


 ANSWER SHEET  
 FEUILLE DE RÉPONSES

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AB02

Drama

Sample K

1. Either

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- (a) "What is drama but life with the dull bits cut out?" To what extent do you find this statement applicable in at least two plays you have studied?

Examinador

Sample K

The heightened sense of drama found in plays when the "dull bits [of life] are cut out" can be found highly relatable by the audience. Playwrights' creations on set serve to create characters that the audience can relate to and throughout the play one's mind can be swept up by how realistic the actions being seen on stage are. This said, there are different types of drama and although they all strive to achieve the same goal of in some form or another engaging the audience it is the individual playwright's amount of creative license that makes magic. In the three works that will be outlined in this essay, a broad range of writing styles by the playwrights can be seen. Setting, props, symbolism and syntax of character's speech are all important elements of creating this "life with the dull bits cut out."

In Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman the audience viewing the play is given scenes and characters by which to base their first impressions of. Willy Loman's life is normal, but the "dull bits" remain intact for dramatic effect. If all drama ~~were~~ <sup>was</sup>



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magnified to a level that was no longer relatable, the audience would feel as though they were reading a fictitious novel, rather than a part of a realistic play in front of their eyes. The title of Miller's Death of a Salesman itself shows themes of the common family. The play is not the death of Willy Loman but rather the death of an aspect of the common family. The trials and tribulations witnessed in Death of a Salesman are not dramatic in the sense that this family is different but drama is created because the "dull bits" were left as a part of the play. Just as any father would, Willy struggles to make ends meet to provide for his family. The harsh reality of wanting a job and a lifestyle that is out of your reach but continuously striving to attain it, is not a problem felt only by Willy Loman and his family. Biff Loman has been pumped full of hot air to inflate his ego just as any mother and father would do if they felt they were giving their son or daughter a better future. Biff and Willy are a "dime a dozen" which symbolically means that they are metaphorically average just as buying eggs or bread at a market. Willy's life offers nothing special to the salesman's life and in the twenty-four hour course of the entire play Willy refuses to live in the present. Willy Loman wants to be the "man who is liked [and] will never want,". Willy even "believed [he] was a true salesman," and wanted to die the Death of a Salesman with hundreds of people at his funeral honouring his well-lived life. It was the true salesman who "died in his chair with his green velvet slippers" that illustrates the stereotypical life with the "dull bits cut out"





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Through Miller's in depth characterization, symbolism and plot development the atmosphere of a normal life was created. In Death of a Salesman it is the "dull bits" that keep the play relatable and true to its audience. It is real life that comes complete with transitions and emotional and situational trials. Linda "can't understand it," as she is the supporting wife of Willy who keeps many of his emotions hidden underneath the surface. Willy Loman is frustrated because he is the "low-man" on the social hierarchy and is living <sup>metaphorically</sup> in a world and life in which he feels he does not belong. Although "a man is not a piece of fruit," Willy constantly places himself in situations where someone "eats the orange, and [throws] away the peel." Willy is selling himself in a sense as Miller effectively creates interest by not mentioning specifically what Willy sells. Even though Willy is unhappy and frustrated as he feels he is being used and then "thrown away" he is unconsciously subjecting his son Biff's classmate to the same future. Bernard is forced to help Biff study in math to receive a passing grade in order to



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attain his football scholarship. Through the dramatic effects of the play a different kind of music plays when Bernard enters the stage to symbolize a different kind of life. Bernard is highly intelligent but according to Willy not "well-liked". The idea and importance of being well-liked is a tone created in Death of a Salesman that is also present in everyday life but heightened by eliminating "dull bits" from the play. Willy is afraid to live in the present and instead relies on memories from his "glorious" past and ideas and inspirations for his future. Drama in a Death of a Salesman is life as the common family would live through it. This is why Miller's play is relatable and the props, characters, setting, lighting, music and speech all works towards the common theme of complete normalcy.

In Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire an adaptation of normalcy is portrayed. Through "feathers and firs" and other over the top ideas of what "normal" is Williams effectively creates a play that one can relate to. The setting is simple and creates an atmosphere of third class living, which in literature and plays is highly relatable. Blanche literally means "white" in French and symbolizes her quest for purity and tranquility. Blanche DuBois is Stella Kowalski's sister and is the protagonist in A Streetcar Named Desire. The enormous amounts of symbolism portrayed in plays in general but specifically Williams' plays cannot be enacted in real life. In this sense A Streetcar Named Desire is "life with





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the dull bits cut out, " Situational and dramatic irony cannot be acted out in real life and interpreted in the same way by two entirely different bystanders. Drama and through the magic of plays can be interpreted in different ways by the audience, but there are certain symbols and themes that are significant no matter the opinion of the viewer. For example, Blanche's "moth-like" clothing illustrates her frail and dainty persona that inevitably becomes her downfall. Although Blanche is "white" and "blank" metaphorically, she covers herself in multiple layers to decrease her chances of exposing herself to the harsh real world she is trying to escape. Blanche states she "[doesn't] want realism, [she] want[s] magic," and so she creates her own ideal world. Shielding herself from the real world comes in numerous forms; just as in life off the stage. The lantern Blanche sets up in the Kowalski residence has multiple possible metaphors and symbolic attributes within itself. The chinese lantern deceives Mitch into believing Blanche is someone she is not, and acts also as a protection against light that would uncover who she really is and



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what she has done. By installing the lantern in the first place Blanche is making herself at home and overlooking the fact that she is merely a visitor and this is not her own house. Just as Blanche is offering Stella help even though she "is not in anything [she] wants to get out of" Blanche forces her own opinion and personality on the living space of the Kowalski's. Stella believes Blanche to begin with as most sisters would give their sister's the benefit of the doubt initially. Just as the lyrics of "It's only a Papermoon," state "it wouldn't be make believe if you believed 'in me," which is why Blanche symbolically sings this in the bathtub while cleansing herself of her past "dirt". This is ironic in the sense that Blanche does not realize that the dirt she needs to purify and rid herself of is not external but rather internal. Blanche says "I don't tell the truth, I tell what right to be the truth" because this is one of her few remaining deception and protection techniques that still effectively shields her from her own potentially dangerous life. The forward motion of the play symbolizes the progress and change in characters and how Blanche, Stanley and Stella evolve. The "cardboard sea" in the lyrics of "It's Only a Papermoon," symbolize the facade Blanche is hiding behind and how no amount of cardboard "water" could ever rid her of the wrongs she has committed. Just as Stella states "I couldn't believe her story, and go on living with Stanley," Blanche comes to the conclusion that she also can no longer live her life the way she has been, and





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can't rely on the "kindness of strangers" like she always has been prior to living with the Kowalski's. The dramatic tension felt between the married Kowalski couple, as well as the couple of Steve and Eunice upstairs all tie into the tone of A Streetcar Named Desire. Tennessee Williams portrays a life of couples, marriage, abuse, rape, deception and trust all in their heightened and magnified theatre roles. These themes exist in normal life as well but are magnified in A Streetcar Named Desire to serve a greater purpose. This is an informative and intriguing look into another dysfunctional family and the progress made within a short timespan. Time is relevant in Tennessee Williams', A Streetcar Named Desire as it symbolizes the change in characters and the family life.

Time is irrelevant, but waiting for change is all important in Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot. The different life and priorities of Estragon and Vladimir ~~and~~ are illustrated as the passage of time is only documented through



the leaves on the sole tree on stage. Estragon and Vladimir appear as one character on stage as they are interdependent on one another. Estragon metaphorically could point to "estrogen" and the stereotype that females rely on males for guidance and are restless. Estragon constantly poses the questions of "why" and "how" in their journey of waiting. Their life of waiting is boring by definition, yet realistic and optimistic by the definition they have created themselves. This new idea of what life is really about or posing the question of "why are we here?" (constantly asked by Estragon) is a basic question for all of humanity. The aspects of life that are commonly defined as "dull" are what Gogo and Didi rely on and push them through the waiting process. There is "nothing to be done," but everything to gain. Estragon and Vladimir's lives and day-to-day adventures are not pathetic, but different in that they encompass different priorities. Samuel Beckett questions the <sup>modern</sup> hectic and busy lifestyle by questioning "why are we here" and "what are we waiting for?" in his play Waiting for Godot. This play is relatable and incredibly unique because it includes the "dull bits" and creates a new definition of waiting. Estragon and Vladimir are waiting for someone who may never come, or possibly could not exist. Deep questions of faith and humanity are included in Waiting for Godot in a way that remains universal but existential. Life for Estragon and Vladimir consists almost solely of these "dull bits" yet they







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push on to wait for Godot. Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot is a fresh take on humanity and whether or not our priorities are in order. It is a common misconception that the only effective plays are those with an abundance of bright saturated colours, or extravagant sets and props. The simplistic set of Waiting for Godot, the quiet urban setting of Death of a Salesman or the hustle and bustle of <sup>La</sup> New Orleans multicultural neighbourhood in A Streetcar Named Desire all serve different purposes in the grand scheme of the play that they ~~serve~~ are a part of.

If "drama [was solely] life with the dull bits cut out," the audience would not be able to relate in such a way that they can when "dull" and realistic parts are included.

Wishing for a status that one cannot achieve such as Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman is universal as well as the ~~deceitful~~ deceitful tactics of Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire and the <sup>somewhat</sup> patient and optimistic outlooks of Estragon and Vladimir in Waiting for



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Godot - A more effective statement would be "drama is life".

Drama only has an audience because it is relatable. The "dull bits" are just as important in illustrating a lifestyle or making a point. The less prominent dramatic points provide contrast for those heightened moments of interest and passion. Just as a play is not created without characterization, props, setting, tones, mood, plot, irony, symbolism and the syntax of speech by the director, drama cannot effectively portray LIFE without including all aspects, "dull" or not.

