



Educator Resources

A photograph of a woman with short, light-colored hair, smiling broadly. She is wearing a brown cardigan over a patterned dress. The background is a solid blue.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

The Glass Menagerie

Directed by
GORDON EDELSTEIN

September 1 – October 17, 2010
Mark Taper Forum

Judith Ivey, photo by IAN MARCUS

Welcome

Educator Resources
The Glass Menagerie

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Center Theatre Group is excited to have you and your students join us for *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams.

A great play raises questions about the human condition and a great educational experience allows students an opportunity to reflect upon those questions and begin to discover their own answers. To that end, the material in Center Theatre Group's Student Discovery Guide and Educator Resources raises questions: questions about family, love and responsibility, questions about the power of memory, questions about writing as a way to help comprehend our lives. Our goal is to provide you with a variety of entry points into *The Glass Menagerie* so that you can choose what best suits you and your students.

The Educator Resources and Student Discovery Guide are companion pieces designed to help you prepare your students to see the play and to follow-up the performance with options for discussion, reflection and creativity.

We have organized the Educator Resources into the following sections:

Student Discovery Guide

The Student Discovery Guide provides students with background information about the play and the subject matter, as well as questions for individual reflection. Written to be student-driven, the Discovery Guide helps prepare your students for the performance.

About This Play

This section includes a scene-by-scene synopsis of the play that provides you with detailed information about the content and form of the play as well as information about the life and work of playwright Tennessee Williams.

Comprehension

This section includes background information about the setting and subject matter of the play. We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play. For *The Glass Menagerie*, this includes information about the time period of the play, the 1930s; including



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information about the economy, the rise of popular culture and the threat of impending war.

This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Student Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

Connection

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives and the world we live in. Structured thematically, each section contains questions and exercises that may be used for reflection, discussion, and/or writing prompts both before and after the performance.

Creativity

This section provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express. Theatre activities are included to examine both specific artistic aspects of the production as well as to delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by *The Glass Menagerie*. The activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

We know the hard work and dedication that it takes to bring students to see theatre. These materials are designed to support you in making the most of that experience. We applaud your passion for sharing theatre with your students and thank you for sharing your students with all of us at Center Theatre Group. We look forward to seeing you at *The Glass Menagerie*!

About

The Glass Menagerie

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Synopsis: *The Glass Menagerie*

The play centers on the Wingfield family in the late 1930s. Tom, his mother Amanda, and his sister Laura live together in a small tenement apartment in St. Louis that Williams describes as, “one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living-units that flower as warty growths in overcrowded urban centers of lower middle-class population.” Their father worked as a traveling salesman for the local telephone company and abandoned them approximately 16 years earlier. Tom has since become the family’s breadwinner and works long hours at the Continental Shoemakers warehouse in order to support the entire family. He dreams of becoming a poet, traveling the world and being free of all of his familial obligations. He tends to disappear in the evenings often coming home late at night, intoxicated and claiming that he has been at the movies. His only real escape seems to be the moments he spends on the apartment’s fire escape, smoking cigarettes, and watching the young couples outside of the Paradise Dance Hall across the alley.

Laura is a terribly shy girl. A childhood illness has left her partially disabled with one leg shorter than the other and held in a brace. She seldom chooses to leave the apartment and instead busies herself by listening to old records on her phonograph and caring for her “glass menagerie,” a collection of small, glass animals that she has acquired over the years.

Amanda constantly dreams of her youth in Blue Mountain, Mississippi when she was a young Southern belle and the darling of the town’s social scene. She loves to relay the story of the infamous Sunday afternoon when she had 17 gentlemen callers. She is not shy about expressing all of the hope and promise that her future seemed to once hold, and how instead she chose to marry a man who would ultimately leave her and force her to fend for herself.

As a single parent, Amanda is constantly trying to find ways to subsidize the family’s income. She enrolled Laura in classes at Rubicam’s Business College, hoping that a career would make her self-sufficient and ultimately secure a future for both of them. When she discovers that Laura has stopped attending her classes she is furious. Laura explains that the speed tests on the typewriter terrified her and made her physically ill. Amanda ultimately gives up her aspirations of a business career for Laura and instead puts all of her hopes into finding her a suitor.

Amanda senses that Tom, just like his father, is growing restless and longs to leave. She also knows that without his wages she and Laura cannot survive. So, she strikes a deal with him. If Tom can help her find a husband for Laura,



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a man who can take care of her, then Tom will be free of his responsibility to them.

Tom brings home Jim O'Connor, his fellow colleague at the warehouse. Jim is a charming and enthusiastic young man whom Laura had a crush on in high school. As the night goes on he chats with Laura, and becomes increasingly flirtatious until he finally kisses her. He then admits that even though he likes her, he cannot call again because he already has a fiancé. Even though Laura is terribly disappointed, a maturity emerges from within as a result of this experience.

Amanda, however, is livid. After Jim leaves, she accuses Tom of bringing home an engaged man in order to make fools of her and Laura. Amanda and Tom have a terrible fight, which proves to be the final straw for him. In his closing monologue, Tom admits that even though he finally left for good and traveled the world, the memory of Laura would always haunt him.

Scene by Scene Synopsis: *The Glass Menagerie*

ACT I. Preparation for a Gentleman Caller

Scene 1

Tom appears and quickly establishes himself as the writer, poet and narrator of the play. He states that the play takes place in the 1930s, when there was civil war in Spain and a very different kind of turmoil in America. He warns that this is a work of memory, and therefore not realistic. He then describes the characters: Amanda, his mother; Laura, his sister; a gentleman caller; and his absent father, who is forever immortalized in a large photograph that hangs on the living room wall.

The action begins with Amanda calling Tom to the dinner table. Amanda begins instructing him on

how to eat his food and the family tension becomes immediately apparent. Laura tries to clear the table, but Amanda insists on having her sit and act the lady while she does the work. Tom gets up to smoke a cigarette while Amanda tells a story from her youth that she has often told before, about the one Sunday afternoon when she received 17 gentleman callers. She names the most memorable ones, tells what they went on to do with their lives, and then angrily states how even though she could have had her pick of any of those young men she instead chose their father. She then asks Laura when her own gentleman callers will begin arriving. Laura responds nervously that she is not expecting any. Amanda states, "Not any? Not one? Why, you must be joking! Not one gentleman caller? What's the matter? Has there been a flood or a tornado?" The scene ends with Laura telling Tom that their mother is afraid that she will be an old maid.

Scene 2

Laura appears washing and polishing her collection of glass animals. She quickly heads back to her typewriter as soon as she hears her mother. Amanda enters clearly disturbed. She proceeds to take Laura's typing diagrams down from the wall and tear them to pieces. When Laura asks her what's wrong she tells her that on her way to the D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution) meeting, she decided to stop by Rubicam's Business College to ask about Laura's progress. The teacher let her know that Laura had not been to class for weeks and so they had assumed she had dropped out. They had phoned the house nearly every day but never received an answer.

Amanda, angry over wasting fifty dollars on the tuition, asks Laura where she has been going everyday. Laura, clearly shaken, admits that she has been walking in the park, going to museums, or the zoo. She explains that the tests would make her so nervous she would become physically ill. She was afraid to tell Amanda the truth for fear that she would be disappointed.

Amanda tells Laura that she is afraid she will not be able to support herself, and women without husbands and jobs ultimately end up depending on relatives in order to get by.

She asks Laura if she has ever liked a boy. Laura responds shyly that yes, in high school she had a crush on a boy named Jim. They had a class together and he used to call her "Blue Roses." When Amanda inquires about the nickname she explains that he misheard her when she told him that she had missed quite a bit of school due to an attack of pleurosis. Laura had read in a newspaper a while back that Jim and his high school girlfriend were engaged. She assumes that by now they are married.

Amanda tells Laura that since she is not cut out for a career they must try to find her a husband. Laura reacts doubtfully responding that she is crippled and therefore cannot find anyone. Amanda reprimands her daughter for using the word "crippled" and encourages her to overcome her "slight defect" by cultivating charm instead.

Scene 3

Tom appears writing about Amanda's new obsession with finding Laura a gentleman caller. In order to prepare for his arrival, Amanda has decided that some extra expenses will be necessary. She has taken a job soliciting subscribers to *The Homemaker's Companion*, a magazine for women, to make some extra money.

Amanda appears on the telephone speaking to a woman whose subscription is about to run out. Amanda tries to convince her to renew by telling her about a new serial that will appear in the next issue, but the potential subscriber ultimately hangs up on Amanda.

The lights begin to dim while Tom sits trying to write. Amanda warns him to take care of his eyesight

and then starts nagging him about his posture. He asks her to leave him alone so that he can finish his writing. Amanda criticizes his attitude, which then leads to a heated argument between the two of them. Laura listens as they scream at each other. Tom expresses outrage that Amanda confiscated his books. Amanda says that she will not allow any books by "Mr. Lawrence" in her home. Tom responds that he is the one who pays the rent and has given up his dreams to support their family. Amanda tells him that she does not believe his claim that he spends his nights out at the movies. She states, "I think you've been doing things that you're ashamed of and that's why you act like this. I don't believe that you go every night to the movies. Nobody goes to the movies night after night. Nobody in their right minds goes to the movies as often as you pretend to." She is also outraged by the drunken state in which he often returns home and fears that his nights out will jeopardize his position at the warehouse. She is afraid that if he loses his job they will be left with nothing.

Tom fires back with anger and frustration that he still wakes up every morning and goes to work even though he hates it. And to Amanda's doubt about where he goes every night, he answers with bitter sarcasm that he is actually hanging out in opium dens and casinos and that he is indeed leading a double life as a warehouse worker by day and the czar of the underworld by night. He is sometimes known as "Killer Wingfield" or "El Diablo" and that his enemies plan to someday blow up their apartment. In his rage Tom calls his mother a witch and then accidentally knocks over the glass menagerie as he is trying to leave. Amanda storms off while Tom helps Laura pick up the pieces of her collection.

Scene 4

As the church bell strikes 5 a.m., a drunken Tom appears stumbling home. Laura sees his empty bed in the front room and then hears him climbing the stairs. He searches for his key but Laura lets him in before

he can open the door. Tom insists that he has been at the movies all night. When Laura expresses doubt he begins listing the lengthy program and then tells her about the magician he went to see. He gives her a rainbow-colored scarf as a souvenir from the show. He tells her of the magician's most impressive trick which was to escape from a coffin without removing a single nail. He says, "You know it don't take much intelligence to get yourself into a nailed-up coffin, Laura. But who in hell ever got himself out of one without removing one nail?" Laura helps Tom to bed.

Scene 5

One hour later. The church bell strikes 6 a.m. and we hear Amanda calling out "Rise and Shine!" An exhausted Tom stumbles out of bed for another day of work. Laura, who has been sent by Amanda to wake him, begs Tom to apologize to her. Amanda is heard calling out from the kitchenette for Laura to go to the store. Laura finally makes her way out.

Tom tries to apologize to Amanda while drinking his morning coffee. Amanda feels that she has suffered and struggled for both Tom and Laura, and that her efforts have made her hateful in his eyes. Tom tells her that he is truly sorry and reassures her that he in no way hates her. Amanda also tells Tom that he has been her right hand man all these years and that she needs him to not fail them. She reassures him that if he truly applies himself he will eventually succeed. She also asks him to promise her that he will never be a drunkard. He promises. She then tries to get him to eat, but he refuses everything except for black coffee.

Amanda tells Tom that Laura thinks he is unhappy. She recognizes that his ambitions stretch far beyond the warehouse and acknowledges that he has had to make certain sacrifices for their family. She asks him why he goes to the movies so often. Tom responds that he likes the adventure he sees in the movies and that his job at the warehouse does not provide any. Amanda expresses her concern that Tom's undying desire for

freedom will ultimately cause him to abandon them. Fearful for Laura's future, Amanda tells Tom that he can leave if he helps find a gentleman caller for his sister — a man who will eventually marry and take care of her. Tom becomes frustrated and tries to break off the conversation by leaving for work but not before being forced to agree to look for a suitor. Amanda picks up the phone and continues calling subscribers.

Scene 6

Tom appears writing about the Paradise Dance Hall, across the alley from their apartment. He describes the music, the rainbow-colored lights that are visible from the fire escape, and speaks of the carefree world of the dancers. We hear Amanda call out for Tom. She complains that he spends too much money on cigarettes and should instead save his money to take a course in night school. Tom states that he would rather smoke.

Tom then reveals to her that he has found a gentleman caller for Laura. Amanda is thrilled, until Tom tells her that he will be arriving tomorrow evening. Amanda becomes afraid that she will not have enough time to make their home presentable. She begins listing all of the preparations that she will need to take care of—polishing her wedding silver, cooking, and finding the right outfits to wear. She inquires about the gentleman caller's character. She wants to make sure that he is not a drunk.

Tom tells Amanda that as far as he knows Jim O'Connor is not a heavy drinker. He is a colleague of his at the warehouse and works as a shipping clerk. He makes approximately eighty-five dollars a month (twenty dollars more a month than Tom), is not too good-looking, but not unattractive, and studies radio engineering and public speaking in night school.

Tom is nervous about Jim's visit because he has not mentioned Laura to him. Amanda seems to have full faith that Laura will simply enchant Jim, but Tom has

his doubts. Tom asks Amanda not to expect too much of Laura, saying that they see her beauty because they know and love her but that to others some of her habits may seem somewhat peculiar. For instance, her glass menagerie and her love of their old phonograph records. He also mentions that they don't even notice that she is crippled anymore but others do. Amanda tells him to not use that word. Tom then leaves for the movies. Amanda calls Laura to come out to the fire escape and asks her to make a wish on the "little silver slipper of a moon." When Laura asks what she should wish for Amanda replies, "Happiness! And just a little bit of good fortune!"

ACT II. The Gentleman Calls

Scene 7

Tom appears writing about Jim. The two young men went to the same high school, where Jim was known as the school hero. He was the basketball star, senior class president, glee club president and the male lead in the annual light operas. Six years later, his job at the warehouse is not much better than Tom's. The two young men are on friendly terms, partly because Tom remembers Jim's former glory days. Jim is also quite fond of Tom and has given him the nickname "Shakespeare" since he knows that he often hides away at work to write poetry. Their friendship has also helped Tom's reputation with the other men at work since Jim is well liked.

Amanda has worked hard to transform the apartment for Jim's visit. Laura appears standing in the middle of the living room while Amanda adjusts the hem of her dress. Amanda then tries to get Laura to stuff her bra with two powder puffs she refers to as "gay deceivers." Laura stares at herself in the mirror while Amanda dresses in one of her old cotillion dresses. She prances around the room while speaking of the days when she spent all her time going to parties, dancing, and making her gentlemen callers bring her jonquil flowers.

Laura hears the name of the gentleman caller for the first time and realizes that it might be the same Jim whom she had a crush on all those years ago. Terrified, she tells Amanda that if it's him, she will not come to the table. When the doorbell rings, Laura argues with Amanda about who will answer the door. Laura finally lets the two men in but flees right after being reintroduced to Jim.

Jim is ambitious and constantly talks about the self-improvement courses he is taking. As they wait for the women on the fire escape he tries to convince Tom to enroll in a public speaking course with him. Tom is uninterested. Jim also warns Tom that their boss at the warehouse is not pleased with him and that if he's not careful he may soon be out of a job. Tom tells Jim of his plans to join the Union of Merchant Seamen and his dreams of pursuing adventure and change. He tells Jim that this month he has paid his dues to the Union instead of the light bill, and that he finally plans to leave St. Louis. He also tells him that Amanda is unaware of his plans. Before the two men can continue the conversation, Amanda enters, dressed as if she were still a young Southern belle. She immediately begins flirting with Jim and winning him over with her southern charm and hospitality.

Tom goes to call Laura for dinner, but she refuses to join them. When Amanda calls for her she nearly faints in front of them. Tom helps her to the sofa. The scene ends with Amanda, Jim and Tom sitting down for dinner saying grace.

Scene 8

As Amanda, Jim and Tom are finishing dinner, the lights go out. Tom pretends to not know the cause of the outage while Amanda, unfazed, continues to charm their guest. She lights candles and asks Jim to check the fuse box. After Jim tells her that the fuse box seems to be fine, Amanda suggests that he go spend time with Laura and get better acquainted.

While Amanda and Tom do the dishes, Laura begins to warm up to Jim, whose charm quickly puts her at ease. She reminds him that they had a class together in high school and then he remembers giving her the nickname "Blue Roses." They reminisce about those days and Laura tells him that she was always late to their class and felt embarrassed by the loud sound that her leg brace would make when she was climbing up the steps. Jim tells her that he never even noticed it.

Jim then reveals that he was never engaged to his high school girlfriend and that they are no longer together. Laura speaks admirably of Jim's singing voice, and she pulls out the program of one of the shows he was in, *The Pirates of Penzance*. After holding onto it for so many years she finally asks Jim to sign it. He happily obliges. Jim then tries to give Laura some advice about improving her self-esteem. He speaks about the different courses he's taking and tells her about his plans to become involved in the television industry.

Laura shows Jim her glass menagerie. They look closely at the glass unicorn, Laura's favorite piece. She tells Jim how that was the very first animal in her collection and she's had him for almost 13 years. They remark on how the unicorn must feel lonely as a result of its uniqueness. Laura assures Jim that the unicorn sits on a shelf with several other horses and that they all seem to get along just fine. Jim then places the unicorn down on the table to give him a change of scenery.

Jim opens the door to the fire escape and hears the music coming from the Paradise Dance Hall; he asks her if she would like to dance with him. As they move clumsily around the room, the tension between them grows. Suddenly, they bump into the table and knock over the unicorn, breaking off its horn. Jim feels terrible and apologizes, but Laura puts him at ease. She tells him that she's going to pretend that the unicorn had an operation to remove the horn so he would be a little less unique.

Jim continues to flirt with Laura by first complimenting her character and then her looks. He tells her how pretty he thinks she is and then, suddenly, kisses her. As soon as he lets her go he becomes fidgety and openly regrets his decision. He then awkwardly admits to Laura that he can't call again because he is already involved with another woman. Laura is devastated. She places the broken unicorn in his hand to take home as a souvenir.

Amanda enters ready to offer them some lemonade only to hear Jim announce that he must be going. When Amanda suggests to Jim that he should call again, he lets her know of his plan to marry his current girlfriend. He also mentions that no one at the warehouse, including Tom, has known about his engagement. He thanks Amanda for her southern hospitality and then exits.

Amanda, in a furious rage, accuses Tom of purposely attempting to make fools of her and Laura. Angered by her accusations, and unwilling to put up with her desperate antics, Tom tells her that he is heading out to the movies. She tells him that he is selfish and that he never thinks about them. She says, "Go, then! Then go to the moon—you selfish dreamer!" Tom exits.

Tom writes about leaving St. Louis for good and followed in his father's footsteps by traveling the world. He admits that even though he had left Laura behind many years before, her memory still haunts him.

About Tennessee Williams

The man who would become Tennessee Williams was born Thomas Lanier Williams III on March 26, 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi. He was the second child born to Cornelius Coffin Williams and Edwina Dakin Williams. Tommy, as he was known, took to his beautiful older sister Rose almost immediately and the two would remain close friends throughout his childhood. Cornelius worked as a traveling salesman and spent the first eight years of Tommy's life on the road. Edwina, Rose and Tommy stayed with their maternal grandparents, the Reverend Walter Edwin Dakin and Rosina Otte Dakin in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Tommy never had a close relationship with his father who resented the attention that Edwina gave to him. Cornelius was a hard drinker and gambler who enjoyed the freedom of the open road but also expected a certain degree of pampering during the few days he spent at home each month. Tommy was very close to his grandfather who was both a man of God and a man of letters. Some of Tommy's fondest memories included spending afternoons in the Reverend's large library where he would be exposed to some of the greatest writers of the English language. With his father being both physically and emotionally absent, the Reverend Dakin would ultimately become the true father figure in Williams' life.

"Tom Williams was, in fact, growing up more a minister's son than the son of a traveling salesman."
—Lyle Leverich, *Tom: The Unknown Tennessee*

Tommy's mother, Edwina, was a pretty southern belle born in Marysville, Ohio and spent most of her childhood moving to different towns in southern Tennessee and Mississippi. An only child, Edwina was charming, popular and no matter what town she moved to became the darling of the social scene. She

always had gentlemen callers, and even though she loved the attention, she also loved her freedom.

Edwina began acting in high school and quickly fell in love with the theatre. She dreamed of becoming a musical theatre actress and continued to act in a few community productions after she finished school. In 1905, she became a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She saw this invitation as a great honor and she would remain involved with the organization for the rest of her life. She was introduced to Cornelius through a gentleman caller of hers that same year when he was in town for business. He worked for a telephone exchange and was known to be a wild, young bachelor. He was immediately taken with the beautiful, vivacious Edwina and saw her as his ideal wife. Since he was in Knoxville and she was in Columbus, they began a long distance courtship. When he would come to visit he would take her to the finest restaurants, buy her extravagant gifts, and of course, take her to the theatre. Even though she never truly loved Cornelius, Edwina would state that he could always, "sweep her off her feet." They married on June 3, 1907.

Shortly after their daughter Rose's birth in 1909, Cornelius began working as a traveling salesman for Clairborn, Tate & Cowan, a large clothing manufacturer based in Knoxville, Tennessee. Edwina was content with this arrangement, having to only be the dutiful wife a few times a year. After the arrival of Tommy two years later, she devoted herself completely to her children and to the town's social scene, which revolved around her father's parish. She adored her son and would spend hours relaying stories to him about her own youth. When Tommy was five-years-old, he was stricken with diphtheria and then later Bright's disease, an inflammation of the kidneys now known as acute nephritis. He was partially paralyzed for two years and had to relearn to walk at the age of seven. His mother

would have to place ice on his throat at night in order to prevent swelling. This instilled in him what would become a lifelong fear of suffocation. Still, Williams described those two years as some of the happiest in his life because he was forced to retreat into his imagination and spend his days creating alternate worlds with his beloved sister Rose.

**"When I stop working the rest of the day is posthumous.
I'm only really alive when I'm writing."**
—Tennessee Williams

In 1918, Cornelius accepted a managerial position at the International Shoe Company in St. Louis, Missouri. He decided that it was time for Edwina, Rose and Tommy to join him. The move proved to be disastrous for everyone. Shortly after arriving in St. Louis, Edwina became pregnant with the couple's third child, Dakin. Dakin quickly became Cornelius's favorite, who he openly favored over the other two. He would often refer to Tommy as "Miss Nancy" and make fun of his son's sensitive nature. This only made Edwina even more protective of her little boy. Their fights over money, the children and her rejection of his sexual advances turned their marriage into a battlefield. Williams would desperately cling to Rose for dear life during those years. Cornelius always knew his wife did not love him in the same way that he loved her, but now that they were all under the same roof it could no longer be ignored. He continued to drink excessively and gamble until the early morning hours. Edwina often felt that she had given up all of her dreams and aspirations for a life where she now felt trapped. She would, as a result, attempt to live vicariously through her young, creative son. He was her confidant and she was fiercely protective of him.

Growing up a shy, awkward young man, Williams was seen as a fragile figure and often taunted by other children. Rose was now a teenager and her interests

had moved past playing make-believe with her little brother. Tennessee often felt alone, no longer having his favorite playmate as his counterpart. Seeing that her son had an overactive imagination and trouble socializing, Edwina bought him a secondhand typewriter at the age of 13. This was a pivotal moment for the young Williams who would never again stop typing. At 16, he won third place in a national essay writing contest sponsored by The Smart Set Magazine. The following year he had a short story published in another magazine called *Weird Tales*.

"Why did I write? Because I found life unsatisfactory."
—Tennessee Williams

After graduating from high school in 1929, Williams went on to attend the University of Missouri (Columbus). It was during this time that he saw a production of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* and was inspired to become a playwright. After failing an R.O.T.C. course at the end of his junior year, however, Cornelius forced Tom to drop out of school and come home to St. Louis to work with him at the International Shoe Company. Tom spent three miserable years working at the warehouse all the while dreaming of escaping and becoming a writer. During his time there he met a young man by the name of Stanley Kowalski, a character who would ultimately re-emerge in his most famous play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

It was also during this time that Rose's condition began to worsen. She suffered from severe bouts of depression and was prone to hysterical attacks. Edwina was convinced for a time that finding Rose a husband would cure her condition. She put Williams in charge of finding her a suitor, potentially one of his factory colleagues or one of his fraternity brothers from The University of Missouri. But Rose's condition continued to deteriorate. Her behavior became quite erratic and

unmanageable. After years of intense therapy, she was institutionalized in 1937.

"My greatest affliction...is perhaps the major theme of my writings, the affliction of loneliness that follows me like a shadow, a very ponderous shadow too heavy to drag with me all of my days and nights."

-Tennessee Williams

Williams eventually went back to school at Washington University in St. Louis and wrote two plays, *The Fugitive Kind* and *Candles to the Sun* that were both produced by a small community theatre known as the Mummers. Williams dropped out before earning a degree and later enrolled at the University of Iowa. He graduated with his B.A. in 1938.

"What is straight? A line can be straight, or a street, but the human heart, oh no, it's curved like a road through mountains."

-Tennessee Williams

Upon finishing school, Williams entered a playwriting contest at the Group Theatre in New York. He changed his birth year from 1911 to 1914 in order to meet the age requirement of twenty-five and used the pen name Tennessee Williams to keep his true identity secret. He then traveled to New Orleans for the first time and officially became Tennessee Williams. He spent the next couple of years living a vagabond lifestyle, traveling from city to city, working odd jobs and continuing to write. It was also at this time that he first began to have romantic relationships with men.

In 1939, Williams was awarded the Group Theatre Award for his collection of one-acts, *American Blues*. Shortly after that he was signed by the very successful Literary Agent, Audrey Wood. After traveling throughout the United States and Mexico, he finally relocated to New York in 1940 and began studying

drama at the New School under John Gassner. He went on to win a Rockefeller Grant for his first full-length play, *Battle of Angels* that same year.

"Make voyages. Attempt them. There's nothing else."
-Tennessee Williams

It was around 1941 that Williams wrote the short story "Portrait of a Girl in Glass", which would ultimately be the inspiration for his play, *The Glass Menagerie*. In 1943, Williams signed a six-month contract to be a scriptwriter at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Right before his move to Los Angeles his sister Rose underwent a prefrontal lobotomy in the hopes of curing her mental condition. The operation was a failure and left Rose incapacitated for the rest of her life. Williams never forgave his parents for allowing the operation. He also carried a tremendous amount of guilt for not having stopped it. The memory of his beloved sister, as she was before the madness had taken over, would forever haunt him. Although he was always a drinker like his father, it was after Rose's surgery that Williams was driven to alcoholism.

"In Tom's mind, these images of his mother—once upon a time a young and pretty southern belle whose venturesome husband had deserted her to go on the road—eventually became entangled with perpetually dark apartments, with Rose's tragic turns, and with his own desperate attempt to free himself from the web of family. For years, these painful reflections lingered in his imagination, until at length they merged into 'a memory play' he was to call *The Glass Menagerie*."
-Lyle Leverich, Tom: The Unknown Tennessee

During his time working for MGM, Williams adapted "Portrait of a Girl in Glass" into a screenplay titled *The Gentleman Caller*. The studio passed on the script stating that it was completely unsuitable for their star, Lana Turner. Once his contract was over,

Williams adapted the script for the stage. His agent, Audrey Wood gave the play to Eddie Dowling, an actor, director and producer. Dowling persuaded stage star Laurette Taylor to take on the role of Amanda.

The Glass Menagerie opened at the Lyric Theatre in Chicago on December 26, 1944. It starred Laurette Taylor as Amanda, Eddie Dowling as Tom, Julie Haydon as Laura, and Anthony Ross as Jim. At first the play had sparse audiences, but with the help of rave reviews it quickly began playing to full houses. It moved to the Playhouse Theatre on Broadway in 1945 where it went on to win the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. The production later moved to the Royale Theatre until its closing in August of 1946. The play ran for more than 560 performances and its success earned Williams both fame and literary respect. He had now established himself as an influential voice within the American theatre.

"Success and failure are equally disastrous."
—Tennessee Williams

In 1947, *A Streetcar Named Desire* opened at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway. The play became an instant success and won Williams a second New York Drama Critics' Circle Award as well as the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It would later be adapted into a screenplay directed by Elia Kazan starring Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh.

That same year, Williams met and fell in love with Frank Merlo, a young Italian-American man who would ultimately become both his secretary and his partner. Merlo provided the type of stability that Williams needed. He suffered from frequent bouts with depression and feared that he would ultimately go mad like his sister. Although they separated twice, the two men would remain partners for 15 years. During

this time, Williams wrote his most epic works including *Summer and Smoke*, *A Rose Tattoo* (Tony Award, 1951), *Camino Real*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* for which he would win his second Tony Award and second Pulitzer Prize in 1955.

"The strongest influences in my life and my work are always whomever I love. Whomever I love and am with most of the time, or whomever I remember most vividly. I think that's true of everyone, don't you?"
—Tennessee Williams

In 1963, Merlo was diagnosed with lung cancer and died shortly after. Williams entered a deep depression, drinking heavily and becoming addicted to prescription drugs. His next few plays would all close after only a few performances due to their negative reviews. His health continued to deteriorate throughout the 1960s until he suffered a complete nervous breakdown and was institutionalized by his younger brother Dakin in 1969. Although he continued to write, Williams' work would never fully recover. He would never again experience the type of success that he had during the 1940s and '50s.

During the 1970s, Williams wrote several plays, a collection of poems, short stories, and a novel. In 1975, he published his memoirs, in which he openly discussed his addiction to drugs and alcohol as well as his struggle with his homosexuality. In 1980, Williams wrote *Clothes for a Summer Hotel*, based on the lives of Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The play opened on Broadway at the Cort Theatre that same year and closed after only 14 performances. It would be his final production.

"I have always been pushed by the negative. The apparent failure of a play sends me back to my typewriter that very night, before the reviews are out.

I am more compelled to get back to work than if I had a success."

-Tennessee Williams

Tennessee Williams died on February 23, 1983 at the Elysee Hotel in New York City at the age of 71. Although there was speculation about whether or not prescription drugs and alcohol were involved, the official police report stated that Williams suffocated to death as a result of an eye drop bottle cap being lodged in his throat. Williams had suffered from cataracts since he was a young man and had a habit of placing the cap in between his teeth while he applied drops to his eyes. Even though Williams asked to be buried at sea, his brother Dakin instead buried him at the Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis. Williams gifted his literary rights to the University of the South, where his beloved grandfather, the Reverend Walter Dakin had studied. His endowment funds a program for Creative Writing.

In 2009, Williams was inducted into the Poet's Corner at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City. There, he joined other literary legends such as William Faulkner and William Shakespeare.

"To be free is to have achieved your life."

-Tennessee William

Timeline

1911

Born Thomas Lanier Williams III on March 26, in Columbus, Mississippi. The second child of Cornelius Coffin Williams, a traveling salesman, and Edwina Dakin Williams, an Episcopal minister's daughter. With Cornelius on the road most of the time, Edwina, Tommy and his older sister Rose, would stay to live with their maternal grandparents. The Reverend Walter Dakin would become Williams' true father figure.

1916-1918

Williams is stricken with diphtheria and later Bright's disease leaving him partially paralyzed. He learns to walk again at the age of seven. This would instill in him a lifelong fear of suffocation.

1918

The Williams family moves from Clarksdale, Mississippi to St. Louis, Missouri. It is the first time in almost ten years that his parents live under the same roof. The move proves to be disastrous for everyone.

1924

Edwina buys her son a secondhand typewriter. Williams never stops writing again.

1927

A sixteen-year-old Williams wins third place in a national essay-writing contest sponsored by The Smart Set Magazine.

1928

Williams has his first short story published in a magazine called *Weird Tales*.

1929

Williams enters the University of Missouri (Columbus) as a journalism major. During his time there, he sees a production of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* and is inspired to write for the stage.

1932

Cornelius forces his son to drop out of school after his junior year because of failing an R.O.T.C. course. He goes to work at the same shoe factory where his father is employed.

1935

Williams begins attending Washington University (St. Louis) but drops out before earning a degree.

1937

Williams has two plays, *Candles to the Sun* and *The Fugitive Kind*, produced by a small St. Louis theatre company called the Mummers. That same year his sister Rose is institutionalized.

1938

Williams graduates from the University of Iowa. He enters a playwriting contest at the Group Theatre in New York, changes his birthdate in order to meet the age limit, and uses the pen name Tennessee Williams to mask his true identity. He visits New Orleans for the first time and officially becomes Tennessee Williams.

1939

Williams spends the next couple of years living on

the open road, traveling from city to city. He wins the Group Theatre Award for his collection of one-acts, *American Blues*, and is awarded \$100. Shortly after, he is signed by Literary Agent, Audrey Wood. He travels to Mexico for the first time.

1940

Williams goes on to win a \$1,000 Rockefeller Grant for his next play, *Battle of Angels*. He receives a scholarship to study playwriting at the New School in New York under John Gassner. He has his first eye surgery for cataracts.

1941

Williams writes a short story titled, "Portrait of a Girl in Glass" which would eventually be the inspiration for *The Glass Menagerie*.

1943

Williams signs a contract with MGM pictures and moves to Hollywood to be a scriptwriter. He adapts "Portrait of a Girl in Glass" into a feature film titled, *The Gentleman Caller*. The studio decides to pass on the script. He then decides to adapt it for the stage. He renames it *The Glass Menagerie*. That same year, his sister Rose undergoes a prefrontal lobotomy that leaves her incapacitated for the rest of her life. Williams never forgives his parents for allowing the procedure. He would forever carry around a tremendous amount of guilt for not stopping the surgery.

1944

The Glass Menagerie premieres at the Lyric Theatre in Chicago.

1945

The Glass Menagerie moves to the Playhouse Theatre

on Broadway where it goes on to win the New York Critics Circle Award. He has his second eye surgery.

1947

Williams meets and falls in love with Frank Merlo. The two men would remain partners off and on for 15 years. That same year Williams' next play, *A Streetcar Named Desire* opens at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway. It goes on to win Williams his second New York Critics' Circle Award and his first Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

1948

Summer and Smoke premieres at the Music Box Theatre on Broadway.

1951

The Rose Tattoo opens at the Martin Beck Theatre on Broadway. Williams wins the Tony Award for Best New Play. The film version of *A Streetcar Named Desire* premieres, directed by Elia Kazan and starring Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh.

1953

Camino Real premieres at the National Theatre on Broadway.

1955

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof premieres at the Morosco Theatre on Broadway. Williams wins his second Tony and his second Pulitzer Prize.

1956

Williams writes the screenplay for *Baby Doll*. This would be his second collaboration with Director Elia Kazan.

1957

Orpheus Descending premieres at the Martin Beck Theatre on Broadway.

1959

Sweet Bird of Youth premieres at the Martin Beck Theatre in New York.

1961

Night of the Iguana premieres at the Royale Theatre on Broadway. Williams wins his third Tony for Best New Play.

1963

The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore premieres at the Morosco Theatre on Broadway. Later that year his long-time partner, Frank Merlo, is diagnosed with lung cancer and dies shortly after. This would mark the beginning of Williams' decade-long battle with depression and addiction.

1968

The Seven Descendents of Myrtle premieres at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway but closes after only 29 performances.

1969

Williams suffers a complete physical and mental breakdown. He is institutionalized by his younger brother Dakin.

1971

Williams begins to re-emerge. He continues to write plays, poems and short stories.

1973

Out Cry premieres at the Lyceum Theatre on Broadway but closes after only 12 performances.

1975

Williams writes his collection of memoirs.

1976

The Eccentricities of a Nightingale premieres at the Morosco Theatre on Broadway but closes after only 24 performances.

1977

Vieux Carré premieres at the St. James Theatre on Broadway but closes after only 6 performances.

1980

Clothes for a Summer Hotel premieres at the Cort Theatre on Broadway but closes after only 14 performances.

1983

Williams dies at the Elysee Hotel in New York City by choking on an eye drop bottle cap. He is buried at the Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri.

Comprehension

Comprehension | Connections | Creativity

This section includes background information about the setting and subject matter of the play.

We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play. For *The Glass Menagerie*, this includes information about the time period of the play, the 1930s; including information about the economy, the rise of popular culture and the threat of impending war.

This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Student Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

Time & Place The Economy

The Great Depression began when the stock market crashed on October 29, 1929. Prior to that, in the 1920s banks, businesses, working-class men and even homemakers had purchased stocks in the hopes of securing a financial future. When the system fell apart on "Black Tuesday" all of these people were left penniless. As a result of their losses, many banks and businesses closed, forcing people out of work. As families had less money to spend, more businesses went under. President Hoover, however, denied that there was a serious economic crisis in the United States. He felt that American businesses would revive themselves in no time. But by 1932 there was no denying the reality of the situation. With 15 million unemployed workers on the street, President Hoover created the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, a government agency that loaned money to banks and large businesses that were on the brink of bankruptcy. Although this did help some companies stay afloat, it did nothing to change the circumstances for the average American. Eighty percent of all steel mills had closed, leaving workers jobless. Many farmers were unable to sell their surplus crops and meats because people didn't have the money to spend.

On March 4, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the presidency. He was inheriting a major recession, but with him came a wave of promise. The President quickly put into action The New Deal, a bill that would sponsor programs such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the

Civilian Conservation Corps, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and the National Recovery Administration to help create jobs and help stimulate the economy.

In 1934, the Dust Bowl hit many of the states in the Great Plains. This was unlike any dust storm the locals had ever seen. The farmers in these areas faced ruined land, dead livestock, and homes and barns buried in dust. More than half of the population of the Great Plains packed up the little belongings they had left and traveled elsewhere to find work. With jobs being scarce everywhere, many of the farmers and their families settled in California where they could work picking fruits or vegetables for one dollar a day. Many were also given wooden shacks with no running water where they could stay with their whole families.

At the height of the Great Depression, one out of every three young adults was unemployed. This economic crisis caused a surge in enrollment numbers at schools and universities. By the end of the decade 80% of high school age people were enrolled. With less work options, young people were either staying in school longer or going out onto the streets. By 1934, there were an estimated four million youths ages 16-24 living on the street. This led to a rise in juvenile crime, and by the end of the decade 90% of prisoners held for major crimes were under the age of 30.

The stock market crashed again in 1937. Despite the government's best efforts to help end the depression, the crisis continued to linger throughout the decade. Even after spending \$9 billion on government work programs, in 1938 there were still an estimated nine million Americans out of work. It wasn't until the end of the decade that Americans began to see new life being breathed into their economy. Many factories were up and running, goods were being produced and more people were finding work again. But this time,

the industry had changed. The goods that were now in demand were guns, battleships, and tanks to send abroad. As a war was on the brink of erupting in Europe, the American economy began to get a second wind.

Radio

"My interest happens to lie in electrodynamics. I'm taking a course in radio engineering at night school, on top of a fairly responsible job at the warehouse."
—Jim (Act 2, Scene 8)

The first radio music box was introduced to the American public in 1922 and became hugely popular in a very short period of time. This new technology linked rural and urban America together by providing a common listening experience. Whether it was a presidential speech, a sporting event or a musical performance, for the first time in our country's history, people could experience something simultaneously.

By the mid 1930s, radio was the nation's most popular pastime. Afternoon programming was geared specifically towards young people with shows such as "Jack Armstrong," "The All-American Boy" and "The Lone Ranger." The plot of these shows usually revolved around a young male protagonist having adventures with his friends and learning the importance of possessing qualities such as loyalty, perseverance, good sportsmanship and clean living. Advertising was also geared toward specific audiences with Wheaties, Cocomalt and Ovaltine financing the afternoon serials. The evening shows were sponsored by detergents, cigarettes and automobile companies.

Families would often gather around the radio after dinner to listen to an evening serial. The most popular of these was "Amos 'n' Andy." The show

revolved around the characters of Amos and Andy, two young African American men who had moved from Atlanta to the south side of Chicago and were continuously confused by their new life in the big city. The show's humor was derived from the characters' distortions of language making some people resent the representation of African Americans as caricatures on national radio. Still, "Amos 'n' Andy" attracted a large audience of both African American and Caucasian listeners. It is estimated that at its peak, over 40 million people would tune in between 7:00 and 7:15 p.m. each weeknight to join the two characters on their latest adventure.

Not until the late 1930s did network radio began to broadcast news programs as well. These quickly became popular and it was apparent that most listeners were very trusting of what they heard. On Halloween eve 1938, CBS broadcast Orson Welles dramatizing H. G. Wells' story, "War of the Worlds" about alien invasion. The story was presented as a series of eyewitness reports that interrupted a musical performance and it quickly sent listeners into a nationwide panic. This demonstrated the degree of influence that radio now had over the American public.

With the decade coming to a close and World War II approaching, radio shows became increasingly military in theme and plot. Characters such as Captain Midnight and Sky King spoke about patriotism and were ready to fight any enemies of the United States. Thus, radio reflected the real world and presented its young listeners with new and exciting ways to cope with it. It provided its listeners with a shared experience and ultimately led to the evolution of a mass culture. Soon, young people would not only be listening to the same programs and music, but they would also be dressing and eating alike as well.

Throughout the 1930s, the radio was the centerpiece of the American home, replacing earlier phonograph. In *The Glass Menagerie*, Laura likes to play old records that her father left behind on her phonograph. This is an example of how she lives in the past and is unaware of the changes that are happening in the outside world. Jim is the opposite. He is taking radio engineering courses in night school and is planning to also break into the television industry someday. His interests parallel what was happening in popular culture during the 1930s.

Movies

"I go to the movies because – I like adventure. Adventure is something I don't have much of at work, so I go to the movies."
–Tom (Act I, Scene 5)

Even though the 1930s were plagued by difficult economic times, Americans were still flocking to the movies. Somehow sitting in a dark movie theatre watching glamorous stars like Jean Harlow and Spencer Tracy on a flickering screen helped people escape the difficulties of everyday life. The addition of both color and sound during the earlier part of the decade made the experience even more memorable. As a result of the Great Depression, one-third of all movie theatres in the United States were forced to close at the beginning of the decade. However, by 1934, the movie business began to experience a revival. In that year alone, it is estimated that over 75 million people went to the movies on an average of once a week.

In response to the drop in ticket sales directly following the Depression, Hollywood created the double feature. For an average of 25 cents audiences could see two full-length feature films in one evening. One movie was

usually considered a quality film with famous screen stars, a well-known director and high production costs such as location shooting, music and advertising. The second feature came to be known as a "B" movie. It usually ran just over an hour and featured unknown actors and a small budget.

In addition to the double feature some theatres would also add a cartoon, a short documentary, a newsreel or even the episode of a well-known weekly serial. Some movie houses also created a "dish night" and gave away inexpensive dishware to lucky ticket holders. Bingo also became a popular addition to the movie experience, allowing the winners to leave the theatre with a little bit of cash in their pockets. Two-for-one passes also became a trend by giving two audience members the chance to see a feature for the price of one.

"There was a very long program. There was a Garbo picture and a Mickey Mouse and a travelogue and a newsreel and a preview of coming attractions. And there was an organ solo and a collection for the milk-fund – simultaneously – which ended up in a terrible fight between a fat lady and an usher!"

–Tom (Act I, Scene 4)

Moviegoers during this time witnessed some of the most diverse filmmaking in the history of the film industry. Hollywood turned out movies for just about everyone's taste. There were comedies featuring The Marx Brothers, Laurel and Hardy, and W.C. Fields that allowed the public to laugh and forget their problems. Action films such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, transported audience members to another time and place. Gangster films such as *Little Caesar* and *Public Enemy* had storylines that were based on some of the most famous newspaper headlines of the decade. Musicals starring dance legends Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers also became big successes. The duos

grace and flawless timing made them overnight stars with *Flying Down to Rio* in 1933. Films rarely depicted the actual everyday lives of Americans during the 1930s. Those that did were not usually the popular features.

Hollywood provided the escape that Americans desired by showcasing handsome leading men such as James Cagney, Errol Flynn and Cary Grant, as well as beautiful actresses such as Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford and Katherine Hepburn on the screen. Their elegance, charm and sophisticated adventures were exactly what people wanted to see. These screen legends would create a glamorous illusion that would help everyday people cope with the difficulties of everyday life.

In 1939, two of the greatest pictures of the decade were released – *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone With the Wind*, based on the bestselling novel by author Margaret Mitchell. *The Wizard of Oz* starred a young Judy Garland and would enchant both children and adults with its mix of the real and the fantastical. Its success was a result of the perfect combination of story, talent, music and new Technicolor technology. *Gone With the Wind* is considered by some to be the greatest movie ever made. It had monstrous production costs and the making of the film proved to be a long and laborious process that took three different directors to complete. It would star the very popular Clark Gable and a young newcomer by the name of Vivien Leigh. An epic story about the Civil War, the film included many memorable scenes that spoke to the realities of the 1930s, but still allowed for a distance because of its historical specificity. Leigh's character, Scarlet O'Hara, stands with her plantation in ruins, penniless, and with no means of support but still she vows that she will, "never go hungry again," a sentiment that many people at that time personally understood. *Gone With the Wind* would allow the entire country to escape their woes by wrapping up the decade in grand movie

making style. And even though the United States was on the brink of the Second World War, many Americans preferred to follow O'Hara's advice and simply, "think about it tomorrow."

**"People go to the movies instead of moving!
Hollywood characters are supposed to have all the
adventures for everybody in America, while everybody
in America sits in a dark room and watches them have
them! Yes, until there's a war. That's when adventure
becomes available to the masses! But I'm tired of the
movies and I am about to move!"**

—Tom to Jim (Scene 6)

Swing Music

Swing music is a form of Jazz that developed from Ragtime music. It first surfaced inside the dance clubs in Harlem in the early 1930s. Its distinctive sound is created by combining the use of a double bass and drums with trumpets, trombones, saxophones, clarinets, piano and guitar. Swing bands usually had lead singers who would often improvise lyrics over the musician's fast tempos. Artists such as Bennie Goodman, Cab Calloway and Count Basie were among the best known soloists of the time. Goodman and his band are credited with helping swing cross over to the mainstream Caucasian audiences and therefore gain a broader following. The use of radio helped to expose more people to the swing craze and to increase the sales of dance recordings.

By 1935, swing was the most popular type of music in the United States especially for couples. Public dance halls became all the rage along with live big band music. Cities like New York housed over 600 dance halls at this time including the infamous Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. Some of these were even known as dance "palaces" and could accommodate anywhere

from 500 to 3,000 dancers. It was estimated that during the mid-1930s around 15 percent of Americans between the ages of 17 and 40 attended their local dance hall at least once a week. The admission usually ranged from fifty cents to a dollar fifty and the dancing was usually overseen by women chaperones or dance-hall inspectors. Dances such as the Lindy Hop, the Jitterbug, the Camel Walk, the Shorty George, the Susie-Q, and the Sabu brought millions onto the dance floor. It was a cheap form of entertainment during a difficult economic time making Americans dance like never before.

**"Across the alley was the Paradise Dance Hall.
Evenings in spring they'd open all the doors and
windows and the music would come outside.**

—Tom (Act I, Scene 6)

The swing dance craze began to decline at the beginning of World War II. Big bands were now difficult to staff since so many young men were fighting overseas. The cost of touring for a large ensemble also became impossible as a result of wartime economics and rations. Bands were forced to restructure into three to five piece groups in order to meet these restrictions. By the end of the 1940s, swing music had evolved into newer styles such as Bebop and Jump Blues.

Women's Roles

By the mid 1930s, over 40 million Americans were living in poverty. With warehouse jobs diminishing, more men were finding themselves out of work. The only jobs that were available were clerical and domestic positions which had traditionally been occupied by women. As a result, women began entering the workforce in large numbers. This caused a major shift where the number of men in the workforce declined

while the number of women increased substantially. The 1930s also saw an increase in the high school graduation rates. Americans were more educated than ever but their chances of finding employment remained dismal. As a result, government funded organizations such as the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration were created in order to give young people vocational training while they looked for work. The National Youth Administration (NYA) was one of the only organizations of its kind to offer this type of training for young women. Eleanor Roosevelt founded the organization out of concern that long-term unemployment would ultimately affect young Americans' faith in democracy. The NYA tackled this problem by providing economic relief in addition to on-the-job training in federally funded work projects. At these centers, young women could learn skills such as sewing and typing that could help them enter the workforce as well as become a future homemaker.

Daughters of the American Revolution

Daughters of the American Revolution, or the D.A.R., was founded on October 11, 1890 in Washington, D.C. It is a non-profit, volunteer women's service organization dedicated to promoting historic preservation, education and patriotism. Some chapters also help raise funds for local scholarships and other educational awards in their communities. The organization's headquarters are in Washington D.C., but there are chapters in all 50 states. Since it is a lineage-based organization, women must be able to prove that they are descendants of a patriot of the American Revolution in order to be eligible for membership.

"I went to the D.A.R. this afternoon, as you know; I was to be inducted as an officer."
—Amanda (Act I, Scene 2)

In the play it is mentioned that Amanda is a member of the D.A.R. In reality Williams' own mother, Edwina, was also a proud member. She saw this invitation as an honor and she would remain involved with the organization throughout her life.

Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War began on July 17, 1936 after an attempted coup d'état by the Nationalist forces against the government of the Second Spanish Republic.

The Nationalist forces were led by General Francisco Franco who wanted to establish a Fascist government in Spain. Both the Fascist Italian government and Nazi Germany supported Franco's vision and provided him with airplanes, weapons and soldier to aid in his effort. Following the military coup, the working-class began to rebel across the country in support of the Republican government. These supporters were known as the Loyalists and were fighting to free their country from what would become a brutal dictatorship. The Loyalists were aided by the Soviet Union as well as the International Brigades, an organization that consisted of volunteers from 50 different countries around the world including the United States.

"In Spain there was revolution. – Here there was only shouting and confusion and labor disturbances, sometimes violent, in otherwise peaceful cities such as Cleveland-Chicago-Detroit..."

—Tom (Act I, Scene 1)

In January of 1939, the Nationalists took Barcelona, one of the largest areas of Loyalist resistance. Although the Nationalist army had tried to capture Madrid throughout the war, they had not been able to penetrate the home of the opposition. Fighting among the Loyalists, however, began to weaken the resistance. People began to switch sides in the hopes that Franco

and his men would show some mercy when the city finally fell. On March 29, 1939, the Nationalists marched into the capital of Spain practically unopposed. Almost three years after the fighting had started General Francisco Franco would overthrow the Republican government and establish an authoritarian state. Under his rule, all right-wing parties would become part of the state party of the Franco regime.

Guernica

On April 26, 1937, planes from the German Luftwaffe, or Condor Legion, and the Italian Fascist Aviazione Legionaria bombed the small Basque city of Guernica in northern Spain. The attack was ordered on behalf of General Franco in order to weaken Basque resistance to the Nationalist army. At the time Guernica represented a strategic point for the Loyalists because of its proximity to the city of Bilbao, the largest city in the Basque region. The Republican forces feared that if Franco and his men took Bilbao they would win the war.

"In Spain there was Guernica! Here there was only hit swing music and liquor, dance halls, bars, and movies, and sex that hung in the gloom like a chandelier and flooded the world with brief, deceptive rainbows..."

—Tom (Act 1, Scene 6)

The bombing lasted over three hours and destroyed the majority of the city killing over 300 civilians. With no resistance left, Guernica fell to the Nationalists on April 29, 1939.

The event became an international symbol of human suffering and the atrocities of war.

Picasso's *Guernica*

Spanish Artist Pablo Picasso created his painting *Guernica* in response to the tragic event. It was unveiled in the Spanish pavilion at the Paris International Exposition in 1937. It would quickly become a controversial reminder of the horrors of war. The painting resides in Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. A copy is displayed at the entrance to the Security Council room inside the United Nations building in New York City.

Southern Gothic Literature

Southern Gothic Literature is a sub-genre of the Gothic writing style that is unique to the American South. Just as its parent genre, it too uses supernatural events, mental disease, and the grotesque as its main themes. The stories that fall under this genre tend to explore social issues and reveal the cultural inequalities of a very specific landscape. Writers tend to avoid perpetuating the antebellum stereotypes that the dominant culture would prefer to see, such as the loyal and content slave, the demure Southern belle, the righteous preacher and the chivalrous gentleman. Characters are instead based on classic Gothic archetypes but portrayed in a modern and realistic manner. The damsel in distress transforms into the faded Southern belle turned spinster while the heroic knight becomes a manipulative, fan-brandishing lawyer with ulterior motives. This genre often captures the plight of those traditionally ostracized by Southern culture such as African Americans, women and homosexuals. The genre is known for its representations of damaged and delusional characters many of which have a deep-rooted bigotry or self-righteousness. These deeply flawed characters, while often disturbing to read about, provide the author with

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the opportunity to expose aspects of Southern culture that are considered controversial or taboo.

Some of the most celebrated authors of the 20th century wrote in the Southern Gothic tradition. This includes writers such as William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Erskine Caldwell, Truman Capote, Harper Lee, Eudora Welty, and playwright Tennessee Williams. Williams once described it as a style that captured "*an intuition, of an underlying dreadfulness in modern experience.*"

The characters that Williams created in *The Glass Menagerie* capture the essence of the Southern Gothic literary tradition. Particularly the character of Amanda, who encompasses a mix of both the comical and tragic in her need to cling to a glorious past in order to deal with a painful reality. She is the archetypal faded Southern belle who desperately clings to an image of the American South that no longer exists. She speaks of a past life filled with abundance and joy in the midst of a nationwide economic crisis.

Connections

Comprehension | Connections | Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the student's lives and the world we live in.

Memory

Tennessee Williams says in his stage directions for *The Glass Menagerie* that memory is seated in the heart. Do you think memory is seated in the heart? Where and how do your most deeply felt memories live?

"In Memory everything seems to happen to music." —Tom (Act I, Scene 1)

- Do you agree? Are your memories set to music? Which of your senses most invoke memories for you, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling? What are the qualities of your memories?
- Think of a favorite childhood memory. What are the qualities of this memory? How do you actually remember it? Is it through your physical senses? Is it through a feeling? Is there music associated with this memory? Do you have a souvenir of that memory; perhaps a photograph, postcard or ticket stub? How does the physical reminder help keep the memory alive?
- What is the value of memory? What is the danger? Is it important to remember? Why or why not? If the memories are painful, like many of Tennessee Williams' childhood memories, what is the value in remembering? What is a memory that brings you joy?
- How do your memories shape the person you are today? If you lost your memory, would you still be the same person? Do memories keep us rooted in the past or do they help propel us into the future? How do our memories relate to our dreams for the future?
- Tom, as the narrator and writer of the play, is putting his memory onstage for us. Do you think that makes him an unreliable narrator? Does it matter? Do you remember different aspects of an event than your family or friends? Does it matter?

- What is the truth of memory?
Is there an absolute truth to memory or is memory different for every individual? How are memory and perspective the same? How are they different?
- Why do you think the character, Tom, and the author, Tennessee Williams, needed to write their memories? How can you use your own memories to create? Is there a memory you have written about? A memory that would make a good song or dance piece? How might this be valuable to you and to others?
- Is there a connection between memory and nostalgia? Is there a time and place that you remember, and like Amanda, wish you could return to? Why is that time and place so appealing? What aspects of that memory do you wish you could bring into your present and future?

Family: Parents, Children and Leaving Home

The Glass Menagerie is Tennessee Williams' most autobiographical work and was his first success after leaving home. It is a play about some of the most fundamental relationships a person has – their parents and siblings. The play explores how deeply families need and love one another and the potential cost of that as well as the eternal desire of young people to leave home, start afresh and recreate themselves.

- Director Gordon Edelstein says the play explores “family and how love and obligation and rage can walk together very closely.” Discuss this idea. Do you agree? Disagree? Why?
- What is a young person’s responsibility to their family? What is their responsibility to their own dreams and future? How do you balance your individual needs with your responsibility to your family? How do you prioritize? How do you choose?
- On an airplane, the safety announcement tells passengers to put on their own oxygen mask before putting the mask on their child. How does the idea of the oxygen mask relate to balancing individual desires with family responsibilities?

Comprehension | Connections | Creativity

- Do you believe that people need to leave home as part of the path to becoming an adult? Why? Why not? How can parents or other adults best help young people be ready to leave home? What is the responsibility of the young person to ready themselves to leave home?
- What happens if you choose to not leave home, or like Laura are not able to leave home?

Families can be the people who know us the best or sometimes, the ones who know us the least. Torn says to Amanda “**There is so much in my heart that I can’t describe to you.**”

- Why is it often so hard to speak your heart to family members?
- If you could say one thing from your heart to a family member, what would you say? What stops you from being able to speak what is in your heart? How do you find the confidence to speak your heart?

Writing and Autobiography

- Why do you think people write about their lives? Beginning writers are often told to “write what you know.” Do you think that is good advice? If you could write anything, what would you write about and what form would you write in?
- How can writing about your life be a way of “working out” your life? How might writing about your life give you perspective on your life? Do you think you have to wait a few years before you could write about a real event? Or is there value in writing about things in your life as they happen?

Director Elia Kazan said about Tennessee Williams “**Everything in his life is in his plays and everything in his plays is in his life.**”

- Why do you think many writers write about their families? Why do you think Williams needed to write *The Glass Menagerie*?

● Do you think it is fair to put real people onstage in a story? If you decided to write, would you use your family as the subject matter? What other subjects interest you to write about?

Tennessee Williams said "**I don't think I would have been the poet I am without the anguished family situation**"

● Do you think all poets are created by an anguished family situation? Or by an anguished life situation? Why would anguish prompt one to create poetry?

● Must one experience anguish in order to create poetry? Is it a requirement? Have you ever created poetry, or created anything, out of deep anguish? Have you created poetry, or created anything, out of any other deep feeling, whether it was positive or negative, joyful or sorrowful?

Stella Adler believes that "**no one can understand the play they are working on without understanding the playwright first.**"

● Do you agree? Disagree? How does knowing that Williams used his real life and family in this play impact your experience of this play? Does it enrich or diminish your experience?

Storytelling

● How is storytelling different than writing? How is it the same?

● Why does Amanda like to tell stories about her past? What does the act of telling the story give her?

● Do you have a story from your past that you enjoy telling? What makes it a good story to tell?

● Is there someone in your family who is the storyteller or the keeper of family stories? What sort of stories do they tell? Why do you think they tell these stories? Do you enjoy listening to their stories? Why or why not?

An American Classic

The Glass Menagerie is considered a classic American play.

- What makes something a “classic”? Why do you think this play is considered a classic? Why do you think this play is produced so often?
- The play is about a specific family in a specific time and place. How does the specificity contribute to the story’s universal appeal?
- What themes or ideas in *The Glass Menagerie* do you think have a universal connection or resonance? Are there themes or ideas that no longer resonate?

In his book *The Other American Drama*, critic Marc Robinson says that Tennessee Williams’ “plays astonish us anew. They set a standard for emotional truthfulness that most playwrights still fail to match.”

- Discuss. Do you agree? Where do you see or experience this emotional truthfulness in *The Glass Menagerie*? Are there other works of art or literature that are emotionally truthful for you? What is the power of emotional truthfulness?

Delicate and Different

“My plays are pleas for the understanding of the delicate people.”
—Tennessee Williams

- What does it mean to be delicate or different? What happens to fragile people in our world? Are they overlooked, made fun of, attacked? Why? What would be the benefit of understanding the delicate people?
- What are the strength, beauty and gifts that delicate people provide for our world? What would the world be like if we understood, celebrated and valued the delicate and different people? How do we start?
- Like the glass animals she cares for, Laura is the most obviously delicate character in the play. In what ways is she also strong? Tom, Jim and Amanda all seem stronger on the outside but in what ways are they fragile?

Do you think that all human beings are delicate in some way? Why do we need to conceal our vulnerability or fragility from each other?

Laura tells Jim that when they were in high school she always felt self conscious because everyone stared at her leg brace and that the clumping “**sounded like thunder.**” (Laura Act II, Scene 7)

- Has there ever been something that you felt stood between you and the rest of your peers? How did/does it shape your experience? Is there a way to change your perception or the perception of other people about this difference?

In high school, Jim gave Laura the nickname Blue Roses. He tells her “**The different people are not like other people, but being different is nothing to be ashamed of....They’re common as – weeds, but – you – well, you’re – Blue Roses.**” She says “**But blue is wrong for – roses.**” and he replies “**it’s right for you!**” (Act II, Scene 7)

- Why do you think people fear difference or are ashamed of being different? How can we celebrate and embrace uniqueness in ourselves and in others? What would the world be like if we did this?
- In his book *The Other American Drama*, critic Marc Robinson says of the Tennessee Williams plays that people are often more “eager to diagnose his characters rather than listen to them.” What do you think he means by that? Do you agree? What happens in a play or in life if we try to “diagnose” a person? What can happen if we listen?

Empathy – stepping into someone else’s shoes

In *The Glass Menagerie* the four characters trying to survive and doing the best they can with what they have. There are no villains in this play although people hurt one another as they struggle to move through life.

- How do we imaginatively step into someone else’s shoes? Especially a person who is very different than us? What might be the value of “stepping into someone else’s shoes?” Is there someone you wish would put themselves in your shoes? Who? Why? What would you hope they discovered about you?

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Step into their shoes and imagine:

- What would it be like to be Tom - a poet forced to work in a warehouse?
What would it be like to be Laura - painfully shy with a brace on your leg?
What would it be like to be Amanda - a single mother whose husband left her to provide for their children in difficult economic times?
What would it be like to be Jim - a young man with gifts and potential who has not gotten as far ahead as he dreamed he would when he was in high school?
- Which character do you most identify with? Which character do you least identify with? Why? Which character would you most like to talk to? What would you want to ask them or to tell them?

Writing: Choose one of the characters in *The Glass Menagerie*. In a monologue or letter, write the story of the evening with the gentleman caller from the point of view of your character.

- Share the stories in class. What is similar in each account? Where are the stories different?

Economy

National Unemployment Rate, 1930: 9%

National Unemployment Rate, June 2010: 9.5%

The economic hardships of the characters in the play echo and reflect some of the economic hardships of our present day reality. The electricity being turned off, the characters being afraid they won't be able to pay the rent, both parents and children having to work several jobs to make ends meet; these are all events that are happening to many families in America today.

- How does the outside world impact the lives of the people in *The Glass Menagerie*? How does the economy impact a person's ability to dream or to dream big? How do you reach for your dreams in spite of outside forces?

- For many people living during the Great Depression, the election of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a sign of great hope and an optimistic future. Just like President Barack Obama, Roosevelt inherited a time of great economic turmoil when he became president. What do you think are some of the similarities that both presidents encountered when they took office? What are some of the differences?
- What similarities do you think would exist between your experience growing up in current day Los Angeles and a young person like Tom, Laura or Jim living in the urban environment of St. Louis during the 1930s?

Collections

- In *The Glass Menagerie*, Laura collects animal figurines, her glass menagerie. Why do you think Laura collects the glass animals? What does it mean to her? How do you think Laura feels when the figurine breaks? What do you think is the symbolism of the unicorn's horn breaking? Why do people collect? Do you have a collection? What do you collect? How did your collection get started? Is there a memory connected to why and what you collect?
- Discuss. Ask for those students who have collections to talk about them and if possible bring their collection to school. Set up the collections in the classroom where everyone can walk around and look at the displays. Ask each student to talk about their collection. What is it? How did they get started? Do they have any particular goals for their collection?
- Start a collection as a class. Take suggestions and decide what to collect—theatre posters, books, glass animals? Decide on a purpose for the collection. Will you give it away at the end of the school year? Who might enjoy or benefit from this collection?

Creativity

Comprehension | Connections | Creativity

This section provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express.

Theatre activities are included that examine both specific artistic aspects of the production as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by *The Glass Menagerie*. The activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

Cultural Mapping

Objectives

Students will gain knowledge of similarities and differences in their classmates.

Students will be introduced to *The Glass Menagerie* and begin to reflect on the play.

Exercise

Ask the students to move the desks to the side and stand in a circle.

Describe the room as a map of the world. Identify Los Angeles in the space. Have students who were born in Los Angeles gather in that place. Have the other students group themselves according to their birthplace (north, east, south or west of Los Angeles). Each group must determine two additional things that they have in common. Report back to the whole class. (Example: The members of the “north” group all like pizza and are the oldest in their families.)

Repeat activity using other divisions:

Oldest, middle, youngest, only child.

Most moved by music, light, color, glass

Ask each student to stand by the quote that most intrigues them. Discuss in the group why they chose that quote. What intrigues them about it?

Quotes from *The Glass Menagerie*

Memory is seated predominantly in the heart.

A fire escape, a structure whose name is a touch of accidental poetic truth.

To begin with, I turn back time.

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The Different people are not like other people, but being different is nothing to be ashamed of.

Tableau/Frozen Picture

Objectives

Students will practice using their bodies to communicate an idea or theme.

Students will reflect on the varied interpretations of the theme.

Students will reflect on *The Glass Menagerie* through a physical exploration of its themes.

Exercise

Divide students into pairs. Student A is the artist. Student B is the sculpture. Have student A create a statue out of B on the theme of the “future.”

Examples: Flying cars, world peace, destroying the environment, graduating from college. Statues can be realistic or symbolic, personal or global.

Have each student title their statue and present to the class.

Repeat exercise with B as the artist and A as the sculpture.

Repeat with the themes of **Memory, Escape, Dreams, Family, Menagerie**. Have each student sculpt an image that represents one of these themes. Have the students sculpt on the same theme from the point of view of one or more of the characters from *The Glass Menagerie*.

Discuss what these ideas mean to your students and what these ideas meant to the characters in *The Glass Menagerie*. Are they similar or very different?

Sculpting Memory: Have students write about a moment in their lives that encapsulates one of the above themes. In small groups have them share their autobiographical memory. Have the group select one of the moments to use as the basis of a group tableau.

Roles in Life:

Objectives: Students will reflect on the different roles they play in their own lives and compare these roles to the roles played by the characters in *The Glass Menagerie*.

Discuss the idea that we all play many roles in our own lives. Get examples: sister, student, athlete, babysitter, friend.

Discuss the characters in *The Glass Menagerie*. What roles did each of them play? Tom: breadwinner, son, writer, dreamer, brother. What happens when the different roles come in conflict with each other? Ex. Tom's desire to write versus his family's need for his factory salary?

Writing: Ask each student to draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. On one side have the students list all the roles they play in their life. Encourage them to think about hobbies, talents, responsibilities, family relationships.

Have them write for a few minutes. Next have students go back to the top of the list they have generated and add in an adjective that describes this role. Ex. loyal brother, bored employee, poetic writer.

Have the students look for roles that may come into conflict with each other.

Have them write about how they try to balance these roles and what choices they have to make. Do they see similarities between the choices they need to make and the choices that faced the characters in *The Glass Menagerie*? Discuss.

Ask each student to pick a role that they are very proud of and share their name, adjective and role. Examples: "I am Tom and I am a gifted writer. I am Laura and I am a loyal daughter."

Poetry

"I'm a poet. And then I put poetry in the drama. I put it in the short stories, and I put it in the plays. Poetry's poetry. It doesn't have to be called a poem, you know."

—Tennessee Williams (from *Conversations with Tennessee Williams*, University Press of Mississippi, 1986)

Writing Prompt/Class Discussion:

How do you define poetry? What is poetry?
Where does one find poetry?
Do you enjoy poetry? Why or why not?
Have you created poetry? What forms did it take?

Definitions Of Poetry:

Webster's:

"Poetry: the art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts."

"Poetry is lofty thought or impassioned feeling expressed in imaginative words."

"From the Latin, *poeta*, which means 'poet' or 'maker.'"

(*Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary*. 1996. Gramercy Books. New York.)

Excerpt from the Wikipedia definition:

"Poetry (from the Latin *poeta*, a poet) is a form of literary art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to, or in lieu of, its apparent meaning."

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry>

Definition: Poetry is an imaginative awareness of experience expressed through meaning, sound, and rhythmic language choices so as to evoke an emotional response. Poetry has been known to employ meter and rhyme, but this is by no means necessary. Poetry is an ancient form that has gone through numerous and drastic reinvention over time. The very nature of poetry as an authentic and individual mode of expression makes it nearly impossible to define.

<http://contemporarylit.about.com/cs/literaryterms/g/poetry.htm>

Tennessee Williams As Playwright And Poet

Tennessee Williams is not only one of the most celebrated playwrights in the United States, he is considered a poet as well. According to The Poetry Foundation, "Critics, playgoers, and fellow dramatists recognized in Williams a poetic innovator."

In *The Glass Menagerie*, the character of Tom is based on Williams (Tennessee's real name was Thomas). Tom is described as "a poet with a job in a warehouse." The character also refers to himself as a poet while he speaks about another character, the gentleman caller:

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"But since I have a poet's weakness for symbols, I am using this character also as a symbol; he is the long delayed but always expected something that we live for."
– *The Glass Menagerie* (Act I, Scene I)

Writing Prompts/Class Discussion:

What does Williams mean by "a poet's weakness for symbols"?

What other symbols do you find in *The Glass Menagerie*?

What symbols do you respond to in life? (peace sign, hearts, flowers, skull and crossbones, angels, devils, etc..) Why do these symbols resonate with you?

What does the title *The Glass Menagerie* symbolize?

Tom also offers this description of himself:

"Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion..."

– *The Glass Menagerie* (Act I, Scene I)

Writing Prompts/Class Discussion:

Why would the above excerpt be considered poetic?

What is the connection between poets and truth telling?

Who are the poets and truth tellers in your life?

Williams described himself as a poet and offers some insight into why he thought this came to be: *"I don't think I would have been the poet I am without that anguished family situation."*

Writing Prompts/Class Discussion:

What do you think he means by this?

Do you think all poets are created by an anguished family situation? Or by an anguished life situation?

Why would anguish prompt one to create poetry?

Must one experience anguish in order to create poetry? Is it a requirement?

Have you ever created poetry, or created anything, out of deep anguish? Have you created poetry, or created anything, out of any other deep feeling, whether it was positive or negative, joyful or sorrowful?

The Glass Menagerie As Poetry

Keeping in mind the above definitions of poetry, *The Glass Menagerie* could be considered a poem of sorts. The dialogue and stage directions contain many

poetic elements. Examples of poetic language are offered below. They are excerpts from the opening description of the setting:

“The apartment faces an alley and is entered by a fire-escape, a structure whose name is a touch of accidental poetic truth, for all of these huge buildings are always burning with the slow and implacable fires of human desperation.”

“The scene is memory and is therefore nonrealistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details; other are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart.”

Writing Prompts/Class Discussion:

What does Tennessee Williams mean by “accidental poetic truth”? How does his poetic language affect the setting of the scene? What is communicated about this world?

Rewrite the above descriptions and leave out the poetic elements. What effect does this create? What is communicated?

Ask students to find other examples of poetry in *The Glass Menagerie*.

Poetry

Tennessee Williams Quote And Poem #1;
(Excerpt from an interview with David Frost)

DF: What is your credo?

TW: That romanticism is absolutely essential. That we can't really live without a great deal of it. It's very painful but we need it.

DF: By romanticism do you mean fantasy?

TW: A certain amount of that and the ability to feel tenderness toward another human being. The ability to love.

DF: And what gives people that ability?

TW: Not allowing themselves to become brutalized by the brutalizing experiences we encounter.

“We Have Not Long To Love”
by Tennessee Williams

We have not long to love.
Light does not stay.

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The tender things are those
we fold away.
Coarse fabrics are the ones
for common wear.....

Source: *Poetry* (February 1991).

You can find the entire poem “We Have Not Long To Love”
to share with your class at the link below:

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=27204>

Writing Prompts/Class Discussion:

How does the David Frost interview connect with the poem written by Tennessee Williams?

What do you think it means to be “brutalized by the brutalizing experiences we encounter”? What do you think Tennessee Williams meant by this?

What is the value of not becoming “brutalized by the brutalizing experiences we encounter”?

How might a person not allow themselves to become brutalized by difficult experiences?

Have you ever seen someone survive a difficult situation and not become bitter, hardened, and/or insensitive? What were the circumstances?

Do you see any connection between this poem, the David Frost interview, and *The Glass Menagerie*? Explain.

Tennessee Williams Quote And Poem #2

“My plays are pleas for the understanding of the delicate people.”

(Tennessee Williams explaining his work to Kim Hunter, who played the original Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.)

Writing Prompts/Class Discussions:

Who are the “delicate people” that Tennessee Williams writes about? Why would it be important to tell stories about them?

Are “delicate people” always weak? Why or why not?

Who are the “delicate people” in your life?

Do all human beings have something delicate about them? Explain.

The title page of *The Glass Menagerie* contains the following quote. It is from the poem “somewhere I have traveled, gladly beyond” by e.e. cummings:

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“Nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands”

You can find the entire poem “somewhere I have traveled, gladly beyond” to share with your class at the link below:

<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15401>

Writing Prompts/Class Discussions:

Why do you think Williams was moved to use this e.e. cummings quote to open the play?

Now that you have read the quote and the poem, what do you predict the play will be about? What do you think will happen?

What does e.e. cummings mean by “small hands”? Who has them? What do they signify?

In the poem, e.e. cummings refers to “the power of your intense fragility.” How is fragility powerful?

Is it possible for power and fragility to coexist? Explain.

Has something delicate or fragile in another person seemed powerful to you?

Has something delicate or fragile in another person held power over you?

How does this quote relate to Laura’s character? Does it relate to Tom or Amanda? Explain.

Tennessee Williams Quote And Poem #3:

Stage directions from Scene VI in *The Glass Menagerie* include a quote from another e.e. cummings poem entitled “the hours rise up putting off stars and it is”:

“Friday evening. It is about five o’clock of a late spring evening which comes ‘scattering poems in the sky.’”

You can find the entire poem “the hours rise up putting off stars and it is” to share with your class at the link below:

<http://poetry.poetryx.com/poems/10139/>

Writing Prompt/Class Discussion:

The opening of the poem contains the phrase, “light walks scattering poems.” What feelings and thoughts come to mind when reading this phrase?

Where do you expect the poem to go?

Does the poem go where you expect it? Explain.

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Tennessee Williams refers to two different poems by e.e. cummings in *The Glass Menagerie*.

What connections do you make between the works of Tennessee Williams and e.e. cummings? Why do you think Tennessee Williams was inspired by the poetry of e.e. cummings?

Dramatizing Poetry:

Students choose one of the discussed poems to dramatize. They can work in small groups or by themselves. Offer them a variety of ways to enter this assignment:

Create a scene with dialogue between characters.

Create a monologue.

Create a series of tableaux (frozen pictures) that tell a story. Must have a beginning, middle, and an ending.

Create a song to sing using the words in the poem or create lyrics based on the poem. Any genre of music can be used (popular ballad, hip/hop, classic rock, etc.)

Design a set that the poem could be presented in if dramatized.

Create a collage containing words, ideas, and images from, and inspired by, the poem.

Any other structure or approach students may offer that the teacher believes will work.

Note:

For simplicity's sake, the teacher may want to offer only one poem and only one way of dramatizing it. (For example, use only the poem by Tennessee Williams and ask small groups of students to write and perform scenes between two or more people.) If students are going to work in small groups, it could be beneficial to assign roles: writer, director, designer, performers.

Echo Poem

Utilizing the Tennessee Williams poem, "We Have Not Long to Love", students will create an "echo poem" from this work.

The teacher reads the poem aloud to the students. She/he does not read the entire poem all at once. After each line, the teacher pauses and the students write a line in response to the line just read aloud.

This response can contain anything that resonates with the students. It can be a direct, literal response to the line. It can be a phrase that comes to mind that might not have an obvious connection to the line read, but does have meaning for the student.

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After the teacher has gone through every line in the poem, each student should have his or her own “echo poem.”

Students take turns reading their echo poems aloud. This is done by having the teacher read through the poem again, pausing after each line. During each pause the student volunteer will read aloud his/her response to the line.

Memory Poem

The Glass Menagerie is described as a memory play and describes memory as being “seated predominantly in the heart.” Students will create a short poem based on memory. First, they list five of their most vivid memories. Then they choose one of those memories to write a poem about. (The teacher may wish to model an example before the students begin their writing.) The following structure can be used to create the poem:

I remember ...
I saw ...
I heard ...
I smelled...
I said...
I felt ...
I wish...
I remember...

Tennessee Williams Poetry Publications:

In the Winter of Cities: Poems, New Directions Publishing (New York, NY), 1956.

Androgyne, Mon Amour: Poems, New Directions Publishing (New York, NY), 1977.

The Collected Poems of Tennessee Williams, edited by David E. Roessel and Nicholas Rand Moschovakis, New Directions Publishing (New York, NY), 2002.

Source: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poet.html>

Writing Memory

The Glass Menagerie is known as a memory play. The story is based on the memories of Tom, the protagonist, and is told from his perspective.

Playwriting Activity

Create a diagram of the place that you would call home.

Now, on your diagram mark the place that is the safest part of your home, the most dangerous part of your home, and the heart of your home.

Now write down one shared memory for each of those locations, meaning a memory you share with another person.

Now choose one of these memories and write the scene between you and the other person from your perspective. What happened?

Now re-write the same scene from the perspective of the other person. How is the shared memory different? How is it the same?

Design Elements

Tennessee Williams' use of stage direction in *The Glass Menagerie* is at once utilitarian and poetic. His language is quite specific in its direction, yet so rich in its imagery that it is clearly meant to evoke emotion from the reader and share the very definite point of view of the author. Before the play even begins, Williams describes the scene:

"The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of a building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living-units that flower as warty growths in overcrowded urban centers of lower middle-class population and are symptomatic of the impulse of this largest and fundamentally enslaved section of American society to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist and function as one interfused mass of automatism."

Williams spends considerable energy describing not only the physical structure of the scenery for *The Glass Menagerie*, but also the emotional, theoretical and political inspiration behind the ideas, indicating his belief that this story is to be told through every element of the theatre.

The **Design Elements** that go into theatre production are sometimes overlooked or underappreciated. In an age where budgetary concerns often translate to minimal scenic, lighting, sound and costume design, a sparse stage is often not an aesthetic choice; it is a financial necessity. However, the theatre Williams wrote for was one where each designer was a true artist, working in his or her own unique and specialized way to tell the playwright's story through their own medium of theatre.

Since audience members would not be privy to this writing while watching a production of the play, it is as if Williams meant the language and the writing

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throughout his lengthy stage directions to serve as a sort of secret message to the artists involved with staging a production. In fact, there is a whole section of “Production Notes” in the original book in which Williams addresses his ideas and the possible challenges the designers may face. He gives specific attention to set, music, and lighting.

A full theatrical production consists of the following artistic areas:

Scene Design: responsible for the set and overall presentation of the stage area. The scenic designer creates models, renderings or drawings with ideas for scenery the same way an architect might. They build scale models or create detailed sketches of their own interpretation of what the world of the play might look like. Then they present these designs to the director for approval before actually launching a full-scale build on the stage itself. The scenic designer is also ultimately responsible for “dressing the set” in terms of furniture, art and general décor, working with the other departments to ensure consistency.

Lighting Design: responsible for physically lighting the stage with attention paid to color, brightness, volume, variation and specific cues decided on by the director and the playwright to indicate change of day, time or scene. The lighting designer must also consider specific lighting needs presented by the story or the scenic design (table lamps, passing headlights outside the playing space, etc.).

Sound Design: responsible for all music and sound effects, including phones, doorbells, radios, televisions sets, traffic noise and any ambient noise seen as relevant to the telling of the story.

Costume Design: responsible for designing and supplying wardrobe to the actors based on the specific time period as well as an overall theme and impression decided on by the director with obvious influence coming from the playwright.

Properties Design: responsible for any and all objects found on the set that an actor might use—the unicorn from Laura’s glass menagerie, for example, or a particular book, drinking glass, pack of cigarettes, etc.

Hair and Make-Up Design: Responsible for styling the actors in an appropriate

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way to represent the style, time period and physical and emotional condition of the characters throughout the play.

Reference:

Fundamentals of Play Directing: Fifth Edition by Dean Carra
Theatre: The Lively Art by Edwin Wilson & Alvin Goldfarb

The following activities are designed to explore the various departments and design elements that go into creating a piece of theatre and to allow students to explore their own inclination as artists through interpretation and design while deepening an understanding of *The Glass Menagerie*.

BASIC UNDERSTANDING (Discussion):

Students and instructor discuss the different elements of theatre design (Set, Lighting, Sound, Properties, Costume, Hair / Make-up). It should be noted that each department has a responsibility to interpret the playwright's story through their own medium, and that each of these departments has multiple people working hard to realize a common vision through individual effort.

DEALER'S CHOICE (Exercise 1)

After a discussion about each of the departments involved in theatre production, students are asked to choose one design element they are most interested in and are divided into groups according to department. Each department will then be responsible for interpreting the play and creating a design scheme that translates the story through their specific medium of theatre art (light, sound, scenery, costume, hair/make-up, props). Each department continues discussion about their department's specific responsibilities in order to clarify details as to the capabilities and challenges of their particular craft.

Students create design plans for *The Glass Menagerie*. They may represent these designs by sketching, sculpting, writing or any combination. Students should consider the following list of questions as they create their own design plans, keeping in mind that their work will influence the work of all the other designers. Students should allow themselves to think creatively as individuals, contributing to a common goal through their own unique expression.
Questions to consider:

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What is the mood of the play (based on your interpretation)?
What is the socioeconomic status of the main family in the play?
What year does the play take place?
What time of year is it?
What time of day is it when the play opens?
How much time will pass during the play?
What is the weather throughout the play?
What are any other essential elements in the play that must be attended to?
What clues does the playwright give specifically to my department?
How will my chosen medium serve the play?
Where do I have room to “breath” as an artist?
How does my design express my own thoughts as an artist?

Presentation and Discussion:

Students present their designs to the class and discuss the elements of each department and how they each contribute to the interpretation of the story. Students see *The Glass Menagerie* at the Mark Taper Forum, taking mental note of the design elements used by the professional production team. After seeing the show, students discuss the differences between what they saw at the Taper and their own interpretations of the play.

The Sound of Music

Music is featured heavily in this production of *The Glass Menagerie*. In fact, music is often featured in theatre, film and television productions and can have a huge effect on the presentation of the story, performance of the actors and experience of the audience. In his production notes, Williams addresses the issue of music:

“A single recurring tune. This tune is like circus music, not when you are on the grounds or in the immediate vicinity of the parade, but when you are at some distance and very likely thinking of something else.”

The description is open to considerable interpretation, but the general feeling Williams proposes is almost a dream-like quality. Exactly what “circus music” sounds like may be very different depending on designers and may range from joyous to melancholy, even frightening. The tempo, volume, composition and

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general feel of the music would also have a huge effect on the actors and, in turn, the audience.

Throughout the following activities, students will be asked to “play” certain scenes multiple times, allowing themselves to be “directed” by accompanying musical selections.

ONE PERSON, ONE SONG (Exercise 1):

A single volunteer is asked to simply walk across the playing area multiple times as a song plays in the background. The student repeats the walk across the stage several times, each time with a different piece of accompanying music (light, melancholy, suspenseful, romantic, slap-stick, scary, etc.).

Questions to consider while watching:
Who was the person?
Where was the person going?
How did they feel about going there?
What time of day was it?
What was the weather like?

Discuss how the different music affected the actor on the stage. The exercise should be repeated by as many participants as are willing to try it!

SILENT SCENES (Exercise 2):

Spread around the room without talking to or touching one another, students are asked to “create their own space.” They will do this by focusing their attention inward, so that they can work without distraction. Students are directed to “play” that they are waiting for a loved one at the train station. As they do this, a selection of different music is played in the background. Students should act silently and allow themselves to feel emotional changes as different music plays, letting their own physicality be influenced by the clues in the music (excited, nervous, in love, resentful, frightened, etc.).

3 LINE SCENES (Exercise 3):

As a group, students are asked to provide three lines of dialogue, one at a time, creating a short “script.” The lines need not be related to one

another and should come from different students. The context, order and even consistency or relationship between the lines is irrelevant. For example, suppose the following three lines were suggested:

- A) I never thought it would turn out this way.
- B) I think it's going to rain.
- C) I'm hungry.

In groups of four (3 actors and a director), students use the script to create a scene in whatever way they like, keeping music in mind as they do so. Groups present back to the rest of the class with musical accompaniment.

Discuss. Students discuss what they saw, paying particular attention to how music changed the line readings and otherwise influenced the actors and directors.

Memory, Flashback and Physical Storytelling

The idea of memories as a theme and the use of flashbacks as a convention are central to Center Theatre Group's production of *The Glass Menagerie*. Tom's character is also the narrator and author. He exists in a different time and space from the rest of the play, thinking out loud in a hotel room as he writes the story that lives itself out on the stage.

Tom: "...I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion. To begin with, I turn back time. I reverse it to that quaint period, the thirties...." (Act I, Scene I)
Williams shows an individual (Tom) in the process of remembering a significant time in his life and all of the people, objects and emotions that existed for him then. As audience members, we are invited to view the process of remembering from the vantage point of both the present and the past.

PHYSICAL STORYTELLING

Exploring the Space: Students walk slowly and quietly around the room (cleared of furniture) without interacting with each other, "exploring the space." Students should not talk or touch one another during this time, but rather

turn their focus inward, concentrating only on their own breath and what they observe through sight and sound around the room.

Sculpture Garden: Instructor "freezes" students periodically with an agreed

upon vocal cue (“Freeze!” works well...). Students should literally freeze mid-stride as if they have been turned into stone right in the middle of an action. This will create a “sculpture garden” of frozen people in various physical and facial positions.

Group Tableaux: Taking the idea of still images one step further, the instructor now introduces the word **Tableaux**, simply meaning a still image used on stage to tell part of a story. These still images are like snap shots taken of a particular moment and can be used to represent an emotion, as expressed by the group working in unison. In groups of four (or more) students create tableaux expressing an emotion (joy, grief, fear, etc). Every student must participate, finding their own function within the group.

Note: Students need not represent people and may even find it easier to portray a tree or a piece of furniture with their bodies. Tableaux may also be used to represent specific moments in history or literature. In groups of about six, students create tableaux, using their bodies to represent characters from an event in history (The Boston Tea Party, Signing of the Declaration of Independence, Barak Obama’s Inauguration, etc.). Every student must participate, but need not represent actual people or historical figures (trees, cars, furniture, etc. are all fair play).

Groups share their tableaux as the remaining students guess what they are seeing. Instructor facilitates a discussion of each group’s work, asking individuals what they are in relation to the whole picture and how/why they made their choice.

TIME JUMP

A simple well-known story (*Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Three Little Pigs*, etc.) is discussed and broken into three parts: A beginning, a middle and an end. (Discussion may also include the acts of a play, the chapters of a book, etc.) Three groups of students form tableaux to represent each of the sections of the story, creating a “timeline” with tableaux illustrating the events of the story’s history.

The tableaux are then shuffled and presented in a different order, creating a very different telling of the story. Time jumping as a concept is discussed and examples from modern movies are used for reference (*Lord of the Rings*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Memento*, etc.).

Back in groups, students choose their own stories to illustrate with a series of snap shot tableaux. These could be fairytales or more contemporary works, but should be familiar to everyone in class. Each group presents its work in any order, and the rest of the class guesses what they are seeing and how the order in which they are seeing it helps to inform the story.

PERSONAL TIMELINE:

Individually, students create their own timelines from birth until present day. They should start by limiting themselves to five significant events, then broaden the story, adding as many events as time will allow.

Students are asked to write about why they chose the specific moments that they did. Students should consider who and what made these particular pieces of their own history stand out to them and how these incidents have shaped the people they are today. Ask students to consider how they might create a memory play from their own lived history. How would they choose to bring this story to life? This part of the writing may be private or shared depending on the group. Discuss Tennessee Williams choice to put his life and memories on the stage in *The Glass Menagerie*.

Voice Work and Confidence

Voice work can go a long way towards developing confidence and ability to communicate what we mean, what we need and what we want.

JIM (to Laura): 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...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!

Vocal warm up:

Tucking the chin to the chest, begin to gently roll down the spine allowing the arms and head to hang. Then, gently roll up vertebrae by vertebrae and chin and head will be the last to rise up. Roll up and down three times.

Clasp your hands in front of you and stretch your hands away from you and feel a stretch across your back. Give a sigh of relief. Move your hands sideways

from left to right and continue to feel a nice stretch across your back. Give a sigh of relief each time you pass through the center. Hands still clasped, bring your hands above your head and stretch skyward. Give a sigh of relief. Continuing with hands clasped above your head, stretch over to your right and feel your left rib cage stretching open. Give a sigh of relief. And stretch to the left side and feel the right rib stretch open. Give a sigh of relief. Repeat if you like and then lower the arms. Give a sigh of relief.

Motor scooter vocal warm up: A healthy way to warm up the vocal cords without straining.

Place your upper teeth on the lower lip, to form a “V” sound. Breathe and fuel air through the mouth to make a “V” or motor scooter buzzing sound. Students can also bring their hands in front as though holding onto the handle bars of the scooter and pretend they are revving the engine and changing the gears. Move up and down pitch-wise as comfortable. Guide them through a riding tour as they vocalize—“...we’re in downtown and you’re changing gears to go up a hill, faster, slower, now shift to low gear as we wait for the light, rev your engine...now move through the room, race your neighbor...”

Now evolve the “V” sound to the open vowel sound “O.” “We’re witches or ghosts during Halloween and using your hands and arms to scare your neighbor, raise your hands and arms up on both sides and using the rise and fall in your voice begin to spook your neighbor—O-O-O-O—O-O-O-O.” Repeat this 6-8 times encouraging the students to use lower, middle and higher parts of their vocal range.

To **wake up the articulators** have the students chew while exaggerating their lip movements, sticking their tongues out and moving their tongues in a clockwise direction and then in a counter clock-wise direction is also excellent for developing the articulators. Repeat 2-4 times in each direction.

Breathe and exhale to flutter the lips. This is the basics of getting breath support developed. After fluttering several times, breathe and begin to exhale on an extended “s” sound. Breathe in again on your own rhythm and to continue the “s.” Breathe again before you need to. This will prevent you from getting into the habit of squeezing your ribs. It is not a contest to see who can make an “s” the longest. (Rib-squeezing will only serve to tighten their throats and their torso and the tension, over time, can hinder their vocal production and therefore their sense of success in building their breath and voice to speak and sing.)

Now walk around the room and lengthen the back of the neck, carrying your ears over your shoulders. (Their posture will naturally fall into place.) Change directions, stop or start again, follow a classmate, break off again and change the pace or rhythm. (Simple movement will get their breath moving.) Allow your arms to hang naturally as you walk about the room. Notice your breath as you walk.

Following this voice work, move into an exercise that will allow the students to begin to voice and express themselves. Most improvisational theatre games are wonderful for this. For example:

"This is not a _____. It's a/an _____."

Use any object, a stick, a book, etc. Everyone form a circle with room to move between each person. Take the object, a stick , for example, and the first person says, "This is not a stick, it's a flute." She/he holds it up as though pretending to play the flute. She/he passes it to the next person to their right. Continue around the circle with each person having the opportunity to speak the phrase and improvise what the object is not, until you've gone around the circle.

This is an excellent exercise for getting imaginations awake and warmed up and it offers the students a chance to engage physically and vocally right after their vocal warm up.

Emotional and Sense Memory:

This series of exercises can be explored in sequence or separated out and explored as individual activities:

From the opening stage directions, "...memory is seated predominantly in the heart."

In *The Glass Menagerie*, Amanda, Laura and Tom share their past and present emotional lives. They, themselves, are a menagerie of characters recalling and sharing their reactions to emotions and senses throughout the play.

To play roles such as these, actors often explore techniques called Emotional Memory and Sense Memory. According to Uta Hagen, a renowned acting teacher, "...sense memory deals with the psychological sensations of, for example, heat, cold, hunger, pains, etc. Of course, it is true that a physical sensation such as heat or cold can produce emotions (emotional memory), such as irritation, depression or anxiety; likewise, an emotional response can

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be accompanied by or produce physical sensations (sense memory), such as getting hot or goose-pimply, becoming nauseated..."

In this first exercise, the students will be asked to follow a guided journey to open up their imaginations to remembering and/or creating photographs in their mind's eye. A writing prompt and discussion will follow and they will be given an opportunity to share their journey and to distinguish a sense memory from an emotional memory.

Photograph Exercise:

Aim: To open up and develop the imagination as a tool for connecting to memories, senses and emotions so they can be applied to creative writing, reading skills, and theatre/acting activities.

Preparations: The students should have a journal or blank paper with pen or pencil in front of them at their desks. Help them to prepare to sit quietly for a number of minutes—they may need to stretch first, etc.

Guide: (to participants/students)

Please sit so you are comfortable. Notice the room sounds, the temperature, here you are.

Now close your eyes, and again notice the room sounds, the temperature. Notice your breath, your heart beat.

Imagine a place you like to be. It might be a place where you feel safe, or it's a place that's fun, such as a friend's home, the beach, under a tree. What do you see? (Allow a few seconds.) What sounds do you hear? (Allow a few seconds.) What is the temperature? Is it hot or cold or just right? (Allow a few seconds to establish this place.)

In this place, you notice a door and it doesn't have to make sense. For example, if you're at the beach you can still imagine a door appears.

This is a secret room that only you enter and only you have the key. You reach into your pocket and you pull out your key. You unlock the door and enter. Shut the door behind you. Once inside, you notice many items you have collected. Take a few moments—what items do you see? Pick one up. Notice how it makes you feel. (Allow about 5 seconds.) Is there a memory that comes to mind? (Allow 10-15 seconds.)

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Now you see a school yearbook. Pick it up. How does the cover feel? How does it smell? Is it heavy or light? What does it look like? Open the book. You turn the pages. Finally, you stop at a photograph that you are in. The photograph begins to expand into a life-sized situation. You step into the photograph.

What do you see? (Allow a few seconds.) Where are you? (Allow a few seconds.) What do you hear? (Allow a few seconds.) What is the temperature? (Allow a few seconds.) What do you smell? (Allow a few seconds.) Is there anything to taste? (Allow a few seconds.) What do you feel? (Allow a few seconds.) Is there anyone in the photo with you and what are you doing, if anything? (Allow about 10 seconds.)

Take the time to look around and even say goodbye if you like. Now, as you step out of the photo, it shrinks back down to yearbook size and you are holding it again. You look at the photograph. When you stepped into the photo, did it feel like present time? Now that you are outside of the photograph, how do you feel? Take a deep breath and let it out. Close the yearbook and put it back.

Take in the room and know that you can return to your secret room anytime you like. Open the door and walk out. Now bring your attention back into this room and open your eyes and begin to write about your experience. What sounds did you hear? What was the temperature? Where was your safe or fun place? What did the door look like? The key? What was your room like and what had you collected? Describe the photograph and what happened. You will have about seven minutes to write.

Follow with a discussion. Ask for student volunteers to share what they wrote or answer some of the writing prompt questions such as: Where did you go? What did you see? How did you feel? What and/or who was in your photograph, etc?

Ask the students if they can distinguish between an emotional memory versus a sense memory. Did they feel an emotion like feeling glad to see someone, or perhaps a sensation like goosebumps, or suddenly a flash of cold or hot? Or perhaps they stepped into a photograph where the environment changed quickly. Was that a sense memory? Or perhaps they felt cold and fear at the same time – a sense memory and an emotional memory.

Part Two

Have students create tableaux/photographs of the photos from the guided

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journey. As the instructor in the room, you might need to take the temperature of your classroom and see if you need a preliminary step of seeing if anyone will first volunteer to share about their photograph experience. Ask the student to share one aspect of their photograph. From this one aspect, the student can begin to sculpt or create a tableau with you, the teacher or another fellow student with your support.

Then, divide students into partners or small groups and ask them to sculpt their fellow student(s) into the image they saw in their photo. Have them start with one aspect of their photograph experience, such as the temperature. The student can give his/her group or partner direction such as “hug yourself like it is cold out” or “have a big grin because you are glad to see the other person in the photo.” The sculptor can share with their group the sense memory and emotional memory to create the relationships, situation and feelings in the photo.

Then the sculptor should step into the photograph and add themselves to the relationships, situation and feelings in the photo.

Part Three

Have the students write in their journals regarding the photograph experience and the following questions: What are my goals for the year? How do I want to see myself in the yearbook at the end of the year? What do I want to see as a lasting memory in my yearbook?

Discuss as a class shared goals for the year. Create a group goal for the year. What would they like their class’s picture in the yearbook to reflect? Perhaps you can take an actual photograph of the class and another one at the end of the year.

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Center Theatre Group's mission is to serve the diverse audiences of Los Angeles by producing and presenting theatre of the highest caliber, by nurturing new artists, by attracting new audiences, and by developing youth outreach and education programs. This mission is based on the belief that the art of theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large.

Theatre is an enduring and powerful tool for communicating ideas, stories, emotions and beliefs that fuel the intellect, imagination and creative spirit. Center Theatre Group believes that stimulating awareness, creativity, dialogue and an inquisitive mind is integral to the growth and well-being of the individual and the community; and that nurturing a life-long appreciation of the arts leads inextricably to an engaged and enlightened society.

Center Theatre Group's education and community partnership programs advance the organization's mission in three key ways:

Audiences: Inspiring current and future audiences to discover theatre and its connection to their lives

Artists: Investing in the training, support and development of emerging, young artists and young arts professionals who are the future of our field; and

Arts Education Leadership: Contributing to the community-wide efforts to improve the quality and scope of arts education in Los Angeles.

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