

Death of a Salesman 1st Reading Assignment

Make a list of at least THREE character traits for at least FOUR characters:

- 1) *Willy*
- 2) *Biff*
- 3) *Linda*
- 4) (*PICKONE*): *Happy, Charley, Bernard, Howard, Ben*

With each character include:

- A Statement of the character trait (X4)
- At least 3 text-citations with page numbers supporting each character trait

Example using Streetcar-

Stanley Kowalski: Character Trait 1: Animalistic attributes/behavior

- 1) “big clumsy fingers” (38)
- 2) “bull... bull”; “making pigs of yourself” (131)
- 3) “describing me as an ape” (112)
- 4) “he grunts” (108)
- 5) “He acts like an animals.. don’t hang back with the brutes” speech (72)

JUST AN FYI about possible character traits ideas for another text (Streetcar):

Stanley

Animalistic; Violent, crude, barbaric, arrogant
Controlling; need to exercise control over others; feels superior to women
Short man syndrome, Napoleonic complex, insecurities
Deliberately cruel; Distrusting
Manly, skilled with hands
Irrational; The appearance of being all-knowing (or smarter than he is)
Sexually abusive; Sarcastic; Paranoid
Realistic; Bluntness; an indignant revealer of the truth
An instigator; The king of the house issues; Ability to see through lies

Stella

Submissive, people pleaser (a need to please)
Controlled by her sexual desires; loves unconditionally
Trapped; in denial; dismissive of Stanley’s offenses
Protective of Blanche, falsely assertive; strong willed
Forgiving; acts stupid for her own survival
devoted to Stan; attracted to physical masculinity
passive; sporadic moments of assertiveness

Blanche

Self-infatuated; conceited
Alcoholic; Trapped; Liar; hypocritical; Flighty; Flirtatious
Inability to distinguish between reality and illusion
Needs to be complimented; (appearance of) materialistic
Shows a fear of aging; Desire to be beautiful; Obsession with cleanliness
Victimized; delusional; A nervousness, eventual insanity
presents an illusion of who she is; a fake; inability to face truth
infatuated with figures of youth; underlying sexual desires
vain, excitable, delicate, fragile (despite fierce temper when confronted)
need to feel sexy; damsel in distress
bossy at times; stuck in the past; presenting the appearance of old Southern morals

Mitch

Insecure about himself; self-conscious; low self-esteem; less than fully masculine
Innocent, naïve, bumbling; sensitive
Lonely; Loyal, moral
Devoted to mother; mama’s boy; caring towards women
Compassionate, gentlemanly
Wants to feel loved and care for someone
Doesn’t want to live in a world of illusions
Linked to Blanche through death experience

Character Bone Structure Activity – STREETCAR

Choose ONE: Stanley, Blanche, Stella, Mitch

These materials help you to understand the physical and psychological background of characters found in literature. Please complete the following minimums (at least):

- FOR Physiology – 1 quote per section with 1 short sentence of analysis/explanation/reflection
- FOR Sociology and Psychology – 3 quotes per section with at least 1 long sentence of critical analysis/explanation/reflection

TIP – Be logical: certain sections (attitude towards life, personal ambitions, place in the community) may be far more important than others (sex, age, etc.) so spend more time with those more important sections

TIP – To save yourself some time, go to the class website and copy and paste this document into MS Word

TIP – For each quote include the page number in parenthesis and try to select significant quotes from a variety of places in the text that you would memorize for the May exam!

Do NOT complete this assignment on this handout.

Physiology 6pts: this helps your description concerning the character's appearance and outward attitude.

- 1) Gender & Age:
- 2) Height & Weight & Posture:
- 3) Appearance (dress/costuming, color of eyes, hair, skin):

44 pts (11X4):

Sociology: this includes the character's home location, type of job, family life, wealth (amount of money), and how free time is spent.

- 4) Class & Occupation:
- 5) Education Level and/or Natural I.Q.:
- 6) Home Life: (Who runs the house or supports the family through work or leadership?)
- 7) Place in Community:
- 8) Amusements, Hobbies:

Psychology: this includes how a character acts because of attitude. Please attempt to describe the mental state of the character. Try to offer reasons for character's actions due to attitude.

- 9) Moral Standards (and/or moral defects):
- 10) Personal Ambitions:
- 11) Frustrations (disappointments, big and small) OR Complexes (Are there any mental problems which cause him/her to act in any particular manner?):
- 12) Temperament: (Is this character mild mannered or hostile? Plus, when a character comes in contact with different persons; how do they respond? Does the character act differently around different people?)
- 13) Attitude toward life:
- 14) Character Self-Perception and/or Extrovert, Introvert (Is the character outgoing and social, keeps to him/herself and doesn't mix with other people, can be described as at one time moody and to him/herself while at other times outgoing and social?):

EXAMPLE of format (3 quotes, 1+ sentence of analysis):

Arthur Dimmesdale from The Scarlet Letter (Hawthorne)

Psychology:

Complexes: *"a sickness, a sore place, if we may so call it, in your spirit, hath immediately its appropriate manifestation in your bodily frame" (134).*

"I must needs look deeper into it. A strange sympathy betwixt soul and body. Were it only for the art's sake, I must search this matter to the bottom" (135).

"What can a ruined soul, like mine, effect towards their purification?" (184).

Dimmesdale's view towards his own earthly sins creates inner confusion. The minister sees his whole life as an act: people seeing him as a saint, when in actuality, he is just as sinful as they.