

Lesson Guidance 15	
Grade	12
Unit	2
Selected Text(s)	<i>Death of a Salesman</i> , 76-84
Duration	Approx 1 Day

Plan with guidance from the [ELA Instructional Expectations Guide](#)

Learning Goal(s)

What should students understand about today's selected text?

Students will be able to analyze Willy's situation and struggle through a Marxist lens as it relates to his alienation.

CCSS Alignment

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

End of lesson task *Formative assessment*

Create a chart comparing Marx's viewpoints on alienation and Willy's experience in this section

Knowledge Check

What do students need to know in order to access the text?

Background knowledge

- The Great Depression
- Key elements of drama
- Key facts about Arthur Miller
- The premise of the play (1940s New York, a middle class White family)
- Understanding the central tenets of Marxism

Key Terms (*domain specific terms to analyze the text*)

- **characterization**: the techniques an author uses to build understanding of a character
- **metaphor**: a comparison between two unlike things
- **symbolism**: the use of symbols in the work; **symbol** an object,



person, or idea in a text has an additional meaning beyond its literal one

- **stage directions:** notes to actors or the director about the dialogue, setting, or action of the play
- **repetition:** using the same word or phrase over and over again in a piece of writing or speech

Vocabulary Words (*words found in the text*)

- **alienation:** the state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong or in which one should be involved
- **worker exploitation:** in the broadest terms, occurs when an employer is unfairly benefitting from their employee's work
- **wire recorder:** an analog type of audio storage
- **Jack Benny:** an American entertainer and comedian popular at the time of the play
- **The smoker:** A car on a train designated for smoking cigarettes
- **Commissions:** a fee for services rendered based on a percentage of an amount received or collected or agreed to be paid

Core Instruction

Text-centered questions and ways students will engage with the text

Opening Activity:

Ask students to respond to the following questions:

Why is Willy's mood upbeat at the start of Act Two? What does he expect to happen? What does this show us about Willy?

Content Knowledge:

In this section, Willy arrives at Howard's office to negotiate a better job opportunity. The conversation does not go the way Willy hopes. Students should pay special attention to Willy's dialogue on page 81. This is one of the most famous sections, and where the play gets its title.

Preteach vocabulary words as needed using [an explicit vocabulary routine](#).

Shared Reading:

As a class, assign roles to read pages 76- 84 starting at "*In the middle of her speech...*" Stop reading at "*Howard exits.*"

Teachers can use the **reading questions** as CFUs as the class reads or have students complete the questions independently after reading through the section.

Roles in this section:

- Narrator
- Willy
- Howard
- Howard's Daughter
- Howard's Son

- Howard's Wife

Reading Questions

1. How does Howard treat Willy?
2. Why does Miller include Howard's admiration for his children?
3. What is the difference between the recording of Howard's children and Howard's wife?
4. How does Howard react to Willy's connection to his father?
5. Where do you see repetition in Howard's dialogue? Why is this significant?
6. How has Howard become successful?
7. What does Willy want out of a salesman career? / What does Willy value out of a job, besides money?

Independent Reading and Analysis:

Students should watch and take notes on the following video explaining Marx's theory of alienation within capitalism. Students should keep in mind quotes connected to Willy's Lack of Self using their [Death of a Salesman Guided Notebook](#).

Alienation

THE FOUR TYPES OF ALIENATION

1. Alienation of the worker from their product: The design and development of a production rest not in the hands of a worker but within the decisions of the capitalists. A worker does not have control over what he or she intends to produce or the specifications of his or her product.

2. Alienation of the worker from the act of production: The production of goods and services within a capitalist society is repetitive and mechanical that offers little to no psychological satisfaction to the worker. Labor seems coerced because a worker undertakes this as a means of survival.

3. Alienation of the worker from their species-essence: The species-essence or "Gattungswesen" of an individual comprises all of his or her innate potentials. Under a capitalist mode of production, an individual loses identity and the opportunity for self-development as he or she is forced to sell his or her labor-power as a market commodity.

4. Alienation of the worker from other workers: The reduction of labor to a mere market commodity creates the so-called labor market in which a worker competes against another worker. Labor is traded in a competitive labor market instead of considering it as a constructive socioeconomic activity characterized by collective common effort.

Formative Assessment:

Ask students to create a chart comparing Marxist viewpoints on alienation and Willy's experience in this section

Example	
Quotes from the video:	How does this connect to the text?
"According to Marx, what we do is directly connected to who we are. It defines us and lets us express our full human-ness."	Willy is fighting for a sense of self in a world that leave less space for the individual
"In the time before the Industrial Revolution it was possible for a number of people to own their work	He believe meaning lies in "the false promises of a society no longer structured around genuine human needs"



and they identified it as an extension of who they were as a human being.”

“Alienation is the condition in which the individual is isolated from society, work and the sense of self”

“Because a labor is vision and purpose is reduced to wages and because they lack connection to the product and process it is logical that people would be alienated from one another”

“The world of capitalism puts people in positions of competition and therefore everyone looks out for themselves”

“Alienation robs a person of all they can be and contribute in the world”

“What we contribute the world is a manifestation of our creativity and creativity is an essential part of our human nature”

“In our product-based society, many people are now alienated from their very human nature. People lose their sense of self and who they are.”

“In the end, we are not in control of our own lives.”

“You can’t eat the orange and throw the peel away—a man is not a piece of fruit” (82).

Optional Extension Activity:

- Compare Willy’s lonely struggle with alienation to major labor wins throughout history. Students can research modern companies like Starbucks and Amazon’s paths to unionizing, or focus on the past movements like auto plants in Detroit, coal mining in West Virginia, Cesar Chavez, etc.
- Students can contrast Willy’s situation with the collective benefits of labor organizing.

Fluency, Comprehension and Writing Supports

Fluency	Fluency Protocols
Sentence Comprehension	Juicy Sentence protocol with sample sentence “Today, it’s all cut and dried and there’s no chance for bringing friendship to bear - or personality.” (p. 81)
Writing	Pattan Writing Scope and Sequence



	N/A
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Additional Supports	
ELD Practices	Practices to promote Tier 1 access
English Language Development ELA Tasks and Scaffolding	
SpEd Practice	Practices to promote Tier 1 access
MTSS Practices	Practices to promote Tier 1 access
Enrichment Practices	Practices to promote Tier 1 access