary fork down and pushes his chair back from the table.)

TOM: I haven't enjoyed one bite of this dinner because of your constant directions on how to eat it. It's you that makes me rush through meals with your **hawk-like** attention to every bite I take. Sickening—spoils my appetite—all this discussion of—animal's secretion—salivary glands—mastication!

Why is Tom angry?

hawk-like = like the hunting bird (hawk); watching, ready to attack

AMANDA: *(Lightly.)* Temperament like a **Metropolitan** star! *(Tom rises and crosses downstage.)* You're not excused from the table.

TOM: I'm getting a cigarette.

AMANDA: You smoke too much.

Metropolitan = famous opera house in New York

How do you think that Amanda says the comment, "You smoke too much"?

LAURA: I'll bring in the **blanc mange**.

*(He remains standing with his cigarette by the **portieres** during the following.)*

AMANDA: *(Rising.)* No, sister, no, sister—you be the lady this time and I'll be the **darky**.

LAURA: I'm already up.

AMANDA: Resume your seat, little sister—I want you to start fresh and pretty—for gentlemen callers!

LAURA: I'm not expecting any gentlemen callers.

blanc mange = pudding for dessert

portieres = place where the stage curtain is drawn

darky = servant

How does Amanda say these words? How does she move? What does she mean?

AMANDA: *(Crossing out to the kitchenette. Airily.)* Sometimes they come when they are least expected! Why, I remember one Sunday afternoon in **Blue Mountain**—*(Enters kitchenette.)*

TOM: I know what's coming!

LAURA: Yes. But let her tell it.

Blue Mountain = the name of the plantation Amanda's father owned

What does Amanda's reference to Blue Mountain tell Tom and Laura?

TOM. Again?

LAURA. She loves to tell it. *(Amanda returns with bowl of dessert.)*

AMANDA: One Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain—your mother received—*seventeen!*—gentlemen callers! Why, sometimes there weren't chairs enough **to accommodate them** all. We had to send the nigger over to bring in folding chairs from the **parish house**.

Why does Laura want her mother to tell the story?

to accommodate them = to make them comfortable

parish house = house close to church where the minister or priest lived

TOM: *(Remaining at portieres.)* How did you entertain those gentlemen callers?

AMANDA: I understood the art of conversation!

TOM: I bet you could talk.

AMANDA: Girls in those days *knew* how to talk, I can tell you.

How does Tom say these words?

What does he really mean?

TOM: Yes?

(Image on screen: Amanda as a girl on a porch, greeting callers.)

AMANDA: They knew how to **entertain** their gentlemen callers. It wasn't enough for a girl to be possessed of a pretty face and a graceful figure—although **I wasn't slighted in either respect**. She also needed to have a nimble wit and a tongue to meet all occasions.

Where do you think that the image appears?

What effect does the image produce?

entertain = amuse

I . . . respect = I had both a pretty face and figure.

TOM: What did you talk about?

AMANDA: Things of importance going on in the world!

*(She addresses Tom as though he were seated in the **vacant** chair at the table though he remains by portieres. He plays this scene as though he held the book.)* My callers were gentlemen—all! Among my callers were some of the most **prominent** young planters of the Mississippi Delta—planters and sons of planters.

Tom has heard all this before. Why, then, does he ask?

vacant = empty

prominent = important

Let's think about it

Here are six questions. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Select one person in your group as secretary to take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answers.

List of questions

1. Why is Tom so annoyed? Do you think he is justified in feeling so upset?
2. Why does Amanda call Tom "a Metropolitan star?" Is she being fair? What is the temperament of artists?
3. How do we know that Tom and Laura have heard Amanda's stories many times? Why do they let her tell them again?
4. What do we learn about Amanda's youth?
5. What does Amanda mean when she says, "No, sister, no, sister—you be the lady this time and I'll be the darky?"
6. What does Amanda mean when she says that she understood "the art of conversation?" Is there really such an art? Do you think that you and Amanda would define the art of conversation in the same way? Why or why not? Some people say that men and women talk differently—men talk to convey messages while women talk to build relationships. Do you think that this analysis is true? Why or why not?

Let's act it out: Role play

In groups of four to five, think about and act out the following:

One person in each group will be Tom. The rest of the students in the group will be good friends of Tom's. The student playing the part of Tom will face the group and explain his situation. He desperately wants to leave home, and his mother is driving him crazy; but he is worried about Laura (as well as a little worried about his mother). On the other hand, he is beginning to feel that he will go insane if he stays home much longer. When Tom is finished explaining his situation, his "friends" (the rest of the group) will ask questions and give advice.

Journal writing: Do this!

Amanda makes Tom very angry by telling him how he should eat. Does this scene remind you of anything in your own experiences? Write a paragraph or two about your thoughts and memories of people telling you what to do.

Before you read Scene II: How do you plan for a good future?

What is the best way of making your future secure and good? Choose one of the possibilities listed below, or suggest another way, and share your ideas in small groups with classmates.

List of future possibilities

To have a good future, you should . . .

save money
prepare yourself for a profession you like
study languages
get a college degree
learn how to fix cars
learn computer skills
buy stocks and bonds
marry into a rich family
buy lots of insurance

Reading Scene II: The Crust of Humility

Amanda has just discovered that Laura no longer goes to the business school where she, at great expense, enrolled her. Laura has spent her mornings wandering around town, going to museums, parks, and the zoo just so that her mother wouldn't find out. When her mother confronts her, Laura admits that she just couldn't take the pressure of the school and that she did all she could so that her mother wouldn't be disappointed.

Scene II
The Crust of Humility

(Pause. A whisper of strings.)

*(Legend on screen: "The **Crust** of **Humility**.")*

AMANDA: *(Hopelessly fingering the huge **pocketbook**.)* So what are we going to do the rest of our lives? Stay home and **watch the parades go by**? Amuse ourselves with the glass **menagerie**, darling? Eternally play those worn-out phonograph records your father left as a painful reminder of him?

We won't have a business career—we've given that up because it gave us nervous indigestion! *(Laughs **wearily**.)* What is there left but **dependency** all our lives? I know so well what becomes of unmarried women who aren't prepared to occupy a position. I've seen such pitiful cases in the South—barely tolerated **spinsters** living upon the grudging patronage of sister's husband or brother's wife—stuck away in some little mouse-trap of a room—encouraged by one in-law to visit another—little birdlike women without any **nest**—eating the crust of humility all their life!

Is that the future that we've mapped out for ourselves? I swear it's the only **alternative** I can think of! It isn't a very pleasant alternative, is it? Of course—some girls *do marry.*

*(Laura **twists** her hands nervously.)*

Haven't you ever liked some boy?

crust = hard outside part of bread

humility = feeling of complete powerlessness; inferiority; unworthiness

pocketbook = purse

watch the parades go by = watch other people live interesting lives

menagerie = (a) zoo, collection of animals

What do we learn about Laura's father?

wearily = in a tired way

dependency = having to count on others to support you

spinsters = women who aren't married

Why does Amanda tell her daughter all this information?

nest = bird's home

Can you correct the mistake Amanda has made in English?

alternative = possibility

How do we see that Amanda is an eternal optimist?

twists = turns

LAURA: Yes. I liked one once. *(Rises.)* I came across his picture a while ago.

AMANDA: *(With some interest.)* He gave you his picture?

LAURA: No, it's in the yearbook.

AMANDA: *(**Disappointed**.)* Oh—a high school boy.

(Image on screen: Jim as high school hero bearing a silver cup.)

LAURA: Yes. His name was Jim. *(Laura lifts the heavy annual from the claw-foot table.)* Here he is in ***The Pirates of Penzance***.

disappointed = the way you feel when things do not go the way you want or expect them to

The Pirates of Penzance = a play

Are there heroes in every school? Do they always do well in their futures? Are there people who are not such heroes in school, but who do very well in life? What is the difference between school and life?

AMANDA: *(**Absently.**)* The what?

absently = in a way that shows she is thinking about something else

LAURA: The operetta the senior class put on. He had a wonderful voice and we sat across the **aisle** from each other Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in **the Aud**. Here he is with the silver cup for debating! See his grin?

aisle = empty space for walking between rows of seats

the Aud = the auditorium; a large room or theater-like hall where students assemble

AMANDA: *(Absently.)* He must have had a jolly **disposition**.

disposition = mood, temperament

LAURA: He used to call me—Blue Roses.

(Image: Blue Roses.)

pleurisies = lung inflammation; a sickness (keep in mind that there are no "blue roses")

Why did Jim call Laura "Blue Roses?" How do you think it made her feel?

AMANDA: Why did he call you such a name as that?

LAURA: When I had that attack of **pleurisies**—he asked me what was the matter when I came back. I said pleurisies—he thought that I said Blue Roses! So that's what he always called me after that. Whenever he saw me, he'd holler, "Hello, Blue Roses!" I didn't care for the girl that he went out with. Emily Meisenbach. Emily was the best-dressed girl at Soldan. She never struck me, though, as being sincere . . . it says in the Personal Section—they're engaged. That's—six years ago! They must be married by now.

What is the real reason why Laura didn't like Emily Meisenbach?

spark = little fire

revival = return to life

AMANDA: Girls that aren't cut out for business careers usually wind up married to some nice man. *(Gets up with a **spark** of **revival**.)* Sister, that's what you'll do!

utters = says

startled = surprised

doubtful = unbelieving

*(Laura **utters** a **startled**, **doubtful** laugh. She reaches quickly for a piece of glass.)*

crippled = physically disabled

How badly disabled do you think Laura is?

LAURA: But, Mother—

AMANDA: Yes. *(Crossing to photograph.)*

disadvantage = disability; opposite of *advantage*, which means something good or something extra

LAURA: *(In a tone of frightened apology.)* I'm—**crippled**!

vivacity = cheerful energy

How do you feel about the advice Amanda gives?

AMANDA: Nonsense! Laura, I've told you never, never to use that word. Why, you're not crippled, you just have a little defect—hardly noticeable, even! When people have some slight **disadvantage** like that, they cultivate other things to make up for it—develop charm—and **vivacity**—and—*charm!* That's all you have to do! *(She turns again to the photograph.)* One thing your father had plenty of—was *charm!*

fiddle = violin (a musical instrument)

*(Tom motions to the **fiddle** in the wings. The scene fades out with music.*

Let's think about it

Here are four questions for you and your classmates. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Select one person in your group as secretary to take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answers.

List of questions

1. What does Amanda mean when she speaks about "the crust of humility?" What does this tell you about the life of women in the American South at the time of the play? Is such a situation still true for women in parts of the world today? Explain.
2. What is the meaning of "Blue Roses?" Were you disappointed when you found out the reason why Jim called Laura "Blue Roses?" Why or why not?
3. Laura gives a reason for not liking Emily Meisenbach. What reason does she give? Do you think that this is the real reason? Why or why not?
4. Amanda tells Laura never to use the word crippled when she speaks about herself. Do you think this is the right way to treat Laura's situation? Why or why not?

Helping the disabled

A euphemism is a way of saying something negative or hurtful in a less offensive (insulting) way. It is a way of trying to say something ugly or sad in a way that doesn't seem quite so bad or doesn't hurt someone as much. For example, in the scene you read, Amanda doesn't like to use the word "crippled" when she thinks about her daughter's condition. We have many euphemisms for the word "crippled." Crippled people are often called handicapped, disabled, or physically challenged.

The time during which the play *The Glass Menagerie* takes place was indeed a very difficult time for anyone with a physical disability. Life is still not easy for those who are physically challenged, but many things are now being done to help them. Today, many physically challenged people live rich and fulfilling lives.

Working with classmates in groups of three to six, make a list of all the things that have been done to help the blind (those who cannot see), the deaf (those who cannot hear), and the paraplegic (those who cannot walk). Consider what else can and should be done. Tell the rest of the class your ideas and listen to reports from other groups.

Journal writing: Extra-curricular activities

When Laura shows her mother a yearbook from her high school, she explains that the boy she liked was very active in all sorts of extra-curricular activities in high school. Do you believe that extra-curricular activities are a beneficial part of education, or do you think that the activities are just a waste of time? Write a paragraph or two about your feelings on this subject.

Before you read Scene III: What makes an ideal partner? • • • • •

When you think about the ideal partner for life, what qualities do you look for? Do you think that the qualities you think are important are the same ones that your mother and/or your father would consider important? Below is a list of attributes that some people consider important when choosing a husband and/or a wife. Read the list carefully and do the following:

1. Put a star next to the traits you consider important.
2. Write the letter "M" next to the qualities your mother or a female family member would probably consider important.
3. Write the letter "F" next to the characteristics your father or a male family member would consider significant.
4. Compare your list with one or two classmates and explain why you or why someone in your family values certain attributes.

List of qualities

_____ The person must be rich.
_____ The person must be good looking.
_____ The person must be taller than I am.
_____ The person must be shorter than I am.
_____ The person must be smarter than I am.
_____ The person should not be as smart as I am.
_____ The person must have an easygoing personality.
_____ The person must know how to dance.
_____ The person must have a serious profession.
_____ The person must have a good education.
_____ The person must be generous.
_____ The person should know how to cook.
_____ The person should be neat and like to keep house.
_____ The person must like fun and adventure.
_____ The person must like to travel.
_____ The person must like to do the same things I like to do.
_____ The person must want a family.
_____ The person must love children.
_____ The person should not smoke.
_____ The person should not drink.
_____ The person should believe the same things I do.
_____ The person should be from the same ethnic or racial group that I am from.

Reading Scene III: Hopes and Preparations

In the scene you are about to read, Tom tells his mother that he is going to bring a young man who works with him at the warehouse home for dinner. Amanda becomes both overjoyed and nervous. She upsets Tom by assuming that Laura will probably become engaged to the young man, even before he comes to dinner.

The Glass Menagerie
Hopes and Preparations

(Amanda turns from the picture and comes outside.)

AMANDA: *(Sighing.)* A **fire-escape** landing's a poor excuse for a porch. *(She **spreads** a newspaper on a step and sits down, gracefully and **demurely** as if she were settling into a swing on a Mississippi verandah.)* What are you looking at?

fire-escape = stairs outside the house used to leave the apartment if there is a fire

spreads = places over a surface

demurely = coyly (she does it as a shy, young girl would)

When do people make wishes?

TOM: The moon.

AMANDA: Is there a moon this evening?

TOM: It's rising over Garfinkel's Delicatessen.

AMANDA: So it is! A little silver slipper of a moon. Have you made a wish on it yet?

TOM: Um-hum.

AMANDA: What did you wish for?

TOM: That's a secret.

AMANDA: A secret, huh? Well, I won't tell mine either. I will be just as mysterious as you.

TOM: I bet I can guess what yours is.

sphinx = an Egyptian statue with the head of a woman and the body of a lion. Someone who seems very secretive could be called "a sphinx."

AMANDA: Is my head so transparent?

TOM: You're not a **sphinx**.

Is Amanda's wish what Tom thought she was thinking?

AMANDA: No, I don't have secrets. I'll tell you what I wished for on the moon. Success and happiness for my precious children! I wish for that whenever there's a moon, and when there isn't a moon, I wish for it, too.

TOM: I thought perhaps you wished for a gentleman caller.

AMANDA: Why do you say that?

TOM. Don't you remember asking me to **fetch** one?

fetch = bring

AMANDA. I remember suggesting that it would be nice for your sister if you brought home some nice young man from the warehouse. I think that I've made that suggestion more than once.

TOM: Yes, you have made it repeatedly.

How does Tom say these words?

AMANDA: Well?

TOM: We are going to have one.

The annunciation is celebrated with music = music is heard (An *annunciation* is a serious and significant announcement.)

AMANDA: *What?*

Why is Amanda so surprised?

TOM: A gentleman caller!

Has Tom invited the young man in order to please Amanda?

(The annunciation is celebrated with music.)

(Amanda rises.)

(Image on screen: Caller with bouquet.)

AMANDA: You mean you have asked some nice young man to come over?

TOM: Yep. I've asked him to dinner.

AMANDA: You really did?

TOM: I did!

AMANDA: You did, and did he—*accept?*

TOM: He did!

AMANDA: Well, well—well, well! That's—lovely!

TOM: I thought that you would be pleased.

AMANDA: It's definite, then?

TOM: Very definite.

AMANDA: Soon?

Why doesn't Tom tell his mother when the young man is coming?

TOM: Very soon.

Is Tom being fair?

AMANDA: For heaven's sake, stop putting on and tell me some things, will you?

TOM: What things do you want me to tell you?

AMANDA: *Naturally* I would like to know when he's *coming!*

TOM: He's coming tomorrow.

AMANDA: *Tomorrow?*

TOM: Yep. Tomorrow.

AMANDA: But, Tom!

TOM: Yes, Mother?

AMANDA: Tomorrow gives me no time!

TOM: Time for what?

AMANDA: Preparations! Why didn't you phone me at once, as soon as you asked him, the minute that he accepted? Then, don't you see, I could have been getting ready!

TOM: You don't have **to make any fuss**.

AMANDA: Oh, Tom, Tom, Tom, of course I have to make a fuss! I want things nice, not sloppy! Not thrown together. I'll certainly have to do some fast thinking, won't I?

TOM: I don't see why you have to think at all.

Why do you think Amanda needs time?

to make any fuss = to go through a lot of trouble

Why is Amanda worried?

AMANDA: You just don't know. We can't have a gentleman caller in a pig-sty! All my wedding silver has to be polished, the monogrammed table linen taken out to be laundered! The windows have to be washed and fresh curtains put up. And how about clothes? We have to *wear* something, don't we?

TOM: Mother, this boy is no one to make a fuss over!

AMANDA: Do you realize he's the first young man we've introduced to your sister? It's terrible, dreadful, disgraceful that poor little sister has never received a single gentleman caller! Tom, come inside! *(She opens the screen door.)*

TOM: What for?

AMANDA: I want to ask you some things.

Why is Amanda so excited?

TOM: If you're going to make a fuss, I'll call it off, I'll tell him not to come!

AMANDA: You certainly won't do anything of the kind. Nothing offends people worse than broken engagements. It simply means I'll have to work like a Turk! We won't be brilliant, but we will pass inspection. Come on inside. *(Tom follows, groaning.)* Sit down.

TOM: Any particular place you would like me to sit?

AMANDA: Thank heavens I've got that new sofa! I'm

How does Tom feel?

Why does Tom ask where he should sit?

also making payments on a floor lamp I'll have sent out! And put the chintz covers on, they'll brighten things up! Of course I'd hoped to have these walls re-papered . . . what is the young man's name?

TOM: His name is O'Connor.

AMANDA: That, of course, means fish—tomorrow is Friday! I'll have that salmon loaf—with Durkee's dressing! What does he do? He works at the warehouse?

TOM: Of course! How else would I—?"

Why doesn't Amanda answer Tom's question?

Why does Amanda think they have to eat fish on Friday?

Finish Tom's sentence, "How else would I—"

AMANDA: Tom, he—doesn't drink?

TOM: Why do you ask me that?

AMANDA: Your father *did!*

TOM: Don't get started on that!

AMANDA: He *does* drink, then?

TOM: Not that I know of!

AMANDA: Make sure, be certain! The last thing I want for my daughter is a boy who drinks!

TOM: Aren't you being **a little bit premature**? Mr. O'Connor has not yet **appeared** on the scene!

What does Tom mean, "Don't get started on that"?

a little bit premature = too early with your plans

appeared = shown up

AMANDA: But will tomorrow. To meet your sister, and what do I know about his **character**? Nothing! Old maids are better off than wives of drunkards!

TOM: Oh, my God!

AMANDA: Be still!

TOM: *(**Leaning** forward to whisper.)* Lots of fellows meet girls whom they don't marry!

AMANDA: Oh, talk sensibly, Tom—and don't be **sarcastic**! *(She has gotten a hairbrush.)*

TOM: What are you doing?

character = personality

Do you agree with the statement, "Old maids are better off than wives of drunkards"?

leaning = bending

What is Tom trying to tell Amanda?

sarcastic = putting down someone; hurtful

AMANDA: I'm brushing that **cow-lick** down! What is this young man's position at the warehouse?

TOM: *(**Submitting grimly** to the brush and the interrogation.)* This young man's position is that of a shipping clerk, Mother.

cow-lick = (a part of) hair growing straight up

How do you think Tom looks?

submitting = giving in

grimly = seriously

What tone of voice does Tom use?

AMANDA: Sounds to me like a fairly responsible job, the sort of a job *you* would be in if you just had more **get-up**. What is his salary? Have you any idea?

get-up = ambition

Why does Amanda bring up the subject of salary?

TOM: I would judge it to be approximately eighty-five dollars a month.

AMANDA: Well—not princely, but—

What is on Amanda's mind?

TOM: Twenty more than I make.

AMANDA: Yes, how well I know! But for a family man, eighty-five dollars a month is not much more than you can just get by on . . .

Has Amanda made plans in her own life?

TOM: Yes, but Mr. O'Connor is not a family man.

AMANDA. He might be, mightn't he? Some time in the future?

TOM: I see. Plans and provisions.

AMANDA: You are the only young man that I know of who ignores the fact that the future becomes the present, the present the past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it!

Let's think about it

Here are four questions. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Select one person in your group as secretary to take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answers.

List of questions

1. Why do you think that Tom's wish is a secret?
2. What preparations will Amanda make? Why does she feel that all these preparations are necessary? Do you feel that the young man is going to be trapped? Why or why not?
3. Amanda realizes that the name O'Connor is an Irish name and that most Irish are Roman Catholic. At the time the play was written, Catholics were not allowed to eat meat on Friday. Since the Wingfields usually do eat meat on Friday, we realize that they are not Catholics. Amanda obviously is not bothered by the thought that Laura might marry someone from a different religion. Does this tell you anything about Amanda?
4. What questions does Amanda ask Tom about Jim? What do we learn about Amanda from these questions?

Preparing for a dinner party

Amanda practically re-decorates the house in preparation for her dinner party. Most of us don't do this much before our dinner parties, but we all have to do some work when we invite guests over for dinner. In groups of three to five, plan for a dinner party. Ask someone in your group to take notes, and appoint one person who will tell the whole class about your party. Consider the questions from the following list:

List of party preparations

1. How many guests will you invite?
2. What kind of food will you serve?
3. How much time will you need for shopping?
4. How and when will you set your table?
5. How will you seat your guests?
6. Will you serve a sit-down meal or a buffet-style dinner?
7. What kind of tablecloth will you use?
8. Will you use candles?
9. What kinds of beverages (drinks) will you serve?
10. Will there be snacks before the main meal?
11. What will you serve for dessert?
12. How much time will you spend cooking?
13. When and how will your guests be invited?
14. Will you have to clean house?
15. Will you play any kind of music? When? What kind?
16. Will there be dancing or any other kind of entertainment at your party?

After you have made your preparations, create a poster inviting everyone to your party. Put up your poster on one of the walls of your classroom, and explain to the whole class what kind of party you have in mind. Enjoy!

Journal writing: Plans and preparations

Amanda is about to make plans and preparations. Write a paragraph or two about a time when you or someone you know made plans for an important occasion (a wedding, a graduation, a big party, a picnic). Were the plans successful, or did everything go wrong?

Before you read Scene IV: What makes you nervous?

Take a few minutes to think about what makes you or someone you know nervous and how you or the person you know calms down. Working with a partner, share experiences about being nervous and the things you've done to calm down. Perhaps your partner has some advice to offer, and maybe you have some advice for your partner. On the next page are two lists. One list has situations that upset people and make them feel nervous; the other list has activities that help people to calm down. You may choose to talk about any of these situations and

activities, or you may choose something from your own personal experiences. Try to explain to your partner why certain activities help to calm you down.

Nervous times

Before a test
Before meeting new people
Before making an important phone call
During a job interview
Before speaking in public
When in a hurry
In restaurants
With important people
When speaking a foreign language
When trying to make friends
Being alone with a person of the opposite sex
When facing angry people

Calming activities

Listening to music
Taking a walk
Taking a pill
Talking to a good friend
Talking to parents
Eating something
Drinking something
Praying
Reading
Taking a bath
Taking a shower
Washing one's hair

Reading Scene IV: Opening the Door

In Scene IV, Tom brings home his friend Jim from the warehouse. Just before the pair arrives, Laura realizes that this is the Jim she secretly loved in high school, so she grows desperately shy and nervous. The only way she manages to calm herself is by playing her father's old scratchy records.

Scene IV

Opening the Door

(Amanda switches on the rose-colored lamp.)

upstage = toward the back of the stage

jonquils = yellow spring flowers

AMANDA: I hope they get here before it starts to rain.

*(She crosses **upstage** and places the **jonquils** in bowl on table.)*

I gave your brother a little extra change so he and Mr. O'Connor could take the service car home.

LAURA: *(With **altered** look.)* What did you say his name was?

altered = changed

How do you think Laura looks?

AMANDA: O'Connor.

What has Laura discovered?

LAURA: What is his first name?

Amanda has forgotten something else. What is it?

AMANDA: I don't remember. Oh, yes, I do. It was—Jim!

sways = moves back and forth as if she is dizzy

*(Laura **sways** slightly and catches hold of a chair.)*

What is happening to Laura?

(Legend on Screen: "Not Jim!")

Why do you think Laura repeats the words on the screen?

LAURA: *(Faintly.)* Not—Jim!

AMANDA: Yes, that was it, it was Jim! I've never known a Jim that wasn't nice!

(Music: Ominous.)

LAURA: Are you sure his name is Jim O'Connor?

AMANDA: Yes. Why?

LAURA: Is he the one that Tom used to know in high school?

effort = (a lot of) work

How does Amanda speak "with effort"?

AMANDA: He didn't say so. I think he just got to know him at the warehouse.

LAURA: There was a Jim O'Connor we both knew in high school—*(Then, with **effort**.)* If that is the one that Tom is bringing to dinner—you'll have to excuse me, I won't come to the table.

AMANDA: What sort of nonsense is this?

LAURA: You asked me once if I'd ever liked a boy. Don't you remember I showed you this boy's picture?

AMANDA: You mean the boy you showed me in the year book?

LAURA: Yes, that boy.

AMANDA: Laura, Laura, were you in love with that boy?

LAURA: I don't know, Mother. All I know is I couldn't sit at the table if it was him!

AMANDA: It won't be him! It isn't the least bit likely. But whether it is or not, you will come to the table. You will not be excused.

LAURA: I'll have to be, Mother.

Why can't Laura sit at the same table with Jim?

How does Amanda say these sentences?

AMANDA: I don't **intend** to humor your silliness, Laura. I've had too much from you and your brother, both! So just sit down and **compose yourself** till they come. Tom has forgotten his key so you'll have to let them in, when they arrive.

LAURA: *(**Panicky**).* Oh, Mother—you answer the door!

AMANDA: *(Lightly.)* I'll be in the kitchen—busy!

LAURA: Oh, Mother, please answer the door, don't make me do it!

AMANDA: *(Crossing into kitchenette.)* I've got to fix the dressing for the salmon. Fuss, fuss—silliness! Over a gentleman caller!

intend = plan

compose yourself = calm down

Has Tom really forgotten his key?

panicky = in a state of great nervousness

How does Laura feel? How does she speak to her mother?

(Door swings shut. Laura is left alone.)

(Legend on screen: "Terror!")

(She utters a low moan and turns off the lamp, sits stiffly on the edge of the sofa, knotting her fingers together.)

(Legend on screen: "The Opening of a Door!")

*(Tom and Jim appear on the fire-escape steps and climb to landing. Hearing their approach, Laura rises with a panicky **gesture**. She retreats to the portieres.)*

(The doorbell. Laura catches her breath and touches her throat. Low drums.)

AMANDA: *(Calling.)* Laura, sweetheart! The door!

(Laura stares at it without moving.)

Where does the legend appear?

Why is Laura in such a state of terror?

gesture = movement

Why do we hear the sound of low drums?

JIM: I think we just beat the rain.

TOM: Uh-huh. *(He rings again, nervously. Jim whistles and fishes for a cigarette.)*

Why is Tom nervous?

AMANDA: *(Very, very gaily.)* Laura, that is your brother and Mr. O'Connor! Will you let them in, darling?

(Laura crosses toward kitchenette door.)

LAURA: *(Breathlessly.)* Mother—you go to the door!

*(Amanda steps out of kitchenette and stares furiously at Laura. She points **imperiously** at the door.)*

imperiously = in a commanding way; like an emperor

Stand up and act this part!

How does Amanda feel?

LAURA: Please, please!

AMANDA: *(In a fierce whisper.)* What is the matter with you, you silly thing?

desperately = hopelessly

How does Laura feel?

LAURA: *(**Desperately**.)* Please, you answer it, please!

to humor you = to give in to you

AMANDA: You'll have to go to the door because I can't!

despairingly = hopelessly

LAURA: Please, please, please, you go!

AMANDA: I told you I wasn't going **to humor you**, Laura. Why have you chosen this moment to lose your mind?

LAURA: *(**Despairingly**.)* I can't either!

AMANDA: Why?

LAURA: I'm *sick!*

Is Amanda "normal?"

AMANDA: I'm sick, too—of your nonsense! Why can't you and your brother be normal people? Fantastic **whims** and behavior! *(Tom gives a long ring.)*

whims = sudden, silly ideas

preposterous = unnatural; very silly

Preposterous goings on! Can you give me one reason—*(Calls out lyrically.)* Coming! Just one second!—Why you should be afraid to open a door? Now you answer it, Laura!

goings on = happenings, events

victrola = record player

LAURA: Oh, oh, oh . . . *(She returns through the portieres. Darts to the **victrola** and winds it frantically and turns it on.)*

AMANDA: Laura Wingfield, you march right to that door!

LAURA: Yes—yes, Mother!

Why does Laura finally obey Amanda?

*(A faraway, scratchy **rendition** of "Dardanella" softens the air and gives her strength to move through it. She slips to the door and draws it cautiously open.)*

rendition = way of playing; a version

(Tom enters with the caller, Jim O'Conner.)

TOM: Laura, this is Jim. Jim, this is my sister, Laura.

What is Tom doing?

JIM: *(Stepping inside.)* I didn't know that Shakespeare had a sister!

Why is Jim surprised?

LAURA: *(Retreating stiff and trembling from the door.)* How—how do you do?

Is "Okay" the correct response?

JIM: *(Heartily extending his hand.)* Okay!

hesitantly = uncertainly

*(Laura touches it **hesitantly** with hers.)*

JIM: Your hand's cold, Laura!

Why is Laura's hand so cold?

LAURA: Yes, well—I've been playing the victrola . . .

What is Jim trying to do?

JIM: Must have been playing classical music on it! You ought to play a little hot swing music to warm you up!

awkwardly = clumsily

darts = moves very quickly

Do you think that Jim likes shy girls?

LAURA: Excuse me—I haven't finished playing the victrola . . .

*(She turns **awkwardly** and hurries into the front room. She pauses a second by the victrola. Then catches her breath and **darts** through the portieres like a frightened deer.)*

JIM: *(Grinning.)* What was the matter?

TOM: Oh—with Laura? Laura is—terribly shy.

JIM: Shy, huh? It's unusual to meet a shy girl nowadays. I don't believe you ever mentioned you had a sister.

Let's think about it

Here are five questions. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Select one person in your group as secretary to take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answers.

List of questions

1. Why does Amanda insist that Laura open the door? Do you think that she is doing the right thing? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think that Laura gains courage by playing her father's old records?
3. How does Jim react to Laura?
4. Why do you think that Tom never mentioned having a sister? Are people's work personalities or school personalities different from their home personalities? Explain.
5. Is "Opening the Door" a good name for this scene? Why or why not? What other name would you give the scene?

Journal writing: Regrets

Amanda regrets the decision she made when she married the father of Tom and Laura. Write a paragraph or two about something that you or someone you know is sorry about having done (regret doing).

Before you read Scene V: Who can best persuade you?

All of us are more easily persuaded by some people than by others. Who most easily persuades you? Use the following survey to determine your answer. Explain to your classmates why you find a particular person more persuasive.

Persuasion survey

1. Who is most likely to persuade you to go to the doctor for a checkup?
   a. your mother
   b a good friend
   c. your teacher
   d. your father
   e. other _____
2. Who is most likely to persuade you to go to the dentist for a checkup?
   a. your girl/boyfriend
   b. a parent
   c. a relative
   d. other _____
3. Who is most likely to persuade you that you should study for a serious career?
   a a parent
   b a teacher
   c. an employer
   d. a friend
   e. other _____
4. Who is most likely to persuade you that you should leave your work behind and go to the movies?
   a. a brother or sister
   b. a friend
   c. your boy/girlfriend
   d. other _____
5. Who is most likely to persuade you to eat the right foods?
   a. a doctor
   b. a parent
   c. a newspaper article
   d. a dietitian
   e. other _____

Reading Scene V: Blue Roses

In the following scene, Jim and Laura become re-acquainted and discover that they like each other. Jim tells Laura that she lacks self-confidence. Actually, he tells her almost the same things that her mother has always told her, but hearing it from Jim, Laura believes them.

The Glass Menagerie

Scene V
Blue Roses

JIM: Hello, there, Laura.

LAURA: (***Faintly.***) Hello. *(She clears her throat.)*

JIM: How are you feeling now? Better?

LAURA: Yes. Yes, thank you.

JIM: This is for you. A little dandelion wine. *(He extends it toward her* ***with extravagant gallantry.****)*

LAURA: Thank you.

JIM: Drink it—but don't get drunk! *(He laughs heartily. Laura takes the glass uncertainly; laughs shyly.)* Where shall I set the candles?

LAURA: Oh—oh, anywhere . . .

JIM: How about here on the floor? Any objections?

LAURA: No.

JIM: I'll spread a newspaper under to catch the drippings. I like to sit on the floor. Mind if I do?

LAURA: Oh, no.

JIM: Give me a pillow?

LAURA: What?

JIM: A pillow!

LAURA: Oh . . . *(Hands him one quickly.)*

JIM: How about you? Don't you like to sit on the floor?

LAURA: Oh—yes.

JIM: Why don't you, then?

LAURA: I—will.

JIM: Take a pillow! *(Laura does. Sits on the other side of the* ***candelabrum****. Jim crosses legs and smiles engagingly at her.)* I can't hardly see you sitting way over there.

faintly = weakly

with extravagant gallantry = with great and overdone politeness

Why does Jim laugh?

Why doesn't Laura laugh?

candelabrum = holder for candles

Correct Jim's English in the sentence, "I can't hardly see you . . ."

LAURA: I can—see you.

JIM: I know, but that's not fair, I'm in the limelight. *(Laura moves her pillow closer.)* Good! Now I can see you! Comfortable?

LAURA: Yes.

JIM: So am I. Comfortable as a cow! Will you have some gum?

LAURA: No, thank you.

JIM: I think that I will **indulge**, with your permission. *(**Musingly** unwraps it and holds it up.)* Think of the fortune made by the guy that invented the first piece of chewing gum. Amazing, huh? The Wrigley Building is one of the sights of Chicago. I saw it summer before last when I went up to **The Century of Progress**. Did you take in The Century of Progress?

indulge = treat one's self

musingly = thoughtfully

Can we learn anything about Jim from the things that make a great impression on him?

The Century of Progress = a world's fair held in Chicago (1933-1934)

exposition = show, display

LAURA: No, I didn't.

JIM: Well, it was quite a wonderful **exposition**. What impressed me most was the Hall of Science. Gives you an idea of what the future will be in America, even more wonderful than the present time is! *(Pause. Smiling at her.)* Your brother tells me you're shy. Is that right, Laura?

LAURA: I—don't know.

JIM: I judge you to be an **old-fashioned** type of girl. Well I think that's a pretty good type to be. Hope you don't think I'm being too personal—do you?

old-fashioned = opposite of modern

Is Jim being too personal?

LAURA: *(**Hastily,** out of **embarrassment**.)* I believe I will take a piece of gum, if you—don't mind. *(Clearing her throat.)* Mr. O'Connor, have you—kept up with your singing?

hastily = quickly

embarrassment = a feeling close to shame. (Notice the spelling of this word.)

Why does Laura bring up the past?

JIM: Singing? Me?

LAURA: Yes. I remember what a beautiful voice you had.

JIM: When did you hear me sing?

(Voice off stage in the pause.)

VOICE: *(Off stage.)*
O blow, ye winds, heigh-ho,
A-roving I will go!
I'm off to my love
With a boxing glove
Ten thousand miles away!

JIM: You say you've heard me sing?

Why do we hear this song?

LAURA: Oh, yes! Yes, very often . . . I—don't suppose—you remember me—at all?

JIM: *(Smiling **doubtfully**.)* You know I have an idea. I've seen you before. I had that idea soon as you opened the door. It seemed almost like I was about to remember your name. But the name that I started to call you—wasn't a name! And so I stopped myself before I said it.

LAURA: Wasn't it—Blue Roses?

JIM: *(Springs up, **grinning**.)* Blue Roses!—My gosh, yes—Blue Roses! That's what I had on my tongue when you opened the door! Isn't it funny what tricks your memory plays? I didn't connect you with high school somehow or other. But that's where it was; it was high school. I didn't even know you were Shakespeare's sister! Gosh, I'm sorry.

LAURA: I didn't expect you to. You—barely knew me!

JIM: But we did have a speaking acquaintance, huh?

LAURA: Yes, we—spoke to each other.

JIM: When did you recognize me?

LAURA: Oh, right away!

JIM: Soon as I came in the door?

LAURA: When I heard your name, I thought it was probably you. I knew that Tom used to know you a little in high school. So when you came in the door—well, then I was—sure.

JIM: Why didn't you *say* something then?

Does Jim remember Laura?

doubtfully = uncertainly

grinning = giving a big smile

Did Laura make an impression on Jim in high school? Why or why not?

LAURA: *(Breathlessly.)* I didn't know what to say, I was—too surprised!

JIM: For goodness' sakes! You know, this sure is funny!

LAURA: Yes! Yes, isn't it, though . . .

What was the real reason why Laura didn't say anything?

JIM: Didn't we have a class in something together?

LAURA: Yes, we did.

JIM: What class was that?

LAURA: It was—singing—Chorus!

JIM: Aw!

LAURA: I sat across the aisle from you in the Aud.

JIM: Now I remember—you always came in late.

Why was Laura always late?

LAURA: Yes, it was so hard for me, getting upstairs. I had that brace on my leg—it clumped so loud!

clumping = making a loud, knocking noise

JIM: I never heard any **clumping**.

wincing = moving or turning quickly as if in pain

LAURA: *(**Wincing** at the recollection.)* To me it sounded like—**thunder**!

thunder = loud, deep storm noise (goes together with lightning)

JIM: Well, well, well, I never even noticed.

self-conscious = uncomfortable; noticing one's self a lot

LAURA: And everybody was seated before I came in. I had to walk in front of all those people. My seat was in the back row. I had to go clumping all the way up the aisle with everyone watching!

relief = feeling one has when something heavy lightens or something painful stops hurting

JIM: You shouldn't have been **self-conscious**.

LAURA: I know, but I was. It was always such a **relief** when the singing started.

JIM: Aw, yes, I've placed *you now!* I used to call you Blue Roses. How was it that I got started calling you that?

LAURA: I was out of school a little while with pleurisies. When I came back, you asked me what was the matter. I said I had pleurisies—you thought I said Blue Roses. That's what you always called me after that!

JIM: I hope you didn't mind.

LAURA: Oh, no—I liked it. You see, I **wasn't acquainted** with many—people . . .

wasn't acquainted = didn't know

Why didn't Laura have friends?

JIM: As I remember you sort of stuck by yourself.

LAURA: I never have had much luck at—making friends.

JIM: I don't see why you wouldn't.

LAURA: Well, I—started out badly.

JIM: You mean being—

LAURA: Yes, it sort of—stood between me—

JIM: You shouldn't have let it!

LAURA: I know, but it did, and—

JIM: You were shy with people!

LAURA: I tried not to be but never could—

JIM: Overcome it?

LAURA: No, I—I never could!

JIM: I guess being shy is something you have to work out of kind of gradually.

LAURA: *(Sorrowfully.)* Yes—I guess it—

JIM: Takes time!

LAURA: Yes—

JIM: People are not so dreadful when you know them. That's what you have to remember! And everybody has problems, not just you, but practically everybody has got some problems.

You think of yourself as having the only problems, as being the only one who is **disappointed**. But just look around you and you will see lots of people as disappointed as you are. For instance, I hoped when I was going to high school that I would be further along at this time, six years later, than I am now—you remember that wonderful write-up I had in *The Torch?*

LAURA: Yes! *(She rises and crosses to table.)*

Finish Laura's sentence, ". . . but never could—"

Why does Jim finish Laura's sentences for her?

Does she mind what Jim says? Why or why not?

How do you feel about the advice that Jim gives?

disappointed = the way you feel when you don't get what you wanted or expected

Why is Jim disappointed?

JIM: It said I was bound to succeed in anything I went into! *(Laura returns with the annual.)* Holy Jeez! *The Torch!*

(He accepts it reverently. They smile across it with ***mutual*** *wonder. Laura crouches beside him, and they begin to turn through it. Laura's shyness is dissolving in his warmth.)*

LAURA: Here you are in *The Pirates of Penzance!*

JIM: *(Wistfully.)* I sang the baritone lead in that operetta.

LAURA: *(Raptly.)* So—beautifully!

JIM: *(Protesting.)* Aw—

LAURA: Yes, yes—beautifully—beautifully!

JIM: You heard me?

LAURA: All three times!

How does Jim feel about seeing *The Torch?*

mutual = shared

What is happening to Laura?

How does Jim feel?

Why is Jim surprised?

JIM: No!

LAURA: Yes!

JIM: All three performances?

LAURA: *(Looking down.)* Yes. All three times!

JIM: No!

LAURA: Yes!

JIM: All three performances?

LAURA: *(Looking down.)* Yes.

JIM: Why?

LAURA: I—wanted to ask you to—**autograph** my program.

autograph = sign your name

What other words do you know that have the prefix "auto" in them? What does "auto" mean?

JIM: Why didn't you ask me to?

LAURA: You were always surrounded by your own friends so much that I never had a chance to.

Finish both Jim's and Laura's thoughts.

JIM: You should have just—

LAURA: Well, I—thought you might think I was—

JIM: Thought I might think you was—what?

LAURA: Oh—

JIM: *(With reflective **relish**.)* I was **beleaguered** by females in those days.

relish = enjoyment

beleaguered = surrounded

Is Jim still beleaguered by females? Why or why not?

LAURA: You were terribly popular!

JIM: Yeah—

Does Jim still have a friendly way?

LAURA: You had such a—friendly way—

JIM: I was spoiled in high school.

Is it true that Jim was spoiled in high school?

LAURA: Everybody—liked you!

How does Laura feel?

JIM: Including you?

with flourish = with show and style

LAURA: I—yes, I—I did, too—*(She gently closes the book in her lap.)*

JIM: Well, well, well! Give me that program, Laura. *(She hands it to him. He signs it **with flourish**.)* There you are—better late than never!

LAURA: Oh, I—what a—surprise!

JIM: My signature isn't worth very much right now. But some day—maybe—it will increase in value! Being

disappointed but I am not discouraged. I'm twenty-three years old. How old are you?

LAURA: I'll be twenty-four in June.

JIM: That's not old age!

LAURA: No, but—

JIM: You finished high school?

LAURA: *(With difficulty.)* I didn't go back.

JIM: You mean you **dropped out**?

LAURA: I made bad grades in my final examinations. *(She rises and replaces the book and the program. Her voice **strained**.)* How is—Emily Meisenbach getting along?

JIM: Oh, that kraut-head!

LAURA: Why do you call her that?

JIM: That's what she was.

LAURA: You're not still—going with her?

JIM: I never see her.

LAURA: It said in the Personal Section that you were—engaged!

JIM: I know, but I wasn't impressed by that—**propaganda**!

LAURA: It wasn't—the truth?

JIM: Only in Emily's optimistic opinion!

LAURA: Oh—

(Legend on screen: "What Have You Done Since High School?")

*(Jim lights a cigarette and leans **indolently** back on his elbows smiling at Laura with a warmth and charm which **lights her inwardly with altar candles**. She remains by the table and turns in her hands a piece of glass to cover her **tumult**.)*

JIM: *(After several **reflective** puffs on a cigarette.)* What have you done since high school?

LAURA: *(She seems not to hear him.)* Huh? *(Laura looks up.)*

JIM: I said what have you done since high school, Laura.

dropped out = quit

strained = tense

Why does Laura ask about Emily?

How does Laura feel?

propaganda = misinformation; way of spreading what you believe in

What does the question on the screen mean?

indolently = lazily

lights her inwardly with altar candles = makes her feel very loved and special

tumult = confusion

reflective = thoughtful

Why doesn't Laura hear what Jim is asking?

LAURA: Nothing much.

JIM: You must have been doing something these six long years.

LAURA: Yes.

JIM: Well, then, such as what?

LAURA: I took a business course at business college—

JIM: How did that work out?

LAURA: Well, not very—well—I had to drop out, it gave me—**indigestion**—

(Jim laughs gently.)

JIM: What are you doing now?

LAURA: I don't do anything—much. Oh, please don't think I sit around doing nothing! My glass collection takes up a good deal of time. Glass is something you have to take good care of.

JIM: What did you say—about glass?

LAURA: Collection, I said—I have one—*(She clears her throat and turns away again, acutely shy.)*

indigestion = (a) stomach ache

Why does Jim laugh?

Does Jim like Laura?

Why does Jim ask Laura to repeat what she said about glass?

Actress Karen Allen as Laura, examining the glass unicorn in the video *The Glass Menagerie.*

JIM: ***(Abruptly.)*** You know what I judge to be the trouble with you? Inferiority complex! Know what that is? That's what they call it when someone low-rates himself! I understand it because I had it, too—though my case was not so **aggravated** as yours seems to be. I had it until I took up public speaking, developed my voice, and learned that I had an **aptitude** for science. Before that time I never thought of myself as being outstanding in any way whatsoever!

Now I've never made a regular study of it, but I have a friend who says I can **analyze** people better than doctors that make a profession of it. I don't claim that to be necessarily true, but I can sure guess a person's psychology, Laura! *(Takes out his gum.)* Excuse me, Laura. I always take it out when the flavor is gone. I'll use this scrap of paper to wrap it in. I know how it is to get it stuck on a shoe.

Yep—that's what I judge to be your principal trouble. You lack of **confidence** in yourself as a person. You don't have the proper amount of faith in yourself. I'm basing that fact on a number of your remarks and also on certain observations I've made. For instance, that clumping you thought was so awful in high school. You say that you even dreaded to walk into class. You see what you did? You dropped out of school, you gave up an education because of a clump, which as far as I know was practically nonexistent! A little defect is what you have. Hardly noticeable even! Magnified thousands of times by imagination!

You know what my strong advice to you is? Think of yourself as ***superior*** in some way!

abruptly = suddenly

Do you believe that Jim had an inferiority complex?

Do you think that Laura has one?

aggravated = serious

aptitude = ability, talent

analyze = break large ideas into small parts

Does Jim's comment about gum losing its flavor tell you anything about him?

confidence = have trust in yourself

Do you think that Jim is intelligent? Why or why not?

Who else has told Laura this same advice?

superior = better than other people; opposite of inferior

Is Jim's advice about "thinking superior" good advice?

LAURA: What way would I think?

JIM: Why, man alive, Laura! Just look about you a little. What do you see? A world full of common people! All of 'em born and all of 'em going to die! Which of them has one-tenth of your good points? Or mine! Or anyone else's, as far as that goes—gosh!

Everybody excels in some one thing. Some in many!

(Unconsciously glances at himself in the mirror.)

All you've got to do is discover in what!

Is Jim being logical? Why or why not?

Do you believe what Jim says? Why or why not?

How does Laura feel?

Take me, for instance. *(He adjusts his tie in the mirror.)*

My interest happens to lie in electro-dynamics. I'm taking a course in radio engineering at night school, Laura, on top of a fairly responsible job at the warehouse. I'm taking that course and studying public speaking.

LAURA: Ohhhh.

JIM: Because I believe in the future of television! *(Turning back to her.)* I wish to be ready to go up right along with it. Therefore, I'm planning to get in on the ground floor. In fact I've already made the right connections and all that remains is for the industry itself to get under way! Full steam—*(His eyes are starry.)* Knowledge—Zzzzzp! Money—Zzzzzzp!—Power!

That's the cycle democracy is built on! *(His attitude is convincingly dynamic. Laura stares at him, even her shyness eclipsed in her absolute wonder. He suddenly grins.)* I guess you think I think a lot of myself!

Do you believe that there is a good future in store for Jim? Why or why not?

Do you agree with Jim's definition of the cycle of democracy?

LAURA: No-o-o-, I—

JIM: Now how about you? Isn't there something you take more interest in than anything else?

LAURA: Well, I do—as I said—have my—glass collection—

(A peal of girlish laughter from the kitchen.)

Who is laughing? Why do we hear this laughter now?

Is Jim really interested?

JIM: I'm not right sure I know what you're talking about. What kind of glass is it?

LAURA: Little articles of it, they're ornaments mostly! Most of them are little animals made out of glass, the tiniest little animals in the world. Mother calls them a glass menagerie! This one is one of the oldest. It's nearly thirteen.

(Music: "The Glass Menagerie.")

(He stretches out his hand.)

Oh, be careful—if you breathe, it breaks!

JIM: I'd better not take it. I'm pretty **clumsy** with things.

clumsy = awkward; someone who drops things and/or falls over things

LAURA: Go on, I trust you with him! *(Places it in his palm.)* There now—you're holding him gently! Hold him over the light, he loves the light! You see how the light shines through him?

What has happened to Laura?

be partial = have a favorite

unicorn = mythical horse with a horn on its forehead

JIM: It sure does shine!

LAURA: I shouldn't **be partial**, but he is my favorite one.

JIM: What kind of a thing is this one supposed to be?

LAURA: Haven't you noticed the single horn on his forehead?

JIM: A **unicorn**, huh?

LAURA: Mmm-hmmm!

JIM: Unicorns, aren't they **extinct** in the modern world?

extinct = no longer existing

Is Laura also extinct in the modern world? Why or why not?

LAURA: I know!

JIM: Poor little fellow, he must feel sort of lonesome.

How is Laura being funny?

LAURA: *(Smiling.)* Well, if he does he doesn't complain about it. He stays on a shelf with some horses that don't have horns, and all of them seem to get along nicely together.

What does this scene tell us about her?

Do Jim and Laura understand each other?

JIM: How do you know?

LAURA: *(Lightly.)* I haven't heard any arguments among them!

JIM: *(Grinning.)* No arguments, huh? Well, that's a pretty good sign! Where shall I set him?

LAURA: Put him on the table. They all like a change of scenery once in a while!

JIM: *(Stretching.)* Well, well, well, well—Look how big my shadow is when I stretch!

What does the sentence about Jim's shadow mean?

LAURA: Oh, oh, yes—it stretches across the ceiling!

Why has the writer put Paradise Dance Hall across the alley and not across the street?

JIM: *(Crossing to door.)* I think it's stopped raining. *(Opens fire-escape door.)* Where does the music come from?

cutting the rug = dancing

LAURA: From the Paradise Dance Hall across the alley.

JIM: How about **cutting the rug** a little, Miss Wingfield?

LAURA: Oh, I—

JIM: Or is your program filled up? Let me have a look at it. *(Grasps imaginary card.)* Why, every dance is taken! I'll just have to scratch some out.

(Waltz Music: "La Golondrina.")

Ahhh, a waltz! *(He executes some sweeping turns by himself then holds his arms toward Laura.)*

LAURA: *(Breathlessly.)* I—can't dance!

JIM: There you go, that inferiority stuff!

LAURA: I've never danced in my life!

JIM: Come on, try!

LAURA: Oh, but I'd step on you!

What is Jim pretending?

JIM: I'm not made of glass.

LAURA: How—how—how do we start?

JIM: Just leave it to me. You hold your arms out a little.

LAURA: Like this?

JIM: A little bit higher. Right. Now don't **tighten up**, that's the main thing about it—relax.

LAURA: *(Laughing breathlessly.)* It's hard not to.

JIM: Okay.

LAURA: I'm afraid you can't **budge me**.

"To be made of glass" has a double meaning. It also means "to be very sensitive."

Jim is certainly not made of glass. How about Laura?

to tighten up = to get nervous

budge me = move me

JIM: What do you bet I can't? *(He swings her into motion.)*

LAURA: Goodness, yes, you can!

JIM: Let yourself go, now, Laura, just let yourself go.

LAURA: I'm—

JIM: Come on!

LAURA: Trying!

JIM: Not so still—easy does it!

LAURA: I know but I'm—

JIM: Loosen the backbone! There now, that's a lot better.

LAURA: Am I?

JIM: Lots, lots better! *(He moves her about the room in a clumsy waltz.)*

LAURA: Oh, my!

JIM: Ha-ha!

How does Laura feel?

How does Jim feel?

LAURA: Oh, my goodness!

JIM: Ha-ha-ha! *(They suddenly bump into the table. Jim stops.)* What did we hit on?

LAURA: Table.

JIM: Did something fall off it? I think—

LAURA: Yes.

JIM: I hope that it wasn't the little glass horse with the horn!

LAURA: Yes.

JIM: Aw, aw, aw. Is it broken?

LAURA: Now it is just like all the other horses.

JIM: It's lost its—

LAURA: Horn! It doesn't matter. Maybe it's a **blessing** in **disguise**.

blessing = gift of God

disguise = hiding behind a mask

favorite = the one you like best

Why does Laura call Jim "Freckles"?

JIM: You'll never forgive me. I bet that was your **favorite** piece of glass.

LAURA: I don't have favorites much. It's no tragedy, Freckles. Glass breaks so easily. No matter how careful you are. The traffic **jars** the shelves and things fall off them.

jars = moves

freakish = strange

Why do they laugh?

JIM: Still I'm awfully sorry that I was the cause.

LAURA: *(Smiling.)* I'll just imagine he had an operation. The horn was removed to make him feel less—**freakish**!

(They both laugh.)

Now he will feel more at home with the other horses, the ones that don't have horns . . .

JIM: Ha-ha, that's very funny! *(Suddenly serious.)*

hesitant = unsure

Correct Jim's English in the sentence, "Do you mind me . . ."

I'm glad to see that you have a sense of humor. You know—you're—well—very different! Surprisingly different from anyone else I know! *(His voice becomes soft and **hesitant** with a genuine feeling.)* Do you mind me telling you that?

abashed = very surprised

*(Laura is **abashed** beyond speech.)*

I mean it in a nice way . . .

(Laura nods shyly, looking away.)

You make me feel sort of—I don't know how to put it! I'm usually pretty good at expressing things, but—this is something that I don't know how to say!

(Laura touches her throat and clears it—turns the broken unicorn in her hands.)

(Even softer.) Has anyone ever told you that you were pretty?

(Pause: Music.)

(Laura looks up slowly, with wonder, and shakes her head.)

Well, you are! In a very different way from anyone else. All the nicer because of the difference too.

(His voice becomes low and ***husky****. Laura turns away, nearly faint with the* ***novelty*** *of her emotions.)*

I wish that you were my sister. I'd teach you to have some confidence in yourself. The different people are not like other people, but being different is nothing to be ashamed of. Because other people are not such wonderful people. They're one hundred times one thousand. You're one times one! They walk all over the earth. You just stay here. They're common as—weeds, but—you—well, you're—*Blue Roses!*

(Image on screen: Blue Roses.)

(Music changes.)

LAURA: But blue is wrong for—roses . . .

JIM: It's right for you! You're—pretty!

LAURA: In what respect am I pretty?

JIM: In all respects—believe me! Your eyes—your hair—are pretty! Your hands are pretty!

(He catches hold of her hand.)

You think I'm making this up because I'm invited to dinner and have to be nice. Oh, I could do that! I could put on an act for you, Laura, and say lots of things without being very sincere. But this time I am. I'm talking to you sincerely. I happened to notice you had this inferiority complex that keeps you from feeling comfortable with people. Somebody needs to build your confidence up and make you proud instead of shy and turning away

How does Laura make Jim feel?

Why does Laura turn the broken unicorn in her hand?

husky = deep-sounding; caused from dryness in the throat or nervousness

novelty = newness

Why does Jim talk about what he would do if he were Laura's brother?

What has happened to Jim?

What has happened to the name "Blue Roses?"

Why does Laura ask this question?

Is what Jim says really what Laura thinks?

and-blushing. Somebody ought to—ought to—*kiss* you, Laura!

(His hands slips slowly up her arm to her shoulder.)

(Music swells ***tumultuously****.)*

(He suddenly turns her about and kisses her on the lips.)

tumultuously = in a way that is confusing; out of order

Why does Jim kiss Laura?

Let's think about it

Here are nine questions. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Select one person in your group as secretary to take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answers.

List of questions

1. Does the fact that Jim and Laura are sitting on the floor have any important effect in this scene? Why of why not?
2. Very ordinary things seem to make a great impression on Jim. When in the play do we see this aspect of his personality? What do we learn about Jim's personality from the observations he makes?
3. How do you think that Jim feels when he realizes that Laura knows all about him and remembers his glorious high school days?
4. How do the words "blue roses" gain a romantic meaning in this scene?
5. What does Jim tell Laura about people? Do you agree with his opinion? Why or why not?
6. Jim analyzes Laura's personality. Do you agree with his interpretation of what is wrong with Laura? Why or why not?
7. Jim is enthusiastic and optimistic about his future. Do you think that he will really become a success? Why or why not?
8. Laura is not sad when the unicorn loses his horn. In fact she says that he will now become more normal—more like the other horses. Does the unicorn represent Laura? Why or why not?
9. How do you think that Jim feels right after he has kissed Laura? How do you think Laura feels?

Working with the video

The Glass Menagerie has been made into an MCA video directed by Paul Newman, starring Joanne Woodward as Amanda, Karen Allen as Laura, John Malkovich as Tom, and James Naughton as Jim, the gentleman caller.

Pre-viewing activity

Tom is the first person we see in the film. He says that he will talk to us about his memories. He says that he will show us a "memory play." Before you watch the video, discuss the following questions with your classmates.

List of questions

1. Where do you think Tom is when he tells us about his memories?
2. Do you think that Tom left his mother and sister? If so, where did he go? What did he do?
3. How can the director of this film make it look and feel like a memory play?

In-viewing activities

Character qualities

Your teacher will divide the class into four groups. As your group watches the film, you will focus on just one character. Group A will focus on Amanda; Group B will observe Tom; Group C will follow Laura; and Group D will focus on Jim. Look for qualities such as sensitivity, openness, warmth, selfishness, intelligence, and charm. Take notes as you watch.

Favorite lines

Re-read the scene between Laura and Jim, and underline your favorite lines. Then watch the scene with your book in front of you, and notice the way in which your favorite lines have been spoken.

Post-viewing activities

Character jigsaw

Sit with classmates who have watched the same character that you watched and talk about your character. Then form new groups in which there are students who have observed each of the characters. Share what you have observed and your opinions. Consider the following questions. Be ready to explain your thoughts.

List of questions

1. Who is the most selfish person in the play?
2. Who is the most open and warm?
3. Who is the most sensitive?
4. Who is the most frustrated?
5. Who is the most intelligent?

Remembering lines

Do you remember who said the lines listed below? Do you remember when the lines were said and why? Share your information with classmates in small groups. You may want to

look at parts of the film again to find the lines.

List of lines

1. "Being different is nothing to be ashamed of."
2. "Time is the longest distance between two places."
3. "Rise and shine!"
4. "Bits of a shattered rainbow."
5. "Chew, chew!"
6. "The power of love is tremendous. It changes the whole world."
7. "I'm not made of glass."
8. "Being disappointed is one thing; being discouraged is something else."
9. "A telephone man who fell in love with long distance."
10. "That face fooled everybody."
11. "There is so much in my heart that I can't describe to you."
12. "Her not speaking, is that such a tragedy?"
13. "If you try you will succeed."
14. "I am bewildered by life."
15. "In memory things happen to music."
16. "You ugly babbling old witch."
17. "I think to myself, 'how lucky dead people are.'"

The meaning of objects

In small groups or pairs, discuss how some of the objects in the following list contribute to and fit into the plot.

List of objects

1. a unicorn
2. a typewriter
3. a business college
4. a women's magazine
5. chewing gum
6. old records
7. an old summer dress
8. an electric bill
9. candles
10. a warehouse

Further activities

Thinking about success

Jim was voted most likely to succeed by his high school class. Yet, six years after graduation he is still working at a menial job. What do you think it takes to be successful?

Below is a list of qualities for you to think about. Rate these qualities on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 is the lowest score, and 5 is the highest score). In small groups of three to five students, explain how you rated each quality and why you gave the quality that rating. Listen to your classmates' reasons. Perhaps, as a group, you can reach a consensus of which qualities people need to succeed. Report on your conversation to the rest of the class.

List of qualities

___ hard work
___ ambition
___ self-confidence
___ people who believe in you
___ money
___ intelligence
___ luck
___ other _____

Judging the characters

In *The Glass Menagerie* you met four characters: Amanda, Tom, Laura, and Jim. Think about these characters through the following questions:

1. Which one did you like the least?
2. Which one did you feel most sorry for?
3. Which one did you admire?
4. Which one could you identify with?
5. Which one did you think was the saddest?

Choose the character that you feel strongest about or find most interesting, and stand together with other students who feel this way. Explain to one another why you have strong feelings about this character or why you find this character most interesting. Then find a classmate who has chosen another character. Sit together with this classmate, and explain to each other why you have chosen your character.

Writing a letter

Imagine that Tom has been gone for two years. One day he decides to write a letter to his sister, Laura. In groups of three to five, write Tom's letter (imagine that you are Tom). Be sure that the letter explains to Laura why you have left home. Also, tell her where you have been and what has happened to you in the past two years. Don't forget to ask her about her life and about Amanda, and add anything else that you think is interesting or relevant. When you have finished writing, read your letter out loud to the class and listen to other groups' letters. Offer suggestions for improvement and listen to suggestions offered to you. After class, make a copy of your group's letter for yourself and take it home to improve it. Give the improved version to your teacher.

Answering an advertisement

Laura is looking for a job. She has cut out the following advertisements from the newspaper. Choose the advertisement that offers the job you think might suit Laura best. In small groups, answer the advertisement for Laura. Remember that Laura should say where she found the advertisement and why it appealed to her. She should also write why she thinks she is qualified for the position and what experience she has had. Lastly, Laura should give the names of people who might be willing to recommend her. She should say that she would be happy to come for a personal interview. Read your letter out loud to the class, and listen to the letters composed by other groups. After you have had some time to make corrections, post your letter on the classroom wall. Walk around reading the letters of other groups. Write comments on the letters. Make sure that at least one comment you write on each letter is positive.

The advertisements

HELP WANTED!

Part-time worker for Susie's Flower Shop. Looking for friendly individual who loves flowers and would like to make flower arrangements. Roses are our specialty. Write to Rose and Violet Florida; Vegetation Way; San Francisco, CA.

MOMMY HAS TO WORK!

I need a live-in baby-sitter for my lovely four-year-old daughter. Good pay and a fine room for the right person. Must be patient and love children, toys. Write to Ms. Ima Busymom; 33 Childplace; Chicago, IL.

NO ELEPHANTS PLEASE!

We need full time help in our china shop. Must be able to handle delicate dishes and spend a great deal of time polishing. We don't want someone who gets easily bored. Must have a pleasant disposition. Write to Anna Fragile and Vera Glassman; 48 Fragile Avenue; New York, New York.

Journal writing: Being tense versus relaxing

Laura is at first very awkward and confused with Jim. Later, she relaxes and speaks freely. Write a paragraph or two about what qualities in people make you tense and what qualities make you relax and be yourself.

Pygmalion

by George Bernard Shaw

Pygmalion

What this play is about

In his play about Eliza Doolittle, a poor flower girl who learns to speak and behave like a lady, George Bernard Shaw writes about his two great interests: the use of language and the organization of society. As a socialist, Shaw was always **distressed** by the nature of the British class system. It was a system that closed the doors of **opportunity** to a great many people. In fact, people were locked into a class because of the way they spoke. People could immediately tell what class you belonged to and where you had been born simply by hearing you talk for a few minutes. In *Pygmalion*, Shaw illustrates how **artificial** and ridiculous such a system can be.

The name *Pygmalion* comes from a Greek **legend** about a sculptor who fell in love with Galatea, a statue he had made. The artist prayed to the goddess of love, Aphrodite, that his beautiful statue be brought to life, and Aphrodite answered his prayer.

In *Pygmalion*, Professor Henry Higgins plays the role of the sculptor, Pygmalion. **On a whim**, he decides to make a simple flower girl, who talks the language of the lower class, into an upper class lady by teaching her to speak proper English. Eliza Doolittle, the flower girl, is the statue in the hands of the artist.

One rainy evening as Eliza is selling flowers in Covent Garden, she notices a strange man writing things in a notebook. She is frightened because she thinks that the man is a policeman. The man is actually Professor Henry Higgins, a famous phonology and speech professor, who is there making a study of the accents he hears people around him speak. Eliza overhears the professor saying to another man that he can make anyone speak like a lady or like a gentleman. Pointing to her and speaking to his friend, Colonel Pickering, Professor Higgins says, "You see this creature with her kerb-stone English—the English that will keep her in the **gutter** to the end of her days? Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a **duchess** at the **ambassador**'s garden party. I could even get her a place as lady's maid or shop **assistant**, which **requires** better English. That's the sort of thing I do for commercial millionaires."

Eliza is **ambitious**. She would like to have her own flower shop, and she knows that speaking proper English would help her to fulfill her ambitions. She decides to visit Professor Higgins and ask him if he would be interested in giving her lessons.

When Eliza arrives at Professor Higgins'

laboratory on Wimpole Street, she finds the professor visiting with his friend, Colonel Pickering. Both of the men are extremely interested in the study of language. When they hear Eliza's request, they find great challenge in it. Colonel Pickering offers to pay all the expenses for the experiment if Professor Higgins can manage, in three months' time, to pass Eliza off as a duchess at the ambassador's garden party.

While Eliza is having a bath upstairs upon returning home, her father, Mr. Alfred Doolittle, (who works as a garbage collector or *dustman* in British English), visits Professor Higgins. Alfred Doolittle thinks that the professor is in love with his daughter and tries to **blackmail** him. At first, Professor Higgins is angry, but later when he discovers that Alfred Doolittle is a very unusual man with a personal sense of **morality**, he agrees to pay him five pounds. As a matter of fact, Higgins offers ten pounds, but Alfred Doolittle only wants five. He says that ten pounds will make him feel middle class, and he prefers to remain in the class of the undeserving poor where he has more freedom.

Eliza proves to be a wonderful student of language. She is gifted with great natural talents and can imitate anyone and make any sound. She is also very musical and quickly learns to play the piano. Higgins and Pickering have a wonderful time with their "live doll," and they are eager to show her off.

Eliza's first contact with the upper class comes when she shows up for an afternoon tea at the house of Mrs. Higgins, Professor Higgins' mother. There she **chats** with a few ladies and gentlemen. Although her pronunciation is perfectly correct, her grammar and her **sense of propriety** haven't yet reached perfection.

Mrs. Higgins is very upset by what her son is doing. She realizes that while Higgins is correcting Eliza's speech, he is also playing with the young woman's emotions.

Finally, the big day arrives, and Eliza, beautifully dressed and bejeweled, is taken by Higgins and Pickering to the ambassador's garden party. Eliza passes the test **with flying colors**. Nobody at the party suspects that she is really a lower class flower girl.

When Higgins, Pickering, and Eliza return to Wimpole Street after the party, Higgins and Pickering are already bored with the whole thing. Neither one of them thinks about Eliza. Neither one of them tells her that she was wonderful in passing the language test. Neither one of them realizes what a terrible moment this must be for her. Eliza is suddenly very frightened. What will become of her now that the experiment is over? She feels and acts like a lady, but she doesn't have the money to live like a lady, and the two men seem to think that they can just forget about her—throw her back into the gutter. In **desperation**, Eliza runs to Mrs. Higgins.

Meanwhile, Alfred Doolittle becomes rich because an American millionaire leaves him a great sum of money. The millionaire had been told by Higgins that Alfred Doolittle was one of England's most unusual moralists. Though Alfred Doolittle is now **wealthy**, he doesn't like it. All of his poor relatives suddenly become very family-minded; the woman he has lived with for years insists that they have a proper wedding ceremony, and now he is sure that he will also have to support Eliza.

When Higgins and Pickering come to the home of Mrs. Higgins in search of Eliza, they find Alfred Doolittle there. He is

on his way to church to get married so he invites all of them to the ceremony.

Before Eliza goes to church to see her father married, she and Higgins have a serious talk. Eliza suddenly realizes that she can become **a phonetics teacher** as famous as Higgins himself. She simply has to **advertise** that the beautiful lady who was seen at the ambassador's garden party and was much admired there had just three months earlier been a flower girl in the **slums**. She could then propose to teach her future students everything she herself had learned. Higgins **praises** Eliza for her independent thinking, and as the play ends we have the distinct feeling that there is more between Higgins and Eliza than just language and professionalism.

George Bernard Shaw wrote a long epilogue to the play in which he explained that Eliza and Professor Higgins were too much like each other to fall in love and that Eliza marries Freddy, a young upper class man who adores her. But reading a work of literature is a creative act for the reader as well as the writer, and most readers simply don't accept George Bernard Shaw's epilogue. They are certain that Higgins and Eliza love each other and are meant for each other.

Working with words

Work together with a classmate to see if you understand the meanings of the bolded words in the previous section. When you don't understand a word, look it up in your dictionary or ask your teacher for help. Then match the bolded words with the following definitions. Write them in the appropriate blanks.

Find the word or expression that means . . .

1. suddenly and without much thinking _____
2. a chance to do something you really want to do _____
3. helper _____
4. a feeling for saying and doing the right thing at the right time _____
5. very high grades _____
6. rich _____
7. a pronunciation teacher _____
8. says good things about someone _____
9. not real or not sincere _____
10. poor section of town _____

Before you read Scene I: What are your ambitions?

All of us have our private ambitions, meaning strong desires to accomplish certain things. As a rule, there is something we must change in the way we function and the way we behave in order to achieve our ambitions. Think about your special ambitions and what you might have to do to achieve them. Then in a group, talk about these ambitions and how they

might be achieved. If everyone in your group agrees on certain ways to achieve ambitions, you might wish to report those ways to the rest of the class.

Here are some things to consider:

Would learning a language help you to achieve your ambitions?
Would a change in the way you look or dress help you to achieve your ambitions?
Would travel around the world help you to achieve your ambitions?
Would learning new skills help you to achieve your ambitions?
Would knowing important people help you to achieve your ambitions?
Would having more money help you to achieve your ambitions?

Reading Scene I: The Ambitious Flower Girl

In this scene Eliza Doolittle goes to the house of Professor Higgins because she has heard that he can make her speak like a lady. Because Eliza is ambitious, independent, and on her own, she has learned how to take care of herself. Life on your own isn't easy anywhere, but in London in the early part of the twentieth century it was more difficult than it is in most places today. Most young women in Eliza's situation would have become drunken prostitutes, but not Eliza. She supports herself by selling flowers, and she is making future plans to have her own flower shop. It is this ambition that motivates her to go to the house of the famous professor who can teach her to talk like a lady—something she needs to do if she is to work in a fine flower shop. When Eliza arrives at Professor Higgins' house, she is met by Mrs. Pearce, the professor's housekeeper. Mrs. Pearce, who knows what kind of people her employer receives, at first doesn't want to admit Eliza. Later Mrs. Pearce is quite upset by Higgins' attitude toward the girl. Higgins treats Eliza as if she were worthless. Eliza would probably have left immediately except for the gentlemanly behavior of Colonel Pickering.

Pygmalion

Scene I

The Ambitious Flower Girl

HIGGINS: A young woman! What does she want?

MRS. PEARCE: Well, sir, she says you'll be glad to see her when you know what she's come about. She's quite a common girl, sir. Very common indeed. I should have sent her away, only I thought perhaps you wanted her to talk into your machines. I hope I've not done wrong; but really you see such queer people sometimes—you'll excuse me, I'm sure, sir—

Who is Mrs. Pearce?

What is Mrs. Pearce's attitude toward the young woman?

How does Mrs. Pearce feel about Higgins?

HIGGINS: Oh, that's all right, Mrs. Pearce. Has she an interesting accent?

What is the only thing that really interests Higgins?

MRS. PEARCE: Oh, something dreadful, sir, really. I don't know how you can take an interest in it.

How do we understand this part of his personality?

What do we learn about Mrs. Pearce?

HIGGINS: *(To Pickering.)* Let's have her up. **Shew** her up, Mrs. Pearce. *(He rushes across to his working table and picks out a cylinder to use on the phonograph.)*

shew = "show" in American English

How does Higgins feel about his work?

MRS. PEARCE: *(Only half resigned to it.)* Very well, sir. It's for you to say. *(She goes downstairs.)*

Does Mrs. Pearce approve of what Professor Higgins does?

HIGGINS: This is rather a bit of luck. I'll shew you how I make records. We'll set her talking; and I'll take it down first in Bell's Visible Speech; then in broad Romic; and then we'll get her on the phonograph so that you can turn her on as often as you like with the written transcript before you.

What technology does Professor Higgins use?

If he were working today, what would he use in place of a phonograph?

Why does Higgins feel that they are lucky?

MRS. PEARCE: *(Returning.)* This is the young woman, sir.

How do you think Mrs. Pierce says her line?

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*(The flower girl enters **in state**. She has a hat with three **ostrich feathers**: orange, sky-blue, and red. She has a nearly clean apron and her **shoddy** coat has been tidied a little. The **pathos** of this **deplorable** figure, with its innocent **vanity** and **consequential** air, touches Pickering, who has already straightened himself in the presence of Mrs. Pearce.*

in state = making a show of her entrance

ostrich feathers = light and fluffy feathers from a large bird that runs fast but cannot fly

shoddy = poor quality

pathos = pitiful look

deplorable = sad

vanity = thinking highly of yourself

consequential = important

How has Eliza prepared herself for this visit?

*But as to Higgins, the only distinction he makes between men and women is that when he is neither **bullying** nor exclaiming to the heavens against some feather-weight cross, he **coaxes** women as a child coaxes its nurse when it wants to get anything out of her.)*

bullying = acting superior to people who are weak

coaxes = convinces

How are Higgins and Pickering different in their attitudes toward women?

HIGGINS: *(**Brusquely**, recognizing her with **unconcealed** disappointment, and at once, baby-like, making an **intolerable grievance** of it.)* Why, this is the girl I jotted down last night. She's no use: I've got all the records I want of the Lisson Grove lingo; and I'm not going to waste another cylinder on it. *(To the girl.)* Be off with you. I don't want you.

brusquely = quickly and impolitely

unconcealed = not hidden

intolerable = impossible to stand

grievance = complaint

Why is Higgins disappointed?

How does Higgins treat the girl?

What do we learn about Higgins' personality?

THE FLOWER GIRL: Don't you be so **saucy**. You ain't heard what I come for yet. *(To Mrs. Pearce, who is waiting at the door for further instructions.)* Did you tell him I come in a taxi?

MRS. PEARCE: Nonsense, girl! Why do you think a gentleman like Mr. Higgins cares what you came in?

THE FLOWER GIRL: Oh, we are **proud**! He ain't above giving lessons, not him: I heard him say so. Well, I ain't come here to ask for any compliment; and if my money's not good enough, I can go elsewhere.

saucy = impolite

Why does Eliza want Higgins to know that she has come in a taxi?

What do we learn about Eliza?

proud = thinking highly of yourself

HIGGINS: Good enough for what?

THE FLOWER GIRL: Good enough for ye-oo. Now you know, don't you? I'm come to have lessons, I am. An' to pay for em too: make no mistake.

Why does Higgins ask this question?

HIGGINS: Well! *(Recovering his breath with a gasp.)* What do you expect me to say to you?

THE FLOWER GIRL: Well, if you was a gentleman, you might ask me to sit down, I think. Don't I tell you I'm bringing you business?

HIGGINS: Pickering, shall we ask this baggage to sit down, or shall we throw her out of the window?

THE FLOWER GIRL: *(Running away in terror to the piano, where she turns **at bay**.)* Ah-ah-oh-ow-ow-ow-oo! *(Wounded and **whimpering**.)* I won't be called a baggage when I've offered to pay like any lady.

(Motionless, the two men stare at her from the other side of the room, amazed.)

Why is Higgins surprised?

Can you correct Eliza's English?

Eliza must be a little afraid. Do we feel this fear for her? Why or why not?

Why is Higgins so insulting?

at bay = like an animal turning to defend itself

whimpering = crying

Why are the men so amazed?

PICKERING: *(Gently.)* What is it you want, my girl?

THE FLOWER GIRL: I want to be a lady in a flower shop instead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can **talk more genteel**. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay—not asking any favor—and he treats me as if I was dirt.

MRS. PEARCE: How can you be such a foolish ignorant girl as to think you could afford to pay Mr. Higgins?

THE FLOWER GIRL: Why shouldn't I? I know what lessons cost as well as you do; and I'm ready to pay.

How does Pickering talk to Eliza?

Why has Eliza come?

talk more genteel = talk as upper class people do

How does Mrs. Pearce feel about Eliza?

How are Higgins and Pickering different in their attitudes toward women?

HIGGINS: How much?

THE FLOWER GIRL: *(Coming back to him, **triumphant**.)* Now you're talking! I thought you'd come off it when you saw a chance of getting back a bit of what you **chucked** at me last night. *(Confidentially.)* **You had a drop in**, hadn't you?

Why does Higgins ask?

triumphant = as if she had won a victory

Why is Eliza happy?

chucked = threw

You had a drop in = you had something strong to drink

HIGGINS: *(**Peremptorily**.)* Sit down.

THE FLOWER GIRL: Oh, if you're going to make a compliment of it—

HIGGINS: *(Thundering at her.)* Sit down.

MRS. PEARCE: *(**Severely**.)* Sit down girl. Do as you're told. *(She places the stray chair near the hearthrug between Higgins and Pickering and stands behind it waiting for the girl to sit down.)*

THE FLOWER GIRL: Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo! *(She stands, half rebellious, half bewildered.)*

PICKERING: *(Very courteous.)* Won't you sit down?

THE FLOWER GIRL: *(Coyly.)* Don't mind if I do. *(She sits down. Pickering returns to the hearthrug.)*

HIGGINS: What's your name?

THE FLOWER GIRL: Eliza Doolittle.

HIGGINS: *(**Declaiming gravely**.)* Eliza, Elizabeth, Betsy, and Bess. They went to the woods to get a bird's nes'.

peremptorily = decisively

Why does Eliza think that Higgins was drunk the previous night?

Why does Higgins shout at Eliza?

severely = seriously

How does Mrs. Pearce treat Eliza?

Why doesn't Eliza sit down?

What makes Eliza sit down?

declaiming gravely = saying out loud seriously

PICKERING: They found a nest with four eggs in it—

HIGGINS: They took one apiece, and left three in it. *(They laugh heartily at their own wit.)*

ELIZA: Oh, don't be silly.

MRS. PEARCE: You mustn't speak to the gentleman like that.

ELIZA: Well, why won't he speak sensible to me?

HIGGINS: Come back to business. How much do you propose to pay me for the lessons?

Why do Higgins and Pickering suddenly recite a children's poem?

Why do Higgins and Pickering laugh?

Is Mrs. Pearce right?

ELIZA: Oh, I know what's right. A lady friend of mine gets French lessons for eighteen pence an hour from a real French gentleman. Well, **you wouldn't have the face to** ask me the same for teaching me my own language as you would for French; so I won't give more than a shilling. Take it or leave it.

HIGGINS: *(Walking up and down the room,* ***rattling*** *his keys and his cash in his pockets.)* You know, Pickering, if you consider a shilling, not as a simple shilling, but as a percentage of this girl's income, it works out as fully equivalent to sixty or seventy guineas from a millionaire.

PICKERING: How so?

HIGGINS: Figure it out. A millionaire has about one hundred and fifty pounds a day. She earns about half a crown.

ELIZA: *(Haughtily.)* Who told you I only—

HIGGINS: *(Continuing.)* She offers me two-fifths of her day's income for a lesson. Two-fifths of a millionaire's income for a day would be somewhere about sixty pounds. It's handsome. By George, it's enormous! It's the biggest offer I ever had.

Is Eliza being logical?

you wouldn't have the face to = you wouldn't dare to

rattling = making noise with

Is Higgins being logical?

ELIZA: *(Rising, terrified.)* Sixty pounds! What are you talking about? I never offered you sixty pounds. Where would I get—

HIGGINS: Hold your tongue.

ELIZA: *(**Weeping**.)* But I ain't got sixty pounds. Oh—

MRS. PEARCE: Don't cry, you silly girl. Sit down. Nobody is going to touch your money.

Why is Eliza afraid?

weeping = crying

Why is Eliza crying?

HIGGINS: Somebody is going to touch you, with a broomstick, if you don't stop **snivelling**. Sit down.

snivelling = crying with a runny nose; whining; complaining

ELIZA: *(Obeying slowly.)* Ah-ah-ah-ow-oo-o! One would think you was my father.

HIGGINS: If I decide to teach you, I'll be worse than two fathers to you. Here. *(He offers her his silk handkerchief.)*

ELIZA: What's this for?

HIGGINS: To wipe your eyes. To wipe any part of your face that feels moist. Remember: that's your handkerchief, and that's your sleeve. Don't mistake the one for the other if you wish to become a lady in a shop. *(Eliza, uutterly bewildered, stares helplessly at him.)*

In what tone of voice do you think that Higgins says these lines?

What is Higgins teaching Eliza?

Why is Eliza confused?

Why is Pickering laughing?

MRS. PEARCE: It's no use talking to her like that, Mr. Higgins; she doesn't understand you. *(Takes away the handkerchief.)*

ELIZA: *(Snatching it.)* Here! You give me that handkerchief. He give it to me, not to you.

PICKERING: *(Laughing.)* He did. I think it must be regarded as her property, Mrs. Pearce.

MRS. PEARCE: ***(Resigning herself.)*** Serve you right, Mr. Higgins.

resigning herself = giving up

Why is Pickering interested?

What does Pickering offer to do?

How do you think Eliza feels?

PICKERING: Higgins, I'm interested. What about the ambassador's garden party? I'll say you're the greatest teacher alive if you make that good. I'll bet you all the expenses of the experiment you can't do it. And I'll pay for the lessons.

ELIZA: Oh, you are real good. Thank you, Captain.

HIGGINS: *(Tempted, looking at her.)* It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty—

Is Eliza clean or dirty?

flattery = good but not necessarily true things said about someone

ELIZA: *(Protesting extremely.)* Ah-ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo-oo! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did.

PICKERING: You're certainly not going to turn her head with **flattery**, Higgins.

MRS. PEARCE: *(Uneasy.)* Oh, don't say that, sir. There's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr. Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage him to do anything foolish.

What does Mrs. Pearce mean?

HIGGINS: *(Becoming excited as the idea grows on him.)* What is life but a series of inspired follies? The difficulty is to find them to do. Never lose a chance; it doesn't come every day. I shall make a duchess of this **dragtailed guttersnipe**.

Why is Higgins so excited?

dragtailed guttersnipe = child of the lowest class (a gutter is a ditch along the side of a road into which rain water or wash water runs; a snipe is a kind of bird)

ELIZA: *(Strongly deprecating this view of her.)* Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo!

Monkey Brand = a kind of very strong soap

HIGGINS: *(Carried away.)* Yes. In six months—in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue—I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today. Now! This moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce. **Monkey Brand**, if it won't come off any other way. Is there a good fire in the kitchen?

Why is a fire necessary?

MRS. PEARCE: *(Protesting.)* Yes, but—

Why is Mrs. Pearce protesting?

HIGGINS: *(Storming on.)* Take all her clothes off and burn them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper till they come.

How does Higgins treat Eliza? Give evidence of his attitude.

ELIZA: You're no gentleman, you're not, to talk of such things. I'm a good girl, I am; and I know what the like of you are I do.

What do you think that Eliza means when she says that she is a good girl?

HIGGINS: We want none of your Lisson Grove **prudery** here, young woman. You've got to learn to behave like a duchess. Take her away, Mrs. Pearce. If she gives you any trouble, **wallop her**.

prudery = too much modesty; being ashamed of showing your body

What does Higgins mean when he says, "Lisson Grove *prudery*"?

wallop her = beat, spank, or discipline her

ELIZA: *(Springing up and running between Pickering and Mrs. Pearce for protection.)* No! I'll call the police, I will.

Why is Eliza frightened?

MRS. PEARCE: But I've no place to put her.

HIGGINS: Put her in the dustbin.

ELIZA: Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo!

PICKERING: Oh come, Higgins! Be reasonable.

How is Higgins unreasonable?

MRS. PEARCE: *(Resolutely.)* You must be reasonable, Mr. Higgins, really you must. You can't walk over everybody like this. (Higgins, *thus scolded, subsides. The* ***hurricane*** *is succeeded by a* ***zephyr*** *of amiable surprise.)*

What does Mrs. Pearce mean?

hurricane = a very strong destructive wind

zephyr = mild, warm wind

HIGGINS: *(**With professional exquisiteness of modulation.**)* I walk over everybody! My dear Mrs. Pearce, my dear Pickering, I never had the slightest intention of walking over anyone. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not express myself clearly, it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours. *(Eliza, **reassured**, steals back to her chair.)*

With . . . modulation = speaking very slowly and with careful pronunciation

Why is Higgins suddenly so reasonable? Do you trust him? Do you think that Mrs. Pearce trusts him? Do you think that Eliza trusts him?

reassured = feeling more secure

MRS. PEARCE: *(To Pickering.)* Well, did you ever hear anything like that, sir?

PICKERING: *(Laughing heartily.)* Never, Mrs. Pearce, never.

Why is Pickering laughing?

HIGGINS: *(Patiently.)* What's the matter?

What does Mrs. Pearce mean?

MRS. PEARCE: Well, the matter is, sir, that you can't take a girl up like that as if you were picking up a **pebble** on the beach.

pebble = small stone

Why is Mrs. Pearce worried?

HIGGINS: Why not?

MRS. PEARCE: Why not! But you don't know anything about her. What about her parents? She may be married.

ELIZA: Garn!

Higgins seems to be an observant person. Do you believe that the observation he makes here is correct?

HIGGINS: There! As the girl very properly says, Garn! Married indeed! Don't you know that a woman of that class looks a worn out **drudge** of fifty a year after she's married?

drudge = person who does hard, boring work, usually cleaning

ELIZA: Whood marry me?

Whood = who would

HIGGINS: *(Suddenly resorting to the most thrillingly beautiful low tones in his best elocutionary style.)* By George, Eliza, the streets will be strewn with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before I've done with you.

Why does Higgins say this?

Could there be some truth in what Higgins is saying?

MRS. PEARCE: Nonsense, sir. You mustn't talk like that to her.

ELIZA: (Rising *and squaring herself determinedly.)* I'm going away. **He's off his chump, he is.** I don't want no **balmies** teaching me.

He's off his chump, he is = He's completely crazy

balmies = crazy people

HIGGINS: *(Wounded in his tenderest point by her insensibility to his elocution.)* Oh, indeed! I'm mad, am I? Very well, Mrs. Pearce, you needn't order the new clothes for her. Throw her out.

Does Higgins understand Eliza? How do you know?

ELIZA: *(Whimpering.)* Nah-ow. You got no right to touch me.

saucy = rude and impolite

Has Higgins misjudged Eliza?

MRS. PEARCE: You see now what comes of being **saucy**. *(Indicating the door.)* This way, please.

Can you correct Eliza's English?

ELIZA: *(Almost in tears.)* I didn't want no clothes. I wouldn't have taken them. *(She throws away the handkerchief.)* I can buy my own clothes.

HIGGINS: *(Deftly retrieving the handkerchief and intercepting her on her reluctant way to the door.)* You're an ungrateful wicked girl. This is my return for offering to take you out of the gutter and dress you beautifully and make a lady of you?

Is Higgins being fair?

Why is Mrs. Pearce so upset?

wicked = very bad

MRS. PEARCE: Stop! Mr. Higgins, I won't allow it. It's you that are **wicked**. Go home to your parents, girl; and tell them to take better care of you.

Why does Eliza say that she has no parents?

What new facts do we learn about Eliza?

ELIZA: I ain't got no parents. They told me I was big enough to earn my own living and turned me out.

What do we learn about Eliza's father?

MRS. PEARCE: Where's your mother?

ELIZA: I ain't got no mother. Her that turned me out was my sixth stepmother. But I done without them. And I'm a good girl, I am.

HIGGINS: Very well, then, what on earth is all this fuss about? The girl doesn't belong to anybody—is no use to anybody but me. *(He goes to Mrs. Pearce and begins coaxing.)* You can adopt her, Mrs. Pearce; I'm sure a daughter would be a great amusement to you. Now don't make any more fuss. Take her downstairs, and—

What does Higgins mean?

What does Higgins seem to be very ignorant about?

What kind of a man is Higgins?

MRS. PEARCE: But what's to become of her? Is she to be paid anything? Do be sensible, sir.

HIGGINS: Oh, pay her whatever is necessary; put it down in the housekeeping book. *(Impatiently.)* What

on earth will she want with money? She'll have her food and her clothes. She'll only drink if you give her money.

ELIZA: *(Turning on him.)* Oh you are a brute. It's a lie. Nobody ever saw a sign of liquor on me. *(She goes back to her chair and plants herself there defiantly.)*

PICKERING: *(In good-humored remonstrance.)* Does it occur to you, Higgins, that the girl has some feelings?

Why is Eliza angry? Does she have a right to be angry?

Why does Pickering ask this question?

HIGGINS: *(Looking critically at her.)* Oh, no, I don't think so. Not any feelings that we need to bother about. Have you, Eliza?

ELIZA: I got my feelings same as anyone else.

HIGGINS: *(To Pickering, reflectively.)* You see the difficulty?

PICKERING: Eh? What difficulty?

HIGGINS: To get her to talk grammar. The mere pronunciation is easy enough.

What problem has Higgins ignored?

What other difficulty has Higgins missed?

ELIZA: I don't want to talk grammar. I want to talk like a lady.

MRS. PEARCE: Will you please keep to the point, Mr. Higgins? I want to know on what terms the girl is to be here. Is she to have any wages? And what is to become of her when you've finished your teaching? You must look ahead a little.

HIGGINS: *(Impatiently)* What's to become of her if I leave her in the gutter? Tell me that, Mrs. Pearce.

MRS. PEARCE: That's her own business, not yours, Mr. Higgins.

What has Eliza misunderstood?

What problems concern Mrs. Pearce?

Who speaks with greater justice, Higgins or Mrs. Pearce?

HIGGINS: Well, when I've done with her, we can throw her back into the gutter; and then it will be her own business again; so that's all right.

ELIZA: Oh, you've no feeling heart in you; you don't care for nothing but yourself. *(She rises and takes the floor resolutely.)* Here I've had enough of this. I'm going. *(Making for the door.)* You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you ought.

What is wrong with Higgins' response?

Is Eliza right?

Why should Higgins be ashamed of himself?

HIGGINS: *(Snatching a chocolate cream from the piano, his eyes suddenly beginning to twinkle with mischief.)* Have some chocolates, Eliza?

What mischief is on Higgins' mind?

ELIZA: *(Halting, tempted.)* How do I know what might be in them? I've heard of girls being drugged by the like of you.

What does Higgins do to make Eliza trust him?

(Higgins whips out his penknife; cuts a chocolate in two; puts one half into his mouth and bolts it; and offers her the other half.)

Has Eliza enjoyed the chocolate?

HIGGINS: Pledge of good faith, Eliza. I eat one half; you eat the other. *(Eliza opens her mouth to retort; he pops the half chocolate into it.)* You shall have boxes of them, barrels of them, every day. You shall live on them. Eh?

ELIZA: *(Who has disposed of the chocolate after nearly choked by it.)* I wouldn't have ate it, only I'm too ladylike to take it out of my mouth.

HIGGINS: Listen, Eliza. I think you said you came in a taxi.

Why does Higgins offer Eliza rides in taxis?

ELIZA: Well, what if I did? I've as good a right to take a taxi as anyone else.

Why does Mrs. Pearce object?

HIGGINS: You have, Eliza. And in future you shall have as many taxis as you want. You shall go up and down and round the town in a taxi every day. Think of that, Eliza.

Is Higgins being logical? Why or why not?

Is Mrs. Pearce being logical? Why or why not?

MRS. PEARCE: Mr. Higgins, you're tempting the girl. It's not right. She should think of the future.

HIGGINS: At her age! Nonsense! Time enough to think of the future when you haven't any future to think of. No, Eliza, do as this lady does—think of other people's future, but never think of your own. Think of chocolates, and taxis, and gold, and diamonds.

ELIZA: No. I don't want no gold and diamonds. I'm a good girl, I am. *(She sits down again, with an attempt at **dignity**.)*

Why does Eliza insist that she is a good girl?

What do gold and diamonds mean to Eliza?

HIGGINS: You shall remain so, Eliza, under the care of Mrs. Pearce. And you shall marry an officer in the Guards, with a beautiful mustache—the son of a marquis, who will disinherit him for marrying you,

dignity = self respect

but will relent when he sees your beauty and goodness—

Why does Higgins make up this fantastic story?

PICKERING: Excuse me, Higgins, but I really must interfere. Mrs. Pearce is quite right. If this girl is to put herself in your hands for six months for an experiment in teaching, she must understand thoroughly what she's doing.

What point does Pickering make?

HIGGINS: How can she? She's incapable of understanding anything. Besides, do any of us understand what we are doing? If we did, would we ever do it?

Is Higgins right when he says that Eliza is incapable of understanding anything? Why do you think he says that?

PICKERING: Very clever, Higgins; but not sound sense. *(To Eliza.)* Miss Doolittle—

ELIZA: ***(Overwhelmed.)*** Ah-ah-ow-oo!

overwhelmed = very surprised

HIGGINS: There! That's all you'll get out of Eliza. Ah-ah-ow-oo! No use explaining. As a military man you ought to know that. Give her orders: that's what she wants. Eliza, you are to live here for the next six months—learning how to speak beautifully—like a lady in a florist's shop. If you're good and do whatever you're told, you shall sleep in a proper bedroom, and have lots to eat, and money to buy chocolates and take rides in taxis. If you're naughty and idle, you will sleep in the back kitchen among the black beetles, and be walloped by Mrs. Pearce with a broomstick. At the end of six months, you shall go to **Buckingham Palace** in a carriage, beautifully dressed.

Why is Eliza so surprised?

Does Eliza really want orders?

How does Higgins explain the situation to Eliza? Is this a good explanation?

Buckingham Palace = home of the kings and queens of England

If the King finds out you're not a lady, you will be taken by the police to the Tower of London, where your head will be cut off as a warning to other presumptuous flower girls. If you are not found out, you shall have a present of seven-and-sixpence to start life with as a lady in a shop.

Is this true? Why does Higgins say so?

What is Higgins telling Eliza?

Is this a fair way of explaining the situation? Why or why not?

If you refuse this offer, you are a most ungrateful and wicked girl; and the angels will weep for you. *(To Pickering.)* Now are you satisfied, Pickering? *(To Mrs. Pearce.)* Can I put it more plainly and fairly, Mrs. Pearce?

MRS. PEARCE: *(Patiently.)* I think you'd better let me speak to the girl properly in private. I don't know that I can take charge of her or consent to the arrangement at all. Of course, I know you don't mean her any harm; but when you get what you call interested in people's accents, you never think or care what may happen to them or you. Come with me, Eliza.

What does Mrs. Pearce plan to do?

Let's think about it

Here are six questions. In groups of three to five discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Ask one person in your group to be the secretary and take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answer.

List of questions

1. How does this play illustrate the class differences in British society? Do such differences exist in societies today?
2. Higgins is a well educated person. He is around thirty years old, yet sometimes he acts like a spoiled overgrown child. In the scene you have read, find instances in which Higgins behaves in a childish way. Can you explain why he might behave this way? Does his type of behavior remind you of anything in your own life? If so, explain.
3. Mrs. Pearce, Professor Higgins, and Colonel Pickering all treat Eliza differently. Describe their attitudes toward the flower girl. Which one of them, in your opinion, behaves most reasonably? Who do you think will succeed in his/her relationship with Eliza?
4. Eliza keeps saying that she is a "good girl." What do you think she means? Why does she find it necessary to repeat this statement?
5. Mrs. Pearce is a servant—thus considered as someone from the "lower classes." Yet Mrs. Pearce seems to look down on Eliza. Can you explain this kind of behavior?
6. Mrs. Pearce seems both to protect and to feel confused about her employer, Professor Higgins. In the scene you have just read, can you find examples of Mrs. Pearce's feelings toward the professor? Do you think that Mrs. Pearce likes Professor Higgins? Why or why not?

Let's act it out: Role play

Mrs. Pearce tries to explain to Eliza about the strange Professor Higgins. She tries to warn Eliza not to become involved with her employer. Eliza doesn't want to listen. She is determined to better herself by learning to speak English like a lady. She doesn't care what kind of a man Professor Higgins is.

In pairs, take on the roles of Mrs. Pearce and Eliza. Before you do the role play, everyone who takes the part of Mrs. Pearce should sit together and talk about what kind of woman Mrs. Pearce is and what she might want to say. Everyone who is acting out Eliza should do the same about Eliza's character.

Your favorite speech

Find your favorite speech in the play, and practice it at home until you have memorized it. Act your speech out in front of the class. Check whether your classmates can remember which character in the play recited the speech and exactly when and why it was said in the play.

Writing a letter

Mrs. Pearce is very worried about the new arrangement at Professor Higgins' house. Late that night she decides to write a letter of Eliza's father about the situation.

In groups of three to five classmates, talk about some of the things that worry Mrs. Pearce. Ask one person in your group to do the writing as you all compose Mrs. Pearce's letter. Read your letter to the rest of the class. Listen to the letters of other groups.

Journal writing: New languages

Eliza is sure that a change in her use of language will give her many more opportunities in life. Do you agree with her attitude? Write a paragraph or two about how the knowledge of a language or improvement of a language can help a person find greater opportunities. If possible, use examples from your own experiences.

Before you read Scene II: Experiencing new cultures

Consider some of the things that people find difficult to do when they are in a new culture. Read the list below and try to remember if you or anyone you know had a difficult time or an embarrassing moment with any of these cultural categories. Think about when you moved from one culture to another. In small groups, share your stories with classmates. Choose one story from your group to share with the rest of the class.

List of cultural categories

How to accept a gift
When to give a gift
When and how to apologize

When to call people by their first names
When to come to someone's house
When to call on the telephone
How to talk about money
How to dress appropriately
When and how to ask for help
When and how to offer help
How to invite someone for a date
How to accept an invitation
How to refuse an invitation
When and how to leave a party
How to behave at a funeral
How to dress for a funeral
What to bring to a wedding

Reading Scene II: Afternoon Tea

Eliza has now been in training with Professor Higgins for two months. Her pronunciation is almost perfect, but she still doesn't know how to speak grammatically, and she hasn't yet made the cultural adjustment into upper class life. This in-between state means that Eliza makes many grammar mistakes and often says not just the wrong words but also the wrong things. She knows all the words, but she puts them in the wrong places. This confusion makes her conversation sometimes seem very strange.

Professor Higgins has decided to take Eliza to his mother's house for afternoon tea. This occasion is Eliza's first practice with people in her new culture. Mrs. Higgins knows all about Henry's experiment. She doesn't like the idea, but Henry didn't ask about her thoughts on having Eliza come to tea. He simply invited himself and Eliza. Eliza has only practiced talking about two subjects: health and the weather. Even though she is well prepared on these two topics, it isn't easy for her to interact with people from the upper classes.

At Mrs. Higgins' tea, Eliza meets the Eynsford Hills family: a widowed mother, her daughter, and her son Freddy. The Eynsford Hills have actually met Eliza before. On the same rainy night when Higgins first met the flower girl, the Eynsford Hills were also in Covent Garden waiting for the rain to stop so that they could go home from the theater.

Eliza is beautifully dressed. She looks like a perfect lady, and Freddy Eynsford Hill instantly falls in love with her. He assumes that her strange way of speaking is the "new slang" popular in London that year. Everyone at the tea party is shocked when Eliza uses the word "bloody," which is considered particularly vulgar and impolite among the British.

Pygmalion

Scene II
Afternoon Tea

THE PARLOR-MAID: *(Opening the door.)* Miss Doolittle.

(She withdraws.)

How can we tell that Higgins is nervous?

HIGGINS: *(Rising hastily and running to Mrs. Higgins.)* Here she is, Mother. *(He stands on tiptoe and makes the signs over his mother's head to Eliza to indicate to her which lady is her hostess.)*

What is Higgins doing?

Why are Higgins' signals necessary?

(Eliza, who is exquisitely dressed, produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty as she enters that they all rise, quite fluttered. Guided by Higgins' signals, she comes to Mrs. Higgins with studied grace.)

Can you imagine what Eliza is wearing? How is her hair done?

What has Eliza learned besides talking like a lady?

ELIZA: *(Speaking with pedantic correctness of pronunciation and great beauty of tone.)* How do you do, Mrs. Higgins? *(She gasps slightly in making sure of the "H" in Higgins, but is quite successful.)* Mr. Higgins told me I might come.

Why does Eliza pause before the letter *H*?

MRS. HIGGINS: *(Cordially.)* Quite right. I'm very glad indeed to see you.

How does Mrs. Higgins behave?

What does Mrs. Higgins's behavior tell us about her?

PICKERING: How do you do, Miss Doolittle?

ELIZA: *(Shaking hands with him.)* Colonel Pickering, is it not?

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: I feel sure we have met before, Miss Doolittle. I remember your eyes.

Where might Mrs. Eynsford Hill have met Eliza?

ELIZA: How do you do? *(She sits down on the ottoman gracefully in the place just left vacant by Higgins.)*

ottoman = sofa

infatuated = very attracted

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: *(Introducing.)* My son Freddy.

Why is Freddy immediately attracted to Eliza?

ELIZA: How do you do?

*(Freddy bows and sits down in the Elizabethan chair, **infatuated**.)*

HIGGINS: *(Suddenly.)* By George, yes! It all comes back to me! *(They stare at him.)* Covent Garden! *(**Lamentably**.)* What a damned thing!

lamentably = sadly

What does Higgins suddenly remember?

MRS. HIGGINS: Henry, please! *(He is about to sit on the edge of the table.)* Don't sit on my writing table—you'll break it.

HIGGINS: *(**Sulkily**.)* Sorry. *(He throws himself so impatiently on the **divan** that he almost breaks it. Mrs. Higgins looks at him but, controls herself and says nothing. A long and painful pause follows.)*

MRS. HIGGINS: *(At last, conversationally.)* Will it rain, do you think?

ELIZA: The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation.

FREDDY: Ha! ha! How awfully funny!

ELIZA: What is wrong with that, young man? I bet I got it right.

FREDDY: Killing!

How does Higgins embarrass his mother?

sulkily = in a bad mood

divan = sofa

Why is there a painful pause?

Why does Mrs. Higgins ask this question?

Why do you think that Eliza talks in this way?

Why does Freddy think that Eliza is being funny?

Actor Leslie Howard as Higgins and Actress Wendy Hillard as Eliza in the video *Pygmalion.*

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: I'm sure I hope it won't turn cold. There's so much influenza about. It runs right through our whole family regularly every spring.

What is Mrs. Eynsford Hill trying to do?

ELIZA: *(Darkly.)* My aunt died of influenza, so they said.

(Mrs. Eynsford Hill clicks her tongue sympathetically.)

ELIZA: *(In the same tragic tone.)* But it's my belief **they done the old woman in**.

Is Eliza saying the right thing? Why or why not?

they done the old woman in = they killed the old woman (This is lower class language, and Mrs. Eynsford Hill doesn't understand.)

MRS. HIGGINS: *(Puzzled.)* Done her in?

ELIZA: Y-e-e-e-es, Lord love you! Why should she die of influenza? She come through diphtheria right enough the year before. I saw her with my own eyes. Fairly blue with it, she was. They all thought she was dead; but my father he kept ladling gin down her throat till she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon.

Can you find the mistake Eliza makes in English grammar?

Can you envision the picture that Eliza creates with her story?

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: *(Startled.)* Dear me!

ELIZA: ***(Piling up the indictment.)*** What call would a woman with that strength in her have to die of influenza? What become of her new straw hat that should have come to me? **Somebody pinched it**; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in.

Piling up the indictment = making a long list of accusations

somebody pinched it = somebody stole it

What is Higgins trying to do?

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: What does doing her in mean?

HIGGINS: *(Hastily.)* Oh, that's the new small talk. To do a person in means to kill them.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: *(To Eliza, horrified.)* You surely don't believe that your aunt was killed?

ELIZA: Do I not! Them she lived with would have killed her for a hat-pin, let alone a hat.

Can your correct the mistake in Eliza's grammar?

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: But it can't have been right for your father to pour **spirits** down her throat like that. It might have killed her.

spirits = alcohol

ELIZA: Not her. Gin was mother's milk to her. Besides, he'd poured so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it.

How is the life of the lower and upper classes different?

Why is Eynsford Hill upset?

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: Do you mean that he drank?

ELIZA: Drank! My word! Something **chronic**.

chronic = lasting (he always did it)

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: How dreadful for you!

ELIZA: Not a bit. It never did him no harm what I could see. But then he did not keep it up regular. *(Cheerfully.)* On the burst, as you might say, from time to time. And always more agreeable when he had a drop in. When he was out of work, my mother used to give him fourpence and tell him to go out and not come back until he'd drunk himself cheerful and loving-like. There's lots of women has to make their husbands drunk to make them fit to live with. *(Not quite at her ease.)* You see, it's like this. If a man has a bit of a conscience, it always takes him when he's sober; and then it makes him low-spirited. A drop of booze just takes that off and makes him happy. *(To Freddy, who is in **convulsions of suppressed laughter**.)* Here! What are you sniggering at?

How does Eliza feel about drinking?

How does Eliza feel about her father?

Why is Eliza angry at Freddy?

convulsions of suppressed laughter = fits of held back laughter

FREDDY: The new small talk. You do it so awfully well.

ELIZA: If I was doing it proper, what was you laughing at? *(To Higgins.)* Have I said anything I oughtn't?

MRS. HIGGINS: *(Interposing.)* Not at all, Miss Doolittle.

ELIZA: Well, that's a mercy, anyhow. *(Expansively.)* What I always say is—

HIGGINS: *(Rising and looking at his watch.)* Ahem!

ELIZA: *(Looking around at him, taking the hint, and rising.)* Well, I must go. *(They all rise. Freddy goes to the door.)* So pleased to have met you. Goodbye. *(She shakes hands with Mrs. Higgins.)*

MRS. HIGGINS: Goodbye.

ELIZA: Goodbye, Colonel Pickering.

PICKERING: Goodbye, Miss Doolittle. *(They shake hands.)*

ELIZA: *(Nodding to the others.)* Goodbye, all.

How does Freddy feel about Eliza?

How does Eliza feel about Freddy?

What is Higgins doing?

FREDDY: *(Opening the door for her.)* Are you walking across the Park, Miss Doolittle? If so—

ELIZA: Walk! Not bloody likely. *(Sensation.)* I am going in a taxi. *(She goes out.)*

Finish Freddy's sentence.

Why is there a sensation?

Let's think about it

Below are six questions. In groups of three to five discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Ask one person in your group to be the secretary and take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answer.

List of questions

1. What kind of relationship does Professor Higgins have with his mother?
2. What kind of a woman is Mrs. Eynsford Hill?
3. Why do you think Freddy falls in love with Eliza?
4. How does Eliza feel at the tea party?
5. Why does Mrs. Higgins cooperate with her son on "the experiment" even though she disapproves of it?
6. How is Eliza's English inappropriate for the tea party? Why?

Discussing emotions

At Mrs. Higgins' tea party everyone felt different emotions. There was pride, embarrassment, confusion, infatuation (love at first sight), pity, and even anger. Some of the people present might have felt all of these emotions.

The people we heard speaking were Mrs. Higgins, Professor Henry Higgins, Eliza, Mrs. Eynsford Hill, and Freddy Eynsford Hill. On the following chart, put a check under each emotion that you think is appropriate to the corresponding character. Then stand up and talk to several classmates about your chart. Explain to your classmates why you have chosen each emotion for each character, and listen to the explanations of your classmates.

	pride	love	anger	embarrassment	confusion	pity
Freddy						
Professor Higgins						
Eliza						
Mrs. Higgins						
Mrs. Eynsford Hill						

To speak or to communicate

Communication ways

Eliza has learned to speak beautifully, but she still hasn't learned how to communicate. When you speak, you make a noise with your mouth and your vocal cords. When you communicate, you deliver a certain message to other people. Humans communicate in many other ways besides speaking.

In small groups, talk about the ways in which we communicate. Ask one person in your group to be the secretary and take notes. Report the communication ways to the rest of the class.

Messages

In scene II, Eliza communicates many different "silent" messages to the people there. For example, to Professor Higgins Eliza may be sending the message, "It was too early to bring me to this tea party. I am not ready for this yet."

There were other wordless messages communicated at the tea party. Here is a list of messages that might have been sent. Working with a classmate, decide which character might have communicated each message. Explain how you think the message was communicated.

List of messages

1. These people are so stupid and boring.
2. What a strange young woman!
3. What a marvelous woman!
4. I wish Henry wouldn't do these things to me.
5. I hope Eliza succeeds.
6. I really have learned how to talk just like these people!

Journal writing: Cultural confusion

In scene II, Eliza has learned how to use the language correctly and how to pronounce it correctly. She is also dressed right for the tea party occasion. Nevertheless, she is not yet culturally at home when she goes to the party. Does this kind of cultural confusion happen to any person who enters a foreign culture? Write a paragraph or two about the experiences that newcomers to a culture might have. Use your own experiences or the experiences of family and friends if possible.

Thinking about Scene III: Playing with a Live Doll

This short scene is not included in the book. It was part of the play simply to show the passage of time and the changes that are taking place. As the months have gone by, Higgins and Pickering have become very involved with Eliza. Eliza herself is undergoing many profound changes that go far beyond language learning. Higgins is aware that he is changing a soul, but does he realize the danger of what he is doing?

Journal writing: Changing personalities

The two men are in the process of changing the personality and character of a woman. Could one or two women change the character or personality of a man? Write a paragraph or more about your thoughts on this subject. Use examples from real life whenever possible.

Before you read Scene IV: Making plans and setting goals

Discussing your plans

People often make plans and goals and try to work to fulfill those plans. All of us have plans that work out for us—perhaps not completely but close enough to make us very happy. All of us also face disappointments in life. We work and plan very hard for something, and it just doesn't turn out the way we want it to.

In small groups, read the following two questions. Explain what happened in each situation and how you felt about it.

1. Have you ever planned something for a long time and then followed through on your plans and been very happy and proud of yourself? How has this changed you?
2. Have you ever planned for something that just didn't go the way you planned and/or hoped that it would? How has this changed you?

Eliza's hopes and plans

In small groups, think about the following questions. Share some of your ideas with the rest of the class before reading the next scene.

List of questions

1. What does Eliza expect from Higgins and Pickering on the evening after the great party?
2. How does Eliza feel this evening?
3. What was Eliza afraid of before the ambassador's garden party?
4. Now that the party is over, what might Eliza be afraid of or worried about?
5. How do you think Eliza has changed in the past few months?
6. How might Eliza's attitude toward Higgins and Pickering have changed?
7. What kind of relationship might Eliza have developed with Mrs. Pearce?
8. Do you think that Eliza has had any contact with the people from her former life? Why or why not?

Reading Scene IV: The Experiment is Over

This scene takes place on the night after the ambassador's garden party. Eliza brilliantly passed the test at the party. She was able to mingle in high society without anyone suspecting that a few months ago she had been a flower girl who spoke the language of the lower classes. The following scene begins after Higgins, Eliza, and Pickering return home. Higgins and Pickering are very tired. Higgins has won his bet so he seems bored with the whole thing. The experiment is over, and he just wants to get to bed. But what about Eliza? She has been studying a foreign language—upper class English—for the past six months. She has just been to a great party where everyone present was a native speaker of the upper class English, and nobody spotted her as a foreigner. This was her great test, and she passed it marvelously. She had been thinking about nothing else for the past six months. Now, suddenly it's all over. What thoughts might be going through Eliza's mind?

Pygmalion

Scene IV

The Experiment is Over

HIGGINS: *(Following him.)* Goodnight. *(Over his shoulder, at the door.)* Put out the lights, Eliza, and tell Mrs. Pearce not to make coffee for me in the morning—I'll take tea. *(He goes out.)*

What kind of a person has Eliza become in Professor Higgins' house?

(Eliza tries to control herself and feels indifferent as she rises and walks across to the hearth to switch off the lights. By the time she gets there, she is at the point of screaming. She sits down in Higgins' chair and holds on hard to the arms. Finally she gives way and ***flings herself furiously*** *on the floor, raging.)*

What kind of a mood is Eliza in?

Do you think that Eliza's feelings are justified?

flings herself furiously = throws herself angrily

HIGGINS: *(In despairing wrath outside.)* What the devil have I done with my slippers? *(He appears at the door.)*

ELIZA: *(Snatching up the* ***slippers****, and* ***hurling*** *them at him one after the other with all her force.)* There are your slippers! And there! Take your slippers, and may you never have a day's luck with them!

slippers = comfortable shoes you wear at home

hurling = throwing

HIGGINS: ***(Astounded.)*** What on earth—! *(He comes to her.)* What's the matter? Get up. *(He pulls her up.)* Anything wrong?

astounded = very surprised

Why is Higgins so surprised?

ELIZA: *(Breathless.)* Nothing wrong—with you. I've won your bet for you, haven't I? That's enough for you. I don't matter, I suppose.

Why is Eliza so angry?

HIGGINS: You won my bet! You! **Presumptuous** insect! *I* won it. What did you throw those slippers at me for?

Presumptuous = putting yourself in a higher place than where you deserve to be

ELIZA: Because I want to smash your face. I'd like to kill you, you selfish brute! Why didn't you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter? You thank God it's all over, and that now you can throw me back again there, do you?

In your opinion, who won the bet?

HIGGINS: *(Looking at her in cool wonder.)* The creature is nervous, after all.

Higgins calls Eliza a "creature." What effect does this have on her?

(Eliza gives a suffocated scream of fury, and instinctively darts her nails at his face.)

HIGGINS: *(Catching her wrists.)* Ah! Would you? Claws in, you cat. How dare you shew your temper to me! Sit down and be quiet. *(He throws her roughly into the easy-chair.)*

Is Higgins abusing Eliza?

What's happening to Eliza?

ELIZA: *(Crushed by superior strength and weight.)* What's to become of me? What's to become of me?

HIGGINS: How the devil do I know what's to become of you? What does it matter what becomes of you?

How do you feel about Higgins' reaction?

ELIZA: You don't care. I know you don't care. You wouldn't care if I were dead. I'm nothing to you—not so much as them slippers.

submission = giving in

Why doesn't it make any difference now?

HIGGINS: *(Thundering.)* Those slippers!

Why is Higgins uneasy?

ELIZA: *(With bitter **submission**.)* Those slippers. I didn't think it made any difference now. *(A pause. Eliza hopeless and crushed; Higgins a little uneasy.)*

loftiest = most superior

HIGGINS: *(In his **loftiest** manner.)* Why have you begun going on like this? May I ask whether you complain of your treatment here?

Why does Higgins ask Eliza about her complaining?

Why does Higgins ask if anyone has behaved badly to Eliza?

ELIZA: No.

Is Eliza's "no" a truthful answer?

HIGGINS: Has anybody behaved badly to you? Colonel Pickering? Mrs. Pearce? Any of the servants?

How does Higgins treat Eliza?

ELIZA: No.

HIGGINS: I presume you don't pretend that *I* have treated you badly?

ELIZA: No.

HIGGINS: I am glad to hear it. *(He moderates his tone.)* Perhaps you're tired after the strain of the day. Will you have a glass of champagne? *(He moves towards the door.)*

ELIZA: No. *(Recollecting her manners.)* Thank you.

HIGGINS: *(Good-humored again.)* This has been coming on you for some days. I suppose it was natural for you to be anxious about the garden party. But that's all over now. *(He pats her kindly on the shoulder. She writhes.)* There's nothing more to worry about.

Does Higgins understand what Eliza feels?

Was Eliza anxious about the garden party?

Why is Eliza so depressed?

ELIZA: No. Nothing more for you to worry about. *(She suddenly rises and gets away from him by going to the piano bench, where she sits and hides her face.)* Oh God! I wish I was dead.

HIGGINS: *(Staring after her in sincere surprise.)* Why? In heaven's name, why? *(Reasonably, going to her.)* Listen to me, Eliza. All this irritation is purely **subjective**.

subjective = imagined

ELIZA: I don't understand. I'm too ignorant.

Is Eliza really "too ignorant?"

HIGGINS: It's only imagination. Low spirits and nothing else. Nobody's hurting you. Nothing's wrong. You go to bed like a good girl and sleep it off. Have a little cry and say your prayers; that will make you comfortable.

How does Higgins feel about Eliza?

Does Eliza know what she would like to do?

ELIZA: I heard your prayers. "Thank God it's all over!"

What could Eliza do?

HIGGINS: *(Impatiently.)* Well, don't you thank God it's all over? Now you are free and can do what you like.

Are Eliza's worries reasonable?

ELIZA: *(Pulling herself together in desperation.)* What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's to become of me?

HIGGINS: *(Enlightened, but not at all impressed.)* Oh that's what's worrying you, is it? (He *thrusts his hands into his pockets and walks about in his usual manner, rattling the contents of his pockets, as if* ***condescending to a trivial subject*** *out of pure kindness.)* I shouldn't bother about it if I were you. I should imagine you won't have much difficulty in settling yourself somewhere or other, though I hadn't quite realized that you were going away. *(She looks quickly at him; he does not look at her, but examines the dessert stand on the piano and decides that he will eat an apple.)*

Does Higgins really understand what worries Eliza?

condescending to a trivial subject = talking like a king to an unimportant person or a child

You might marry, you know. *(He bites a large piece out of the apple and munches it noisily.)* You see, Eliza, all men are not confirmed old bachelors like me and the Colonel. Most men are the marrying sort (poor devils!); and you're not bad-looking; it's quite a pleasure to look at you sometimes—not now, of course, because you're crying and looking as ugly as the very devil—but when you're all right and quite yourself, you're what I should call attractive. That is, to the people in the marrying line, you understand. You go to bed and have a good nice rest; and then get up and look at yourself in the glass; and you won't feel so cheap.

How do you feel about Higgins' reaction?

What do we learn about Higgins' attitude toward Eliza?

How does Eliza feel when Higgins suggests that she marry?

How do you think Eliza feels as she listens to Higgins' suggestion?

(Eliza again looks at Higgins, speechless, and does not stir. The look is quite lost on him; he eats his apple with a dreamy expression of happiness, as it is quite a good one.)

What kind of a look does Eliza give Higgins?

Why is Higgins so pleased with himself?

HIGGINS: *(A genial afterthought occurring to him.)* I dare say my mother could find some chap or other who would do very well.

What does Higgins mean?

What does Eliza mean?

ELIZA: We were above that at the corner of Tottingham Court Road.

HIGGINS: *(Waking up.)* What do you mean?

Is Eliza being honest?

ELIZA: I sold flowers. I didn't sell myself. Now you've made a lady of me; I'm not fit to sell anything else. I wish you'd left me where you found me.

Has Eliza "insulted human relations?"

cant = talk; often repeated phrase

HIGGINS: *(Slinging the core of the apple decisively into the grate.)* Tosh, Eliza. Don't you insult human relations by dragging all this **cant** about buying and selling into it. You needn't marry the fellow if you don't like him.

Is the statement "you needn't marry the man . . ." true?

What does Higgins suggest?

togs = clothes

ELIZA: What else am I to do?

Does Higgins' suggestion make sense?

HIGGINS: Oh, lots of things. What about your old idea of a florist's shop? Pickering could set you up in one—he's got lots of money. *(Chuckling.)* He'll have to pay for all those **togs** you have been wearing today—and that, with the hire of the jewelry, will make a big hole in two hundred pounds. Why, six months ago you would have thought it the millennium to have a flower shop of your own. Come! You'll be all right. I must clear off to bed; I'm devilish sleepy. By the way, I came down for something. I forget what it was.

ELIZA: Your slippers.

shied = threw

HIGGINS: Oh yes, of course. You **shied** them at me. *(He picks them up, and is going out when she rises and speaks to him.)*

Why does Eliza suddenly call Higgins *sir?*

ELIZA: Before you go, sir—

Does Higgins understand Eliza's question?

HIGGINS: *(Dropping the slippers in his surprise at her calling him "sir.")* Eh?

ELIZA: Do my clothes belong to me or to Colonel Pickering?

HIGGINS: *(Coming back into the room as if her question were the very climax of unreason.)* What the devil use would they be to Pickering?

Is Eliza's assumption reasonable?

ELIZA: He might want them for the next girl you pick up to experiment on.

HIGGINS: *(Shocked and hurt.)* Is that the way you feel towards us?

Does Higgins have a right to be hurt?

ELIZA: I don't want to hear anything more about that. All I want to know is whether anything belongs to me. My own clothes were burnt.

What doesn't Eliza want to hear about?

Is Eliza being reasonable?

HIGGINS: But what does it matter? Why need you start bothering about that in the middle of the night?

ELIZA: I want to know what I may take away with me. I don't want to be accused of stealing.

HIGGINS: *(Now deeply wounded.)* Stealing! You shouldn't have said that, Eliza. That shows **a want** of feeling.

a want = a lack

Does Higgins have a right to speak about "feelings"?

ELIZA: I'm sorry. I'm only a common ignorant girl; and in my station I have to be careful. There can't be any feelings between **the like of you** and the like of me. Please will you tell me what belongs to me and what doesn't?

the like of you = someone like you

Why does Eliza need to know about what belongs to her?

HIGGINS: *(Very sulky.)* You may take the whole damned houseful if you like. Except the jewels. They're hired. Will that satisfy you? *(He turns on his heel.)*

ELIZA: *(Drinking in his emotion like **nectar**, and **nagging him to provoke a further supply**.)* Stop, please. *(She takes off her jewels.)* Will you take these to your room and keep them safe? I don't want to run the risk of their being missing.

nectar = drink of the gods

nagging him . . . supply = pushing him with words, so that he will get even more upset

HIGGINS: *(**Furious**.)* Hand them over. *(She puts them into his hands.)* If these belonged to me instead of to the jeweler, I'd ram them down your ungrateful throat. *(He **perfunctorily thrusts** them into his pockets, unconsciously decorating himself with the protruding ends of the chains.)*

Furious = very angry

perfunctorily = mechanically

thrusts = pushes

Why is Higgins so angry?

ELIZA: *(Taking a ring off.)* This ring isn't the jeweler's—it's the one you bought me in Brighton. I don't want it now. *(Higgins dashes the ring violently into the*

fireplace, and turns on her so threateningly that she crouches over the piano with her hands over her face, and exclaims.) Don't you hit me!

wounded = hurt, cut

HIGGINS: Hit you! You infamous creature, how dare you accuse me of such a thing! It is you who have hit me. You have **wounded** me to the heart.

Would Higgins hit Eliza?

ELIZA: *(Thrilling with hidden joy.)* I'm glad. I've got a little of my own back, anyhow.

Why is Eliza happy?

HIGGINS: *(With dignity, in his finest professional style.)* You have caused me to lose my temper: a thing that has hardly ever happened to me before. I prefer to say nothing more tonight. I am going to bed.

How does Higgins envision himself?

Is Higgins being realistic?

ELIZA: ***(Pertly.)*** You better leave a note for Mrs. Pearce about the coffee—for she won't be told by me.

pertly = in a lively way

HIGGINS: *(Formally.)* Damn Mrs. Pearce; and damn the coffee; and damn you; and damn my own folly in having lavished hard-earned knowledge and the treasure of my regard and intimacy on a heartless guttersnipe! *(He goes out with impressive **decorum**, and spoils it by slamming the door savagely.)*

Higgins speaks formally, but he uses distasteful (bad) language. What does this use of language tell us?

decorum = manners

(Eliza smiles for the first time, expressing her feelings by a wild pantomime in which an imitation of Higgins' exit is confused with her own triumph, and finally goes down on her knees on the hearthrug to look for the ring.)

Why is Eliza looking for the ring?

(Time has passed. At Mrs. Higgins' house, in Mrs. Higgins' drawing room. She is at her writing-table as before. The parlor-maid comes in.)

THE PARLOR-MAID: *(At the door.)* Mr. Henry, ma'am, is downstairs with Colonel Pickering.

MRS. HIGGINS: Well, shew them up.

THE PARLOR-MAID: They're using the telephone, ma'am. Telephoning to the police, I think.

Why are Higgins and Pickering telephoning the police?

MRS. HIGGINS: What!

THE PARLOR-MAID: *(Coming further in and lowering her voice.)* **Mr. Henry is in state**, ma'am. I thought I'd better tell you.

Mr. Henry is in state = Mr. Henry is very nervous

MRS. HIGGINS: If you had told me that Mr. Henry was not in a state, it would have been more surprising. Tell them to come up when they've finished with the police. I suppose he's lost something.

How does Mrs. Higgins feel about her son?

What is Eliza doing in Mrs. Higgins' house?

THE PARLOR-MAID: Yes, ma'am. *(Going.)*

MRS. HIGGINS: Go upstairs and tell Miss Doolittle that Mr. Henry and the Colonel are here. Ask her not to come down till I send for her.

THE PARLOR-MAID: Yes, ma'am. (Higgins *bursts in. He is, as the parlor-maid has said, in a state.)*

HIGGINS: Look here, Mother. Here's a confounded thing!

MRS. HIGGINS: Yes, dear. Good morning. *(Higgins checks his impatience and kisses her, whilst the parlor-maid goes out.)* What is it?

What kind of a relationship does Higgins have with his mother?

HIGGINS: Eliza's **bolted**.

bolted = run away

MRS. HIGGINS: *(Calmly continuing her writing.)* You must have frightened her.

What has surprised Higgins?

HIGGINS: Frightened her! Nonsense! She was left last night, as usual, to turn out the lights and all that. And instead of going to bed, she changed her clothes and went right off. Her bed wasn't slept in. She came in a cab for her things before seven this morning, and that fool Mrs. Pearce let her have them without telling me a word about it. What am I to do?

MRS. HIGGINS: Do without, I'm afraid, Henry. The girl has a perfect right to leave if she chooses.

What has Eliza been doing for Higgins?

HIGGINS: *(Wandering distractedly across the room.)* But I can't find anything. I don't know what appointments I've got. I'm—*(Pickering comes in. Mrs. Higgins puts down her pen and turns away from the writing-table.)*

reward = prize (for finding something lost)

PICKERING: *(Shaking hands.)* Good morning, Mrs. Higgins. Has Henry told you? *(He sits down on the ottoman.)*

HIGGINS: What does that ass of an inspector say? Have you offered a **reward**?

MRS. HIGGINS: *(Rising in indignant amazement.)* You don't mean to say you have set the police after Eliza?

HIGGINS: Of course. What are the police for? What else could we do? *(He sits in the Elizabethan chair.)*

PICKERING: The inspector made a lot of difficulties. I really think he suspected us of some improper purpose.

MRS. HIGGINS: Well, of course he did. What right have you to go to the police and give the girl's name as if she were a thief, or a lost umbrella, or something? Really!

What does Pickering mean?

What might the inspector have suspected?

Let's think about it

Read the following eight questions. In groups of three to five discuss your answers. Choose one question to answer and report to the class. Ask one person in your group to be the secretary and take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the rest of the class has to your group's answer.

List of questions

1. Some people have said that Higgins and Eliza are very much alike. After reading this scene, do you agree with them? Why or why not?
2. In this scene Higgins makes Eliza very angry, and she, in turn, makes him angry. How do they anger each other?
3. What does Higgins expect from Eliza now that the experiment is over? What does Eliza expect from Higgins?
4. Look back over the scene, and find the lines that show us both Higgins' and Eliza's real feelings.
5. There are many emotions displayed in this scene—anger, frustration, disappointment, hope, and surprise. Find some examples of these emotions.
6. Why do you think that Eliza has chosen to go to Mrs. Higgins' house?
7. How does Eliza feel about the solutions that Henry Higgins offers her for her future life?
8. Go back to the first scene of the play, and re-read some of the remarks made by Mrs. Pearce when Eliza first arrived at the house of Professor Higgins. Have any of Mrs. Pearce's predictions come true?

Before you read Scene V: What has affected your education?

Think about who or what has affected your education.

Was it . . .

books?

a member of your family?

a school?

a friend?
a teacher?
a lesson in school?
a lesson from life?

In small groups, discuss what you consider the core or the cornerstone of your education.

Reading Scene V: What Makes a Lady?

In the scene you are about to read, Higgins and Pickering are at the house of Higgins' mother, Mrs. Higgins. Eliza has been staying with Mrs. Higgins ever since she ran away from the house of Professor Higgins on Wimpole Street. Higgins is very relieved to see Eliza, but he doesn't show her his true feelings. Instead he continues to be angry and to claim that she is nothing without his help. Eliza never talks directly to Higgins. Instead she talks to Pickering and explains to him how important he has been in her education. Since Higgins always had bad manners and showed a bad temper, Eliza claims that she would have never learned how to be a real lady if she had not observed how a real gentleman behaves. Pickering was always a real gentleman, and as such he behaved like a gentleman and treated Eliza like a lady. It was this behavior, says Eliza, which turned her into a lady. The difference between being a lady and being a flower girl evidently is not how one acts but how one is treated, and Colonel Pickering's gentlemanly behavior was the real core of Eliza's education.

Pygmalion

Scene V

What Makes a Lady

*(Eliza enters, sunny, **self-possessed**, and giving a **staggeringly convincing exhibition** of ease of manner. She carries a little work-basket, and is very much at home. Pickering is too much taken aback to rise.)*

ELIZA: How do you do, Professor Higgins? Are you quite well?

HIGGINS: *(Choking.)* Am I—*(He can say no more.)*

ELIZA: But of course you are—you are never ill. So glad to see you again, Colonel Pickering. *(He rises hastily, and they shake hands.)* Quite chilly this morning, isn't it? *(She sits down on his left. He sits beside her.)*

self-possessed = very sure of herself

staggeringly convincing exhibition = a very good show

What kind of an impression does Eliza make?

Why is Higgins so shocked?

What has Eliza learned?

HIGGINS: Don't you dare try this game on me. I taught it to you, and it doesn't take me in. Get up and come home; and don't be a fool.

(Eliza takes a piece of needlework from her basket, and begins to stitch at it, without taking the least notice of this outburst.)

What does Higgins mean?

Why does Eliza begin sewing?

MRS. HIGGINS: Very nicely put, indeed, Henry. No woman could resist such an invitation.

HIGGINS: You let her alone, Mother. Let her speak for herself. You will jolly soon see whether she has an idea that I haven't put into her head or a word that I haven't put into her mouth. I tell you I have created this thing out of the squashed cabbage leaves of Covent Garden, and now she pretends to play the fine lady with me.

What is Mrs. Higgins trying to do?

Is what Higgins says true?

MRS. HIGGINS: *(**Placidly**.)* Yes, dear; but you'll sit down, won't you?

(Higgins sits down again, savagely.)

ELIZA: *(To Pickering, taking no apparent notice of Higgins, and working away deftly.)* Will you drop me altogether now that the experiment is over, Colonel Pickering?

placidly = very calmly

Why is Mrs. Higgins being so calm?

Why does Eliza speak only to Pickering?

PICKERING: Oh don't. You mustn't think of it as an experiment. It shocks me, somehow.

ELIZA: Oh, I'm only a squashed cabbage leaf—

PICKERING: *(Impulsively.)* No.

ELIZA: (Continuing *quietly.)* . . . but I owe so much to you that I should be very unhappy if you forgot me.

PICKERING: It's very kind of you to say so, Miss Doolittle.

Does Pickering have a right to be shocked?

Why does Pickering say "no"?

Why does Eliza feel that she owes Pickering a great deal?

ELIZA: It's not because you paid for my dresses. I know you are generous to everybody with money. But it was from you that I learnt really nice manners; and that is what makes one a lady, isn't it? You see it was so very difficult for me with the example of Professor Higgins always before me. I was brought up to be just like him, unable to control myself, and

What does Eliza mean?

Who is Eliza really talking to?

using bad language on the slightest provocation. And I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen didn't behave like that if you hadn't been there.

HIGGINS: Well!

PICKERING: Oh, that's only his way, you know. He doesn't mean it.

ELIZA: Oh, I didn't mean it either, when I was a flower girl. It was only my way. But you see I did it; and that's what makes the difference after all.

What kind of "difference" is Eliza talking about?

Why does Eliza speak this way about the professor?

What does Eliza think of Higgins' abilities?

PICKERING: No doubt. Still, he taught you to speak, and I couldn't have done that, you know.

ELIZA: *(Trivially.)* Of course, that is his profession.

HIGGINS: Damnation!

ELIZA: *(Continuing.)* It was just like learning to dance in the fashionable way: there was nothing more than that in it. But do you know what began my real education?

PICKERING: What?

ELIZA: *(Stopping her work for a moment.)* Your calling me Miss Doolittle that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self-respect for me. *(She resumes her stitching.)* And there were a hundred little things you never noticed, because they came naturally to you. Things about standing up and taking off your hat and opening doors—

How does Eliza define real education?

What do we learn about British manners in the early twentieth century?

How does Pickering try to excuse Higgins? Is this a good excuse?

PICKERING: Oh, that was nothing.

ELIZA: Yes, things that shewed you thought and felt about me as if I were something better than a scullery-maid, though of course I know you would have been just the same to a scullery-maid if she had been let into the drawing room. You never took off your boots in the dining room when I was there.

PICKERING: You mustn't mind that. Higgins takes off his boots all over the place.

ELIZA: I know. I am not blaming him. It is his way, isn't it? But it made such a difference to me that you

Is Eliza being honest?

didn't do it. You see, really and truly, apart from the things anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking, and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will. But I know I can be a lady to you because you always treat me as a lady, and always will.

Does Eliza have thoughts of her own or is she really, as Higgins claims, just a product of his teaching?

MRS. HIGGINS: Please don't grind your teeth, Henry.

PICKERING: Well, this is really very nice of you, Miss Doolittle.

ELIZA: I should like you to call me Eliza, now, if you would.

ELIZA: And I should like Professor Higgins to call me Miss Doolittle.

HIGGINS: I'll see you damned first.

MRS. HIGGINS: Henry! Henry!

PICKERING: *(Laughing.)* Why don't you slang back at him? Don't stand it. It would do him a lot of good.

Why has George Bernard Shaw written this line into the play?

Why does Eliza want Pickering to call her by her first name and Higgins to call her "Miss Doolittle"?

Why is Mrs. Higgins upset?

What does Pickering mean?

ELIZA: I can't. I could have done it once; but now I can't go back to it. Last night, when I was wandering about, a girl spoke to me, and I tried to get back into the old way with her, but it was no use. You told me, you know, that when a child is brought to a foreign country, it picks up the language in a few weeks, and forgets its own. Well, I am a child in your country. I have forgotten my own language and can speak nothing but yours. That's the real break-off with the corner of Tottenham Court Road. Leaving Wimpole Street finishes it.

What has happened to Eliza? Does this really happen? Has it happened to you or to anyone you know?

PICKERING: *(Much **alarmed**.)* Oh! But you're coming back to Wimpole Street, aren't you? You'll forgive Higgins?

HIGGINS: *(Rising.)* Forgive! Will she, by George! Let her go. Let her find out how she can get on without us. She will **relapse** into the gutter in three weeks without me at her elbow.

alarmed = shocked and worried

Why is Pickering alarmed?

relapse = fall back

Is Higgins right?

(Alfred Doolittle appears at the center window. With a look of dignified **reproach** *at Higgins, he comes slowly and silently to his daughter, who, with her back to the window, is* ***unconscious of his approach****.)*

reproach = blame

unconscious of his approach = Eliza doesn't know that her father has come in.

PICKERING: He's **incorrigible**, Eliza. You won't relapse, will you?

incorrigible = impossible to correct

ELIZA: No, not now. Never again. I have learnt my lesson. I don't believe I could utter one of the old sounds if I tried. *(Doolittle touches her on her left shoulder. She drops her work, losing her self-possession utterly at the spectacle of her father's splendor.)* A-a-a-a-a-h-ow-ooh!

HIGGINS: *(With a crow of triumph.)* Aha! Just so. A-a-a-a-ahowooh! A-a-a-ahowooh! A-a-a-a-ahowooh! Victory!

Is this really a victory for Higgins?

Let's think about it

Here are six questions. In groups of three to five discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to answer and report to the class. Ask one person to be the secretary and take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answer.

List of questions

1. Professor Higgins taught Eliza how to speak while Pickering taught her how to behave like a lady. We might call Higgins' "role training" and Pickering's "role education." What is the difference? Which one do you think is more important? Can one exist without the other? Try to give examples from your own personal experience.
2. Eliza says that she has been like a child living in a foreign country. Do you understand what she is talking about? Would such a child have problems later in life? What might these problems be?
3. A person moving to a different country needs to learn not just the language but also the culture of that country. Which do you think is more difficult? Has Eliza mastered both the language and the culture of the British upper class? Explain.
4. Do you think that Higgins feels superior to Eliza? Why or why not? Do you think that Higgins has the right to feel superior?
5. What part does Mrs. Higgins play in this drama?
6. Why do you think that Eliza's father makes his appearance at the end of Scene V?

Let's act it out: Role play

In pairs, act out the following role play. Your teacher may ask you to act out the role play in front of the entire class.

Eliza's father, Mr. Doolittle, who has become a rich man, wants his daughter to come home to live with her family. He tells Eliza that he can provide for her and that he is proud that she has become such a lady. He tells her that her stepmother will also be proud of her and that now they can be a happy family. He explains all the ways in which Eliza could be of a help to her family.

Eliza is grateful to her father, but she doesn't want to go to live with him and her stepmother. She explains to her father why this is not a good idea and why she would prefer to stay independent. When her father asks her how she intends to support herself, she offers all kinds of ideas. Her father is surprised but proud of his daughter.

When you have finished your role play, discuss as a class how you felt about becoming either Eliza or Mr. Doolittle. Could you identify with your role? Did it remind you of anything in your own life?

Journal writing: Belonging

In Scene V Eliza talks about what it is like to be a person who doesn't belong to any culture and who feels lost between cultures. Eliza doesn't quite fit into the upper class where she now spends her time, but she can no longer return to her life as a flower girl either. Can you understand the strange situation she is in? Write a paragraph or two on the topic of belonging. Use examples from real life whenever possible.

Before you read Scene VI: Rewarding yourself for your accomplishments

When we accomplish something, most of us need to share our accomplishment with other people. Below is a list of what some students say they do when they pass a test. Read the list and put an X by the things that you do. Then get up and move around the class, talking to your classmates to find out what they do.

List of things you do when you've accomplished something

____ I call my parents.
____ I buy myself some ice cream.
____ I tell everyone I know.
____ I just sit and smile to myself.
____ I write in my diary.
____ I write to my family.
____ I am nice to my husband (or wife).
____ I tell my girlfriend (or boyfriend).
____ I kiss my girlfriend (or boyfriend).
____ I go shopping.
____ I put the test on the wall above my desk so I can smile at it.

____ I put it in a special "success" folder.
____ I say to myself, "You are great! You did it!"
____ I imagine myself in a big room where everyone claps when I stand up.
____ I cook good food.
____ I kiss my children.
____ I listen to music.
____ I go out with my friends and celebrate.
____ I go the movies and say to myself, "Enjoy. You deserve it!"
____ I just feel good.
____ I say to myself, "I'm okay. I belong in this world."

Reading Scene VI: The Meaning of Independence

Eliza has just said good-bye to her father who is on his way to church to marry Eliza's stepmother. Eliza's father has inherited a great deal of money from an American philosopher. Professor Higgins had written the philosopher recommending Alfred Doolittle as an outstanding and original moralist. The philosopher followed the recommendation of Higgins, and as a result, Doolittle has new riches. However, due to his wealth, Doolittle is forced to follow a great many middle class traditions such as marriage. He previously had always ignored these traditions. Now Doolittle offers to support his daughter, but Eliza prefers not to live with her father and stepmother.

In Scene VI, Higgins and Eliza are alone. They talk about Eliza's future and the things she can possibly do with her life. Eliza tells Higgins that she is no stranger to love and romance. She surprises him by letting him know that Freddy Eynsford Hill is very much in love with her and wants to marry her. Higgins tries hard not to show that he is jealous, but in fact, he is. Higgins tells Eliza that he wants her to be independent and his equal though he doesn't always treat her as an equal.

Pygmalion

Scene VI
The Meaning of Independence

(Eliza goes out on the balcony to avoid being alone with Higgins. He rises and joins her there. She immediately comes back into the room and makes for the door, but he goes along the balcony quickly and gets his back to the door before she reaches it.)

HIGGINS: Well, Eliza, you've had a bit of your own back, as you call it. Have you had enough? And are you going to be reasonable? Or do you want any more?

Why is Eliza escaping from Higgins?

Why is Higgins following Eliza?

What does Higgins mean when he asks Eliza if she is going to be reasonable?

ELIZA: You want me back only to pick up your slippers and put up with your tempers and fetch and carry for you.

HIGGINS: I haven't said I wanted you back at all.

ELIZA: Oh, indeed. Then what are we talking about?

HIGGINS: About you, not about me. If you come back, I shall treat you just as I have always treated you. I can't change my nature; and I don't intend to change my manners. My manners are exactly the same as Colonel Pickering's.

Is what Eliza says true?

Is Higgins saying the truth when he says he doesn't want Eliza back?

Do you think what Higgins says about his nature is true?

ELIZA: That's not true. He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess.

HIGGINS: And I treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl.

ELIZA: I see. *(She turns away composedly, and sits on the ottoman, facing the window.)* The same to everybody.

HIGGINS: Just so.

ELIZA: Like father.

HIGGINS: *(Grinning, a little taken down.)* Without accepting the comparison at all points, Eliza, it's quite true that your father is not a snob, and that he will be quite at home in any station of life to which his **eccentric** destiny may call him. *(Seriously.)* The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third-class carriages, and one soul is as good as another.

Does Eliza make a correct comparison?

What point is Higgins making?

How is Higgins like Eliza's father?

Why does Higgins feel "taken down"?

eccentric = unusual

Do you agree with Higgins' philosophy?

ELIZA: Amen. You are a born preacher.

HIGGINS: *(Irritated.)* The question is not whether I treat you **rudely**, but whether you ever heard me treat anyone else better.

ELIZA: *(With suddenly sincerity.)* I don't care how you treat me. I don't mind your sneering at me. I don't mind a black eye; I've had one before this. But *(standing up and facing him)* I won't be passed over.

Why does Eliza say Higgins is a "born preacher"?

rudely = impolitely

What does Eliza mean when she says she "won't be passed over"?

HIGGINS: Then get out of my way—for I won't stop for you. You talk about me as if I were a motor bus.

Is "motor bus" a good description of Higgins? Why or why not?

ELIZA: So you are a motor bus—all bounce and go and no consideration for anyone. But I can do without you—don't think I can't.

HIGGINS: I know you can. I told you you could.

ELIZA: *(Wounded, getting away from him to the other side of the ottoman with her face to the hearth.)* I know you did, you brute. You wanted to get rid of me.

Why is Eliza hurt?

What is Higgins trying to tell Eliza?

HIGGINS: Liar.

ELIZA: Thank you. *(She sits down with dignity.)*

HIGGINS: You never asked yourself, I suppose, whether *I* could do without you.

ELIZA: *(Earnestly.)* Don't you try to get round me. You'll have to do without me.

HIGGINS: *(Arrogant.)* I can do without anybody. I have my own soul, my own spark of divine fire. But *(with sudden humility)* I shall miss you, Eliza. *(He sits down near her on the ottoman.)* I have learnt something from your idiotic notions. I confess that humbly and gratefully. And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them rather.

Is it true that Higgins can do without anybody?

Why is Higgins grateful?

What might Higgins have learned from Eliza?

ELIZA: Well, you have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got no feelings to hurt.

Why does Eliza say this?

What does Higgins say for the first time?

HIGGINS: I can't turn your soul on. Leave me those feelings and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you.

ELIZA: Oh, you are a devil. You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her. Mrs. Pearce warned me. Time and again she has wanted to leave you; and you always got round her at the last minute. And you don't care a bit for her. And you don't care a bit for me.

What is Eliza trying to tell Higgins?

What did Mrs. Pearce warn Eliza about?

HIGGINS: I care for life, for humanity; and you are a part of it that has come my way and been built into my house. What more can you or anyone ask?

Can you understand how Higgins feels?

ELIZA: I won't care for anybody that doesn't care for me.

Can you understand how Eliza feels?

HIGGINS: Commercial principles, Eliza. Like *(reproducing her Covent Garden pronunciation with professional exactness)* s'yollin voylets (selling violets), isn't it?

What does Higgins mean when he talks about "commercial principles?"

mean = cruel; low class

ELIZA: Don't sneer at me. It's **mean** to sneer at me.

HIGGINS: I have never sneered in my life. Sneering doesn't become either the human face or the human soul. I am expressing my righteous contempt for commercialism. I don't and won't trade in affection. You call me a brute because you couldn't buy a claim on me by fetching my slippers and finding my spectacles. You were a fool. I think a woman fetching a man's slippers is a disgusting sight. Did I ever fetch your slippers? I think a good deal more of you for throwing them in my face. No use slaving for me and then saying you want to be cared for: who cares for a slave? If you come back, come back for the sake of good fellowship, for you'll get nothing else. You've had a thousand times as much out of me as I have out of you, and if you dare to set up your little dog's tricks of fetching and carrying slippers against my creation of a Duchess Eliza, I'll slam the door in your silly face.

What does Higgins mean that he has "never sneered"?

How does Professor Higgins feel about the role of women in the world? Do you agree with him?

What does Higgins mean "come back for the sake of good fellowship"?

ELIZA: What did you do it for if you didn't care for me?

HIGGINS: *(Heartily.)* Why, because it was my job.

Higgins compares himself to God (the world's "maker"). How does he do it? How do you feel about such a comparison?

ELIZA: You never thought of the trouble it would make for me.

HIGGINS: Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble? Making life means making trouble. There's only one way of escaping trouble, and that's killing things. Cowards, you notice, are always shrieking to have troublesome people killed.

ELIZA: I'm no preacher; I don't notice a thing like that. I notice that you don't notice me.

HIGGINS: *(Jumping up and walking about intolerantly.)* Eliza, you're an idiot. I waste the treasures of my **Miltonic mind** by spreading them before you. Once for all, understand that I go my way and do my work without caring twopence what happens to either of us. I am not intimidated, like your father and your stepmother. So you can come back or go to the devil—which you please.

Miltonic mind = the mind of John Milton, a great English poet (1608-1674) (Higgins is saying that he considers himself as brilliant as Milton.)

Is Higgins telling the truth when he says that he doesn't care whether Eliza stays or goes?

ELIZA: What am I to come back for?

HIGGINS: *(Bouncing up on his knees on the ottoman and leaning over it to her.)* For the fun of it. That's why I took you on.

ELIZA: *(With averted face.)* And you may throw me out tomorrow if I don't do everything you want me to?

HIGGINS: Yes, and you may leave tomorrow if I don't do everything you want me to.

ELIZA: And live with my stepmother?

HIGGINS: Yes, or sell flowers.

ELIZA: Oh! If I only could go back to my flower basket! I should be independent of both you and father and all the world! Why did you take my independence from me? Why did I give it up? I'm a slave now, for all my fine clothes.

Does Higgins' reasoning mean anything to Eliza?

Is this a good basis for a relationship?

Did Higgins really take Eliza's independence away from her?

HIGGINS: Not a bit. I'll adopt you as my daughter and settle money on you if you like. Or would you rather marry Pickering?

ELIZA: *(Looking fiercely round at him.)* I wouldn't marry you if you asked me, and you're nearer my age than what he is.

HIGGINS: *(Gently.)* Than he is: not "than what he is."

ELIZA: *(Losing her temper and rising.)* I'll talk as I like. You're not my teacher now.

HIGGINS: *(Reflectively.)* I don't suppose Pickering would, though. He's as confirmed an old bachelor as I am.

Why does Higgins suddenly suggest that Eliza should marry Pickering?

ELIZA: That's not what I want, and don't you think it. I've always had chaps enough wanting me that way. Freddy Hill writes to me twice and three times a day, sheets and sheets.

Eliza is really saying that men find her attractive. But why is she saying that?

HIGGINS: *(Disagreeably surprised.)* Damn his impudence! *(He recoils and finds himself sitting on his heels.)*

ELIZA: He has a right to if he likes, poor lad. And he does love me.

HIGGINS: *(Getting off the ottoman.)* You have no right to encourage him.

ELIZA: Every girl has a right to be loved.

HIGGINS: What! By fools like that?

Why is Higgins suddenly so upset?

How does Higgins feel about Eliza?

What does Higgins mean that Eliza "has no right to encourage" Freddy?

Eliza is really saying that men find her attractive. But why is she saying that?

ELIZA: Freddy's not a fool. And if he's weak and poor and wants me, maybe he'd make me happier than my betters that bully me and don't want me.

HIGGINS: Can he make anything of you? That's the point.

ELIZA: Perhaps I could make something of him. But I never thought of us making anything of one another; and you never think of anything else. I only want to be natural.

HIGGINS: In short, you want me to be as **infatuated** about you as Freddy? Is that it?

Is Eliza seriously considering a marriage to Freddy?

What might Freddy contribute to Eliza's life?

Why does Higgins compare himself to Freddy?

infatuated = very attracted to; foolishly in love

Higgins is upset about being compared to Freddy. What may he be thinking about?

ELIZA: No, I don't. That's not the sort of feeling I want from you. And don't you be too sure of yourself or of me. I could have been a bad girl if I'd liked. I've seen more of some things than you, for all your learning. Girls like me can drag gentlemen down to make love to them easy enough. And they wish each other dead the next minute.

HIGGINS: Of course they do. Then what in thunder are we quarreling about?

What might Eliza have seen that Higgins doesn't know anything about?

ELIZA: *(Much troubled.)* I want a little kindness. I know I'm a common ignorant girl, and you a book-learned gentleman; but I'm not dirt under your feet. What I done— *(correcting herself)* what I did was not for the dresses and the taxis; I did it because we were pleasant together and I come—came—to care for you; not to want you to make love to me, and not forgetting the difference between us, but more friendly like.

What point does Eliza make?

How does Eliza explain her feelings for Higgins?

HIGGINS: Well, of course. That's just how I feel. And how Pickering feels. Eliza, you're a fool.

ELIZA: That's not a proper answer to give me. *(She sinks on the chair at the writing-table in tears.)*

HIGGINS: It's all you'll get until you stop being a common idiot. If you're going to be a lady, you'll have to give up feeling neglected if the men you know don't spend half their time sniveling over you and the other half giving you black eyes. If you can't stand the coldness of my sort of life, and the strain of it, go back to the gutter. Work till you are more a brute than a human being, and then cuddle and squabble and drink till you fall asleep. Oh, it's a fine life, the life of the gutter.

It's real; it's warm; it's violent; you can feel it through the thickest skin; you can taste it and smell it without any training or work. Not like Science and Literature and Classical Music and Philosophy and Art. You find me cold, unfeeling, selfish, don't you? Very well. Be off with you to the sort of people you like. Marry some sentimental hog or other with lots of money, and a thick pair of lips to kiss you with and a thick pair of boots to kick you with. If you can't appreciate what you've got, you'd better get what you can appreciate.

Why is Higgins's answer not a proper one? What do you think Eliza wants for an answer?

How do you feel about Higgins' description of human relations?

What distinction does Higgins make between educated and uneducated people? Do you agree with him?

ELIZA: *(Desperate.)* Oh, you are a cruel tyrant. I can't talk to you; you turn everything against me. I'm always in the wrong. But you know very well all the time that you're nothing but a bully. You know I can't go back to the gutter, as you call it, and that I have no real friends in the world but you and the Colonel.

You know well I couldn't bear to live with a low common man after you two, and it's wicked and cruel of you to insult me by pretending I could. You think I must go back to Wimpole Street because I have nowhere else to go but father's. But don't you be too sure that you have me under your feet to be trampled on and talked down. I'll marry Freddy, I will, as soon as he's able to support me.

What does Eliza mean by calling Higgins a "cruel tyrant"?

Why is it difficult for Eliza to argue with Higgins?

HIGGINS: *(Sitting down beside her.)* Rubbish! You shall marry an ambassador. You shall marry the Governor-General of India or the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, or somebody who wants a deputy-queen. I'm not going to have my masterpiece thrown away on Freddy.

Why is Higgins so against a marriage to Freddy?

ELIZA: You think I like you to say that. But I haven't forgot what you said a minute ago; and I won't be **coaxed round** as if I was a baby or a puppy. If I can't have kindness, I'll have independence.

coaxed round = sweet talked; convinced through insincere words

HIGGINS: Independence? That's middle class **blasphemy**. We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth.

blasphemy = contempt for (looking down on) something holy

ELIZA: *(Rising determinedly.)* I'll let you see whether I'm dependent on you. If you can preach, I can teach. I'll go and be a teacher.

Why is independence a middle-class blasphemy?

HIGGINS: What'll you teach, in heaven's name?

Why does Higgins laugh?

ELIZA: What you taught me. I'll teach phonetics.

HIGGINS: Ha! ha! ha!

What does Higgins threaten to do? Does his behavior go against what he said before?

ELIZA: I'll offer myself as an assistant to Professor Nepean.

HIGGINS: *(Rising in a fury.)* What! That impostor! That humbug! That toadying ignoramus! Teach him my methods! My discoveries! You take one step in his direction and I'll wring your neck. *(He lays hands on her.)* Do you hear?

ELIZA: *(Defiantly non-resistant.)* Wring away. What do I care? I knew you'd strike me some day. *(He lets her go, stamping with rage at having forgotten himself, and recoils so hastily that he stumbles back into his seat on the ottoman.)* Aha! Now I know how to deal with you. What a fool I was not to think of it before! You can't take away the knowledge you gave me. You said I had a finer ear than you. And I can be civil and kind to people, which is more than you can. Aha! That's done you, Henry Higgins, it has. Now I don't care that *(snapping her fingers)* for your bullying and your big talk. I'll advertise it in the papers that your duchess is only a flower girl that you taught, and that she'll teach anybody to be a

Why is Eliza so happy?

Do you think that Eliza would succeed as a phonetics teacher?

duchess just the same in six months for a thousand guineas. Oh, when I think of myself crawling under your feet and being trampled on and called names, when all the time I had only to lift up my finger to be as good as you, I could just kick myself.

HIGGINS: *(Wondering at her.)* You damned impudent **slut**, you! But it's better than sniveling—better than fetching slippers and finding spectacles, isn't it? *(Rising.)* By George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you; and I have. I like you like this.

slut = immoral woman

Why does Higgins like Eliza better?

ELIZA: Yes, you turn round and make up to me now that I'm not afraid of you and can do without you.

HIGGINS: Of course I do, you little fool. Five minutes ago you were like a **millstone** round my neck. Now you're a tower of strength: a consort battleship. You and I and Pickering will be three old bachelors together instead of only two men and a silly girl.

millstone = heavy weight

*(Mrs. Higgins returns, dressed for **the wedding**. Eliza instantly becomes cool and elegant.)*

the wedding = the marriage ceremony of Eliza's father and stepmother

MRS. HIGGINS: The carriage is waiting, Eliza. Are you ready?

ELIZA: Quite. Is the Professor coming?

MRS. HIGGINS: Certainly not. He can't behave himself in church. He makes remarks out loud all the time on the clergyman's pronunciation.

ELIZA: Then I shall not see you again, Professor. Goodbye. *(She goes to the door.)*

MRS. HIGGINS: *(Coming to Higgins.)* Goodbye, dear.

HIGGINS: Goodbye, Mother. *(He is about to kiss her, when recollects something.)* Oh, by the way, Eliza, order a ham and a Stilton cheese, will you? And buy me a pair of reindeer gloves, number eights, and a tie to match that new suit of mine, at Eale & Binman's. You can choose the color. *(His cheerful, careless, vigorous voice shows that he is incorrigible.)*

What is Higgins assuming?

Do you think he is right in his assumption? Why or why not?

ELIZA: *(Disdainfully.)* Buy them yourself. *(She sweeps out.)*

MRS. HIGGINS: I'm afraid you've spoiled that girl, Henry. But never mind, dear. I'll buy you the tie and gloves.

HIGGINS: *(Sunnily.)* Oh, don't bother. She'll buy 'em all right enough. Goodbye.

(They kiss. Mrs. Higgins runs out. Higgins, left alone, rattles his cash in his pocket, chuckles, and behaves in a highly self-satisfied manner.)

Why is Higgins so pleased with himself?

Let's think about it

Below are seven questions. In groups of three to five discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to answer and report to the class. Ask one person in your group to be the secretary and take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the rest of the class has to your group's answer.

List of questions

1. Higgins claims that he no longer wants Eliza to do his errands for him, but right before Eliza leaves with Mrs. Higgins, he asks her to do a whole lot of errands for him. This is very contradictory behavior. Find other places in this scene where Professor Higgins says one thing and later says something completely different. Why do you think that he is being so contradictory?
2. George Bernard Shaw (the play's writer) claimed that he had not meant for Higgins and Eliza to fall in love. In this scene, however, they show strong feelings for each other. Can you find the places in the scene where their words and behavior show their true feelings?
3. Professor Higgins claims that he believes in equality between men and women. Do you think he truly believes in equality? Why or why not? Do you think that true equality between men and women is possible? Why or why not?
4. Is marriage a possible solution to Eliza's problems? Why or why not?
5. Do you think a marriage between Higgins and Eliza would work out? Why or why not?
6. Eliza claims that she has had experiences that Higgins has not had. What kinds of experiences do you think she is talking about?
7. At one point Higgins claims that independence is very important. Later he says that we all depend on one another. Can these views go together? Why or why not?

Let's act it out: Role play

Choose two speeches from Scene VI and act them out with a classmate. Practice your scene until you know your lines by heart. Then practice trying to put in the right emotional tone. Consider whether your character feels angry, sad, contemptuous, or proud when he or

she says the lines. Act out your scene in front of the class. Watch other students acting out theirs.

Writing advertisements

Imagine this situation: Eliza has opened a new school where she teaches proper pronunciation to people that need it. Eliza gets many students because she is a skillful teacher, and she knows how to advertise her school well. In small groups, write an advertisement for Eliza's school. When you have finished your advertisement, have your teacher help you to correct your English. Write up your advertisement on a large poster. Display your poster on the walls of your classroom, and walk about the room reading other students' posters.

Journal writing: Good manners

Eliza claims that Colonel Pickering's good manners helped her to become a lady. Professor Higgins says that good manners don't matter as long as you treat everyone alike. How do you feel about politeness and good manners? Write a paragraph or two on this topic using examples from real life whenever possible.

Working with the video

A film has been made of the play *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw. The film is produced by Horizon Entertainment. It stars Leslie Howard as Professor Higgins, Wendy Hillard as Eliza, and Wilfrid Lawson as Colonel Pickering. Janus Films presently has the rights to the film (578 Broadway, Suite 1106, New York, New York 10012). Watching the video would certainly add to your enjoyment of the play.

Pre-viewing activity: Section I

In small groups, talk about the questions below and report the main points of your discussion to the class.

1. How do you think the characters in this play look? For example, how old is Higgins? Is he tall or short? Fat or thin? Does he have a beard or a mustache? How does he dress? What color is his hair, and what color are his eyes? How old is he? What does Eliza look like? Is she tall or short? Is her hair straight or curly? How old is she? What does her voice sound like? Do her looks change as her language changes?
2. Imagine the interior of Professor Higgins' house. Is there a staircase? Where does Eliza sleep? What does the kitchen look like? What does Professor Higgins' work room look like?
3. You read about Higgins, Eliza, and Pickering after their return from the ambassador's ball. What do you think happened at the party? How did Eliza behave? Whom did she meet at the party? Whom did she talk to? Did she make any mistakes? How was she dressed? Where was Higgins during the entire party? What about Pickering?

In-viewing activity: Section I

Watch the video up to the point where Higgins is teaching Eliza how to pronounce the letter "H." Your teacher will divide the class into groups of three to five students. Each group will be given a viewing task from the list below.

Viewing tasks

1. How is the film different from the written text?
2. What do we learn about Eliza's father?
3. What kind of a teacher is Higgins?
4. What sounds are particularly difficult for Eliza to make? Are there any specific sounds in English that you find equally difficult?

Post-viewing activity: Section I

When you have finished watching the first section of the video, sit in your group and consider what you have seen. Then report your conclusions to the class.

Pre-viewing activity: Section II

Before you view the next section of the film, your teacher will divide the class into groups of six. In your group, re-read Scene II: Afternoon Tea. Assign the reading parts of Eliza, Higgins, Pickering, Mrs. Higgins, Mrs. Eynsford Hill, and Freddy Eynsford Hill to different members of your group. Read through the scene, trying to put as much dramatic expression as you can into your reading. When you have finished, try to recall your favorite lines from the play. Write the lines you remember on the board, and then check with the text to see how many you got right. If you were Eliza's teachers, what grade would you give her for her performance at the tea party? Tell the rest of the class about your decision, and justify your grade.

In-viewing activity: Section II

Watch the video up to the part where Higgins says that Eliza is ready for the great ball. In small groups, select one of the questions below and answer it.

Viewing tasks

1. Why do you think that the director of this film decided to add "the Reverend" to the group of guests at Mrs. Higgins tea party?
2. How has Eliza's dress changed?
3. Look carefully at Eliza's performance at the party. This time give her a grade for each of the following: pronunciation, use of vocabulary, grammar, and using language appropriately.
4. Think about Freddy's character. Is he different than you imagined him? Why is he so infatuated with Eliza?

5. What kind of a woman is Mrs. Eynsford Hill? How is she different from Mrs. Higgins?

Post-viewing activity: Section II

When you have finished watching the film up to this point, sit together with students in your group and discuss what you have seen. Then report your conclusions to the class.

Pre-viewing activity: Section III

Before you look at the remainder of the film, in small groups talk about the two topics listed below. Select a secretary to take notes so that later you can report to the class about the main points of your discussion.

List of topics

1. What do people do when they get ready for a great and important ball? Do men get ready differently than women?
2. There are certain great events that change the meanings of our lives. Make a list of such events. In what ways does the ambassador's ball change Eliza's life?

In-viewing activity: Section III

Your teacher will divide the class into groups of three to five students. Each group will be given a viewing task from the list below.

Viewing tasks

1. How does Eliza get ready for the ball?
2. Who is Higgins' former student? Why is he spying on Eliza? What are his conclusions? Why is Higgins afraid of this man?
3. Did you find the scene after the party very much as you had imagined it when you read the text? If not, what was different?
4. Did the way the actors move and stand help you to understand the play? Explain.
5. Try to remember how Higgins and Pickering made fun of Eliza's name when she first arrived at Wimpole Street. Compare this to the ball, when Eliza is introduced as Miss Elizabeth Doolittle. Why do you think that such an introduction is significant?
6. Do you think that the last line of the play was a good way to end this drama? Why or why not?

Post-viewing activity: Section III

When you have finished watching the video, sit together with your group and discuss what you've seen. Report your conclusions to the class.

Working with the video *My Fair Lady*

The play *Pygmalion* was made into a musical film, *My Fair Lady*. In 1964, this musical, starring Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison, received eight academy awards. It has now been restored and put on video by CBS Video. It is a beautiful film full of color, life, and music. It would certainly enhance your understanding of the play *Pygmalion* to watch this movie.

In-viewing activities

Songs

Below are some of the names of the most famous songs from the movie *My Fair Lady*. As you watch the video, try to put the songs in the order in which they are on the video. When you finish watching the film, compare your list with that of a classmate, and see if you can remember what the songs are about.

List of songs

"Get Me to the Church"
"I Could Have Danced All Night"
"Wouldn't It Be Lovely"
"With a Little Bit of Luck"
"I'm an Ordinary Man"
"I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face"
"Let a Woman in Your Life"
"The Rain in Spain"
"Why Can't the English Teach Their Children How to Speak"

Your Favorite Song

Choose your favorite song from the musical. Listen to it several times, and try to get all of the words down on paper. Then find other students in your class who have chosen the same song, and sing it together.

Post-viewing activity

Below is a list of events that occurred during the ambassador's ball. With the help of a classmate, number the events in the order they happened. Later compare your list with other students. As you do your comparison, visualize each event. Then watch the scene again to see if you remembered it correctly. (Be careful! One of the events on the list didn't happen!)

List of events

___ Eliza dances with the prince.
___ Eliza has conversations with other guests.
___ Eliza and Colonel Pickering are introduced to the general public.

___ Everyone gossips about Eliza.
___ Eliza dances with Higgins.
___ Eliza dances with Pickering.
___ Eliza dances with the Hungarian.
___ Eliza is introduced to the Queen of Transylvania.
___ Higgins meets his former student.
___ Higgins and Pickering are frightened.
___ Higgins and Pickering are pleased.
___ Higgins tries to distract the Hungarian.
___ Higgins has a good laugh.

Further activities

Comparing videos

In groups of three to five students, discuss how *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* were different. Which one do you like better? Explain. Consider the following list of questions

List of questions

Why has Mrs. Higgins' tea party scene been changed to the races at Ascot?
Which actor do you like better as Professor Higgins?
Which actress do you prefer as Eliza?
Why have so many more servants been added to Professor Higgins' household?
What is added with the color and the music?
Which version do you find more believable?
Can you think of lines that were almost identical in the musical and the drama?
Which name do you like better, *Pygmalion* or *My Fair Lady?* Why?

Journal writing: To go back home

Eliza says that she cannot go back to her old life. What do you think? Can a person ever "go back home again?"

Discussion

Here is a list of questions. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Ask one person in your group to be the secretary and take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answer.

List of questions

1. Why did George Bernard Shaw write about the way English society was organized? Do you think that some of that class system still holds true in modern societies?
2. How was the sculptor's prayer answered? Do you think that love between the sculptor and his former work of art is possible?

3. Why is Eliza frightened? Do you think that such a fear is realistic and justified?
4. What is Professor Henry Higgins' attitude toward Eliza?
5. Can you explain why anyone (for example, Alfred Doolittle) would not want to become middle class?

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TRIFLES AND A JURY OF HER PEERS

BY SUSAN GLASPELL

TRIFLES
A JURY OF HER PEERS

What this play and the story are about

The play *Trifles* and the short story, *A Jury of her Peers*, are two versions of the same story. Susan Glaspell writes about what happens to people when the society they live in imprisons them and does not allow them to develop their dreams to their potential.

One dark night a farmer, Mr. Hale, and his son, Harry, are on their way home in their wagon. They pass the house of the Wrights, who are the Hale's closest neighbors. Mr. Hale decides to stop at the Wrights' house to see if he can talk John and Minnie Wright into sharing a party line on a telephone with him and his wife, Martha. When Mr. Hale knocks on the door, no one answers. He knocks several times, and finally a voice from inside tells him to come in.

In the house, Minnie Wright is behaving very strangely. She tells Mr. Hale that her husband, Mr. Wright, was murdered the previous night while they were both sleeping in bed. She says someone killed him by choking him with a rope.

Shortly after this visit, Mrs. Wright is accused of murdering her husband. The sheriff, together with the county attorney, investigates the case. Everyone is quite sure that Mrs. Wright did murder John Wright, but they are not sure why she did it. The prosecutor (the county attorney) wants a motive (a reason for the killing). He thinks that unless he has a real motive, the jury will probably declare Mrs. Wright "not guilty." In his opinion, juries "are soft on women" and deal leniently with them.

The morning after the murder, the sheriff, the county attorney, and Mr. Hale go to the Wrights' house to try to find some kind of evidence for the motive of the murder. They ask Mrs. Peters, the Sheriff's wife, and Mrs. Hale to accompany them because they want the women to get some of the personal things Mrs. Wright needs from the house.

The two women discover just exactly why Minnie Wright killed her husband. They also decide that the murder was justified and that they are not going to disclose what they know to the men. These two women have become a jury of Mrs. Wright's peers (equals), and they declare her innocent. The women realize that some of the things that the men call "trifles" (small and unimportant things or matters) can be matters of life and death for a woman alone in an isolated country house.

Before you read the story: Sharing dreams, hopes, and fears • • •

Note: Read the short story before you read the play; the story supplies more background about the people that will act out the drama.

A Jury of Her Peers deals with the problem of isolation. Susan Glaspell wonders what happens to people when they have no one to talk to and no one to share their dreams, hopes, and fears. Who do you think people turn to when they have a problem? Who do people talk to when they want to share a good story (for example, a story about something they succeeded at doing)? Choose three possibilities from the list below and in small groups talk about why you made your choices.

List: Who to talk to

a relative
a parent
a teacher
a friend
a co-worker
a psychiatrist
a psychologist
a religious leader
an older person
a brother or sister
a boyfriend or a girlfriend
a husband or a wife
a diary
a spiritual power

Reading the story *A Jury of Her Peers* • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Mrs. Hale is a very good homemaker. Her home is always clean and she cooks good food. But she also knows how difficult it is to keep a clean house in the country so when the sheriff and the lawyer say something about Mrs. Wright being a bad housewife, she feels angry. "What do these men know about keeping a house clean?" she thinks. As you read the story, visualize how the house looks.

A Jury of Her Peers

Short Story

When Martha Hale opened the **storm door** and got a cut of the north wind, she ran back for her big woolen scarf. As she hurriedly wound that round her head, **her eye made a scandalized sweep of her kitchen**. It was no ordinary thing that called her away—it was probably farther from ordinary than anything that had ever happened in Dickson County. But what her eye took in was that her kitchen was in no shape for leaving: her bread all ready for mixing, half the flour sifted and half unsifted.

storm door = extra door outside of the ordinary door for greater protection against bad weather

her eye made a scandalized sweep of her kitchen = she is very upset as she looks at the kitchen

Do you think that Martha Hale is a good housekeeper? Why or why not?

She hated to see things half done; but she had been **at that** when the team from town stopped to get Mr. Hale, and then the sheriff came running in to say his wife wished Mrs. Hale would come too—adding, with a grin, that he guessed she was getting scared and wanted another woman along. She had dropped everything right where it was.

"Martha!" Now came her husband's impatient voice. "Don't keep folks waiting out here in the cold."

at that = in the middle of her work

She again opened the storm door, and this time joined the three men and the one woman waiting for her in the big two-seated **buggy**.

After she had the robes tucked around her, she took another look at the woman who sat beside her on the back seat. She had met Mrs. Peters the year before at the county fair, and the thing she remembered about her was that she didn't seem like a **sheriff**'s wife. She was small and thin and didn't have a strong voice. Mrs. Gorman, the sheriff's wife before Gorman went out and Peters came in, had a voice that somehow seemed to be backing up the law with every word. But if Mrs. Peters didn't look like a sheriff's wife, **Peters made it up** in looking like a sheriff. He was to a dot the kind of man who could get himself elected sheriff—a heavy man with a big voice, who was particularly genial with the law-abiding, as if to make it plain that he knew the difference between criminals and noncriminals. And right there it came into Mrs. Hale's mind, with a stab, that this man who was so pleasant and lively with all of

buggy = a carriage

Who is Mrs. Peters?

What is the weather like when this story begins?

sheriff = policeman

How is Mrs. Peters different from the previous sheriff's wife?

Peters made it up = Peters compensated for his wife

What kind of a man is Peters?

them was going to the Wrights' now as a sheriff.

"The country's not very pleasant this time of year," Mrs. Peters at last **ventured**, as if she felt they ought to be talking as well as the men.

Mrs. Hale scarcely finished her reply, for they had gone up a little hill and could see the Wright place now, and seeing it did not make her feel like talking. It looked very lonesome this cold March morning. It had always been a lonesome-looking place. It was down in a **hollow**, and the poplar trees around it were lonesome-looking trees. The men were looking at it and talking about what had happened. The county **attorney** was bending to one side of the buggy and kept looking steadily at the place as they drew up to it.

ventured = started (a conversation)

hollow = a low place; a valley

How does the Wrights' house look?

What kind of feeling do you get when you read about the house?

attorney = lawyer

"I'm glad you came with me," Mrs. Peters said nervously, as the two women were about to follow the men in through the kitchen door.

Even after she had her foot on the doorstep, her hand on the knob, Martha Hale had a moment of feeling she could not cross that **threshold**. And the reason it seemed she couldn't cross it now was simply because she hadn't crossed it before. Time and time again it had been in her mind. "I ought to go over and see Minnie Foster" —she still thought of her as Minnie Foster, though for twenty years she had been Mrs. Wright. And then there was always something to do, and Minnie Foster **would go from her mind**. But *now* she could come.

The men went over to the stove. The women stood close together by the door. Young Henderson, the county attorney, turned around and said, "Come up to the fire, ladies."

Why do you think that the women have come?

threshold = the piece of wood at the bottom of the door frame

Why is it difficult for Martha Hale to walk into the house?

Who is Minnie Foster?

would go from her mind = she would forget it

Mrs. Peters took a step forward, then stopped. "I'm not cold," she said.

And so the two women stood by the door, at first not even so much as looking around the kitchen.

The men talked for a minute about what a good thing it was the sheriff had sent his **deputy** out that morning to make a fire for them, and then Sheriff Peters

Why doesn't Mrs. Peters go closer to the fire?

deputy = helper

How many men are in the house?

How are the women related to the men?

stepped back from the stove, unbuttoned his outer coat, and leaned his hands on the kitchen table in a way that seemed to mark the beginning of official business. "Now, Mr. Hale," he said in a sort of **semi-official** voice, "before we move things about, you tell Mr. Henderson just what it was you saw when you came here yesterday morning."

semi-official = almost formal

The county attorney was looking around the kitchen. "By the way," he said, "has anything been moved?" He turned to the sheriff. "Are things just as you left them yesterday?"

Why is it important that nothing has been moved?

Peters looked from cupboard to sink; from that to a small worn rocker a little to one side of the kitchen table. "It's just the same."

"Somebody should have been left here yesterday," said the county attorney.

"Oh—yesterday," returned the sheriff, with a little gesture as of yesterday having been more than he could bear to think of. "When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy—let me tell you, I had my hands full *yesterday*. I knew you could get back from Omaha by today, George, and as long as I went over everything here myself—"

What did the sheriff have to do the previous day?

"Well, Mr. Hale," said the county attorney, in a way of letting what was past and gone go, "Tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning."

Mrs. Hale, still leaning against the door, had that sinking feeling of the mother whose child is about to speak a piece. Lewis often wandered along and got things mixed up in a story. She hoped he would tell this straight and plain, and not say unnecessary things that would just make things harder for Minnie Foster. He didn't begin at once, and she noticed that he looked queer—as if standing in that kitchen and having to tell what he had seen there yesterday morning made him almost sick.

What does Mrs. Hale know about her husband? What is she afraid of?

"Yes, Mr. Hale?" the county attorney reminded.

"Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes," Mrs. Hale's husband began.

Harry was Mrs. Hale's oldest boy. He wasn't with them now for the very good reason that those potatoes never got to town yesterday, and he was taking them this morning so he hadn't been home when the sheriff stopped to say he wanted Mr. Hale to come over to the Wright place and tell the county attorney his story there, where he could point it all out. With all Mrs. Hale's other **emotions** came the fear that maybe Harry wasn't dressed warm enough—they hadn't any of them realized how that north wind did bite.

Who is Harry? Why isn't he there?

Why, do you think, that the potatoes never got to town?

emotions = feelings

Why is Mrs. Hale worried about Harry?

"We come along this road," Hale was going on, with a motion of his hand to the road over which they had just come, "and as we got in sight of the house I says to Harry, I'm goin' to see if I can't get John Wright to take a telephone. You see," he explained to Henderson, "unless I can get somebody to go in with me, they won't come out this branch road except for a price *I* can't pay. I'd **spoke** to Wright about it once before; but he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—guess you know about how much he talked himself. But I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, and said all the womenfolk liked the telephones, and that in this lonesome stretch of road it would be a good thing—well, I said to Harry that that was what I was going to say—though I said at the same time that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—"

Why did Mr. Hale stop at the Wrights' house?

What kind of a man do you think John Wright was?

How did John Wright treat his wife?

spoke = spoken

Now, there he was! Saying things he didn't need to say. Mrs. Hale tried to catch her husband's eye, but fortunately the county attorney interrupted with "Let's talk about that a little later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but I'm anxious now to get along to just what happened when you got here."

When he began this time, it was very **deliberately** and carefully. "I didn't see or hear anything. I knocked at the door. And still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up—it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, louder, and I thought I heard somebody say 'Come in.' I wasn't sure—not sure yet. But I opened the door—this door," jerking a hand toward the door by which the two women stood, "and there, in that rocker"—pointing to it—"sat Mrs. Wright."

Why is Mrs. Hale upset?

deliberately = slowly and carefully

Everyone in the kitchen looked at the rocker. It came into Mrs. Hale's mind that the **rocker** didn't look in the least like Minnie Foster—the Minnie Foster of twenty years before. It was a **dingy** red, with wooden rungs up the back, and the middle rung was gone, and the chair sagged to one side.

"How did she—look?" the county attorney was inquiring.

"Well," said Hale, "she looked—**queer**."

"How do you mean *queer?*" As he asked it, he took out a notebook and pencil. Mrs. Hale did not like the sight of that pencil. She kept her eye fixed on her husband, as if to keep him from saying unnecessary things that would go into that notebook and make trouble.

rocker = rocking chair, a chair placed on top of curved pieces of wood that let the chair move back and forth

Why does everyone look at the rocker?

dingy = dull, faded in color

Who is Minnie Foster?

queer = strange

Hale did speak guardedly, as if the pencil had **affected** him too. "Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of—done up."

"How did she seem to feel about your coming?"

"Why, I don't think she minded—one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said 'Ho' do, Mrs. Wright? It's cold, ain't it!' And she said, 'Is it?'—and went on pleatin' at her apron."

affected = influenced (changed Hale's mind)

"Well, I was surprised. She didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to sit down, but just **set** there, not even lookin' at me. And so I said: 'I want to see John.'"

"And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh."

"I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said, a little sharp, 'Can I see John? ' 'No,' says she—kind of dull like. 'Ain't he home?' says I. Then she looked at me. 'Yes,' says she, 'he's home.' 'Then why can't I see him?' I asked her, out of patience with her now. 'Cause he's dead,' says she, just as quiet and dull—and fell to pleatin' her apron. 'Dead?' says I, like you do when you can't take in what you've heard."

"She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rock'n back and forth. 'Why—where is he?' says I, not knowing *what* to say. She just pointed upstairs—like this—pointing to the room above."

set = sat

How is Mrs. Wright behaving?

"I got up, with the idea of going up there myself. By this time I—didn't know what to do. I walked from there to here; then I says, 'Why, what did he die of?'

"He died of a rope around his neck,' says she; and just went on pleatin' at her apron."

Why isn't anyone speaking?

Hale stopped speaking, and stood staring at the rocker, as if he were still seeing the woman who had sat there the morning before. Nobody spoke; it was as if everyone were seeing the woman who had sat there the morning before.

"And what did you do then?" the county attorney at last broke the silence.

"I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. I got Harry in, and we went upstairs." His voice fell almost to a whisper. "There he was—lying over the—"

"I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs," the county attorney interrupted, "where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story."

"Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked—" He stopped, his face twitching.

unconcerned = as if she doesn't care

strangled = choked (to death)

"But Harry, he went up to him and he said, 'No he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything.' So we went downstairs."

"She was still sitting the same way. 'Has anybody been notified?' I asked. 'No,' says she, **unconcerned**. 'Who did this, Mrs. Wright?' said Harry. He said it business-like, and she stopped pleatin' at her apron. 'I don't know,' she says. 'You don't *know?*' says Harry. 'Weren't you sleepin' in the bed with him?' 'Yes,' says she, 'but I was on the inside.' 'Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and **strangled** him, and you didn't wake up?' says Harry. 'I didn't wake up,' she said after him."

I sleep sound = I don't wake up easily

coroner = official death investigator

"We may have looked as if we didn't see how that could be, for after a minute she said, '**I sleep sound.**' Harry was going to ask her more questions, but I said maybe that weren't our business; maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the **coroner** or the sheriff.

Then Harry went fast as he could over to High Road—the Rivers' place, where there's a telephone."

"And what did she do when she knew you had gone for the coroner?" The attorney got his pencil in his hand all ready for writing.

"She moved from that chair to this one over here"—and Hale pointed to a small chair in the corner—"and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone; and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me—scared."

Why do you think Mrs. Wright is laughing?

Why do you think that Mrs. Wright is scared?

At the sound of a moving pencil the man who was telling the story looked up.

"I dunno—maybe it wasn't scared," he hastened; "I wouldn't like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr. Lloyd came, and you, Mr. Peters, and so I guess that's all I know that you don't."

He said that last with relief, and moved a little, as if relaxing. Everyone moved a little. The county attorney walked toward the stair door.

"I guess we'll go upstairs first—then out to the barn and around there." He paused and looked around the kitchen. "You're **convinced** there was nothing important here?" He asked the sheriff. "Nothing that would—point to any **motive**?"

What did Harry do?

convinced = certain

motive = reason for the crime

The sheriff too looked all around, as if to **reconvince** himself.

"Nothing here but kitchen things," he said, with a little laugh for the insignificance of kitchen things.

The county attorney was looking at the cupboard—a peculiar, ungainly structure, half closet and half cupboard, the upper part of it being built in the wall, and the lower part just the old-fashioned kitchen cupboard. As if its queerness attracted him, he got a chair and opened the upper part and looked in. After a moment he drew his hand away sticky.

reconvince = talk himself into something for a second time

How does the sheriff feel about "kitchen things"?

"Here's a nice mess," he said **resentfully**. The two women had drawn nearer, and now the sheriff's wife spoke.

"Oh—**her fruit**," she said, looking to Mrs. Hale for sympathetic understanding. She turned back to the county attorney and explained: "She worried about that when it turned so cold last night. She said the fire would go out and her jars might burst."

Why is there a mess in the kitchen cupboard?

resentfully = with bad feeling

her fruit = the fruit she had made into jam in the summer

Mrs. Peters' husband broke into a laugh. "Well, **can you beat the woman**! Held for murder, and worrying about her preserves!"

The young attorney set his lips. "I guess before we're through with her she may have something more serious than **preserves** to worry about."

"Oh, well," said Mrs. Hale's husband, with good-natured superiority, "women are used to worrying over **trifles**."

The two women moved a little closer together. Neither of them spoke. The county attorney seemed suddenly to remember his **manners**—and think of his future.

"And yet," said he, with the gallantry of a young politician, "for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies?"

The women did not speak, did not **unbend**. He went to the sink and began washing his hands. He turned to wipe them on the roller towel—whirled it for a cleaner place.

"Dirty towels! Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?" He kicked his foot against some dirty pans under the sink. "There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm," said Mrs. Hale stiffly.

Why is the sheriff laughing?

can you beat the woman = can you think of anything stranger than the woman?

preserves = jam

How does the young attorney feel about Mrs. Wright?

trifles = silly little things; unimportant things

Why do you think the women move closer together? How do they feel?

manners = rules of politeness

Why does the young lawyer make this statement about women? Do you think that his words make the women feel better?

Why don't the women speak?

unbend = relax

What does the young attorney think of Mrs. Wright?

"To be sure. And yet"—with a little bow to her—"I know there are some Dickson County farmhouses that do not have such roller towels." He gave it a pull to expose its full length again.

"Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be."

"Ah, loyal to your sex, I see," he laughed. He stopped and gave her a keen look. "But you and

How does the young attorney try to compliment Mrs. Hale?

Why does the young man laugh?

Mrs. Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too."

Martha Hale shook her head. "I've seen little enough of her of late years. I've not been in this house—it's more than a year."

"And why was that? You didn't like her?"

"I liked her well enough," she replied with spirit. "Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr. Henderson. And then—" She looked around the kitchen.

"Yes?" he encouraged.

Why hadn't Mrs. Hale visited her neighbor?

"It never seemed a very cheerful place," said she, more to herself than to him.

What is the young attorney trying to do?

"No," he agreed; "I don't think anyone would call it cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct."

"Well, I don't know as Wright had, either," she muttered.

"You mean they didn't get on very well? He was quick to ask.

"No, I don't mean anything," she answered, with decision. As she turned a little away from him, she added, "But I don't think a place would be the cheerfuller for John Wright's bein' in it."

How did Martha Hale feel about John Wright?

I'm . . . now = I want to look over things upstairs

"I'd like to talk to you about that a little later, Mrs. Hale," he said. "**I'm anxious to get the lay of things upstairs now**." He moved toward the stair door, followed by the two men.

"I suppose anything Mrs. Peters **does'll** be all right?" The sheriff inquired. "She was to take in some clothes for her, you know—and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday."

does'll = does will

The county attorney looked at the two women whom they were leaving alone there among the kitchen things.

"Yes—Mrs. Peters," he said, his glance resting on the woman who was not Mrs. Peters, the big farmer woman who stood behind the sheriff's wife. "Of course

Why does the young attorney look at Mrs. Hale when he is speaking about Mrs. Peters?

Mrs. Peters is one of us," he said, in a manner of entrusting responsibility. "And keep your eye out, Mrs. Peters, for anything that might be of use. No telling; you women might come upon a **clue** to the motive—and that's the thing we need."

What does the young attorney mean by the statement, "Of course Mrs. Peters is one of us"?

clue = sign

Mr. Hale rubbed his face after the fashion of a showman getting ready for a pleasantry. "But would the women know a clue if they did come upon it?" he said; and, having delivered himself of this, he followed the others through the stair door.

The women stood motionless and silent, listening to the footsteps, first upon the stairs, then in the room above them.

How does Mr. Hale feel about the women?

Then, as if releasing herself from something strange, Mrs. Hale began to arrange the dirty pans under the sink, which the county attorney's disdainful push of the foot had deranged.

"I'd hate to have men comin' into my kitchen," she said testily—"snoopin' round and criticizin'."

"Of course it's no more than their duty," said the sheriff's wife, in her manner of **timid acquiescence**.

Why does Mrs. Hale say "I'd hate to have men comin' into my kitchen"?

timid acquiescence = frightened agreement

"Duty's all right," replied Mrs. Hale **bluffly**, "but I guess that deputy sheriff that come out to make the fire might have got a little of this on." She gave the roller towel a pull. "Wish I'd thought of that sooner! Seems mean to talk about her for not having things **slicked up**, when she had to come away in such a hurry."

She looked around the kitchen. Certainly it was not "slicked up." Her eye was held by a bucket of sugar on a low shelf. The cover was off the wooden bucket, and beside it was a paper bag—half full. Mrs. Hale moved toward it.

"She was putting this in here," she said to herself—slowly.

bluffly = loud and cheerfully (but she is annoyed)

slicked up = clean and polished

Why is Mrs. Wright's kitchen not very clean?

She thought of the flour in her kitchen at home—half sifted, half not sifted. She had been interrupted and had left things half done. What had interrupted

What does Mrs. Hale remember?

Minnie Foster? Why had that work been left half done? She made a move as if to finish it—unfinished things always bothered her—and then she glanced around and saw that Mrs. Peters was watching her—and she didn't want Mrs. Peters to get that feeling she had got of work begun and then—for some reason—not finished.

What is she trying to understand?

"It's a shame about her fruit," she said, and walked toward the cupboard that the county attorney had opened, and got on the chair, murmuring: "I wonder if it's all gone."

It was a sorry enough looking sight, but "Here's one that's all right," she said at last. She held it toward the light. "This is cherries, too." She looked again. "I declare I believe that's the only one." With a sigh, she got down from the chair, went to the sink, and wiped off the bottle. "She'll feel awful bad, after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer."

What has happened to Mrs. Wright's fruit?

She set the bottle on the table, and, with another sigh, started to sit down in the rocker. But did not sit down. Something kept her from sitting down in that chair. She straightened—stepped back, and, half turned away, stood looking at it, seeing the woman who sat there "pleatin' at her apron."

The thin voice of the sheriff's wife broke in upon her. "I must be getting those things from the front room closet." She opened the door into the other room, started in, stepped back. "You coming with me, Mrs. Hale?" she asked nervously. "You—you could help me get them."

Mrs. Peters was asked to get some things for Mrs. Wright. What personal *things* would a woman in jail want?

They were soon back—the stark coldness of that shut-up room was not a thing to linger in.

"My!" said Mrs. Peters, dropping the things on the table and hurrying to the stove.

Mrs. Hale stood examining the clothes the woman who was being detained in town had said she wanted.

"Wright was **close**!" she exclaimed, holding up a shabby black skirt that bore the marks of much making over. "I think maybe that's why she kept so much to

close = stingy; did not like to spend money

herself. I s'pose she felt she couldn't do her part; and then, you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively—when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls, singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was twenty years ago."

Why didn't Mrs. Wright socialize with the other women?

What kind of a person had Mrs. Wright been before she was married?

With a carefulness in which there was something tender, she folded the shabby clothes and piled them at one corner of the table. She looked at Mrs. Peters, and there was something in the other woman's look that **irritated her**.

"She don't care," she said to herself. "Much difference it makes to her whether Minnie Foster had pretty clothes when she was a girl."

Then she looked again, and she wasn't so sure; in fact, she hadn't at any time been perfectly sure about Mrs. Peters. She had that shrinking manner, and yet her eyes looked as if they could see a long way into things.

"This all you was to take in?" asked Mrs. Hale.

irritated her = upset her; made her nervous

What do you think irritated Mrs. Hale?

Did Mrs. Peters know Minnie Foster?

Why does Martha Hale change her mind about Mrs. Peters?

"No," said the sheriff's wife, "she said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want," she **ventured** in her nervous little way, "for there's not much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. If you're used to wearing an apron . . . she said they were in the bottom drawer of this cupboard. Yes—here they are. And then her little shawl that always hung on the stair door."

She took the small gray shawl from behind the door leading upstairs, and stood a minute looking at it.

ventured = said

Suddenly Mrs. Hale took a quick step toward the other woman.

"Mrs. Peters!"

"Yes, Mrs. Hale?"

"Do you think she—did it?"

A frightened look blurred the other things in Mrs. Peters' eyes.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, in a voice that seemed to shrink away from the subject.

"Well, I don't think she did," affirmed Mrs. Hale

Why does Mrs. Hale ask Mrs. Peters if she thinks Minnie did it?

Why is Mrs. Peters frightened?

Why doesn't Martha believe that Minnie killed her husband?

stoutly. "Asking for an apron, and her little shawl. Worryin' about her fruit."

"Mr. Peters says—" Footsteps were heard in the room above; she stopped, looked up, then went on in a lowered voice: "Mr. Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr. Henderson is awful **sarcastic** in a speech, and he's going to make fun of her saying she didn't—wake up."

What does Mrs. Peters know?

sarcastic = humorous in a very nasty cutting way

For a moment Mrs. Hale had no answer. Then, "Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake up—when they was slippin' that rope under his neck," she **muttered**.

"No, it's strange," breathed Mrs. Peters. "They think it was such a—**funny** way to kill a man." She began to laugh; at the sound of the laugh, she **abruptly** stopped.

"That's just what Mr. Hale said," said Mrs. Hale, in a resolutely natural voice. "There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand."

"Mr. Henderson said, coming out, that what was needed for the case was a motive. Something to show anger—or sudden feeling."

"Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here," said Mrs. Hale. "I don't—"

muttered = talked in an unclear way

funny = strange

abruptly = suddenly

Why does Mrs. Peters start laughing? Why does she stop?

She stopped. It was as if **her mind tripped** on something. Her eye was caught by a dish towel in the middle of the kitchen table. Slowly she made toward the table. One half of it was wiped clean, the other half messy. Her eyes made a slow, almost unwilling turn to the bucket of sugar and the half empty bag beside it. Things begun—and not finished.

her mind tripped = her thoughts stopped

What can't Mrs. Hale understand?

After a moment she stepped back, and said, in that manner of **releasing herself**: "Wonder how they're finding things upstairs? I hope she had it a little more **red-up** there. You know," she paused, and feeling gathered, "it seems kind of **sneaking** locking her up in town and coming out here to get her own house to turn against her!"

releasing herself = relaxing

red-up = ready; tidy

sneaking = dishonest

Why does Mrs. Hale feel uncomfortable?

"But, Mrs. Hale," said the sheriff's wife, "the law is the law."

"**I s'pose 'tis**," answered Mrs. Hale shortly.

She turned to the stove, saying something about that fire not being much to brag of. She worked with it a minute, and when she straightened up, she said aggressively: "The law is the law—and a bad stove is a bad stove. How'd you like to cook on this?"—pointing with the poker to the broken lining. She opened the oven door and started to express her opinion of the oven; but she was swept into her own thoughts, thinking of what it would mean, year after year, to have that stove to wrestle with. The thought of Minnie Foster trying to bake in that oven—and the thought of her never going over to see Minnie Foster.

What does Mrs. Peters mean, "the law is the law?"

I s'pose 'tis = I suppose it is

Why does Mrs. Hale comment on the stove?

Why does Mrs. Hale lose herself in thought?

She was **startled** by hearing Mrs. Peters say: "A person gets discouraged—and loses heart."

The sheriff's wife had looked from the stove to the sink—to the pail of water which had been carried in from outside. The two women stood there silent, above them the footsteps of the men who were looking for **evidence** against the woman who had worked in that kitchen. That look of seeing into things, of seeing through a thing to something else, was in the eyes of the sheriff's wife now. When Mrs. Hale next spoke to her, it was gently.

startled = surprised

evidence = proof

"**Better loosen up your things**, Mrs. Peters. We'll not feel them when we go out."

Mrs. Peters went to the back of the room to hang up the **fur tippet** she was wearing. A moment later she exclaimed, "Why, she was piecing a quilt," and held up a large sewing basket piled high with quilt pieces.

Mrs. Hale spread some of the blocks on the table. "It's log cabin pattern," she said, putting several of them together. "Pretty, isn't it?"

They were so engaged with the quilt that they did not hear the footsteps on the stairs. Just as the stair door opened Mrs. Hale was saying: "Do you supposed she was going to quilt it or just knot it?"

Better loosen up your things = You better take off your coat or you'll be very cold when we go out.

fur tippet = fur shawl

The sheriff threw up his hands. "They wonder whether she was going to quilt it or just knot it!"

There was a laugh for the ways of women, a warming of hands over the stove, and then the county attorney said briskly:

"Well, let's go right out to the barn and get that cleared up."

Why are the men laughing?

Why are the men going to the barn?

"**I don't see as** there's anything so strange," Mrs. Hale said **resentfully**, after the outside door had closed on the three men— "our taking up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. I don't see as it's anything to laugh about."

"Of course they've got awful important things on their minds," said the sheriff's wife apologetically.

They returned to an inspection of the blocks for the quilt. Mrs. Hale was looking at the fine, even sewing, and was preoccupied with thoughts of the woman who had done that sewing, when she heard the sheriff's wife say, in a queer tone: "Why, look at this one." She turned to take the block held out to her.

I don't see as = I don't think

resentfully = with bad feelings

How do the women feel about the men's work?

"The sewing," said Mrs. Peters, in a troubled way. "All the rest of them have been so nice and even—but this one. Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about!"

Their eyes met—something flashed to life, passed between them; then, as if with an effort, they seemed to pull away from each other. A moment Mrs. Hale sat there, her hands folded over that sewing which was so unlike all the rest of the sewing. Then she had pulled a knot and drawn the threads.

Why are the women surprised?

What are the women thinking?

"Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?" asked the sheriff's wife, **startled**.

"Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good," said Mrs. Hale mildly.

"I don't think we ought to touch things," Mrs. Peters said, a little helplessly.

"I'd just finish up this end," answered Mrs. Hale, still in that mild, matter-of-fact fashion.

startled = surprised

Why is Mrs. Peters so surprised?

Why do you think that Mrs. Hale is pulling out the threads?

She threaded a needle and started to replace bad sewing with good. For a little while she sewed in silence. Then, in that thin, timid voice, she heard:

"Mrs. Hale!"

"Yes, Mrs. Peters?"

"What do you suppose she was so—nervous about?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Mrs. Hale, as if dismissing a thing not important enough to spend much time on. "I don't know as she was nervous. I sew awful queer sometimes when I'm just tired."

What does Mrs. Hale mean?

peering = looking closely

be through = be finished

She cut a thread, and out of the corner of her eye looked up at Mrs. Peters. The small, lean face of the sheriff's wife seemed to have tightened up. Her eyes had that look of **peering** into something. But the next moment she moved, and said in her thin, indecisive way:

"Well, I must get those clothes wrapped. They may **be through** sooner than we think. I wonder where I could find a piece of paper—and string."

"In that cupboard, maybe," suggested Mrs. Hale, after a glance around.

One piece of the crazy sewing remained unripped. Mrs. Peters' back turned, Martha Hale now **scrutinized** that piece, compared it with the dainty, accurate sewing of the other blocks. The difference was startling. Holding this block made her feel queer, as if the **distracted thoughts** of the woman who had perhaps turned to it to try and quiet herself were communicating themselves to her.

scrutinized = looked at closely; examined

distracted thoughts = wandering thoughts

What is Mrs. Hale trying to imagine?

Mrs. Peters' voice roused her.

"Here's a bird cage," she said. "Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?"

"Why, I don't know whether she did or not." She turned to look at the cage Mrs. Peters was holding up. "I've not been here in so long." She sighed. "There was a man round last year selling canaries cheap—but I don't know as she took one. Maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself."

How is Minnie Wright similar to a canary?

Mrs. Peters looked around the kitchen.

"Seems kind of funny to think of a bird here." She half laughed—an attempt to put up a barrier. "But she must have had one—or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it."

"I suppose maybe the cat got it," suggested Mrs. Hale, resuming her sewing.

"No; she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. When they brought her to our house yesterday, my cat got in the room, and she was real upset and asked me to take it out."

Why didn't Minnie like cats?

"My sister Bessie was like that," laughed Mrs. Hale.

The sheriff's wife did not reply. The silence made Mrs. Hale turn around.

Mrs. Peters was examining the birdcage.

broke = broken

"Look at this door," she said slowly. "It's **broke**. One hinge has been pulled apart."

What happened to the cage?

Mrs. Hale came nearer.

"Looks as if someone must have been—rough with it."

What are the women thinking?

Again their eyes met—startled, questioning, **apprehensive**. For a moment neither spoke nor stirred. Then Mrs. Hale, turning away, said **brusquely**:

apprehensive = worried

brusquely = quickly

"If they're going to find any evidence, I wish they'd be about it. I don't like this place."

"But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale." Mrs. Peters put the birdcage on the table and sat down. "It would be lonesome for me—sitting here alone."

Is this the real reason why Mrs. Peters is glad that Mrs. Hale came?

"Yes, it would, wouldn't it?" agreed Mrs. Hale, a certain determined naturalness in her voice. She picked up the sewing, but now it dropped in her lap, and she murmured in a different voice: "But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I wish—had."

"But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale. Your house—and your children."

"I could've come," retorted Mrs. Hale shortly. "I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come. I—" She looked around. "I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I don't know what it is, but it's a lonesome place, and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—" She did not put it into words.

How does Mrs. Hale feel?

"Well, you mustn't **reproach** yourself," counseled Mrs. Peters. "Somehow, we just don't see how it is with other folks till—something comes up."

reproach = blame

"Not having children makes less work," mused Mrs. Hale, after a silence, "but it makes a quiet house—and Wright out to work all day—and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?"

"Not to know him. I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man."

"Yes—good," conceded John Wright's neighbor grimly. "He didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—" She stopped, **shivered** a little. "Like **a raw wind** that gets to the bone." Her eye fell upon the cage on the table before her, and she added, almost bitterly: "I should think she would've wanted a bird!"

shivered = shook with cold

a raw wind = an icy wind

What kind of a life did Minnie Wright have?

Suddenly she leaned forward, looking intently at the cage. "But what do you s'pose went wrong with it?"

"I don't know," returned Mrs. Peters, "unless it got sick and died."

But after she said it she reached over and swung the broken door. Both women watched it as if somehow held by it.

"You didn't know her?" Mrs. Hale asked, a gentler note in her voice.

"Not till they brought her yesterday," said the sheriff's wife.

"She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself. Real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid

and—and fluttery. How—she—did—change."

That held her for a long time. Finally, as if struck with a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things, she exclaimed, "Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind."

What does Mrs. Hale suggest?

"Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale," agreed the sheriff's wife, as if she, too, were glad to come into the atmosphere of a simple kindness. "There couldn't possibly be any objection to that, could there? Now, just what will I take? I wonder if her **patches** are in here—and her things."

patches = quilt squares (cloth)

I'll warrant = I'm sure

They turned to the sewing basket.

"Here's some red," said Mrs. Hale, bringing out a roll of cloth. Underneath that was a box. "Here, maybe her scissors are in here—and her things." She held it up. "What a pretty box! **I'll warrant** that was something she had a long time ago—when she was a girl."

She held it in her hand a moment; then, with a little sigh, opened it.

Instantly her hand went to her nose.

"Why—!"

Mrs. Peters drew nearer—then turned away.

"There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk," **faltered** Mrs. Hale.

faltered = spoke uncertainly

"This isn't her scissors," said Mrs. Peters in a shrinking voice.

Her hand not steady, Mrs. Hale raised the piece of silk. "Oh, Mrs. Peters!" she cried "It's—"

Mrs. Peters bent closer.

"It's the bird," she whispered.

"But, Mrs. Peters! cried Mrs. Hale. "*Look* at it! It's neck—look at it's neck! It's all—other side *to*."

She held the box away from her. The sheriff's wife again bent closer.

"Somebody **wrung** its neck," said she, in a voice that was slow and deep.

And then again the eyes of the two women met—this time clung together in a look of **dawning comprehension**, of growing horror. Mrs. Peters looked from the dead bird to the broken door of the cage. Again their eyes met. And just then there was a sound at the outside door.

Mrs. Hale slipped the box under the quilt pieces in the basket, and sank into the chair before it. Mrs. Peters stood holding to the table. The county attorney and the sheriff came in from outside.

wrung = twisted and broke

dawning comprehension = gradual understanding

What are the women thinking?

"Well, ladies," said the county attorney, as one turning from serious things to **little pleasantries**, "have you decided whether she was going to quilt or knot it?"

"We think," began the sheriff's wife in a **flurried** voice, "that she was going to—knot it."

He was too **preoccupied** to notice the change that came in her voice on that last.

"Well, that's very interesting, I'm sure," he said tolerantly. He caught sign of the birdcage. "Has the bird flown?"

"We think the cat got it," said Mrs. Hale in a voice curiously even.

He was walking up and down, as if thinking something out.

little pleasantries = ways of being polite

flurried = confused

preoccupied = busy with his own thoughts

Mrs. Hale knows there was no cat, so why does she talk about a cat?

"Is there a cat?" he asked absently.

Mrs. Hale shot a look up at the sheriff's wife.

"Well, not *now*," said Mrs. Peters. "They're **superstitious**, you know; they leave." She sank into her chair.

The county attorney **did not heed her**. "No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside," he said to Peters, in the manner of continuing an interrupted conversation. "Their own rope. Now let's go upstairs again and go over it, piece by piece. It would have to have been someone who knew just the—"

superstitious = believing in magical beliefs (such as ghosts)

What have the women decided?

did not heed her = didn't pay any attention to her; ignored her

The stair door closed behind them, and their voices were lost.

The two women sat motionless, not looking at each other, but as if **peering into** something and at the same time holding back. When they spoke now it was as if they were afraid of what they were saying, but as if they could not help saying it.

"She liked the bird," said Martha Hale, low and slowly. "She was going to bury it in that pretty box."

peering into = looking deeply into

"When I was a girl," said Mrs. Peters, under her breath, "my kitten—there was a boy who took a **hatchet**, and before my eyes—before I could get there—" She covered her face an instant. "If they hadn't held me back I would have—" She caught herself, looked upstairs where footsteps were heard, and finished weakly—"hurt him."

hatchet = small ax; wood-cutting tool

Are the men listening to what the women are saying?

What does Mrs. Peters really mean to say? Why is this important?

Then they sat without speaking or moving.

"I wonder how it would seem," Mrs. Hale at last began, as if feeling her way over strange ground, "never to have had any children around?" Her eyes made a slow sweep of the kitchen, as if seeing what that kitchen had meant through the years. "No, Wright wouldn't like the bird," she said after that— "a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too." Her voice tightened. Mrs. Peters moved uneasily.

"Of course we don't know who killed the bird."

"I knew John Wright," was Mrs. Hale's answer.

"It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale," said the sheriff's wife. "Killing a man while he slept—slipping a thing around his neck that choked the life out of him."

Mrs. Hale's hand went out to the birdcage.

"His neck. Choked the life out of him."

"We don't know who killed him," whispered Mrs. Peters wildly. "We don't know."

Mrs. Hale had not moved. "If there had been years and years of—nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still—after the bird was still."

Why do the women sit without speaking or moving?

What is the connection between Minnie Wright and the bird?

It was as if something within her not herself had spoken, and it found in Mrs. Peters something she did not know as herself.

"I know what stillness is," she said, in a queer, monotonous voice. "When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old—and me with no other then—"

Mrs. Hale **stirred**.

"How soon do you suppose they'll be through looking for evidence?"

What is happening to the two women?

stirred = moved

"I know what stillness is," repeated Mrs. Peters, in just that same way. Then she pulled back. "The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale," she said in her tight little way.

"I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster," was the answer, "when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons, and stood up there in the choir and sang."

The picture of that girl, the fact that she had lived neighbor to that girl for twenty years, and had let her die for lack of life, was suddenly more than she could bear.

"Oh, I wish I'd come over here once in a while!" she cried. "That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?"

What is happening to Mrs. Peters?

"**We mustn't take on**," said Mrs. Peters, with a frightened look toward the stairs.

"I might 'a' known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together, and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing! If it weren't—why do you and I understand? Why do we know—what we know this minute?

we mustn't take on = we should not blame ourselves

What does Mrs. Hale mean, "We live close together and we live far apart"?

She dashed her hand across her eyes. Then, seeing the jar of fruit on the table, she reached for it and choked out:

"If I was you, I wouldn't tell her her fruit was gone! Tell her it ain't. Tell her it's all right—all of it. Here—

Why shouldn't Mrs. Peters tell Minnie about the fruit?

take this in to prove it to her! She—she may never know whether it was broke or not."

She turned away.

Mrs. Peters reached out for the bottle of fruit as if she were glad to take it—as if touching a familiar thing, having something to do, could keep her from something else. She got up, looked about for something to wrap the fruit in, took a **petticoat** from the pile of clothes she had brought from the front room, and nervously started winding that round the bottle.

petticoat = underskirt

"My!" she began, in a high, false voice, "It's a good thing the men couldn't hear us! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary." She hurried over that. "As if that could have anything to do with—with—My, wouldn't they laugh?"

Why is Mrs. Peters' voice high and false?

Footsteps were heard on the stairs.

"Maybe they would," muttered Mrs. Hale—"maybe they wouldn't."

"No, Peters," said the county attorney incisively; "it's all perfectly clear, except the reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing—something to show. Something to make a story about. A thing that would connect up with this clumsy way of doing it."

What have the men not discovered?

In a **covert** way Mrs. Hale looked at Mrs. Peters. Mrs. Peters was looking at her. Quickly they looked away from each other. The outer door opened and Mr. Hale came in.

covert = secret, hidden

What are the women thinking?

"I've got **the team** round now," he said. "Pretty cold out there."

the team = the horses

"I'm going to stay here awhile by myself," the county attorney suddenly announced. "You can send Frank out for me, can't you?" he asked the sheriff. "I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied we can't do better."

Why don't the women talk?

Again, for one brief moment, the two women's eyes found one another.

The sheriff came up to the table.

"Did you want to see what Mrs. Peters was going to take in?"

The county attorney picked up the apron. He laughed. "Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies picked out."

Mrs. Hale's hand was on the sewing basket in which the box was concealed. She felt that she ought to take her hand off the basket. She did not seem able to. He picked up one of the quilt blocks which she had piled on to cover the box. Her eyes felt like fire. She had a feeling that if he took up the basket she would snatch it from him.

But he did not take it up. With another little laugh, he turned away, saying, "No—Mrs. Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs. Peters?"

Why is the county attorney laughing?

Mrs. Peters was standing beside the table. Mrs. Hale shot a look up at her, but she could not see her face. Mrs. Peters had turned away. When she spoke, her voice was **muffled**.

"Not—just that way," she said.

"Married to the law!" chuckled Mrs. Peters' husband. He moved toward the door into the front room, and said to the county attorney, "I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows."

"Oh—windows," said the county attorney **scoffingly**.

"We'll be right out, Mr. Hale," said the sheriff to the farmer, who was still waiting by the door.

Hale went to look after the horses. The sheriff followed the county attorney into the other room. Again—for one moment—the two women were alone in that kitchen.

Martha Hale sprang up, her hands tight together, looking at that other woman, with whom it rested. At first she could not see her eyes, for the sheriff's wife had not turned back since she turned away at that suggestion of being married to the law. But now

How does Mrs. Peters feel?

muffled = softened; made quiet and unclear

scoffingly = disagreeably; making fun of the idea

Why doesn't the county attorney want to look at the windows?

Mrs. Hale made her turn back. Her eyes made her turn back. Slowly, unwillingly, Mrs. Peters turned her head until her eyes met the eyes of the other woman. There was a moment when they held each other in a steady, burning look in which there was no evasion nor **flinching**. Then Martha Hale's eyes pointed the way to the basket in which was hidden the thing that would make certain the **conviction** of the other woman—that woman who wasn't there and yet who had been there with them all through the hour.

flinching = movement

conviction = finding guilty

What are the women saying to each other at this moment?

For a moment Mrs. Peters did not move. And then she did it. With a rush forward, she threw back the quilt pieces, got the box, tried to put it in her handbag. It was too big. Desperately she opened it, started to take the bird out. But there **she broke**—she could not touch the bird. She stood helpless, foolish.

There was the sound of a knob turning in the inner door. Martha Hale **snatched** the box from the sheriff's wife and got it in the pocket of her big coat just as the sheriff and the county attorney came back into the kitchen.

she broke = she lost her courage

snatched = took away very quickly

Why does Mrs. Hale snatch the box?

"Well, Henry," said the county attorney **facetiously**, "at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is you call it, ladies?"

Mrs. Hale's hand was against the pocket of her coat.

"We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson."

facetiously = in a funny or humorous way

How does the county attorney talk to the women?

Let's think about it

Below are six questions. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Select one person in your group as secretary to take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answers.

List of questions

1. The writer has made many comparisons between Minnie Foster Wright and a caged bird. What are these similarities? Do you think that such a comparison is accurate and believable? Why or why not?
2. The Sheriff and the County Attorney have brought the two women along for two reasons: to gather and take some of Minnie's personal belongings to her in jail and to help them look for evidence. Why couldn't the men pick up Minnie's belongings? Why don't the men ever ask the two women if they have found any evidence?
3. When do the two women finally decide that they will not share the evidence they discovered with the men? How and why do they reach this decision?
4. The story, *A Jury of Her Peers*, shows us that men and women in the early twentieth century in the rural areas of the United States lived in two different cultures. How does the author show us this situation? Do men and women still live in different cultures today? Why or why not?
5. Do you think that *A Jury of Her Peers* is a good name for this story? Why or why not?
6. Throughout the story, Mrs. Hale seems to feel very guilty. Why does she feel this way? Do you think that her feelings are justified? Why or why not?

The act of murder

A biblical commandment tells us not to kill. Is murdering another human being always an unforgivable wrong? Is taking another person's life ever justifiable? Write down your thoughts on this question and then share your ideas with one or two classmates. Later tell the entire class whether or not you and your classmates agree or disagree on this subject, and do the following activities.

Defining the act

There are many words that mean "the taking of a human life." The following is a list of some of the terms we use:

List of terms

suicide: a person takes his or her own life
assisted suicide: someone helps a person to take his or her own life
justifiable homicide: someone kills in self-defense
manslaughter: accidentally killing someone
second degree murder: killing someone without premeditation
first degree murder: killing someone after making plans to do so

In which of the above categories would you place Minnie Wright's deed? Your teacher will write the above categories as column headings on the board. Write your ideas under the category that you most agree with. Be prepared to explain why you have made your decision.

Types of crime

Together with three to five classmates, talk about different kinds of crime and punishment. How should each of the crimes listed above be punished? Do you think that men and women should be given the same punishment for the same crime? Report your conclusions to the class.

Journal writing: Capital punishment

Many countries today do not have capital punishment (execution of a criminal). How do you feel about such punishment? Write a paragraph or two explaining your opinion.

Before you read the play: Going to plays and movies

Which do you like?

In groups of three, talk about the following questions. Let everyone in your group have a chance to share their thoughts.

List of questions

1. Do you like going to the theater when the play is in your own language? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever seen a play in English? If you have, tell your classmates about it. If you haven't, tell your classmates about a play you would like to see.
3. Do you like going to the movies? Why or why not?
4. What do you enjoy more—a live play or a movie? Explain.

A play versus a story

A playwright writes differently from a story teller because a play is supposed to be seen and to happen just as the audience looks at it. Make a list of all the ways in which a play is different from a story. Think of what is being left out in a play and how the playwright compensates for what is left out. When you have finished your list, compare your ideas with those of other classmates. Make note if your ideas are realized in the play, *Trifles*.

Reading the play *Trifles*

The men in the play talk down to the women almost as if the women were small children. They are convinced that it is men who do all the serious and important work in the world. The women's work is just silly little unimportant things, otherwise known as trifles. As you read the play, think about all the things that the men and women do.

Trifles

The Play

*(The kitchen in the now abandoned farmhouse of John Wright, a **gloomy** kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the breadbox, a dish towel on the table—other signs of incomplete work. At the **rear** the outer door opens and three men enter. The Sheriff and Hale are men in middle life, the County Attorney is a young man; all are much **bundled up** and go at once to the stove. They are followed by two women—the Sheriff's wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face. Mrs. Hale is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door.)*

gloomy = sad looking

What are the signs that the kitchen is not orderly?

rear = back

bundled up = dressed for the cold

How are the two women different?

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(Rubbing his hands.)* This feels good. Come to the fire, ladies.

What is Mr. Hale supposed to do?

MRS. PETERS: *(After taking a step forward.)* I'm not—cold.

SHERIFF: *(Unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove as if to mark the beginning of official business.)* Now, Mr. Hale, before we move things about, you explain to Mr. Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: By the way, has anything been moved? Are things just as you left them yesterday?

SHERIFF: *(Looking about.)* It's just the same. When it dropped below zero last night, I thought I'd better send Frank out this morning to make a fire for us—no use getting pneumonia with a big case on, but I told him not to touch anything except the stove—and you know Frank.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Somebody should have been left here yesterday.

Why didn't the sheriff come the previous day?

SHERIFF: Oh—yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy—I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday—I knew

you could get back from Omaha by today and as long as I went over everything here myself—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, Mr. Hale, tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning.

HALE: Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place and as I got here I said, "I'm going to see if I can't get John Wright to go in with me on a **party telephone**." I spoke to Wright about it once before and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—

Who is Harry?

party telephone = a telephone line shared by two people or two families. This arrangement makes it cheaper to have a telephone.

What did Mr. Hale know about the Wrights' marriage?

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Let's talk about that later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.

A scene from the film *A Jury of Her Peers.*

HALE: I didn't hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up; it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say "Come in." I wasn't sure, I'm not sure yet, but I opened the door—this door *(indicating the door by which the two women are still standing)* and there in that rocker—*(pointing to it)* sat Mrs. Wright. *(They all look at the rocker.)*

What did Mr. Hale see when he entered the Wrights' house?

COUNTY ATTORNEY: What—was she doing?

HALE: She was rockin' back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of—pleating it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How did she—look?

HALE: Well, she looked queer.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How do you mean—queer?

done up = looking sick

HALE: Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of **done up**.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How did she seem to feel about your coming?

HALE: Why, I don't think she minded—one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said, "How do, Mrs. Wright? It's cold, ain't it!" And she said, "Is it?"—and went on kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to **set** down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, "I want to see John." And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp, "Can't I see John?" "No," she says, kind o' dull like. "Ain't he home?" says I. "Yes," says she, "He's home." "Then why can't I see him?" I asked her, out of patience. "Cause he's dead," says she. *"Dead?"* says I. She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin' back and forth. "Why—where is he?" says I, not knowing what to say. She pointed upstairs—like that *(Himself pointing to the room above)*. I got up, with the idea of going up there. I walked from there to here—then I says, "Why, what did he die of?" "He died of a rope round his neck," says she, and just went on pleatin' at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—

What makes Mrs. Wright's behavior seem so strange?

set = sit

need help. We went upstairs and there he was lyin'—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.

Finish Mr. Hale's sentence, "It looked . . ."

unconcerned = as if she didn't care

HALE: Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked . . . *(He stops, his face twitches.)* But Harry, he went up to him, and he said, "No, he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything." So we went back down stairs. She was still sitting that same way. "Has anybody been notified?" I asked. "No," says she, **unconcerned**. "Who did this, Mrs. Wright?" said Harry. He said it businesslike—and she stopped pleatin' of her apron. "I don't know," she says. "You don't *know?*" says Harry. "No," says she.

What seems impossible?

coroner = public official, usually a doctor, who determines the cause of death

"Weren't you sleepin' in the bed with him?" says Harry. "Yes," says she, "but I was on the inside." "Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn't wake up?" says Harry. "I didn't wake up," she said after him. We must 'a looked as if we didn't see how that could be, for after a minute she said, "I sleep sound." Harry was going to ask her more questions but I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the **coroner**, or the sheriff, so Harry went fast as he could to Rivers' place, where there's a telephone.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And what did Mrs. Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner?

Why had Mr. Hale stopped at the Wrights' house?

dunno = don't know

HALE: She moved from that chair to this one over here *(pointing to a small chair in the corner)* and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me—scared. *(The County Attorney, who has had his notebook out, makes a note.)* I **dunno**, maybe it wasn't scared. I wouldn't like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr. Lloyd came, and you, Mr. Peters, and so I guess that's all I know that you don't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(Looking around.)* I guess we'll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around there. *(To the Sheriff)* You're convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive?

What are the men looking for?

SHERIFF: Nothing here but kitchen things. *(The County Attorney, after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Here's a nice mess. *(The women draw nearer.)*

MRS. PETERS: *(To the other woman.)* Oh, **her fruit**; it did freeze. *(To the County Attorney)* She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.

her fruit = the fruit she had made into jam

What is Mrs. Wright worried about?

SHERIFF: Well, **can you beat the woman**? Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves.

can you beat the woman = can you think of anything stranger than the woman

preserves = jam

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than **preserves** to worry about.

How does Mr. Hale feel about the worries of women?

HALE: Well, women are used to worrying over trifles.

(The two women move a little closer together.)

Why do the women move closer together?

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(With the **gallantry** of a young politician.)* And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies? *(The women do not unbend. He goes to the sink, takes a dipperful of water from the pail and pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. Starts to wipe them on the roller towel, turns it for a cleaner place.)* Dirty towels! *(Kicks his foot against the pans under the sink.)* Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?

gallantry = politeness

What does Mrs. Hale understand that the County Attorney does not?

How does the County Attorney try to make Mrs. Hale feel good?

Whose hands were "washed" and still left dirt on the towel?

Why does the County Attorney think Mrs. Wright was a bad housekeeper?

MRS. HALE: *(Stiffly.)* There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: To be sure. And yet *(with a little bow to her)* I know there are some Dickson country farmhouses which do not have such roller towels.

(He gives it a pull to expose its full length again.)

MRS. HALE: Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Ah, **loyal to your sex**, I see. But you and Mrs. Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too.

loyal to your sex = defending another woman

How long has it been since Mrs. Hale visited Mrs. Wright?

Why didn't Mrs. Hale visit more often?

MRS. HALE: *(Shaking her head.)* I've not seen much of her of late years. I've not been in this house—it's more than a year.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And why was that? You didn't like her?

MRS. HALE: I liked her all well enough. Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr. Henderson. And then—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes—?

MRS. HALE: *(Looking about.)* It never seemed a very cheerful place.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct.

Who does the County Attorney blame for the uncheerful house?

What does Mrs. Hale mean when she responds, "I don't know as Wright had, either"?

How does Mrs. Hale feel about Mr. Wright?

MRS. HALE: Well, I don't know as Wright had, either.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: You mean that they didn't get on very well?

MRS. HALE: No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any cheerfuller for John Wright's being in it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'd like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now.

(He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door.)

SHERIFF: I suppose anything Mrs. Peters does'll be all right. She was to take in some clothes for her, you know, and a few **little things**. We left in such a hurry yesterday.

little things = comb, brush, soap, and other personal items

What is Mrs. Peters supposed to do?

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs. Peters, and keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.

MRS. PETERS: Yes, Mr. Henderson.

(The women listen to the men's steps on the stairs, then look about the kitchen.)

MRS. HALE: I'd hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around and criticizing.

(She arranges the pans under sink which the County

Attorney had shoved out of place.)

How did the towel get dirty?

MRS. PETERS: Of course, it's no more than their duty.

MRS. HALE: Duty's all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make the fire might have got a little of this on. *(Gives the roller towel a pull.)* Wish I'd thought of that sooner. Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up when she had to come away in such a hurry.

MRS. PETERS: *(Who has gone to a small table in the left rear corner of the room, and lifted one end of a towel that covers a pan.)* She had bread set. *(Stands still.)*

MRS. HALE: *(Eyes fixed on a loaf of bread beside the breadbox, which is on a low shelf at the other side of the room. Moves slowly toward it.)* She was going to put this in there. *(Picks up loaf, then abruptly drops it. In a manner of returning to familiar things.)* It's a shame about her fruit. I wonder if it's all gone. *(Gets up on the chair and looks.)* I think there's some here that's all right, Mrs. Peters. Yes—here. *(Holding it toward the window.)* This is cherries, too. She'll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer. *(She puts the bottle on the big kitchen table, center of the room. With a* ***sigh****, she is about to sit down in the rocking-chair. Before she is seated, she remembers her job.)*

What has happened to Mrs. Wright's fruit?

sigh = a long, deep breath

Wright was close = Wright was stingy; he didn't like to spend money.

Ladies Aid = a society of women that does good things for the community

MRS. PETERS: Well, I must get those things from the front room closet. *(She goes to the door at the right, but after looking into the other room, steps back.)* You coming with me, Mrs. Hale? You could help me carry them.

(They go in the other room; reappear, Mrs. Peters carrying a dress and skirt, Mrs. Hale following with a pair of shoes.)

MRS. PETERS: My, it's cold in there. *(She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove.)*

MRS. HALE: *(Examining the skirt.)* **Wright was close**. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the **Ladies Aid**. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to

wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in?

Do you think Minnie Foster has always been happy?

MRS. PETERS: She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn't much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door. *(Opens stair door and looks.)* Yes, here it is.

(Quickly shuts door leading upstairs.)

MRS. HALE: *(Abruptly moving toward her.)* Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS: Yes, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE: Do you think she did it?

MRS. PETERS: *(In a frightening voice.)* Oh, I don't know.

Why does Minnie Wright want her apron?

MRS. HALE: Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit.

MRS. PETERS: *(Starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above. In a low voice.)* Mr. Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr. Henderson is awful **sarcastic** in a speech and he'll make fun of her sayin' she didn't wake up.

MRS. HALE: Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake when they was slipping that rope under his neck.

MRS. PETERS: No, it's strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was such a **funny** way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that.

Why doesn't Mrs. Hale believe that Minnie Wright is guilty?

sarcastic = humorous in a mean and nasty way

funny = strange

MRS. HALE: That's just what Mr. Hale said. There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand.

MRS. PETERS: Mr. Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a **motive**; something to show anger, or—sudden feeling.

MRS. HALE: *(Who is standing by the table.)* Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here. *(She puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at the table, one half of which is clean,*

Why does "a gun in the house" make the situation difficult to understand?

motive = reason

the other half messy.) It's wiped to here. *(Makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at the loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel. In that voice of coming back to familiar things.)* Wonder how they are finding things upstairs. I hope she had it a little more **red-up** there. You know, it seems kind of **sneaking**. Locking her up in town and then coming out here to get her own house to turn against her.

red-up = tidy

sneaking = unfair

Why does Mrs. Hale think that the investigation is unfair?

MRS. PETERS: But Mrs. Hale, the law is the law.

MRS. HALE: **I s'pose 'tis**. *(Unbuttoning her coat.)* Better loosen up your things, Mrs. Peters. You won't feel them when you go out. *(Mrs. Peters takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on a hook at back of room, stands looking at the under part of the small corner table.)*

I s'pose 'tis = I suppose it is

piecing a quilt = making small squares that will be sewn together to make a decorative blanket.

abashed = ashamed; embarrassed; uneasy

MRS. PETERS: She was **piecing a quilt**.

(She brings the large sewing basket and they look at the bright pieces.)

MRS. HALE: It's log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn't it? I wonder if she was goin' to quilt it or just knot it?

(Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs. The Sheriff enters followed by Hale and the County Attorney.)

SHERIFF: They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it!

*(The men laugh; the women look **abashed**.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(Rubbing his hands over the stove.)* Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up. *(The men go outside.)*

Frank's fire didn't warm up a cold house. Would any other fire have an effect? Why or why not?

I don't know as = I don't think

MRS. HALE: *(Resentfully.)* **I don't know as** there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. *(She sits down at the big table, smoothing out a block with decision.)* I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

MRS. PETERS: *(Apologetically.)* Of course they've got awful important things on their minds.

(Pulls up a chair and joins Mrs. Hale at the table.)

MRS. HALE: *(Examining another block.)* Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about! *(After she has said this they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant Mrs. Hale has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.)*

MRS. PETERS: Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE: *(Mildly.)* Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. *(Threading a needle.)* Bad sewing always made me **fidgety**.

MRS. PETERS: *(Nervously.)* I don't think we ought to touch things.

Why do you think the sewing is suddenly so bad?

fidgety = nervous; uncomfortable

What is Mrs. Peters afraid of?

MRS. HALE: I'll just finish up this end. *(Suddenly stopping and leaning forward.)* Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS: Yes, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE: What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS. PETERS: Oh—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. *(Mrs. Hale starts to say something, looks at Mrs. Peters, then goes on sewing.)* Well, I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think. *(Putting apron and others things together.)* I wonder where I can find a piece of paper and string.

MRS. HALE: In that cupboard, maybe.

MRS. PETERS: *(Looking in cupboard.)* Why, here's, a birdcage. *(Holds it up.)* Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?

What do you think Mrs. Peters has at this moment decided?

Why does Mrs. Hale suddenly look at Mrs. Peters?

What have the two women said to each other through the language of their eyes?

MRS. HALE: Why, I don't know whether she did or not—I've not been here for so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I **don't know as** she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.

MRS. PETERS: *(Glancing around.)* Seems funny to think

don't know as = don't know if

of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it.

MRS. HALE: I s'pose maybe the cat got it.

MRS. PETERS: No, she didn't have a cat. She'd got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.

MRS. HALE: My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it?

What is so queer? Correct Mrs. Hale's English in this sentence.

MRS. PETERS: *(Examining the cage.)* Why, look at this door. It's **broke**. One hinge is pulled apart.

broke = broken

MRS. HALE: *(Looking too.)* Looks as if someone must have been rough with it.

MRS. PETERS: Why, yes.

(She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table.)

MRS. HALE: I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd **be about it**. I don't like this place.

be about it = hurry and do it

How does Mrs. Hale feel? Is she right in feeling this way?

MRS. PETERS: But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS. HALE: It would, wouldn't it? *(Dropping her sewing.)* But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I—*(looking around the room)* wish I had.

MRS. PETERS: But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale—your house and your children.

MRS. HALE: I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come. I—I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is, but it's a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—*(Shakes her head.)*

MRS. PETERS: Well, you mustn't **reproach** yourself, Mrs. Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until—something comes up.

reproach = blame

MRS. HALE: Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?

How does John Wright seem good? How was John Wright not a good person?

MRS. PETERS: Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

raw wind = icy wind

would 'a = would have

went wrong with it = happened to it

MRS. HALE: Yes—good. He didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—*(Shivers.)* like a **raw wind** that gets to the bone. *(Pauses, her eye falling on the cage.)* I should think she **would 'a** wanted a bird. But what do you suppose **went wrong with it**?

What kind of a man was Wright? What would it be like to live with him?

MRS. PETERS: I don't know, unless it got sick and died. *(She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again. Both women watch it.)*

MRS. HALE: You weren't raised round here, were you? *(Mrs. Peters shakes her head.)* You didn't know—her?

MRS. PETERS: Not till they brought her yesterday.

MRS. HALE: She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change. *(Silence; then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to every day things.)* Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

What kind of a woman was Minnie Foster? Why do you think she changed?

MRS. PETERS: Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale. There couldn't possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here—and **her things**. *(They look in the sewing basket.)*

her things = her scissors, cloth, needles, and thread

red = red cloth

What do you think could be in the box?

MRS. HALE: Here's some **red**. I expect this has got sewing things in it. *(Brings out a fancy box.)* What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors are in here. *(Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose.)* Why—*(Mrs. Peters bends near, then turns her face away.)* There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

MRS. PETERS: Why, this isn't her scissors.

MRS. HALE: *(Lifting the silk.)* Oh, Mrs. Peters—it's

(Mrs. Peters bends closer.)

MRS. PETERS: It's the bird.

MRS. HALE: *(Jumping up.)* But, Mrs. Peters—look at it! Its neck! Look at its neck! It's all—other side to.

MRS. PETERS: Somebody—**wrung**—its—neck. *(Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension, of horror. Steps are heard outside. Mrs. Hale slips the box under the quilt pieces and sinks into her chair. Enter Sheriff and County Attorney. Mrs. Peters rises.)*

wrung = twisted and broke

What do you think really happened at the farm house?

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(As one turning from serious things to little pleasantries.)* Well, ladies, have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?

MRS. PETERS: We think she was going to—knot it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, that's interesting, I'm sure. *(Seeing the birdcage.)* Has the bird flown?

MRS. HALE: *(Putting more quilt pieces over the box.)* We think the—cat got it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(Preoccupied.)* Is there a cat?

(Mrs. Hale glances in quick covert way at Mrs. Peters.)

MRS. PETERS: Well, not now. They're **superstitious**, you know. They leave.

What could be the meaning of the sentence, "Has the bird flown?"

superstitious = believing in unnatural happenings or magic

Why do the women say the things about a cat?

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(To Sheriff, continuing an interrupted conversation.)* No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go up again and go over it piece by piece. *(They start upstairs.)* It would have to have been someone who knew just the—

(Mrs. Peters sits down. The two women sit there not looking at each other, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now, it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they can not help saying it.)

MRS. HALE: She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

Finish the County Attorney's sentence, "It would have to have been someone who knew just the—"

Why are the women afraid?

MRS. PETERS: *(In a whisper.)* When I was a girl—my kitten—there was a boy who took a hatchet, and before my eyes—and before I could get there—*(Covers her face* ***an instant****.)* If they hadn't held me back I would have—*(catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly)* hurt him.

What is Mrs. Peters afraid to say? Does she understand what Minnie experienced?

an instant = quickly; for not very long

What does Mrs. Hale think happened?

MRS. HALE: *(With a slow look around here.)* I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around. *(Pause.)* No, Wright wouldn't like the bird—a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

MRS. PETERS: *(Moving uneasily.)* We don't know who killed the bird.

MRS. HALE: I knew John Wright.

MRS. PETERS: It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

MRS. HALE: His neck. Choked the life out of him. *(Her hands go out and rest on the birdcage.)*

MRS. PETERS: *(With rising voice.)* We don't know who killed him. We don't know.

MRS. HALE: *(Her own feeling not interrupted.)* If there'd been years and years of nothing than a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still—after the bird was still.

homesteaded = had a little farm on new land (homesteaders had a hard life)

Why does Mrs. Peters understand the situation?

MRS. PETERS: *(Something within her speaking.)* I know what stillness is. When we **homesteaded** in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then—

be through = be finished

Why is Mrs. Peters confused?

MRS. HALE: *(Moving.)* How soon do you suppose they'll **be through**, looking for the evidence?

MRS. PETERS: I know what stillness is. *(Pulling herself back.)* The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale.

MRS. HALE: *(Not as if answering that.)* I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. *(A look around the room.)* Oh, I wish I'd come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?

MRS. PETERS: *(Looking upstairs.)* We mustn't—take on.

Why does Mrs. Hale feel guilty?

MRS. HALE: I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together, and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing. *(Brushes her eyes; noticing the bottle of fruit, reaches out for it.)* If I was you, I wouldn't tell her her fruit was gone. Tell her it ain't. Tell her it's all right. Take this in to provide it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not.

MRS. PETERS: *(Takes the bottle, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the bottle. In a false voice.)* My, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with—with—wouldn't they laugh!

What has Mrs. Peters decided?

(The men are heard coming down stairs.)

MRS. HALE: *(Under her breath.)* Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No, Peters, it's all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know **juries** when it comes to women. If there was some definite things. Something to show—something to make a story about—a thing that would connect up with this strange way of doing it—

juries = groups of twelve people in a courtroom who decide whether someone is guilty or innocent

What worries the County Attorney?

(The women's eyes meet for an instant. Enter Hale from outer door.)

HALE: Well, I've got the **team** around. Pretty cold out there.

team = horses

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'm going to stay here a while by myself. *(To the Sheriff.)* You can send Frank out for me, can't you? I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied that we can't do better.

SHERIFF: Do you want to see what Mrs. Peters is going to take in? *(The County Attorney goes to the table, picks up the apron, laughs.)*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out. *(Moves a few things about, disturbing the quilt pieces which cover the box. Steps back.)* No, Mrs. Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs. Peters?

How does the County Attorney feel about the women?

How does Mrs. Peters feel?

MRS. PETERS: Not—just that way.

SHERIFF: *(Chuckling.)* Married to the law. *(Moves toward the other room.)* I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: *(Scoffingly.)* Oh, windows!

SHERIFF: We'll be right out, Mr. Hale.

*(Hale goes outside. The Sheriff follows the County Attorney into the other room. Then Mrs. Hale rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at Mrs. Peters, whose eyes make a slow turn, finally meeting Mrs. Hale's. A moment Mrs. Hales holds hers, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed. Suddenly Mrs. Peters throws back the quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is carrying. It is too big. She opens the box, starts to take the bird out, cannot touch it, **goes to pieces**, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room. Mrs. Hale snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter County Attorney and Sheriff.)*

goes to pieces = gets very upset and starts to cry

How is tension created in this scene?

How would this scene be shown in a film?

COUNTY ATTORNEY: ***(Facetiously.)*** Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies?

facetiously = in a humorous way; with ridicule

Why do the women have the last line in the play? What have they "knotted"?

MRS. HALE: *(Her hand against her pocket.)* We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson.

A scene from the film *A Jury of her Peers.*

Let's think about it

Here are seven questions. In groups of three to five, discuss your answers to these questions. Choose one question to report to the class. Select one person in your group as secretary to take notes for the report. Listen to the reactions the class has to your group's answers.

List of questions

1. What aspect of the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Hale that was described in the story is left out in the play? Do you think that Susan Glaspell could have shown this aspect of the relationship on stage? Why or why not?
2. What do we learn about the relationship of Minnie Foster Wright and John Wright? How and when do we learn these things?
3. "Nothing here but kitchen things." Who says this line? When and Why? What does this line tell us about the attitudes displayed in the play?
4. "And yet for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies?" Who says this line? When and why? The person who says it is trying to be nice. Why isn't this statement (or question) about women kind?

5. Mrs. Peters appears to switch loyalties somewhere in the play. How and why does this change in her attitude happen?
6. The County Attorney tells Mrs. Peters that she is "married to the law." What is he implying? Is he right or wrong about Mrs. Peters?
7. Minnie's husband's name is John Wright. Why do you think that Susan Glaspell has chosen this name for him?

Imagining scenes

There are many scenes in this play that are left to the imagination. For example, we never see the scenes in the following list:

List of scenes to imagine

How the murder actually happened and what caused it
What kind of a young woman Minnie Foster was before she married John Wright
Why Minnie Foster decided to marry John Wright
What Minnie's daily life was after she married John
Why John and Minnie didn't have children

In small groups, pretend that you have been assigned the job of making a movie from the play *Trifles*. You are told to include at least one of the scenes listed above. Do the following steps:

1. Choose one scene.
2. Decide where and how it will be incorporated into the film-script.
3. Decide what will be happening in the scene.
4. Write the dialogue that will be spoken in the scene.
5. Decide what music will be played in the film.
6. Decide on the camera angles—when to use close-ups (when the camera focuses on only the face of one single person) and when to use wide-angle shots.
7. Finally, present your scene to the rest of the class. You can tell about the scene and perhaps act part of it out.

Working with language

Mr. Hale describes Minnie Wright as looking "kind of queer." The word "queer" means "strange" or "unusual." Using a dictionary or a thesaurus, find as many words as you can that carry such a meaning. Then, with the help of your teacher, make sentences with these words.

Working with the video

The play *Trifles* was made into a film production called *A Jury of Her Peers,* distributed by Public Media Films Incorporated. It was produced and directed by Sally Heckel.

Diane De Lorian plays Mrs. Hale, and Dorothy Lancaster plays Mrs. Peters. The name of Mr. Wright has been changed to Mr. Burke in the film. The video can be obtained from the following sources:

Public Media Incorporated (PMI)
4411 North Ravenswood
Chicago, Illinois 60640-5802
Phone: (800) 826-3456, ext. 371 or 313

Sally Heckel
Phone: (212) 477-5545
Email: sal@smokey.com

Pre-viewing activity

It is very important for a film maker to consider the opening of his/her film. In small groups, plan the opening of the film *A Jury of Her Peers*. Discuss the following three questions:

List of questions

1. In the opening, what would the viewer see first?
2. What would the viewer hear first?
3. How and when would the titles appear (name of film, names of actors, names of director and producer)?

Below are some of the possibilities of what might appear on the screen. Choose one of the possibilities, or create one of your own. Then appoint a spokesperson to tell the rest of the class how and why you made your choices. Listen to the decisions of other groups.

What would be the first picture we would see on the screen? What would be the first sound we hear? Where would the titles appear?

List of opening pictures

a house
a kitchen
a wagon drawn by horses
a wintry landscape
a birdcage

List of opening sounds

a conversation
music
a canary singing in a cage
water running
a knock on the door

List of title appearances

the opening scene
after the first scene
after the second scene

In-viewing activities

Seeing details

As you watch the film, check the appropriate boxes on the chart below.

1. Which part of Minnie do we see first?	her face	her hands	her dress
2. Mrs. Peters is dressed in . . .	black	blue	grey
3. Mrs. Hale is dressed in . . .	red	blue	black
4. "Women are used to worrying about trifles." Who makes this statement?	the sheriff	the County Attorney	Mr. Hale
5. Burk (his name in the play is "Wright") was a good man because . . .	he didn't drink	he was kind to his wife	he was always friendly
6. "Years and years of nothing." This sentence is about . . .	the police	Mrs. Peters	Minnie Burk

Men's attitudes

Write down the occasions in the film when the men seem to belittle or put down the women.

Meaningful looks

There are several times in the film when Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale do not say anything to each other; instead they exchange meaningful looks. As you watch the film, find one such moment.

Post-viewing activities

Results

In small groups, talk about the results of your in-viewing activities. What do you think the play is saying about society at that time? What meaning does it have in society today? What do you think the women are wanting to say (or thinking) at the times when they give "meaningful looks"?

Role play

Read the last page of the play. Begin with Mrs. Peters' line, "We don't know who killed him. We don't know." In groups of five, take on the parts of Mrs. Hale, Mrs. Peters, Mr. Hale, the Sheriff, and the County Attorney. Practice reading your own role. Then stand up and as a group, act out the scene. Then assume a different role and act out the scene again. Finally, watch this scene again on the video and discuss the following questions as a class:

List of questions

1. How is tension created in this scene?
2. What decisions are made in this scene?
3. What is said about crime and punishment in this scene?
4. Do you think that what happens in this scene is right and moral? Why or why not?

Discussion

In small groups, choose two or three of the questions below to discuss. Share your ideas with the rest of the class.

List of questions

1. The rocking chair in the film is red with a green pillow. Why do you think that the film maker has chosen these colors?
2. Mrs. Hale finds a book of bible songs. In it is a picture of Minnie as a young girl. Why is this moment important to the film?
3. Mr. Burk is defined as "a good man" because he "didn't drink; paid his debts; and kept his word as well as most." What do you think of such a definition? Do you have your own definition of "a good man" and "a good woman"?
4. Why do you think that the film maker decided to change the name "Wright" to "Burk"?
5. Was the film in any way different from the play and the story? How and why?
6. If you had been assigned to make a movie from the play *Trifles* would you have done it differently? How and why?

Further activities

Journal writing: Court trials

Have you ever watched or read about a trial that interested you? What happened in the trial? Write one or two paragraphs about your reaction to the trial and to the justice system as you saw it practiced.

Let's act it out: Role play

Stage a trial for Minnie Wright. Decide who plays the roles in the following list, then read the trial proceedings to begin.

List of roles

Twelve students to serve as a jury
One (or more) student(s) to act as defense attorney(s)
One (or more) student(s) to act as prosecutor(s) (county attorneys)
One (or more) student(s) to act as the court recorder(s)
One (or more) student(s) to act as a judge(s)
One student to act the part of the bailiff
One student to act the part of the defendant—Minnie Wright
Several students to act the part of witnesses either for the defense of for the prosecution

Trial proceedings

1. The Bailiff stands up and declares, "The Court of Dickson County is now in session. Judge Jones presiding. Wright versus Dickson County. All rise."
2. The Judge walks in and takes his/her seat at the front table while everyone in the courtroom stands.
3. Everyone sits down, and the judge asks the prosecution (the county attorney) to present its case. The prosecution makes an opening statement.
4. The defense (the lawyer for Mrs. Wright) makes an opening statement.
5. The prosecution presents its case against Minnie Wright. The attorney calls various witnesses, and the defense lawyer has the right to cross examine all the witnesses.
6. The defense presents its case with witnesses, and the prosecution cross-examines the witnesses.
7. The prosecution makes a final argument.
8. The defense makes its final argument and its final appeal to the jury.
9. The prosecution makes a final appeal to the jury.
10. The jury goes out to deliberate (to decide on the verdict).
11. The jury delivers the verdict—guilty or not guilty.

Gender work

The play *Trifles* shows us that although men and women may live in the same house and even sleep in the same bed, they sometimes occupy very different places in culture. One way the play illustrates this fact is by showing that men and women do different types of work. What occupations are women's and which are men's?

Make a list of occupations. Decide whether each occupation is best done or more frequently done by men or by women or whether the occupation can be done equally well by either men or women. After you have made your decisions, talk to your classmates about choices that you agree on, and explain to one another why you feel the way you do. Find a classmate who disagrees with you, and listen to one another's opinions. You might be convinced to change your mind!

Comparing the story and the play

In small groups, speak about which version of this narrative you liked better: the story *A Jury of Her Peers*, or the play *Trifles*. Discuss the questions from the following list.

List of questions

1. Which version gave you more information?
2. In which version did you feel that the characters were more fully developed?
3. Which version produced more tension?
4. Which version showed you more about the life of the people in an isolated area at the beginning of the twentieth century?

All the World's a Stage: Drama for Communication

Natalie Hess

The tragic romance of *Romeo and Juliet*, the spine-tingling secrets of *Trifles*, a life of illusionary success that ends in the *Death of a Salesman* . . . from embracing triumph to struggling with self-identity, the five well-known plays in *All the World's a Stage* provide a powerful key to learning English! Each chapter presents a world of useful, effective, and worthwhile language strategies that foster genuine, creative communication and explore how drama reflects the world. The chapters feature the following:

- Clear summaries of each play's plot. The summaries serve as reading comprehension passages and as overviews to help students thoroughly understand the pivotal scenes.

- Innovative pre-reading, in-reading, and post-reading activities for each scene. The selected scenes and activities form complete units, so students can get a feel for the entire drama without actually reading the whole play.

- Entertaining video-viewing tasks. *Working with the video* sections encourage students to watch the plays on film, adding a valued listening component and an additional level of interest.

This "stageful" of lively and thought-provoking activities requires minimal preparation time on behalf of the teacher. Use *All the World's a Stage* as a main text in an intermediate reading class or as a supplementary text in conversation classes—it'll shine stage lights on every English learner!

Natalie Hess, Ph.D., associate professor at Northern Arizona University in Yuma, has over thirty years of experience in the teaching of EFL/ESL as well as in teacher education. She has authored and co-authored several ESOL textbooks and teacher resource books, as well as many articles on linguistic, pedagogical, and literary issues. Natalie enjoys exchanging ideas with both colleagues and students. She finds much pleasure and creative energy in the ESOL/EFL classroom.