1958

Two units for the teaching of Abe Lincoln in Illinois and Our Town

Mullaney, Colleen Rose

Boston University

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/6606

Boston University
BOSTON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Project

TWO UNITS FOR THE TEACHING OF

ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS

AND

OUR TOWN

by

Colleen Rose Mullaney
(A.B., Trinity College, 1957)

and

John Francis Shea
(A.B., St. Anselm's College, 1954)

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Education
1958
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER | PAGE
--- | ---
I. | INTRODUCTION .. 1
--- | ---
The Problem .. 1
Purpose .. 1
Justification .. 1
Scope and Limitations .. 1
Definition of Terms .. 2
Procedure .. 2
II. | REVIEW OF RESEARCH .. 4
--- | ---
The Language Arts Program .. 4
Speaking and Writing in the Language Arts Program .. 4
Reading and Literature in the Language Arts Program .. 19
Dramatic Literature in the Language Arts Program .. 22
Methods of Teaching Dramatic Literature .. 29
Bibliography .. 40
III. | UNITS - UNIT A: ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS .. 43
--- | ---
Preface .. 43
Introduction .. 43
Pupil Objectives .. 44
Pre-Test .. 52
Answers Keys .. 55
Unit Assignment .. 56
Introductory Activities .. 56
Core Activities .. 58
Optional Related Activities .. 75
Pooling of Experiences Phase .. 78
Bibliography for Pupil Activities .. 79
Collateral Reading List .. 85
Bibliography for Teacher's Use .. 92
Bibliography of Audio-Visual Aids .. 95
Evaluations .. 98
Final Test .. 102
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNIT B: OUR TOWN</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil Objectives</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Assignment</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Activities</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Activities</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Related Activities</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pooling of Experiences Phase</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography for Pupil Activities</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography For Teacher's Use</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Test</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer Key</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Problem.--The reading of dramatic literature has become an important aspect of our total school curriculum. Effective instruction aimed at a knowledge and appreciation of this literature calls for the best methods and materials.

Purpose.--The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to present the best methods and materials relevant to the teaching of dramatic literature and (2) to construct two resource units for the teaching of Abe Lincoln in Illinois and Our Town.

Justification.--To develop skill in the teaching of dramatic literature as preparation for a teaching career, the writers realize a personal need for a knowledge of the modern and accepted methods and materials related to this instruction.

Scope and Limitations.--This study is concerned with the teaching of dramatic literature in senior high school. Two units have been designed for grades ten and eleven. The writers' lack of teaching experience limits these units since no valid evaluation of them can be made until they are tried in the classroom.
Definition of Terms. -- Unit: "...a comprehensive series of related and meaningful activities so developed as to achieve pupil purposes, provide significant educational experiences, and result in appropriate behavioral changes."  

Unit Assignment: "...a sequence of activities by means of which...elements of educative growth are to be achieved."  

Core Activities: "...that part of the unit assignment in which it is expected that most pupils--perhaps all pupils--will engage directly at some time in some way, and to some extent."  

Optional Related Activities: "...activities in which pupils engage solely because they want to."  

Pooling-of-Experiences Phase: "...a series of well-organized and pertinent oral reports, discussions, debates, explanations, demonstrations, experiments, musical selections, dramatic sketches, auditory and visual aids."  

Procedure. -- In the research chapter the English language arts program is discussed, with particular attention to the


3/Ibid., p. 507.

4/Ibid., p. 507.

5/Ibid., p. 602.
place of dramatic literature in the total program. Methods for the teaching of this literature are then presented.

Two units have been constructed. The first is based upon Robert E. Sherwood's *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*; the second, upon Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. Within both units, provisions have been made for a consideration of the other works of both playwrights, if the teacher so desires.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RESEARCH

The Language Arts Program.-- The broad and general goals of American education form a basis for the program in the language arts. The Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English states that in our society "it is clear that the American people want the children and youth of the nation to be educated to the extent of their highest potentialities." In view of what the Commission believes the American people want for their children, it lists the three major purposes of American education:

"... (1) cultivation of satisfying and wholesome personal lives, (2) development of social sensitivity and effective participation in the life of the local community, the nation, and the world, and (3) preparation for vocational competence."

For the fulfillment of these goals, the language arts program must consider the growth of each student as an


2/Ibid., pp. 6-7.
individual and as a member of a group. More specifically, the growth with which the program concerns itself deals with "the linguistic abilities and the awareness of the values of life which are required by the fully mature civilized human being."  

The program recognizes two important facts. First, that language power if it is part of growth, must be the product of a long, continuous process, developing as the child grows and develops into a mature individual. Further, "each child grows at his own pace, some more slowly, some more quickly." To satisfy the needs of each child the curriculum designed to develop this growth must make provisions for such continued and individual development. Secondly, the language arts program recognizes "the need for developing language power in the social situations in which it is used." The ability to use language effectively at a proper moment is developed gradually by a series of previous experiences. The effective curriculum will try to discover in what situations outside the classroom people do speak, listen, write, and read and adapt the in-class activities to prepare the individual for such real-life

1/Ibid., p. 8.
2/Ibid., p. 13.
situations. It will determine the particular powers needed in thinking, reading, writing, listening, and speaking and "relate them to the problems of living in a democracy today."

The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English has set ten major goals toward which experiences in the language arts should be directed. These are:

1. Wholesome Personal Development.
2. Dynamic and Worthwhile Allegiances through Heightened Moral Perception and a Personal Sense of Values.
4. Effective Use of Language in the Daily Affairs of Life.
5. Habitual and Intelligent Use of the Mass Modes of Communication.
7. Effective Habits of Work.
8. Competent Use of Language and Reading for Vocational Purposes.
10. Faith in and Allegiance to the Basic Values of a Democratic Society.

1/Ibid., p. 13.
2/Ibid., p. 15.
3/Ibid., pp. 41-53.
For the attainment of these goals, the teacher of language arts must be aware of the real purposes which language serves in the everyday lives of his students. His attention is called to the fact "that the primary use of language (one frequently overlooked in the teaching of English) is to enable one human being to convey something of his private experiences to another." Implicit in this is recognition of each individual as the possessor of such "private experiences" and the development through the language arts of the power to communicate these experiences effectively.

The areas of the language program by means of which we accomplish our goals are: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The importance of relating these areas is evident in Dora V. Smith's statement:

"Today the tendency is even more pronounced to develop integrated units or activities involving reading, writing, speaking, and listening about topics or enterprises of daily concern to boys and girls."

Such integration is not only possible but natural to the classroom activities. For the teacher seeking to train his students in the everyday life experiences calling for the

1/Lou LaBrant, We Teach English, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1951, p. 21.
2/The English Language Arts, op. cit., p. 326.
use of language, endless opportunities for integration will present themselves.

Speaking. -- The Commission states: "No aspect of the curriculum is more important to the schools of a democracy than the teaching of speech." The two-fold problem in the teaching of speech is evident in the Commission's statement that "personal effectiveness is determined by what one says and how one says it." The skill of communicating by the spoken word is not enough. The ideas to communicate must be present, for the importance of speech lies not only in expressing oneself pleasantly and convincingly but in the ability to summon ideas and present them clearly and effectively.

Such speaking we must realize, takes place in the company of one's associates. It would seem natural then that the individual as part of a group must learn to work, and in this case, speak and to communicate within that group.


2/ Ibid., pp. 203-204.

The Commission states:

"...because speech is the basic language activity by which people relate themselves to one another, the development of speech competence should come about through practice in using speech effectively in group relationships."

Authorities also insist upon focusing our attention upon the natural and everyday situations that demand spoken English by making these situations the sources of classroom instruction. J. N. Hook groups these classroom speech activities into four categories:

1. Those activities often used such as conversing, telephoning, giving directions, making introductions, telling stories, reading aloud, and discussing informally.

2. Those important but less frequently needed activities such as interviewing or being interviewed, making announcements, introducing a speaker, giving reports, following parliamentary procedure, and defining and taking part in panel discussions.

3. Those activities more important perhaps for superior students such as giving book reviews, dramatizing, debating, platform speaking, after-dinner speaking, choral reading, reciting of memorized passages and participating in radio programs.

4. Those activities needed for professional work such as techniques of salesmanship.

The Relation Between Speaking and Writing. -- Many of the above activities, by their very nature, demand an

1/ The English Language Arts in the Secondary School, op. cit., p. 204.

integration of speaking with the other areas of the language arts. If, for example, we have panel discussions on some phase of our reading, the three areas of reading, speaking and listening are brought into play. If to these we add written preparation of the discussion, the fourth area, composition, becomes involved. In regard to this, Mirrieles says:

"...you should make oral work a basis for composition, an important phase of all literature, and an outstanding factor in its own right during each semester's course."

The interrelationship between speech and writing becomes evident when considering the simple procedure of making a statement. How much clearer and more effective that statement becomes when we first write it out, see it in print and revise it according to the exact meaning we wish to convey. How more effective, on the other hand, is our writing when discussion, either with a single person or with a group, precedes it. Mirrieles feels this need for discussion is one method for interrelating the areas of speech and writing. Her idea regarding the motivation of students to written composition is that it should be first based upon the exchange of ideas in class discussions

1/Lucia B. Mirrieles, op. cit., p. 239.
2/Ibid., pp. 244-45.
during which each student selects his topic which takes the
form of written composition, only after it is given ex-
temporaneously before the class.

She also suggests group discussions aimed at the
selection of the better written papers, oral criticisms of
papers read and class discussion of any topic of interest
which might be used as a source of written work.

The problems of punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary
building, long associated only with written composition,
now appear closely allied to the area of speech and thus to
the interrelated areas of speech and writing. Mirrielees
suggests the following methods:

1. The reading of sentences aloud to illustrate
that punctuation and clear expression of thought are
closely related.

2. The use of dictation exercises for teaching
spelling.

3. The use of talks on roots, suffixes, prefixes
and meanings of words.

4. The use of reports, group discussions, and
panel discussions for vocabulary work.

Writing.-- The teaching of writing offers new problems.

Volume Three of the Curriculum Series of the National Council

1/Ibid., pp. 255-256.

2/Ibid., pp. 256-257.
of Teachers of English states: "Teaching writing is both
difficult and rewarding, demanding much but offering much
to teacher and student."

Dora V. Smith presents the problem more specifically
when she states:

"The written sentence is presumably to be
understood by anyone who reads it, and lacks the
intonation, gesture, and facial expression which help
interpret what is said. Consequently writing is more
difficult than speaking."

This conclusion seems substantiated when we consider
the skills needed for writing.

Volume Three of the Curriculum Series states:

"All the manifold details of written form, of
spelling, the grammatical usage, and of vocabulary
development arise to plague the youngster who tries
to record his experiences in writing."

These matters must be made to seem important to the
student by making him realize the value of accuracy in writ-
ing. To realize this goal, the teacher may use questions
by which the students can evaluate their written work,
questions aimed at determining if sentences are clear
enough to express the meaning desired. Volume Three suggests

1/ The English Language Arts in the Secondary School,
on. cit., p. 293.

2/ The English Language Arts, on. cit., p. 319.

3/ The English Language Arts in the Secondary School,
on. cit., p. 337.
that capitalization and punctuation rules should not be taught in isolation from their need in writing, but "in relation to the problems of actual communication."  

The objectives of teaching writing should be clear to both the teacher and the pupil. Volume Three states that these objectives should urge the student to express himself creatively and to think as an individual with independent thought.

In regard to the objectives of writing, this same volume makes the following statements:

1. "Sharing ideas or experiences through writing is one way of learning to know one's self and to enrich one's personality."

2. "Writing is also a means of learning to know others because if we are to write about people we must know and understand them."

3. "Even on an elementary level, writing should help the young student to observe and organize his experience, in other words, to think."

In regard to motivating the student, Volume Three states: "The first business of the teacher of writing is to create in the classroom an atmosphere in which sharing personal experiences comes naturally...." This volume

1/Ibid., p. 339.
2/Ibid., p. 293.
4/Ibid., p. 299.
urges that ample time be given to the kind of discussion which leads naturally into more than one idea. In such a way, more than one topic will be available for writing purposes. Before the actual writing process begins, the student "...should have some observation, experience, question or conflict which he is interested in communic-

The reasons for which we write are extensive. Volume Three has grouped the writing experiences to be taught in school into four categories:

1. Personal writing experiences useful to young people in the expression of their ideas and in the sharing of their feelings with each other. These writing experiences include personal letters, stories, essays and poems, invitations and replies, letters of condolence, or congratulation, and notes of thanks for gifts or favors received.

2. Writing dealing with the clarification and expression of ideas and the gathering of information for some specific purpose. Examples of this would be an outline for an argument or for a report to the class on a certain topic.

3. Writing for doing business by mail; announcing meetings, for example, and ordering goods, soliciting funds, selling or advertising the high school annual, and seeking a job or asking for a recommendation.

4. Service writing consists of posting written notices of meetings, keeping minutes, thanking a speaker for an assembly talk, or congratulating a fellow student upon his success in dramatics or sports.

1/Id., p. 296.
2/Id., pp. 297-298
A problem pertinent to the teaching of writing is that of instruction in English grammar. Volume Three states: 1/

"The teaching of systematic English grammar to a student does not automatically result in his speaking and writing better. On the other hand, the teaching of grammar cannot be ignored, for though a functional knowledge of the basic structure of the English sentence and of the terms used in identifying language forms, an intelligent student can be assisted in the revision of his writing and in the self-analysis of recordings of his speech."

Volume Three concludes: 2/

"...learning to write is hard work. It calls for constant writing by the student and direct teaching and evaluation by the teacher. There is no other way, and time-consuming though it is, the task is there if there is to be a population able to express ideas clearly, effectively, and with integrity."

Listening.-- A third strand in the language arts program is listening. Today's teachers realize that good listening habits must be taught; few people are naturally good listeners. Throughout the grades a continuous program in teaching listening must be carried out. In the secondary schools, listening skills must be reviewed, reinforced, and higher skills taught. The Commission on English Curriculum states: 3/

"Because of their (listening skills) importance in effective learning, in the enrichment of personal living, and in participation in the social and civic affairs of modern life, they should be developed at all levels of instruction. The nature of the program

1/Ibid., p. 357.
2/Ibid., p. 350.
in each successive grade will depend upon the kind of situation in which the learners at each level have occasion to listen, the maturity of the problems they face, and the extent of skill which they exhibit in each phase of listening."

Such a program calls for more than incidental lessons in listening. Nichols and Lewis say:

"Loosely speaking, listening may be said to be of three types, with each serving a different end: (a) appreciative listening to any kind of stimuli gratifying to the senses of the hearer; (b) critical listening to persuasive speech for the purpose of evaluating the speaker's argument and evidence; (c) discriminative listening to informative speech... for the purpose of comprehension and perhaps utilization of the ideas and information of the speaker."

A person's level of living and learning depends to a great extent on his ability to listen. Flavor is added to the life of the individual who listens creatively. Listening can make the difference between knowledge and ignorance, between enjoyment of everyday affairs and boredom. The development of good listening habits is part of the development into maturity. Besides the individual gains which are the reward of good listening habits, there are group gains. In the schoolroom, in clubs, in society, listening is a major element in influencing others and working cooperatively with others.

LaBran in *We Teach English* stresses the fact that the teacher today has two necessities: first, to develop students who can listen to varied views on any controversial subject; second, and more important, to train these students early in the art of analyzing what they hear. She says that in today's world good listening may be more important to the citizen than good reading or writing.

Instruction in listening must be related to the other language arts. In this way many objectives may be served. For example, a pupil who learns to listen for organizational pattern in speech, will also be learning how to find organizational patterns in reading and how to use them in his own writing. The Commission on English Curriculum states:

"The standards of appreciation of literature can be developed effectively through listening to oral reading by both teachers and pupils, to radio and stage plays, and motion pictures. At the same time such productions can add immeasurably to the pupil's appreciation of the beauties of the spoken language."

The student should be helped to see that although many of his speaking, writing and reading skills can be carried over to listening, that listening differs from these arts in many respects. For example, strict attention must be paid in any listening situation because in most cases opportunity to review is precluded. In listening, meaning

1/ The English Language Arts, op. cit., pp. 340-341.
is often colored by tone of voice, facial and hand expressions, and the very words of the speaker. And since listening usually takes place as a group activity, the listener may very well be influenced by the reactions of the audience.

Many skills are necessary to make a good listener. Nichols and Lewis give what they consider the ten components for effective listening:

1. Previous experience with difficult material.
2. Interest in the topic at hand.
3. Adjustment to the speaker.
4. Energy expenditure of the listener.
5. Adjustment to the abnormal listening situation.
6. Adjustment to the emotion-laden words.
7. Adjustment to the emotion-rousing points.
8. Recognition of central ideas.
10. Reconciliation of thought speed and speech speed.

The program to be truly worthwhile and effective must at all times contribute to the personal, social and occupational gains of the individual.

Reading and Literature. — The fourth strand in the language arts program is reading and literature. For many years, teaching English and teaching reading and literature were synonymous on the elementary level, while in the secondary school, development of reading skills as such was left behind and "the classics" became the core of studies. Today's secondary school teachers are not surprised at the range of reading abilities in their classrooms. For example, in today's ninth grade the range of reading ability often extends from fifth grade through college level.

It is clear then that the teaching of reading should be a developmental program. Although the elementary school gives the foundation skills for reading growth, the program must be reviewed, reenforced, and more mature reading skills taught at each level of the school system.

J. N. Hook says that principles for motivating better reading must be set up and that:

1. Each student should understand what reading can do for him.
2. Each student should know how well he reads.
3. Each student should know that his reading can be improved.
4. Each student should be kept aware of his progress.

\[\text{[J. N. Hook, op. cit., p. 223.]}\]
5. Reading materials should be appropriate.

6. The classroom atmosphere should be pleasant.

LaBrant on this same topic remarks:

"In making up the program of reading in the secondary school, the staff must consider certain general principles:

1. The program must offer variety, to take cognizance of the many levels of understanding and differences of interests and backgrounds of the students.

2. The program must provide for classroom and individual guidance in reading.

3. The program must allow for pupil initiative in planning group and individual reading.

4. The program must be in terms of the life experiences of the student, experiences which include their personal lives and their relation as young persons to the unknown world of adult literature."

The student should realize that although we are all individuals with individual characteristics we do have many things in common; some of the same wishes, hopes and desires are in us all. These are called universals. It is because of these universals that men can know and understand one another. It is because of these universals that we can understand what motivated man hundreds of years ago and what motivates man in today's complex society. Literature is meaningful to us because of these characteristics common to all men in all times. When we read we are

1/Lou LaBrant, op. cit., p. 72.
actually finding out about ourselves.

It is one major purpose of English to introduce the student to finding out more about himself, and the society in which he lives. People have many reasons for reading. Most people read for the same reason that they talk. They want to share experiences with others. Many people read to accomplish certain definite results; they read to find information. Others use reading as a means of escape, a means of getting away temporarily from anxieties. Reading is also one of the most popular forms of leisure time activity.

There are different levels of reading for the maturing reader of literature. In the developmental program, the teacher helps the student to move from one step to the next. Many students come to the secondary school on the first step of the reading ladder. They read for the story only. It is then up to the teacher to help the student read for the theme and its relation to universal truths as are revealed in action, characters, or symbols. The mature reader can then be helped to look for under-the-surface values and ask himself, "How do these apply to me personally?" It is through reading that the student will learn to think critically and intelligently.
Dramatic Literature in the Language Arts Program.—

The place of dramatic literature in the English curriculum is considered important by authorities in the teaching of English. The National Council of Teachers of English states:

"Drama as a form of literature offers much to the reader in enjoyment and insight if he understands how to read it. Direct study of it, on occasion, with lively oral interpretation in the classroom, will open up the whole field for future reading. Great dramas that have lived recur constantly on stage and screen and on the air. Why have they lived? Why does Shakespeare continue to appear on the billboards? How did his theatre differ from ours? What has he contributed that we cannot afford to lose? What dramatists of today and yesterday are worth knowing? These questions are important in the lives of young people."

Ross and Carney urge the reading of dramatic literature when they state:

"If pupils are to learn to read plays with appreciation, they must begin their reading in the seventh grade and continue with it progressively through the secondary schools."

Gainsburg stresses the distinction between seeing and reading drama when he tells us:

"Reading allows us to make pauses, to linger over a surprising statement, to go back to a bit of conversation whose significance we had overlooked before,

1/ The English Language Arts, op. cit., p. 139.


to relive for a moment some relevant experience of our
own that suddenly clarifies the motive or feeling of
some character. And these opportunities form the only
excuse we have for expecting anyone to read plays—to
get from them the richness of understanding that is not
possible while a play is being witnessed. In the
latter case its pace does not readily permit more than
the action level of appreciation. Reading a play offers
the time and leisure, at one own's pace, to savor
fully and perhaps delectably, the interpretive level
of appreciation."

Aims in Teaching Dramatic Literature.—Numerous aims
in the teaching of literature have been presented by the
National Council of Teachers of English. The Council
1/ states:

"Response to the printed page may be a kind of
ignition, which may bring about an evolution—sometimes
even a revolution—in an individual. The change
which comes through needed information, through fac-
tual, concrete or abstract words, through sustenance
for body and soul, through pleasure that enriches life,
may result in growth toward maturity, growth leading
to further growth. It is such growth—emotional,
intellectual, and spiritual—from the explicit and the
implicit—that is the end of the teaching of literature."

The Council urges the need for relating literature
to the personal life of the student when it tells us that
experiences with literature, in junior and senior high
school "....should give students broad and deep insight
into themselves, into others, and into a world which is
broadening astonishingly for them". In regard to the

1/The English Language Arts, op. cit., p. 375.
2/The English Language Arts in the Secondary School,
on. cit., p. 128.
teaching of dramatic literature in particular, writers seem to be in agreement that ideas, attitudes and ideals which are discussed in connection with a particular drama can aid the student to a better understanding of himself and others. Dorothy Dakin believes that we must "...present drama as an explanation of life and personality, closely related to the reader and his actions." She continues:

"Real, living beings, who by their acts and words, portray a mood, reveal a crisis, re-create an epoch, vivify history, expound a thesis—that is drama, close indeed, as its history bears witness, to the life experiences of our race. Particularly significant should it be to your pupils in their quest for new experience and understanding. Lead them gladly toward this interpretation of human emotion."

Such growth in the area of human understanding seems important only if there is transfer of such insight to the lives of the students. Our attention is called to this statement:

"The question is not whether a younger knows *Julius Caesar* but what from *Julius Caesar* works in him. It may be more important for him to hurl "*Et tu, Brute*?" as an epithet in the corridor than to be


2/Ibid., p. 272.

able to scan the blank verse. There may be more complex and elevated consequences... a sense of the varied motives that move people to extreme acts; and for some, a complete awareness of the part of the lives of these ancient people unfolded in the play that is built into what they know of people."

**Difficulties in Reading Dramatic Literature.**— Concerning the teaching of dramatic literature, Cross and Carney state:

"In the reading of plays the high school girl and boy will encounter all the usual reading difficulties plus those which are peculiar to dramatic literature."

Among these difficulties are:

1. Visualizing action.
2. Reading dialog and stage directions.
3. Understanding the play's division into acts and scenes.
4. Developing the higher critical reading skills.

LaBrant names the reason for these difficulties when she tells us:

"Thousands of students in junior and senior high school will never have seen a full length stage play; their acquaintance with the stage will be restricted to school plays and movies."

She urges us to find the experiences students have with drama and use such experiences to take them forward to the reading of dramatic literature. Such preparation

---

appears necessary if we wish to avoid "....plunging the young reader into the deep water of an Elizabethan drama." She asks us to make the first play read "a bridge between the story and the bare dramatic form."

English teachers seem to be in agreement as to the chief difficulties encountered in the reading of dramatic literature. One of these difficulties is that of visualizing. The National Council of Teachers of English tells us:

"In reading drama, the task of the reader is to visualize the scene, to recreate the characters, and to follow clues to the plot entirely through the conversation of the actors."

The Council also states:

"Drama places upon the reader a tremendous burden of conjuring up mental pictures and inferring ideas from scanty clues."

More specifically, such elements as dialogue, stage directions, and the division of a play into acts and scenes present reading problems to the young student more familiar with the reading of the novel or short story. His concern, in the drama, is focused sharply upon the words being exchanged between characters. These words, if left coldly

1/Ibid., p. 284.
2/Ibid., p. 284.
3/The English Language Arts, op. cit., p. 400.
upon the page may be meaningless. Again, the imagination must be aroused and attention called to the fact that these are the words of people living and speaking within the drama. Concerning this, the National Council tells us that:

"...the reader of the drama must form his estimates of characters completely by indirect means—what the character says and does, what others say about him—just as one does in real life...Stage directions create another specific reading problem in drama. Students should form the habit of noting stage directions carefully rather than skipping over them which is the natural inclination."

In regard to the division of the drama, Dorothy Dakin states:

"You must be ready to explain the play's divisions into acts and scenes, the way of indicating each speaker; the lack of explanation; the list and meaning of the dramatis personae."

Besides overcoming the problems already mentioned, the teacher must work for the development of skills which will yield a deeper and more critical appreciation of the written drama. Joseph Gainsburg advises us to develop

"...the student's ability to recognize and interpret the many clues inserted by the author to provide the richer and deeper meanings that, for the

1/ The English Language Arts in the Secondary School, op. cit., p. 187-188.

2/ Dorothy Dakin, op. cit., p. 274.

sake of artistry and interest, he carefully avoids explaining directly. These interpretations make clear the how and why of action as well as the action itself. Failure to spot these meanings is equivalent to missing the most interesting and enjoyable aspects of the play."

In realizing the importance of such interpretations we must be aware that "... growth to maturity in mind and in response to literature go hand in hand." 1/

Such growth is developed by establishing both long-range and immediate goals. These immediate goals become "... the skills and understandings without which these awarenesses cannot be developed." Burton lists these goals as follows:

1. "Awareness of the complexity of human character". The skills and understandings in reading literature which will promote these are: (1) ability to follow character development and (2) practice in exercising skill of inferring from clues.

2. "A firm understanding of the reality in human experience and the ability to detect oversimplification and falsity in the assumptions underlying it." The skills necessary for this are: (1) skill in determining cause and effect in events and (2) skill in determining point of view.

3. "A concern with a set of values by which to regulate life." The skill needed for this is that of discovering the theme of a selection and being able to relate details to it.


2/Ibid., p. 276.

3/Ibid., pp. 276-279.
Before the teacher leads the student to the full appreciation of dramatic literature, the printed page before the young reader must be considered and the difficulties encountered must be overcome. Cross and Carney suggest:

"It is well to eliminate all the barriers that are likely to kill pupils' enjoyment, to give a background for the play before the reading begins, to use pictures to stimulate the imagination, to read much of the play aloud, to dramatize parts informally, to use recordings, to memorize significant passages, and to discuss plot, character and central ideas."

This suggestion both states directly and implies many of the classroom activities which English teachers consider most beneficial. Let us now consider some methods.

Methods of Teaching Dramatic Literature.—In deciding the approach and methods that will be used in the study of dramatic literature, the teacher considers his class, the play, and the objectives of the unit. But he realizes that some problems are common to all reading of dramatic literature. These are:

1. Visualizing the plot.
2. Visualizing the scene.
3. Visualizing the characters.
4. Bridging the gap between the scenes and acts.

\[\text{F. A. Cross and Elizabeth Carney, op. cit., p. 483.}\]
5. Imagining emotions.

6. Determining the purpose of the author.

**Following the Plot of a Drama.**—Studies of plot should be made in all six years, grades seven through twelve; but as the student intellectually matures, need for intensive study of the plot will decrease.

In the junior high school, one method of plot study is to have the students make a brief statement of what is accomplished in each scene. This synopsis shows the forward movement of the drama. After the entire play has been read, the student, by looking back at his notes, can formulate a statement of the struggle in the play and its results.

Older students on the senior high school level can do more than a synopsis of the plot. Dakin suggests that the teacher have them work out a simple plan of plot structure such as follows:

1. **Introduction:** a statement of setting, antecedent action, introduction of characters, the first incident of the struggle.

2. **Rising Action:** a statement of several of the steps in the struggle.

3. **Turning Point:** a statement of the incident that marks the point at which the action turns for or against the leading character.

4. **Conclusion:** a statement of the result of the struggle.

---

This method may be used as a summing up of the action of a play or as an assignment, but avoid over-analysis. "Enough makes for increased understanding, but too much makes for deadly dullness."

**Visualizing the Scene.**-- If we are reading a Shakespeare play, we know that Shakespeare wasn't concerned with elaborate settings, but Dakin tells the teacher, "Sharpen the inner eye of your pupils; make them see the heath, or the market place, or the castle at Elsinore."

In visualizing, the student must decide upon the time of day. Often it is helpful to hold a discussion on the lighting that a director might use. Another aid to visualizing the scene is to have the students write a paper describing the setting or the costumes for a certain act or scene. This may be called, "If I Were Directing the Play". Other methods of helping students to visualize scenes are reports on the historical period concerned, projects such as building a model of a Shakespearean theatre or garden, dressing dolls in Elizabethan costume, and papers comparing and contrasting two characters.

1/ Ibid., p. 280.
2/ Ibid., p. 273.
3/ Ibid., pp. 273-278.
Visualizing the Characters.-- Cross and Carney

tell the teacher to use questions to bring out the ideas that boys and girls may have about the characters. They must come to picture the characters as real people before reading the play. In Shakespearean plays as well as in many modern plays it is good to have the student pronounce the names of the characters many times in order to become familiar with them.

Dakin suggests stressing the physical attributes of the main characters with junior high school students. Be sure they can support their claims by exact references. Sometimes a diagram helps to illustrate relationships. Diagrams of relationships such as are used in history books may serve as guides.

She also says to discuss the characters as each enters the stage. "What manner of man is he?" "How is he dressed?" "How does he bear himself?" As the students continue to read the play they should picture the character in action. "Does the character stand or sit?" "Is his bearing haughty or subservient?" It is the job of the teacher to make the characters real people.

Bridging the Gaps between the Acts and Scenes.--

Cross and Carney say that the teacher can help to bridge this gap by explaining the lapse of time between the acts or scenes by telling the students that while one group of characters is doing something, another group is doing and saying other things in other places. Here the movies can be a great help.

Circumstances leading up to a scene can also be considered, or a future scene can be prepared for by considering some enlightening speech which foretells what is to happen.

Imagining emotions.-- The teacher who is helping the student acquire skill in imagining emotions should help the student try to equate his own feelings with emotions and problems of people in the play. Records of songs and poems will help high school pupils to see how emotion is expressed. Watching facial expressions of people in trains, hospitals, churches, supermarkets, and those of good actors will help. "Understanding emotions requires the understanding of mood." Illustrate that the character's own words between the lines indicate the mood.

1/E. A. Cross and Elizabeth Carney, op. cit., p. 472.
2/Ibid., p. 475.
Determining the Purpose of the Author. — When the student is able to read a play intelligently, to understand the plot, setting, and characters, often a teacher thinks his job is completed. But there are deeper values to be found in reading dramatic literature.

Hook says:

"Most high school students read fiction for entertainment. The teacher, while encouraging reading for this purpose tries also to show the possibly deeper values that fiction possesses. . . . Plays, too, afford a key to the meaning of life. But even more directly than fiction, they offer a temporary escape. By going to the movies, daydreaming, or play reading, we escape the routine of everyday living."

After the students have read the play the teacher should help them to realize the purpose of the author.

Dakin suggests that the students discuss themes in works they are familiar with and show by specific examples how the themes are developed in these works. When the students are able to do this it is time for them to take the play they are studying and indicate how the characters and situations exemplify the theme. She stresses the fact that when teaching something abstract, the teaching must be definite.

"Growth to maturity in mind and in response to

2/ Dorothy Dakin, op. cit., p. 281.
literature go hand in hand." In determining the purpose of the author, students need the ability to determine cause and effect in events. A good guide question is, "Was there any preparation for the happenings, any reason for them in what preceded, or did they occur purely by chance or coincidence?"

The play will remain a play if the teacher is sure to put it back together after items such as setting, character, and theme have been studied. The parts of the play should always be seen in relation to the whole.

**General Methods Used for Teaching Dramatic Literature.**

Some general methods used by teachers in the study of dramatic literature are:

1. Reading aloud.
2. Class Dramatizations.
3. Special trips made by the students to view plays and movies.

**Reading Aloud.** One of the most successful methods used in overcoming difficulties found in reading dramatic literature is reading the play aloud. Gainsburg says:

"A play must be read aloud or at least with inner vocalism to be enjoyed. The student must be

1^Tbid., p. 281.
3^Joseph C. Gainsburg, op. cit., p. 405.
able to imagine the vocal quality when the hero thunders his challenge or the victim pleads for mercy;...."

To impress upon the students the playwright's special abilities some teachers require the writing of a paraphrase of a famous or particularly effective passage, and ask the student to read aloud first his version and then, the original. The contrast is usually most impressive.

Another purpose for reading plays aloud is to get the meaning of strange words. The teacher can use synonyms for obsolete words and words whose meanings have changed. Meaning may be grasped through context. Reed Smith says: 1/

"Eternal vigilance and eternal patience are the price of safety in this regard. By actual count "As You Like It" contains 497 words and phrases that need explanation, in addition to twenty-one proper names and classical references that require clearing up.....This is indeed a tremendous barrier; but the goal to be reached is worth all the effort required to reach it."

Class Dramatizations.— "Because visualization is so important in reading plays, class dramatizations have a definite place in teaching procedure." Dakin suggests that after each act the students should select a few significant scenes. They should prepare them well, but they need not be memorized. By arrangement of chairs some

suggestions of stage setting may be made. The action should be introduced and the exits and entrances planned. The role of the teacher here is to supervise so that a smooth performance will result. A halting, stumbling performance will not aid the student in visualizing a scene.

Plays, Movies and Television. — Kaplan says:

"Some attempt should be made to awaken the student to the realization that the books he studies are part of a vital cultural process that keeps growing and keeps changing as it grows. He should know, for instance, the ancient Greek play, the Elizabethan drama, the opera, the musical comedy, the motion picture, the radio play, and now the television play offer graphic evidence of how drama has developed as a result of changes in medium, in customs, and in ideas.... It must not be assumed that radio and movie drama can be put on the same literary level as Shakespeare.... However, a study of radio, the movies, and now television may reveal penetrating insights into drama as a whole. Drama is influenced and shaped by the medium in which it is presented."

William Boutwell suggests a list of questions which could be used with teenagers in viewing a movie. These questions could also be used in viewing a television play.

1. Title and type of picture.
   a. Is the name of the picture well chosen? Does it keynote the theme of the picture?
   b. What is the type of the picture—musical, straight drama, mystery, horror, western, fantasy? A picture deserves to be evaluated according to the type within which it falls.

2. Credits: Who worked to make this picture?
   a. What producing studio?
   b. Directors--what other pictures did he direct?
   c. What is the source of the film? Is it from a book, a play, or is it an original screen play?
   d. What other plays or movies have you seen by the same author?
   e. Who is the musical director?
   f. Who is the producer, the set designer, the camera man, the costume designer, and the other people important in the film's production?

3. Cast: Who are the main characters? Who are the supporting characters? Who are the minor characters?
   a. Were they the best people to play these parts? Who else might have played these parts?
   b. Do they make the characters believable? Are they overacted? Stiff?

4. Plot: Summarize the plot in four or five good sentences only. Use the real names of the characters portrayed in the picture, not the names of the actors.

5. Theme: What is the nature of the conflict in the picture? What is the main issue? The argument?

6. Solution:
   a. Does the story end in a logical way?
   b. Was it honestly believable as it was worked out?
   c. Does the picture solve issues with blazing guns, rights to the jaw, or in ways in which we commonly settle arguments?

7. Evaluation:
   a. Was the picture dramatic? Did it hold attention?
   b. What were the best bits of acting?
   c. Was the dialog believable? Fresh?
   d. What did you learn from the picture that you didn't know before?
   e. What in particular did you notice about the photography, setting, lights, sound, costumes?
   f. What unusual or humorous details did you notice?
   g. How would you rate the picture? Why?
Those students who choose to go to see professionals on stage or in movies have a special contribution to make to classroom discussion when they return. A few days before each trip, students attending the particular play or movie should meet to discuss factors in the plot or characterizations which they think will be interesting as handled on the stage. More vigorous, however, will be the criticisms and comments at meetings following the plays where plot, acting, settings, dancing, and all the factors which made the play are discussed. "Perhaps the most pleasing outcome is that students are stimulated to go independently to dramatic productions, plays, operas, ballets, or good movies."  

Joseph Gainsburg states it well when he says:

"His (the teacher's) fundamental purpose should be not alone to develop appreciation of the particular play under study, although this is a means to our final goal. His purpose should be rather to use each play-teaching period to develop the power and capacity better to enjoy other plays."


BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

PART I
UNIT ORGANIZATION OF THE TOPIC
ARE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS
By
ROBERT E. SHERWOOD

PART II
UNIT ORGANIZATION OF THE TOPIC
OUR TOWN
By
THORTON WILDER
Preface:

The following source unit was constructed for a tenth grade non-college-preparatory class. The writer's inexperience limits this unit to no one particular class. The assumption has been made that even in such a class, some pupils could handle the more difficult material while others would have trouble with the most simple assignments. Individual differences must then be cared for.

In an attempt to meet these individual differences a Pre-Test has been presented to determine particular needs; study guide questions and activities representing various degrees of difficulty have been supplied. These study questions should be used at the discretion of the teacher, being by nature, merely a "guide" to both pupil and teacher. Undoubtedly, supplementary questions can and should be added as the unit progresses.

More material has been presented than would ordinarily be used in a two to three-week unit. Again, all suggested activities should be adapted according to the objectives of the teacher and the particular needs of the class.

INTRODUCTION

Various literary studies of great people will exist
as long as the lives which they have led afford an interest and a challenge to the competent literary artists of our society. The life of one great man, Abraham Lincoln, has seemingly captured the interest of one such competent dramatist, Robert E. Sherwood.

Mr. Sherwood's drama is simple and direct, using but twelve brief episodes in Lincoln's life. Opportunity is afforded, however, to observe such elements as family conflict, the loyalty of friends, the sentiment of romantic love, the effect of civil strife upon a nation and the doubt and indecision which were the keynote of Lincoln's life. Although these elements were a part of one particular life, over one hundred years ago, parallel situations are evident in both our personal lives and in the world in which we live. May the student, enjoying the force and clarity of dramatic form, observe and apply these situations to his own life and times.

PUPIL OBJECTIVES

Understandings

1. Abe Lincoln in Illinois was written by Robert E. Sherwood who has won four Pulitzer Prizes.

2. Robert E. Sherwood has written many other plays but Abe Lincoln in Illinois is quite unique among his plays.

3. This play was presented on the stage in New York City in October, 1938 and received newspaper reviews just as plays do today.
4. The play later won a Pulitzer Prize and was made into a movie.

5. _Abe Lincoln in Illinois_ received many favorable critical reviews when it first opened. Raymond Massey, in the leading role, also received enthusiastic reviews.

6. We can learn about these reviews from books and magazine articles written at the time.

7. A play, although favorably received, can meet with unfavorable criticism also.

8. The important incidents in a man's life can be presented dramatically in twelve short episodes. Each scene represents an important episode in the life of Lincoln up to the time of his departure to assume the presidency. A range of some thirty years is covered. Nine different settings are presented in twelve scenes.

9. Conflict is essential in drama. There are at least two types of conflict in _Abe Lincoln in Illinois_.

   a. between characters—between Lincoln and his wife and between Lincoln and his friends.

   b. between a character and himself—between Lincoln's desire to be left alone and his realization of his own duty.

10. Characters and actions in a play may symbolize other meanings.

11. Even in a play based upon historical facts, the playwright introduces fictitious events and people.

12. A minor character may be introduced early in the play because of his importance to the plot later on.

13. Supplementary biographical material about the main character is often helpful (though not completely necessary) for understanding a play of this type.

14. There are often extensive periods of time between scenes in a play. In this play there are lapses
of time ranging from a few days to sixteen years. But in such a play the dramatist does not have to tell us all that has happened between scenes, but usually implies, or states directly, something of importance which has occurred between the scenes. Enough information is presented for our understanding of the play.

15. A playwright cannot, in such a play, communicate too many of his own ideas.

16. Events in a play can be timely even though they occurred many years before. Lincoln's last speech is most timely for both 1938 and 1958.

17. People need a strong leader in time of a crisis.

18. Scheming politicians often plan to control the man they help into office.

19. All people must make important decisions sometime in their life; these decisions are often difficult to make.

20. There are family conflicts in the lives of even the most outstanding people.

21. Environment and heredity are great influences upon a person.

22. Our world needs both realistic and idealistic thinking.

23. In a play our knowledge of the characters and their motives is derived chiefly from what they say, what they do, and what others say about them.

24. Because words in a play were meant to be spoken, we usually enjoy hearing them rather than just reading them silently.

25. The main differences between a novel and a play are that a play depends wholly upon dialogue and action, and it is primarily written to be interpreted by actors upon a stage.

26. Uncertainty and indecision were the keynote of Abraham Lincoln's political and personal life.
27. Through all these uncertainties and indecisions, Lincoln realized the more universal rights which must be given to man—justice, truth and liberty.

28. To maintain these rights, he had to face his own destiny and realize his personal importance to the cause of freedom.

29. Even though he wanted to be "left alone", a greater cause than personal happiness was urging him on.

30. Friends and relatives were aware of his place in life and had to force him to his own destiny.

31. Lincoln did not want to assume the responsibilities of President of a country on the brink of Civil War.

32. Lincoln had a sense of humor.

33. Lincoln's early life affected him greatly.

34. There are certain words which lend "local color" to the scenes in which they occur.

35. Each character in _Abe Lincoln in Illinois_ has some direct bearing upon the life of the main character.

36. Other dramas have been written using Lincoln as the main figure. Different dramas, however, may present different studies of the same person.

37. Much of the dialogue is comprised of Lincoln's own words, supplemented when necessary, yet maintaining the spirit and dignity and simplicity upon which the quality of the play rests.

Attitudes, Tastes and Appreciations

1. Increased sensitivity to language that stirs the emotions. For example, the scenes between Lincoln and Ann Rutledge and also Lincoln's farewell speech to the people of Springfield.

2. By means of the play you can encounter people and surroundings entirely new to you.
3. Deeper understanding of human behavior—even the behavior of a "great man".

4. We must often neglect our own personal desires for something more important.

5. In spite of certain weaknesses, human beings can overcome them to attain greater achievements.

6. A competent dramatist can make a vital play from a mere series of episodes.

7. Oral reading is an excellent way to understand the power of the spoken word on the stage.

Skills and Abilities

Reading

1. To develop a sense of participation while reading a play by the following: **
   a. visualizing the setting and characters
   b. discovering the conflicts within the play and following their development.
   c. recognizing the various moods in a play
   d. "hearing" the lines in a play
   e. understanding characters and their motives.

2. To learn to detect devices used by the playwright to help you to understand the play better. For example:
   a. the reading of "On Death" in the first scene predicts the "rugged path" which Lincoln follows during the rest of the play.

** These skills are elaborated upon in the Introductory Activities.
b. the talk that death is close to him predicts his melancholy mood which we see again as the play progresses.

3. To learn to read stage directions carefully. These directions can help you visualize what is going on and to "hear" in your mind the words being spoken.

4. To increase awareness of words which lend "local color", for example, the word "sucker" in Act 1-Scene 2.

5. To increase awareness of language used to appeal to the emotions; for example, that used by Douglas in Act 3-Scene 9.

6. To increase ability to adjust reading rate to the purpose for reading. (Reading dialogue and stage directions should be slower than reading a straight narrative.)

7. To equate your own feelings with the feelings of people in the play. Ask yourself the question, "Have I ever felt as he(or she) does?"

8. To read to detect humor

**Writing**

1. To increase the ability to write the business letter correctly.

2. To develop the ability to keep a good notebook. **

3. To increase the ability to write a good descriptive composition.

4. The correct form of the friendly letter will be studied to increase the ability to write a lively and interesting letter.

5. The following topics will be studied in regard to composition writing to increase ability in these areas:

   a. a good introductory paragraph

** The use of the notebook is explained in the Introductory Activities.
6. The following mechanics will be stressed for all written work to increase ability in these areas.
   a. varied sentence structure and mature vocabulary.
   b. correct spelling, punctuation and capitalization.
   c. correct grammar and usage.

7. A natural style of writing will be expected.

8. Legible writing is expected for all work.

**Listening**

1. To increase ability to listen attentively.

2. To increase skill in listening for new words as they appear.

3. To increase ability to listen for main points.

4. To increase ability to listen for details.

5. To increase skill in detecting irrelevant material.

6. To increase the ability to listen with courtesy to other speakers.

7. To increase the ability to take written notes as you listen.

**Speaking**

1. To increase skill in reporting orally on the core and optional related activities.

2. To increase ability in the following when preparing and delivering an oral report.
a. Appearing alert and interested in your material.
b. Giving your entire attention to the audience.
c. Limiting your remarks to the subject.
d. Speaking to be heard.
e. Facing the class when speaking.
f. Selecting only those facts necessary for an effective presentation of your topic.
g. Pronouncing words clearly and correctly being sure to check the pronunciation of words that are new to you.
h. Speaking at a moderate rate.
i. Speaking naturally.
ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS

PRE-TEST **

The purpose of this Pre-Test is to discover what you already know about Abe Lincoln in Illinois. Try your best to complete it. Your paper will not be graded; omit answers to questions you do not understand.

A. On the line at the left of each number, write the letter of the statement which is the best ending to each sentence.

1. The play Abe Lincoln in Illinois was written by (a) Maxwell Anderson, (b) Robert Sherwood, (c) Lillian Hellman, (d) William Saroyan.

2. Abe Lincoln in Illinois was presented in New York in (a) 1931, (b) 1946, (c) 1938, (d) 1940.

3. The role of Lincoln was acted on the Broadway stage by (a) Michael Redgrave, (b) Ralph Bellamy, (c) Raymond Massey, (d) Alfred Drake.

4. The time of the action of the play is (a) 1865, (b) 1832, (c) 1857, (d) a range of thirty years.

5. The play was awarded (a) the Pulitzer Prize, (b) the Nobel Prize, (c) the Drama Critics' Award, (d) the Antoinette Perry award.

B. Read each statement below and circle the answer which correctly completes the statement.

1. In regard to going to war, Lincoln was (a) definitely against it, (b) definitely in favor of it, (c) in favor of it only if it meant preserving the union, (d) none of these.

** The Pre-Test should be administered before the students see the objectives for the unit, since some of the items in the test are based upon these objectives.
2. Lincoln's political and social life were marked by
(a) instant success.
(b) indecision and uncertainty.
(c) failure.
(d) great financial gains

3. At the time of crisis, the people of a country need
(a) a strong political party in office.
(b) a strong leader.
(c) a sound economy.
(d) a strong foreign policy.

4. Often, a great person must be encouraged and urged on by
(a) the desire for personal security.
(b) the people who elected him.
(c) the people closest to him, his friends and relatives.
(d) his own personal convictions

5. Lincoln often became angry with his friends because
(a) he did not like having many people around him.
(b) he felt he was unambitious and wanted to be left alone.
(c) he had a very bad temper.
(d) he felt inferior before them.

C. On the line in front of each item in Column 2 place the number of the item from Column 1 most nearly associated with it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Four acts—eight scenes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Shakespeare's Hamlet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Stephen Douglas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Prologue to Glory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Three acts—twelve scenes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) The Prairie Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) the Bible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Ninian Edwards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Abraham Lincoln</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The source of the words: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." The number of acts and scenes into which the play is divided.
Column 2

---
The Man with whom Lincoln conducted several famous debates
---
A character in the play who has a fine sense of humor
---
Another play concerning Lincoln

D. After reading the following two speeches carefully, underline the words which you felt appealed to your emotions.

1. "Because they too demand a living wage! So it is throughout the North. Hungry men, marching through the streets in ragged order, promoting riots, because they are not paid enough to keep the flesh upon the bones of their babies! What kind of liberty is this? And what kind of equality?"

2. "No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feelings of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of you people, I owe everything. I have lived here for a quarter of a century, and passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return.

E. On the paper provided, write a brief summary (100 words) of what you already know about the early political career of Abraham Lincoln.

F. Write a short paragraph (100 words) answering the question,--How I come to understand a character in a play.

G. You are about to begin reading Abe Lincoln in Illinois. How do you feel about reading this play? Be frank in your answer.

H. Questions based upon the material in Appendix B are suggested. The result of these questions will determine to what extent the information in this Appendix will be used as a basis for discussion in the introductory activities.
### ANSWER KEYS

#### ARE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS

**PRE-TEST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>(c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>(c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>(d)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>(c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>(d)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. These answers will vary. The answers to be hoped for and which will be discussed in class are:

1. "hungry" ... "ragged" ... "bones of their babies"

2. "one is buried" ... "not know when or whether ever I may return."

**FINAL TEST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>(d)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>(c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>(c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mentor Graham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Postmaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in the state Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the people of Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lincoln and his friends--Lincoln and himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>eight--nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crimmin, Barrick, Sturveson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prologue to Glory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Mary Todd
2. Billy Herndon
3. Nancy Green
4. Ann Rutledge
5. Billy Herndon
6. Abraham Lincoln
7. Stephen A. Douglas
8. Elizabeth Edwards
9. Ben Mattling
10. Seth Gale
UNIT ASSIGNMENT
(Tentative Time Allotment—Two Weeks)

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

1. Administer Pre-Test in order to determine pupil needs and to arouse interest.

2. Distribute to each member of the class a copy of the play.

3. Play the recording. Ask the class to raise questions as they listen.

4. Prepare an attractive, stimulating, initial bulletin board using pictures from the play.

5. Through class discussion, led by the teacher, the first nine topics listed under "Pupil Objectives—Understandings" will be commented upon. The background material covered in Appendix A may be used at the discretion of the teacher.

6. The teacher will read scene 1 aloud. Attention will be called to the following as the reading progresses.

   a. the introduction and study guide questions for Act 1, Scene 1

   b. visualizing

   characters—Answer the questions: (1) What type of person is he? (2) How is he dressed? (3) How does he bear himself? (4) What movements does he make on the stage?

   setting—Answer the questions: (1) What do the stage directions tell us about the setting? (2) How can our imagination help us to see the setting?

   time of day

   the lighting a director might use in the scene

   c. "hearing" the lines which are being spoken.—By the quality of your own reading, illustrate the value of the spoken word in understanding and appreciating

* This recording is the Victor Recording of Mr. Raymond Massey reading scenes from the play. It is listed in the bibliography of audio-visual aids.
drama. Point out that although we cannot always read aloud, "hearing" the lines in our mind as they might be spoken is most effective.

d. understanding characters.—Call attention to what the characters say about themselves, what other people say to or about them.

e. reading stage directions—These should be discussed as they arise especially when they aid in the discussion of "b", "c", and "d" listed above.

f. recognizing mood.—A discussion of "b", "c", "d", and "e" listed above should help to convey the mood of this first scene. Stress the reading of "On Death" by Lincoln as dramatically conveying both mood and insight into the type of person Lincoln is and will be in future scenes.

7. Many of the skills, attitudes, and understandings listed under pupil objectives have been considered in these introductory activities. The teacher should, however, consider this only as a foundation upon which to build in the future discussions, core activities and optional related activities which should re-emphasize these and other objectives.

8. Distribute the biographical sketch on Robert Sherwood, the background material on Abe Lincoln in Illinois, the Study Guide Questions and the Activities Guide. These should be mimeographed and stapled together and headed by an introduction addressed to the student. It would appear as follows.

Introduction

1. A section of your notebook should be set aside for use while working with this unit. The information to be contained in this notebook will be explained later.

2. The following biographical sketch and background material on the play form the first two core activities. A core activity is one in which all students must participate. Please read this material, including in your notebook any notes on it which will aid you in future class discussions. The third core activity consists of the guide questions for each of the twelve scenes in Abe Lincoln in Illinois. Some scenes have an introduction which attempts to present information you would not
ordinarily know and which will aid you in further understanding and appreciating the scene discussed. You should read the introduction, when there is one, and each question carefully before you read the scene. Keep them in mind as you read. Read the play at your own rate. You should write in your notebook the answers to most of these questions as they will form the basis of our class discussions as the unit progresses and particularly when we conduct our culminating activities.

3. Before you begin reading the play read the other core activities as you may want to take notes and prepare them as you read.

4. For each scene of the play keep a written record in your notebook containing the following information:
   a. the number of the act and scene
   b. the time of the scene
   c. the setting
   d. the characters involved in the scene


5. Follow this information with the answers to the study guide questions, information in relation to any of the core or optional related activities, or any personal comments you may wish to make.

6. Notice always the lapse of time between scenes. Try to visualize characters, and setting. Imagine the lines as they might be spoken on the stage. Try to read each scene as we have read the first scene.

7. Remember that the questions will be discussed in class. Specific reasons must be given for your answers. A simple yes or no is not acceptable.

CORE ACTIVITIES

1. Biographical sketch—Robert E. Sherwood

   Robert E. Sherwood was born in New Rochelle, New York, on April 4, 1896. His father, Arthur Murray Sherwood, a descendant of Irish Protestant revolutionists, was a banker;
his mother Rosina Emmet Sherwood a well-known painter and
illustrator. His private school education began at Milton
Academy, and continued on to Harvard from which he received
his A.B. degree as of 1918. He had left in 1917 to en-
list in the Canadian Black Watch Regiment. Serving over-
seas in France, he was gassed at Vimy Ridge and returned
to a hospital in England.

After the war, he started on a series of jobs lasting
until the late 1920's. One of these was on the staff of
*Vanity Fair* where he remained but a short time. He then
joined the staff of the old *Life* and in 1920 started writing
movie reviews. During this time he began writing for a
newspaper syndicate, and did movie reviews for the *New
York Herald* and *Photoplay* and *McCalls* magazines. In 1924
he became editor of *Life*. Because he refused to treat
neither Herbert Hoover nor his prohibition with respect,
he was fired in 1928. Meanwhile, he had begun writing
plays, three of which, *The Road to Rome*, *The Love Nest*
and *The Queen's Husband* had appeared in New York before
1930. After this year, he devoted himself entirely to the
writing of plays. The 1930's saw the production of seven
of his plays which we shall consider later.

Meanwhile Sherwood's personal life was not without
conflict. In 1934 his marriage of twelve years to Mary
Brandon ended in divorce. In 1935 he married Mrs Madelene
(Murlock) Connelly.

In 1935, he became secretary of the Dramatists Guild, becoming president in 1937. Together with Maxwell Anderson, Elmer Rice, Sidney Howard and S.H. Behrman he formed the Playwrights' Company, an organization established to produce the plays of its members.

The new decade, 1940-1950, began for Mr. Sherwood with the production of *There Shall Be No Night* after which he began campaigning for President Franklin D. Roosevelt for the election of 1940. In the war years following, Sherwood was an unofficial member of the White House staff. He headed the overseas branch of the Office of War Information and served as special assistant to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy. He has been credited with writing many of Roosevelt's finest speeches. His only contribution to the Broadway theatre during these years was *The Rugged Path*, produced in 1945. After the death of Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins, Sherwood devoted himself to thirty months of steady work in the writing of his book *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History*. As relaxation after the strenuous work of writing this book, he collaborated with Irving Berlin and Moss Hart on the musical comedy *Miss Liberty* (1949). In the years following, his professional work was devoted to writing for television and working on a new play, *Small War on Murray Hill*, which
he completed just before his death and which was produced in New York in January of 1957. He died in New York City on November 14, 1955 at the age of fifty-nine.

2. Background Material—Abe Lincoln in Illinois

If Mr. Sherwood ever has experienced fulfillment as a playwright certainly his Lincoln drama has contributed greatly. Its success, both popular and critical, was unique in Broadway history. It opened in New York during the 1938-39 season amidst much speculation as to its ultimate success. There were several reasons for this. First, another play about Lincoln, E.P. Conkle's *Prologue to Glory* had recently enjoyed great success. The question raised was how the two dramas would compare. Second, it was the first production of the newly organized Playwrights' Producing Company; and third, talk was prevalent that the Canadian-British actor, Raymond Massey, might present a handicap which the play would have to overcome. All of these speculations were eventually proven groundless. Discounting the fact that the Playwrights' Company obviously had a hit for its first attempt, comparisons with the Conkle drama were immediately eliminated because the two studies of Lincoln were vastly different. Mr. Massey, also, scored a complete personal success and proved far more of an asset than a liability.

Concerning the reviews which appeared after its opening at the Plymouth Theatre on October 15, 1938, Burns
Mantle wrote:

"The critical reception of Abe Lincoln in Illinois was largely on the rapturous side. A majority of the reviewers were unashamedly ecstatic in their praise of the drama, and of Mr. Sherwood's writing and Mr. Massey's performance."

Brooks Atkinson called it Sherwood's "finest play" with Raymond Massey giving "an exalted performance". He concluded with the reservation that "...a reviewer's only anxiety is that he may not herald it vigorously enough."

In the New York Herald-Tribune, Richard Watts, Jr. joined Mr. Atkinson in his enthusiasm by writing of it as "...one of the most stirring American plays....", "...a beautiful and moving portrait of the greatest and most lovable of our national heroes...." He concluded by naming it "...one of the great achievements of the American theatre and the American spirit.

As always, more modest estimates were heard and even one or two mild dissenters. John Mason Brown said that Sherwood had been aided greatly by collaborators including the audience's extensive fore-knowledge of the main figure.

He wrote:

"Had there been calls for 'Author! Author!' Mr. Sherwood would have had to appear behind the footlights hand in hand with Honest Abe."

In view of this, however, Mr. Mantle writes:

"There was general admission, however, that this was the greatest of the Lincoln plays to date, and to this admission the general play-going public quickly and whole-heartedly subscribed. *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* ran through the season, playing to consistently large and enthusiastic audiences."

The literature which appeared after the opening of Sherwood's play reveals several aspects of the drama which for the sake of expediency the New York reviewers seemingly chose to avoid mentioning. One of the more prolific writers was Frank Hurburt O'Hara, from whom it is learned that *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* was one of three prominent plays appearing in New York during the late 1930's which used events from the past to comment upon the present-day. One of these plays was Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, set in the spring of 1900, but effective, nevertheless, in presenting its author's views about her own day. In *Knickerbocker Holiday*, Maxwell Anderson "comments upon the

---

2/ Ibid., p. 33.
present by means of scenes from another day."

From O'Hara we learn:

"In more serious fashion, Robert E. Sherwood's *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* speaks for contemporary America through the scenes, and frequently through the very words of yesterday. When Lincoln debates with Douglas, he talks about the textile workers of Massachusetts in phrases which might have been lifted from a this-week's journal of current opinion. The effect of his speech upon the audience is to underscore a present-day situation of which the audience is already aware. Probably no one in contemporary life could speak with so much authority on this problem of today as Lincoln spoke in the words of yesterday, because he speaks as a prophet who is felt by many to have vindicated his authority to speak."

In O'Hara's opinion Sherwood's play depicts uncertainty as the "keynote of life it depicts". Whether to go to Springfield to the legislative; whether he is really cut out for a political career; whether to accept the nomination for the presidency. These are but a few of the questions which confronted Lincoln. Even in his personal life, his marriage to Ann Rutledge demanded a decision which, for a while, he was unable to make. O'Hara points out:

"....throughout these uncertainties, both

1/ Frank Hurfurt O'Hara, op. cit., p. 101.
3/ Ibid., pp. 102-103.
4/ Ibid., p. 104.
private and public, the playwright indicates the rise of a growing spire of certainty: the first rights of man are the 'human' rights—justice, truth, freedom—a few inalienable heritages a man dare give himself to maintain."

Throughout the play, this "spire of certainty rises" through the increasing uncertainties which surround him. In the last scene of the play Lincoln is going off to Washington. Concerning his final speech to his friends, we find out:

"He is not sure of what lies ahead; he is not sure that he is the man to lead the American people; but he is sure that somehow the American people must find their way to maintain their essential democracy."

O'Hara questions the word "tragic" which has been used to describe Lincoln's career. He maintains that it was tragic only according to the connotation of that word in the average mind.

"But is it possible to write a genuine tragedy about one whom martyrdom has only enhanced, enlivened, authenticated? He died, but he died grandly without defeat. His was no continuing maladjustment but an apparent rising over circumstances to what the present-day audience considers a triumph and with which the audience chooses to identify itself."

Concluding his remarks on Abe Lincoln in Illinois, he re-emphasizes the aspect of the play by which our attention is called to the present-day by means of the past.

1/Ibid., p. 104.
2/Ibid., p. 104.
3/Ibid., p. 106.
Let us consider the following statement concerning Mr. Sherwood and his contemporaries:

"Now our playwrights seem to be looking back with a thought that some of those who survived anonymity in their own generation must have known a good deal about the essentials of living. These writers do not turn to such characters of history for enlightenment about another day so much as they turn to them for enlightenment about our own day. For we feel that we can see the newness of our own problems only as we sense the continuing human problems which bind the generations together; we know when we are dealing with the accoutrements of modernity only as we know when we are dealing with the ongoing struggle of man to find and free himself."

Conclusion and evaluation of the play.—There is little difference of opinion among the critics concerning the quality of *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. To those remarks already mentioned, Edith Isaacs writes:

"*Abe Lincoln in Illinois* says what all Sherwood's other serious plays have tried to say and says it so well and so convincingly that audiences rise to their feet to applaud it....To recreate such a figure out of history may seem an easier task than to mold a character out of a dramatist's own fresh clay. Indeed it is far harder, as the whole history of such endeavors shows."

In Harlan Hatcher's opinion:

"Sherwood had written even better than he knew and the time was ripe for this dramatization of a great American hero."


One of the outstanding aspects of the drama is the dialogue—comprised mainly of Lincoln's own words. Rosamond Gilder tells us:

"Mr. Sherwood has so aptly woven Lincoln's own words derived from speeches, letters and recorded conversations into the fabric of his play that there is no break in the steady upswing of emotion when the familiar and noble words of his great speeches are delivered from the stage."

In the opinion of Granville Vernon, Sherwood shows in this play a fine creative spirit and succeeds in reaching heights he has never reached before.

3. **Study Guide Questions**

**Act I-Scene 1**

*Introduction*—Lincoln met Mentor Graham while recording votes for a small city election in New Salem. This was the beginning of his political career and of his friendship with Graham who, in the years to follow, was to teach Lincoln subjects ranging from grammar, through Shakespeare, to surveying.

1. Notice the mention of Lincoln's friends. Who are they? Keep their names in mind as you read on.

2. What is Lincoln's attitude in this scene? Has his past and even his present life affected him

---


**These introductions were adapted from Robert Sherwood's comments in the following book:**

in any way? If so, how?

3. Why is he afraid to go to the city?

4. Note the word "misanthropic". Put it in your notebook. Think of its meaning as you read more about Lincoln. Decide if it's a good word to describe him.

5. In the poem "On Death", what is meant by the words "rugged path"? How do they apply to Lincoln?

6. What in this scene prepares us for something which might happen to Lincoln in the next scene?

**Act 1- Scene 2**

**Introduction**—Several of the characters in this scene—Ben Mattling, Trum Cogdal, Seth Gale and the Clary's Grove boys—are imaginary. Mattling was probably introduced to show that Lincoln knew men who had fought in the Revolution, and Seth Gale because of his importance in a later scene.

1. What position does Lincoln now hold? How were we prepared for this?

2. Why do you think the Clary's Grove boys were introduced into this scene?

3. Notice Lincoln's reaction to the thought of revolution in France. Why does he react in this way? Notice his words and keep them in mind.

4. What do Josh Speed and Ninian Edwards ask him to do? What is his answer to them?

5. Is Lincoln sure of what he wants to do in life?

6. How does he feel about the responsibilities connected with politics?

7. What is his decision?

8. How does Lincoln act with Ann? What is the effect he has on her? Does he have this effect upon other people?
9. Notice his great decision at the end of this act. What, do you think, has made him change his mind?

Act 1 - Scene 3

1. What is Lincoln's position now? Is he happy in his new work?
2. Notice his appearance and compare it with that of the preceding scene.
3. How do we learn of his activities in the Assembly?
4. How does Bowling Green feel about Lincoln's career and about Ann's part in it?
5. What is Lincoln's reaction to Ann's death?

Act 2 - Scene 4

1. Notice Lincoln's appearance as he enters. Again, compare it with that of the preceding scene.
2. How does he feel about slavery and about going to war?
3. According to Josh, Bowling, and Billy Herndon, what should Lincoln's position be in regard to slavery?
4. Again, how does he feel about fighting and about making big decisions?

Act 2 - Scene 5

1. Lincoln does not appear until late in this scene. What do we learn about him, however, and what characters tell us?
2. Notice the conflict between Mary and Elizabeth. What is the basis for this conflict?
3. Read Mary's words carefully. What do they reveal about her character?
4. What does Mary think is her position in Lincoln's life?
Act 2- Scene 6

Introduction—The episode of the burned letter is not an invention as some who have seen this play have supposed. There is much historical evidence that Lincoln's general mental attitude depicted in this scene was true to life. Herndon's outburst toward the end of the scene is imaginary but the speech probably does reveal what he actually felt and wanted to say to Lincoln. Read this speech carefully when you come to it.

1. Why doesn't Lincoln want to marry Mary Todd? How is this in keeping with what we already know about him?

2. Who, in this scene, shows a deep understanding of Lincoln? How does this character show it?

3. Notice what Lincoln does at the end of this scene? Is his action reminiscent of a previous scene? If so, which one?

Act 2- Scene 7

Introduction—This scene has been called by Robert Sherwood himself the most completely fictitious scene in the entire play. As you read it, look for the deeper meaning behind it.

1. How does Lincoln feel about the extension of slavery into the west? What does he feel will be the result?

2. What does he realize as he talks to Seth Gale?

3. What does the prayer spoken here symbolize?

4. What do Seth and his family symbolize?

5. What does Seth's little boy symbolize?

Act 2- Scene 8

Introduction—His return to Mary Todd in this scene is the expression of his acceptance of his own destiny. Actually it took him twelve more years of searching thought and observation before he became a strong decisive man who was sure he had truth on
his side.

1. Notice the entire tone of this scene. Imagine how you might have directed the actors in this scene.

2. What does Mary mean by the phrase "magnificent destiny"?

3. How does she feel about facing "humiliation"?

**Act 3- Scene 9**

**Introduction**—Douglas's speech in this scene is a blend of several of his actual words—Lincoln's reply is also a mixture of quotations and paraphrases from various speeches given by him and from some of his letters. Notice the lapse of time between this scene and the preceding one. Read Lincoln and Douglas's speeches very carefully.

1. Notice the vocabulary used by both speakers. Write in your notebook the words which you don't understand.

2. Was Douglas's selection of words suppose to appeal to the emotions of the people? Write down those which you think do.

3. What is Douglas's opinion of slavery?


5. In what manner of speaking does Lincoln deliver his address?

6. How do Lincoln's words differ from those of Douglas?

7. What is the source of Lincoln's words—"A house divided against itself cannot stand"?

**Act 3- Scene 10**

**Introduction**—The characters of Sturveson, Barrick and Grimmin are fictitious, probably representing the world of politics into which Lincoln was being drawn. Sherwood tells us that we are not to believe that Lincoln was driven only by friends. When he was
sure of something in his own mind, he became a
decisive man of action. He used clever means of his
own to get ahead and when elected he took orders
from no one.

1. How does Mary now feel about her part in Lin-
coln's career? How does it differ from that of
an earlier scene?

2. Notice some of the politicians' opinions of
Lincoln. Do you think they have reason to be-
lieve as they do? Be prepared to given specific
reasons for your answer.

Act 3—Scene 11

Introduction—There is evidence that Lincoln did
lose his patience with his wife; hence Sherwood
included such an incident as takes place in this
scene.

1. What is Mary's attitude in this scene? How
does it differ from that of Lincoln?

2. What is the meaning of Mary's last words to
Lincoln at the end of this scene?

3. How do you think Lincoln might have spoken the
words by which he describes his campaign as the
"dirtiest campaign in the history of corrupt
politics."

4. Notice Lincoln's reaction to the news that he
has won the election. Might we expect such a
reaction?

Act 3—Scene 12

Introduction—This farewell speech is a blend of
several of Lincoln's utterances, starting with the
words he actually delivered to his neighbors on this
occasion. The lines about the "sentiment in the
Declaration of Independence" were from his speech in
Independence Hall in Philadelphia, eleven days later.
The lines about the Eastern monarch and his wise
men were from the address given to farmers in Mil-
waukee a year and a half previously.

1. What is Lincoln's attitude in this scene?
2. Read his farewell speech carefully. What words do you think give the essence of this speech?

3. Imagine the atmosphere on stage as Lincoln departs. Has this atmosphere prevailed during any of the other scenes? If so, when? If not, why?

The remaining core activities must be done by all students. Following each activity there appears the number 1, 2, or 3 in parentheses. The number 1 means that the activity will be prepared for oral presentation only; the number 2, that the activity will be prepared in writing only; the number 3, that the activity will be prepared both in writing and for oral presentation. Several activities could be planned for a panel discussion. If you and other members of the class are interested in such a discussion, consult the teacher.

4. As you read the play, keep a record in your notebook of the words that are new to you. Check their meanings and use the words in sentences related to the play. Include the sentences in your notebook. (3)

5. Pretend that you are a character from *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. Introduce yourself and tell the class in what way you were important to the play. (1)

6. Write a composition on any character in the play telling how they influenced Lincoln's life. (3)

7. Write a friendly letter to some friend (one who has never read the play) giving a good description of your favorite character. Be very specific in telling what the person looked like, how he was dressed, how he spoke, and how he acted in the play. (3)

8. As you read the play keep a written record of the lines which particularly appealed to you, especially those which you find yourself wanting to re-read. Imagine these lines as you might hear them spoken on the stage. Be prepared to speak them to the class so that the other students might try to identify them. (3)
9. Write a descriptive paragraph in which you describe one setting or one costume from any scene in *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. (2)

10. As you read the play, select those stage directions which help you to understand the following:
   a. how a character moves on the stage
   b. how a character speaks (tone of voice, rate of speed, etc.)
   c. some position taken by a character on the stage.
   d. how a character is dressed
   e. the mood or attitude of a character

   Record in your notebook at least five for each category (a, b, and c listed above) (2)

11. All of us have had some decision which was difficult for us to make. Write about such a decision in your own life in a composition of at least two paragraphs. (2)

12. Take any three characters from the play and list the most desirable and undesirable traits which they possess. (2)

13. Be prepared to discuss one or more of the books on the collateral reading list. Keep a written record of each book you read, comment upon the book, and be prepared to discuss your list at the end of the unit. (2)

14. There are many examples in the play of Lincoln's sense of humor. As you come across them, record them in your notebook for future discussions. (2)

15. Record in your notebook at least five examples of one character telling us something about another character who is not present at the time. (2)

16. Take one of your favorite scenes. Pretend you are the director of the play. Write a composition entitled—*How I Would Have Directed This Scene*. (3)
OPTIONAL RELATED ACTIVITIES

Listed below are various activities from which you may select one or more or none. If you find one that interests you, consult the teacher before you begin work. Several activities could be planned for a panel discussion. If you and other members of the class are interested in such a discussion, consult the teacher before you begin your work.

1. Robert E. Sherwood has won the Pulitzer Prize four times (one of these you remember was for Abe Lincoln in Illinois). Find out for what other plays or books he was awarded this prize. Report orally to the class.

2. You might be interested in reading the complete newspaper reviews for the New York production of the play. If so, report orally to the class on at least two of these. At the same time, report, in the same way, on any play which has opened in New York within the past year.

3. Read another play by Robert Sherwood. Discuss it with the class showing in what ways it is like and/or unlike Abe Lincoln in Illinois. Before you begin reading it, discuss your selection with the teacher and a copy of the play will be obtained for you.

4. Prepare Lincoln's speech in Act 3- Scene 9 for dramatization. Read it as you would expect him to read it on such an occasion.

5. Do the same with Douglas's speech in the same scene.

6. Make a tape recording of one of the scenes. After it has been presented, conduct a discussion in which your classmates are asked to visualize the setting and the characters.

7. Select a few scenes from the play and dramatize them. Memorization of the lines is not necessary.

8. E.P. Conkle's Prologue to Glory and John Drinkwater's Abraham Lincoln are both about Lincoln
Read one of these and compare the portrait of Lincoln with that of *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*.

9. John Keats poem "On Death" is read in Act 1-Scene 1 of the play. Why did this poem appeal to Lincoln? Find other poems which for the reason you decide upon might have appealed to Lincoln.

10. Both Lincoln and Douglas were outstanding speakers. There have been many more brilliant orators in the history of our country. Select one or two who appeal to you and compare them to Lincoln or Douglas.

11. A group of students, interested in history, should find the beginning of Lincoln's political career in Washington fascinating. Select a chairman, divide the topics of interest among you and present your discussion to the class.

12. Another group, interested in history, might want to report on a biography of Lincoln which will tell us more than the play does about the main character. Emphasize, particularly, the years not covered in the play.

13. In the light of Lincoln's farewell speech to the people of Springfield, investigate the history of the United States in the year 1938. Tell how the play might have been timely when produced. Report also on whether you think the play is timely even at the present day.

14. Mr. Raymond Massey, who played the leading role in the original production of the play, is still active in movies, television and on the stage. Locate information on him and present it orally to the class.

15. Perhaps some one in the class has an older friend or relative who has seen *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. If so, speak with them and present to the class the person's reaction to seeing the play.

16. Create and mount for bulletin board display cartoons based upon your study of *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. Keep your captions in the mood of your cartoon.
17. If you enjoy drawing, depict a character, scene, or setting from the play. Use Material directly from the play.

18. Make illustrations of some of the costumes which have appeared in the play. Place them in a scrapbook so that each student might inspect them more closely.

19. If you are interested in making things, build a speaker's platform from which Lincoln might have delivered some of his famous speeches. If some other project appeals more to you, speak with me before you begin.

20. There are numerous anecdotes that have been told concerning Lincoln. They are both humorous and serious in nature. Find some of these and report them to the class.

21. Biographical information is always interesting and helpful to our understanding of a certain person. Read about that portion of Stephen Douglas's life depicted in the play and report to the class.

22. Remember that this play was made into a movie. Compose a good business letter to the studio that produced it asking for photographs from the movie.

23. Many poems have been written about Lincoln. Locate at least five, read them and report on them to the class.

24. Write a composition on why you think Robert Sherwood was unable to include many of his own ideas in this play.

25. Take one of the basic conflicts in the play and trace its development through the play. Prepare a good outline first and show it to me before you begin your final writing.
POOLING OF EXPERIENCES PHASE

Before beginning these activities the teacher should review with the class the aims of effective speaking and listening in terms of the previously determined objectives.

1. Those questions from core activity #3 (study guide questions) not already discussed will be considered. Some questions may be reviewed at the discretion of the teacher.

2. Class participation in the remaining core activities and in the optional related activities.

3. Exhibitions of various projects

4. Panel discussions and oral reports

5. Written objective test (final test)
BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR PUPIL ACTIVITIES

The following list of references is to be used in relation with the optional related activities. The number in parentheses following each reference is the number of the activity to which the reference directly applies.

**Biographies**


   On pages 77-97 Carl Sandburg writes a biographical account called "Abe Lincoln Speaks at Gettysburg."


   A book that brings out the spiritual strength of the giant from the backwoods at the same time showing him a lonely troubled man in another questioning era.


   A biography of the prairie president, based on up-to-date and accurate sources—in his gauntness, his gawkiness, and his greatness—the backwoods boy who became President and saved the Union.


   A glimpse into the Civil War, the effort of Stephen A.
Douglas to prevent it. Reveals a study of more than twenty thousand letters which give insight into his life and times.


An adaptation for boys and girls from the first twenty-seven chapters of "Abe Lincoln, the Prairie Years", covering his early life until he left home at nineteen.

**Histories**


Deals with fundamental activities, ideas, and interests which have entered into the development of American society from the colonial period to the contemporary age.


A survey, pictorial and written, of America's cultural, social, and economic history, from Columbus's discovery to the present.


Unusually readable history which fills a place between the longer works and the condensed school histories. A condensed narrative for the purpose of interesting young readers.

**Poetry**

Book Company, New York, 1952. (23)

Anthology of literature with a poem about Lincoln on the page cited.


Anthology of literature with a poem about Lincoln on the page cited.


Anthology of literature with a poem about Lincoln on the page cited.


An anthology of literature with a poem about Lincoln on the page cited.


An anthology of literature with poems about Lincoln on the pages cited.


An anthology of literature with a poem about Lincoln on the page cited.

An anthology of poetry containing Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed" on the pages cited.

**Plays About Lincoln**

   
   A play in one act

   
   A play in eight scenes based on the New Salem years of Abraham Lincoln.

   
   Certain events in Lincoln's life after the fifty faneless years are simply staged. The local color and much of the talk in America.

**Books of Anecdotes**

   
   Anecdotes by some men who knew him; being personal recollections of Judge Owen T. Reeves, Hon. James S. Ewing, Col. Richard Morgan, John W. Bunn and others.

   
   Stories told by him in the Military office in the War department during the Civil War, recorded by one of the listeners, David Homer Bates.

Stories gathered from authentic sources.


Latest light on Abraham Lincoln; and war time memories, including many heretofore unpublished incidents and historical facts concerning his ancestry, boyhood, family, religion, public life, trials and triumphs, illustrated with many reproductions from original paintings, photographs, etc.


Personal recollections of Lincoln and men of his time by Dittenhoffer, a campaigner for Lincoln in 1860 and a Lincoln elector in 1864.

6. Hertz, Emanuel, Lincoln Talks. The Viking Press, New York, 1939. (20)

A biography in anecdote, collected, collated, and edited by Hertz.

Autobiographies


Consists of personal portions of his letters, speeches and conversations.

Newspaper Articles


The review written by Atkinson after the New York opening of the play

The review written by Watts after the New York opening of the play.
COLLATERAL READING LIST

This reading list should be used by the teacher in view of the individual differences within the particular class. The first list was derived from the following source:

Roos, Jean Carolyn, Patterns in Reading, American Library Association, Chicago, 1954.

In this publication, Roos directs her choices to "young people" whom she terms as those teen-agers of the early high school age and those in their later teens. Interests are broad and reading abilities considered are varied. Upon the teacher rests the responsibility of giving the right book to the right student.


   The whole survey of the Civil War—in verse.


   Fanny Kemble, a great English actress, triumphs on both sides of the Atlantic, but her marriage to American Pierce Butler fails because she cannot accept his stand on slavery.


   Stephen Brice, a young New England lawyer, falls in love with a southern girl in St. Louis where he went to practice law. A meeting with Lincoln makes him decide to join the Union Army.


   The biography of a remarkable woman who served as scout, spy and nurse during the Civil War and never gave up the fight for full rights for her people.

Henry Fleming longed to be a hero, but delayed opportunity sapped his nerve at Chancellorsville. However he proved the right to the "red badge of courage."


This biography of the sculptor of the minute man and the figure in the Lincoln Memorial is a tribute by his daughter and gives an appealing picture of family life.


Conversations with Lincoln, publication of an abolitionist newspaper, and association with John Brown are some of the highlights in the career of Frederick Douglass, the first American negro to become an outstanding leader of his people.


Plantation life in Virginia is gay until war brings sorrow, privation, and tragedy with defeat.


Frederick Douglass, a great American negro, escaped from slavery, worked for the freedom of all enslaved people the world over, and became one of the spearheads of emancipation.


Chronicles several generations of the Sask family of Kentucky, through the Indian raids, through the Civil War years.

Anne Carroll, born on a southern plantation but with sympathy for the North, became an official member of Lincoln's cabinet and planned the Tennessee Valley military strategy which split the Confederacy.


The first fifty-two years of Lincoln's life, until he became President.


Young Abraham Lincoln comes to the rescue when Jim Owens attempts to take the "Talisman", a new river boat, up the Sangamon and is caught by low water.


Tibby Day, in her ninety-fifth year, lives through the dreadful Civil War years in Williamsburg, Richmond, and Washington.


An inspiring life of the president of the United States who brought his country through the most difficult conflict in its history.

The following list was adapted from the following source:

In each reference which follows, there are three numbers following the date of publication. The first two, separated by a hyphen, indicates the range of grade levels to which this book will be interesting. The last number, preceded by the letter V, indicates the vocabulary grade level of that particular book.


A thrilling story of the forebears of Abraham Lincoln who sold their farm in Virginia to follow Daniel Boone and establish new frontiers.


Many pictorial charts and diagrams contribute to an extremely readable text to tell what was happening all over the world at significant periods in Lincoln's life.


An exciting account of a colorful period of history beginning with a trip to Kansas territory when Bill is only eight, adventures and dangers unroll up to the dramatic moment when the Pony Express speeds away with news of Lincoln's election.


This very condensed history which tells something about everything on the American scene, past and present, includes the struggle for unity and lists presidents, heroes, and inventors.


Stirring and sympathetic portrayal of the final surrender of Lee and his forces with considerable insight into the personalities of the two great generals.

Short biographical sketches from Martha Washington to Mamie Eisenhower.


The reader will enjoy this story of Lincoln with its quiet charm and sincerity.


Young Jeff and his sister Corinth, with their mother, take their wagon across the country to Oregon. One of a series of stories filled with historical fact, written to bring out the exciting experiences encountered by the young people of earlier days.


A Civil War story about the rivalry between a northern girl and her southern cousin.


An historical story of a slave brought to America in the early eighteenth century and his later free life in Jaffrey, N.H.

The following list was adapted from:

National Council of Teachers of English, Books For You, A list for Leisure Reading For Use by Students in Senior High Schools, Champaign, Illinois, 1956.

Following a reference, there may appear an asterisk (*) or the letters NF. The asterisk indicates that the book is especially mature in content and style. The
letters NF indicate a work on non-fiction.


John Brown was the first to strike a blow for the freedom of slaves. Men worshiped him, followed him for years, and contributed money to his cause, and some fought by his side.


A carefully documented hour-by-hour account of the last day of Lincoln's life.


In pictures and narrative, Buchanan presents a brief history of American elections and electioneering from 1789 to 1956. Included are the outstanding events and figures of each period.


A gripping characterization of the men who fought to save the Union and took their stand at Gettysburg.


An epic account of the later exploits of the Union Army. Portrayed are the strategy of Grant and the majesty of the finale of the War.


A study of the times and situations which have produced the seven assassins or would be assassins of seven Presidents of the United States.

A somewhat whimsical story of the corps of balloonists that was formed during the Civil War.


Belle Boyd, the heroine, was one of the most efficient secret agents of the Confederacy. At seventeen she found ways to render valuable service to the southern cause.


This story centers on the men and ships constituting Eads' "Fighting Ironclads" who fought the Civil War along the Mississippi and its branches in 1862.


The marriage of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd was marked by devotion on both sides but also by misunderstanding and sorrow.
BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR TEACHER’S USE

Books


**This bibliography lists the references used in this unit and in Appendix A in regard to the life and work of Robert E. Sherwood.**


**Articles**


Thesis

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

Films


A carefully authenticated, minutely documented, dramatic account of Lincoln's death in the home of Mr. Peterson, where he was carried after being shot. In a most memorable sequence, the camera follows Lincoln's funeral train across the country-side to the accompaniment of Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed". One in the Lincoln Series produced by the TV-Radio Workshop of the Ford Foundation.


Lincoln is seen at the age of 14, attending a typical school of that day. Evidence from his father, his stepmother, his sister, and his stepbrother of what kind of a boy he had grown up to be is given in following sequences. Filmed in the actual locale where the President spent his youth. One in the Lincoln Series produced by the TV-Radio Workshop of the Ford Foundation.


Shows the hard life experienced by the American backwoods family in general and the Lincoln family in particular. Young Abe Lincoln is seen as being extremely close to his mother, and deeply moved by her death. How this void in his life is slowly filled by Tom Lincoln's second wife, Sally Bush Lincoln, concludes the film. One in the Lincoln Series produced by the TV-Radio Workshop of the Ford Foundation.
Using familiar modern day scenes, monuments, historical documents, and animation sequences, the life and times of Abraham Lincoln are brought to life. The actor portraying Lincoln is never shown. Narration is used to review present ideas of him, and the effect of his environment on his life, and his influence today. Among the scenes recreated are Pioneer Village, near Rockland, Indiana, Gettysburg, Penna., and Washington, D.C.

Dramatically re-enacts incidents in Lincoln's life which characterize him as an outstanding exponent of human freedom. Traces interesting events of Lincoln's early boyhood which reveal his unforgettable qualities of integrity, humor, common sense, and tenderness. Points to his several roles as store clerk, woodsman, lawyer, husband, father, Congressman, and President. Associates familiar Lincoln quotations with the actual incidents which promoted them.

Winner of the Academy Award for the best short documentary of 1956, this film is the actual record of the crucial Civil War period in our nation's past made up mostly of Matthew Brady's original wetplates photographs, it surveys the whole story of the war—its course, its desperate, bloody battles, its leaders and its effect on the nation.
Later he repeats the speech to a wounded Confederate soldier and thus reveals his attitude toward the south.

8. Coronet Film Catalogue, *How To Read Plays*, 16 mm, sound film black and white. Chicago, Illinois, 1953. 13\u00bc minutes.

This film offers constructive workable suggestions concerning the problems of reading a play. Emphasis is placed on reconstructing—imaginatively—the stage production itself, thereby enabling the reader to fully grasp the visual, aural, and dramatic content of a play from the bare outline provided in a book.

**Filmstrips**


Consists of photographs taken during the production of a feature motion picture. Shows Lincoln's activities as a frontier boy, his family life in a log cabin, a trip down the Mississippi River on a flat boat where he sees gangs of slaves driven through the streets and his entire political career until he is bound for Washington, D.C. as President of the United States.

**Recordings**

1. Decca Records, *Abraham Lincoln*, 12-inch discs, 33 1/3 r.p.m.

Poetry and prose concerning Lincoln by the following artists: Carl Sandburg, Edwin Markham, Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman, Rosemary Benet and Vachel Lindsay. Read by Carl Sandburg, Walter Huston, Orson Welles and Agnes Moorehead.


Scenes from the play read by Mr. Raymond Massey.
EVALUATIONS

Listed below are check lists which could be filled out by each student estimating various aspects of the work accomplished during the unit.

CHECK LIST FOR WRITTEN WORK

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Did I plan an outline for my work?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Did I have a strong introductory paragraph?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Did I have a different paragraph for each distinct idea?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Were all my paragraphs closely related to each other?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Were my ideas clearly and logically organized?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Did I have a strong concluding paragraph which summarized the work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Did I have varied sentence structure?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Did I check for errors in spelling, capitalization and punctuation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Did I check for errors in grammar and usage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Did I write legibly at all times?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Did I write in a natural style?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHECK LIST FOR LISTENING

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Did I listen attentively?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Did I write down new words as I heard them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Did I listen carefully for the distinction between main points and details?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Did I listen to detect irrelevant material?
5. Did I make notes on those points which I did not understand?
6. Was I courteous during the talk?

CHECK LIST FOR SPEAKING

1. Did I appear alert and interested in my material?
2. Did I give my entire attention to my audience?
3. Was I heard easily?
4. Did I face my audience when speaking?
5. Was I selective in the facts necessary for an effective presentation of my topic?
6. Did I pronounce my words clearly and correctly?
7. Did I speak at an appropriate rate of speed?
8. Did I speak naturally?

CHECK LIST FOR LETTER WRITING

1. Did I follow the correct form for the letter being written?
2. Did I follow the rules for writing a good description?
3. Did I write an interesting letter?
4. Did I write legibly?
5. Did I check carefully for errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization?

6. Did I check carefully for errors in grammar and usage?

7. Did I address the envelope correctly?

**CHECK LIST FOR STUDENT NOTEBOOK**

1. Did I record those answers to the study guide questions which would assist me most in actively participating in the class discussions?

2. Did I record accurately other information which would assist me in completing the core activities?

3. Did I maintain a neat notebook—notations being made in ink whenever possible?

**CHECK LIST FOR PUPILS' EVALUATION OF THE UNIT**

1. Did you find the unit interesting?

2. Did you find it challenging?

3. Did it have meaning for you in terms of your own personal life?

4. Would you enjoy reading another play as the subject of such a unit as this?

   Complete the following statements in as much detail as possible. Be sure to give specific reasons for your answers.

1. The part of the unit I liked the most was..............
2. The part of the unit I liked the least was.............
3. I would improve this unit by..........................
ARE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS

FINAL TEST

A. Those questions from the Pre-Test should be repeated which the teacher feels are pertinent in light of the class discussions which have taken place.

B. On the line to the left of each number write the letter of the statement which identifies the best ending for the sentence.

1. In the first scene Lincoln is told that he is a strange mixture of
   (a) friendliness and misanthropy.
   (b) optimism and pessimism.
   (c) sadness and humor.
   (d) helpfulness and despair.

2. Lincoln firmly believed that there was great responsibility in
   (a) taking the advice of friends.
   (b) representing the people.
   (c) fulfilling his financial obligations.
   (d) lawmaking.

3. From the very beginning, Lincoln was
   (a) undecided and wanted to be left alone.
   (b) determined to be President.
   (c) interested in a political career in New Salem.
   (d) interested in conducting a small business in New Salem.

4. Mary Todd was ambitious for her husband because
   (a) she was jealous of her sister Elizabeth.
   (b) she wanted to be married to the President of the United States.
   (c) she realized the great future Lincoln was destined to have.
   (d) she realized he had little ambition of his own.
5. Lincoln's stand on the slavery question was urged most strongly by
   (a) Mary Todd.
   (b) Seth Gale.
   (c) Billy Herndon.
   (d) Bowling Green.

6. Lincoln and Douglas's views in regard to slavery were
   (a) very different.
   (b) practically the same.
   (c) the same except in regard to its extension to the west.
   (d) the same except in regard to conditions in the north.

7. Lincoln realized his duty in life for the first time
   (a) when Billy Herndon told him of his duty.
   (b) as he talked with Seth Gale on the Prairie near New Salem.
   (c) when he returned to Mary Todd.
   (d) when he was asked to run for President.

8. In regard to going to war, Lincoln felt that
   (a) the United States should go to war only if it were necessary to preserve human freedom.
   (b) it was absolutely necessary.
   (c) war should be avoided at all costs.
   (d) the United States should go to war only if slavery were extended to the west.

9. Lincoln accepted the Presidency with indifference because
   (a) he did not want to assume these duties at such a time.
   (b) he believed his campaign was corrupt.
   (c) he never wanted to be President.
   (d) he did not want to leave his friends in Springfield.
C. On the line in front of each item in Column 2 place the number of the item from Column 1 most nearly associated with it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Jane Squire</td>
<td>setting of the play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Seth Gale</td>
<td>the poem read by Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) &quot;A house divided against itself cannot stand.&quot;</td>
<td>an imaginary character in the play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) the letter written by Lincoln to Mary Todd</td>
<td>a burned letter Lincoln's first love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) &quot;On Death&quot;</td>
<td>expression used by Lincoln about himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) &quot;sucker&quot;</td>
<td>words from Lincoln's campaign speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) &quot;whether ever I shall return.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;magnificent destiny&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) New Salem and Springfield</td>
<td>Lincoln's wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Minian Edwards</td>
<td>the words from Lincoln's speech to the people of Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Ann Rutledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) New Salem and Washington, D.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) Mary Todd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) &quot;Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14) &quot;Would you want to be President at this time?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15) the letter written by Minian Edwards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. In the space provided write the word or words which correctly complete the following statements.

1. Lincoln's early teacher in New Salem was___________.

2. Lincoln's first political position in New Salem was that of___________.

3. Lincoln's next political position was___________.

4. It has been said that Seth Gale's little boy symbolizes___________.

5. Lincoln's last words in the play were addressed to___________.

6. The most completely fictitious scene in the entire play is the scene in which___________.
7. The two main conflicts in the play are between_________ and_________ and also between_________ and_________.

8. Supplementary biographical material would be helpful between the scene in which_____________________________ and the scene in which_____________________________.

9. Another drama written about Lincoln is_____________________________.

10. The three men who came to ask Lincoln to run for the Presidency were_____________________________,_____________________________, and_____________________________.

E. The quotations listed below were spoken by characters from Abe Lincoln in Illinois. At the left of each quotation place the name of the person who spoke it.

1. "What ever becomes of the two of us, I'll die loving you."

2. "If she really is ambitious for you—if she will never stop driving you, goading you—then I say, God bless her, and give her strength!"

3. "Because the one thing he needs is a woman with a will to face life for him."

4. "...you're a man who could fill any one's heart—yes, fill it and warm it and make it glad to be living."

5. "...a man who has never wanted anything in his life but to be let alone, in peace!"

6. "Everything in this town is my business, Jack. It's the only kind of business I've got."

7. "We can go on as we have done, increasing in wealth, in population, in power, until we shall be the admiration and the terror of the world!"

8. "Mr. Lincoln's chief virtue is that he hides no part of his simple soul from any one."

9. "Don't let 'em get you; don't let 'em put you in a store suit that's the uniform of
degradation in this miserable country."

10. "What's the use of working for a future, when there won't be anybody growing up to enjoy it."
UNIT B -- OUR TOWN

Preface:

This unit is designed for use with an eleventh grade English class of twenty-five pupils. These pupils are preparing for college. They live in a small industrial city and are from middle-class backgrounds.

In an attempt to meet individual differences a Pre-Test has been presented to determine particular needs; study guide questions and activities representing various degrees of difficulty have been supplied. Supplementary questions can and should be added as the unit progresses.

INTRODUCTION

This unit is concerned with the study of modern American drama and specifically with the study of Our Town by Thornton Wilder.

Much of the American drama is concerned with interpreting the truths of everyday life. American dramatists, in general, have also required realistic descriptions, characterization, dialogue, action and settings in their plays.

Our Town is representative of these trends. This unit aims to develop appreciation of Our Town as a means to developing the power and capacity in the student to enjoy other plays more fully.
PUPIL OBJECTIVES

Understandings

1. Plays are written primarily to be acted.
2. The play must be understood as a whole.
3. Characters are defined by dialogue and action.
4. The dialogue must seem natural to the reader and to the hearer.
5. A play plot is a series of incidents leading up to and through a climax to a conclusion.
6. A crisis is a minor climax or turning point.
7. The climax is the chief turning point in the play.
8. The necessary elements in a play are setting, characters, dialogue, and atmosphere.
9. When we refer to a drama, we mean a serious play with some lighter moments.
10. Our Town was written by Thornton Wilder and it won the Pulitzer Prize.
11. Our Town received many favorable critical reviews when it first opened.
12. We can learn about these reviews from books and magazine articles written at the time.
13. A play, although favorably received, can meet with unfavorable criticism also.

Attitudes, Tastes and Appreciations

It is hoped that this unit of study will help to bring about further personal development of the individual by:

1. A greater understanding of people and of human nature.
3. An increased ability in interpreting character.
4. Greater social poise as a result of performing before and working with a group.
5. A heightened appreciation for the cultural aspects of life.
6. Appreciation of accomplishments of fellow students.
7. The exercise of initiative, responsibility, and the ability to co-operate with the group.
8. An appreciation of worthwhile literature and the resultant development of the ability to discriminate.

Skills and Abilities

Reading

1. Increased facility in the use of reference material.
2. An increased reading vocabulary.
3. Increased awareness of language used to appeal to the emotions.
4. Increased awareness of words which lend "local color".
5. Detecting the author's purpose through silent reading.
6. Detecting the mood of the play through silent reading.
7. Increased ability in adjusting reading rate to the purpose for reading. (Reading dialogue and stage directions is slower than reading straight narrative.)
8. Increased ability in interpreting and analyzing characters through silent and oral reading.
9. Increased ability in reading stage directions carefully. These directions can help you visualize what is going on and to "hear" in your mind the words being spoken.

10. Increased improvement of comprehension in reading.

Writing

1. Ability to keep a good notebook.

2. Increased ability to write a good descriptive composition.

3. Increased facility in expressing one's thoughts in writing.

4. The following mechanics will be stressed for all written work to increase ability in these areas.
   a. varied sentence structure and mature vocabulary.
   b. correct spelling, punctuation and capitalization.
   c. correct grammar and usage.

5. Increased ability in writing constructive evaluations of work done in class.

6. Increased ability in writing concise summaries of plots.

7. Expressing ideas clearly, logically, and in a well organized manner.

8. Legible writing is expected for all work.

Listening

1. Listening politely and constructively to others as they read or perform.

2. Increasing ability to listen for main points.
3. Increasing ability to listen for details.

4. Listening effectively in group discussions in order to contribute ideas to the group.

5. Listening for new words as they appear.

6. Listening critically to others, in order to present helpful evaluations of their work.

**Speaking**

1. Reading aloud effectively with expression and understanding of the written words.

2. Expressing thoughts effectively for the understanding of the group.

3. Conveying meaning to others, in a discussion and group meetings, in a logical, well organized manner.
UNIT ASSIGNMENT

(Tentative time Allotment—Three Weeks)

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

1. Conduct a discussion of a play or movie seen on television that many of the students found unusually entertaining.

2. Ask these questions on the play or movie:
   1. Title and type of play or movie on TV.
      a. Is the name of the picture well chosen?
      b. What is the type of the play or movie — musical, straight drama, mystery, fantasy? A play deserves to evaluated according to type.
   2. Credits: Who worked on this production?
      a. What producer or producing studio?
      b. Director—what other pictures or plays did he direct?
      c. What other movies or plays have you seen by the same author?
   3. Cast: Who are the main characters? Who are the supporting characters? Who are the minor characters?
      a. Were they the best people to play these parts? Who else might have played these parts?
      b. Do they make the characters believable? Are they overacted? Stiff?
   4. Plot: Summarize the plot in four or five good sentences. Use the names of the characters portrayed in the picture or play, not the names of the actors.
   5. Theme: What is the nature of the conflict in the picture? What is the main issue? The argument?
6. Solution:
   a. Does the story end in a logical way?
   b. Was it honest and believable as it was worked out?
   c. Does the picture or play solve issues with blazing guns, rights to the jaw, or in ways in which we commonly settle arguments?

7. Evaluations:
   a. Was the picture dramatic? Did it hold attention?
   b. What were the best bits of acting?
   c. Was the dialogue believable? Fresh?
   d. What did you learn that you didn't know before?

3. Show the film strip, "Four Ways to Study Drama", (33 minutes) University of California, Grades 10-12.

4. Hand out copies of the mimeographed Study Guide and Reading List.

5. Question 2 of the Introductory Activities may be used as a Pre-Test, either written or oral, if the teacher wishes to do so.

6. The teacher may draw upon the material in Appendix B, Drama as a Form of Literature, for use in class discussions or as a basis for a written or an oral Pre-Test.
Introduction to the Student

1. A section of your notebook should be set aside for use while working with this unit. The information to be contained in this notebook will be explained later.

2. The following biographical sketch of Thornton Wilder, author of Our Town, and the critical comments on the play form the first two core activities. A core activity is one in which all students must participate. Please read this material, including in your notebook any notes on it which will aid you in future class discussions.

3. It is suggested that the student read Our Town completely from beginning to end in one sitting. This is sensible because the play was written to be seen completely at one sitting.

4. After reading the play completely the first time, you will read it again, but this time with more care and thought, using the Study Guide Questions which make up the third core activity. Answers to the Study Guide Questions will be recorded in your notebook.

5. Read the other core activities as you may want to take notes and prepare them as you read the play.

6. Remember that the questions will be discussed in class. Specific reasons must be given for your answers. A simple yes or no is not acceptable.

CORE ACTIVITIES

1. Biographical sketch — Thornton Wilder

Thornton Wilder was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1897. His father, known the country over as a writer and a brilliant after-dinner speaker, was a newspaper editor in Madison, and much later was Consul in Hong Kong. Thornton seems to have gone to school progressively at almost every
place between these two points, returning to the United States to complete his high-school education. His college studies were interrupted by his service in the Coast Artillery Corps in the First World War, but he completed them after the War and then did graduate study in archaeology at the American Academy in Rome for a year. For a time he taught at private schools, and from 1930 to 1936 he lectured on literature at the University of Chicago.

In the Second World War, Wilder served with the Air Force's Intelligence in North Africa and Italy.

Issacs has said of Wilder, "He wanted to teach and to study, he wanted to write novels and plays. He solved those problems by doing them all, both in turn and together."

It was as a novelist that Wilder first won recognition. The Cabala, written in 1925, received much praise. In 1927 Wilder was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his philosophical novel The Bridge of San Luis Rey. In 1930 he wrote The Woman of Andros and in 1935 Heaven's My Destination. After winning success in the theatre, Wilder proved that he was still able to write noteworthy fiction with his story of Julius Caesar, The Ides of March, in 1948.

Gassner, in A Treasury of the Theatre, describes

Wilder's career in the theatre:

"Wilder's career in the theatre started inauspiciously with a play called The Trumpet Shall Sound, which Richard Boleslavsky's Laboratory Theatre produced in New York in 1926. Wilder then brought out two collections of one-act plays, The Angel that Troubled the Waters (1928) and The Long Christmas Dinner (1931). Some of these one-acters are notable as early examples of Wilder's interest in the everyday events of simple life and of his fondness for nonrealistic styles of play construction. In 1932 he adapted André Obey's Lucrece for Katherine Cornell.

'It was rather late in his career that Wilder made his special impression on the theatre. In 1938 in addition to adapting a German play, The Merchant of Yonkers, which failed on Broadway, he made theatrical history with Our Town. This play received a brilliant production on a bare stage from the volatile genius of the American theatre Jed Harris; it had for its chief actor the lovable performer Frank Craven who played the Narrator. Our Town enjoyed a long run on Broadway, toured widely, and has been a favorite production in the little theatres throughout the United States. In 1942 Wilder startled playgoers with a uniquely stylized drama, The Skin of Our Teeth, which telescoped human history in the story of a New Jersey suburban family. Although it did not succeed so well as Our Town, The Skin of Our Teeth made a deep impression. It was the most profound commentary on the Second World War crisis of which the American theatre proved capable. In 1948, Wilder's adaptation of a play by Sartre, The Vistors, received an experimental production. But it was not written in Wilder's characteristic vein, and it throws no light on the nonrealistic dramatic art for which he will be remembered."

To add to the picture of people one studies, it is often interesting to know more about the person than his work. If we know what a person looks like, we somehow feel

1/John Gassner (Editor), A Treasury of the Theatre: from Ghosts to Death of a Salesman. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1956, p. 926.
that we know him better. In the case of Thornton Wilder
many writers have written about his physical appearance.
This is how he appeared to one writer in 1938 shortly
after Our Town had been produced:

"In appearance he (Wilder) suggests a young
colonel in civilian clothes. He obviously enjoys
life. His eyes behind his round steel-rimmed
glasses have a peculiarly bird-like quality. And
he talks a blue streak. . . . As his books indicate,
he has considerable powers of concentration. He is
too intense, indeed, to have the serenity of one
of his own characters. His personality hops from the
oracular perch to the impish one with the quickness
of a restless canary. He gave me the impression
of being anxious both to be liked and to be under-
stood. Although I thought to myself, a highly-strung,
friendly person."

In discussing Thornton Wilder, the writer, we think
of Thornton Wilder, the man. In 1955, Tyrone Guthrie
stated in the "New York Times Magazine":

"He is essentially an American writer, a New
England writer, writing about his own environment.
Authenticity to this environment is essential if
the best results are to be achieved in production.
But at the same time his plays are sufficiently
true to universal human experience, sufficiently
transcend merely local environment and character, to
make them acceptable on a cosmopolitan level. . . . It
is one of the paradoxes of art that a work can only
be universal if it is rooted in a part of its creator
which is most privately and particularly himself.

1/Hoss Parmenter, "Novelist into Playwright: An Interview
with Thornton Wilder," Saturday Review of Literature,
(June 11, 1938) 18: 10-11.

2/Tyrone Guthrie, "The World of Thornton Wilder," The
Such roots must sprout not only from the people but also the places which have meant the most to him in his most impressionable years."

2. Critical Comments—Our Town

Many critics have written about Thornton Wilder and Our Town, but it is difficult to judge a man or his work until it is all laid before us. An evaluation of Wilder and his work is still going on. For today's reader, it may prove both interesting and profitable to see some of what has been said about Our Town in the twenty years since it was first produced.

Describing the play, E. J. R. Issacs said:

"The playwright uses the narrative form to unfold his tale of daily life, love, marriage and death, in this New Hampshire town. Frank Craven, pretending to be himself but actually doing an accomplished piece of creative acting, tells the audience the story of the village and its people. As he talks, the people come and go about their tasks and their pleasures on the stage behind him, sometimes acting out a full scene in which Mr. Craven plays a part or which he retires to a corner of the stage to watch."

In 1956, the critics were still discussing the form of Our Town with its narrator. Miller stated:

"A narrator is kept in the foreground as though to remind us that this is not so much 'real life' as an abstraction of it—in other words, a stage.


It is clearly a poetic rather than a realistic play. Would a real set make it realistic? Not likely. A real set would only discomfort us by drawing attention to what would then appear to be a slightly unearthly quality about the characterizations. We should probably say, 'People don't really act like that.' In addition, the characterization of the whole town could not be accomplished with anything like its present vividness if the narrator were removed, as he would have to be from a realistic set, and if the entrances and exits of the environmental people, the townspeople, had to be justified with the usual motives and machinery of Realism."

The audience must be aware of Wilder's purpose in using this form for his play. The reader of Our Town should read the stage directions carefully so that he can picture the action as he reads.

Issac continues:

"If the form of Our Town puts large demands upon the actors that is nothing to the faith it demands of the audience. Disbelief can destroy the story in a jiffy; an audience that is willing to believe in what is going on can make Our Town a living, delightful, moving, theatre piece. Fortunately, the New York audience believes heartily in the reality and the charm of Thornton Wilder's play."

In the same vein, John Mason Brown states:

"The form Mr. Wilder has used is as old as the theatre's ageless game of 'let's pretend' and as new as the last time it has been employed effectively. The co-operation it asks an audience to contribute is at heart the very same co-operation which the most realistic and heavily documented productions invite playgoers to grant. The major difference is one of degree. Both types of production depend


in the last analysis upon their audiences to supply that final belief which is the mandate under which all theatrical illusion operates. The form Mr. Wilder uses is franker, that is all. It does not attempt to hide the fact that it is make-believe. Instead it asks its audiences to do some of the work, to enter openly and gladly into the imaginative conspiracy known as the successful staging of a play."

The form of Our Town enables the author to build the kind of play he wants to give to the audience, an informal, intimate, and compellingly human drama. It is, from the audience point of view, a very personal play. It is the kind of drama which depends upon what the audience or the reader brings to it. The assumption behind Wilder's work is that the audience is anything but a group of people who have assembled, not passively to accept an illusion, but actively to take part in a game of make-believe.

The special form that Our Town takes has also received adverse criticism. Many people say that although Wilder says he abandons all scenery, in truth, he doesn't. Our Town has a trellis, a white dress, a soda fountain, and special lighting effects.

In viewing the play, one critic said:

"It remains a question whether Mr. Wilder has been able to accomplish more with a completely barren stage than with a picturesque suggestion. Personally we resented the shabby ugliness of the chairs and tables as the Chinese properties are good to look

at, and if we are granted clucking chickens and a bridal veil, why not rush-bottom chairs?"

Wilder's two important full-length plays, Our Town and The Skin of Our Teeth, reflect the theme of all his major writing, man in the universe.

John Mason Brown comments on the universality of the unimportant details in Our Town:

"Mr. Wilder's play is concerned with the universal importance of those unimportant details which figure in the lives of men and women everywhere. His Grover's Corners is a New Hampshire town inhabited by decent New England people. The very averageness of these quiet, patient people is the point at which our lives and all living become a part of their experience. Yet Mr. Wilder's play involves more than a New England township. It burrows into the essence of the growing-up, the marrying, the living, and the dying of all of us who sit before it and are included by it."

This is a family play which deals with the traditional family figures, the father, mother, brother, sister. At the same time it uses this particular family to reflect the author's basic idea, his informing principle which can be stated as the indestructibility, the everlastingness, of the family and the community, its rhythm of life, its deep roots in the essentially safe world despite troubles and seemingly disastrous, but essentially temporary dislocations.

Arthur Miller says:

"Wilder sees his characters in this play not

1/ John Mason Brown, op. cit., p. 190.
2/ Arthur Miller, op. cit., p. 39.
primarily as personalities, as individuals, but as forces, and he individualizes them only enough to carry the freight, so to speak, of their roles as forces. I do not believe, for instance that we can think of the brother in this play, or the sister or mother, as having names other than Brother, Sister, Mother. They are characterized rather as social factors, in their roles of Brother, Sister, Mother, in Our Town. They are drawn as forces to enliven and illuminate the author's symbolic vision and his theme, which is that of the family as a timeless, stable quantity which has not only survived all the turmoil of time but is, in addition, beyond the possibility of genuine destruction.

Wilder is not concerned with social trends, with economic conditions, or glittering personalities. He tells of those small events which loom so large in the daily lives of each of us and which are usually not talked about. His interest is the unexceptional, the average, the personal. His preoccupation is what lies beneath the surface and the routine of our lives, and is common to all our hearts and experience. "It is not so much of the streets of a New England Town he writes as of the clean white spire which rises above them."

Winfield Townley states this well when he says:

"Perfectly in key comes Mrs. Gibb's advice to Emily: 'At least, choose an unimportant day. Choose the least important day in your life. It will be important enough.' There sound the central chords of the play: the common day and the light of the future."

1/John Mason Brown, op. cit., p. 192.

Anyone who hears only the milk bottles clink when early morning comes to Grover's Corners has not heard what Mr. Wilder wants them to hear. These milk bottles are merely the spokesmen of time, symbols for the bigness of little things. In terms of the Gibses and the Webbs, Mr. Wilder gives the pattern of repetition of each small day's planning, each small life's fruition and decline. He makes us feel the swift passing of the years. He gives us the sense that our lives go rushing past so quickly that we scarcely have time in which to hold our breaths.

"There go all of us," Brooks Atkinson has expressed the meaning of the play, "not 'but for the grace of God', but 'by the grace of God'," The play deals, as Atkinson has said, with "the days and deaths of the brotherhood of man." Wilder's cultivated mind has reduced human complexity to simplicity.

There was some criticism against the form that Mr. Wilder employed and there has also been criticism against the actual play.

John Mason Brown notes one instance of failure:

"Only once does he (Wilder) fail us seriously. This is his scene in the bleak graveyard on the hill.

1/John Gassner (Editor), op. cit., p. 927.
Although he seeks there to create the image of the dead who have lost their interest in life, he has not been able to capture the true greatness of vision which finds them at last unfettered from the minutiae of existence. Both his phrasing and his thinking are inadequate here. He chills the living by removing his dead even from compassion."

Another critic, George G. Nathan, feels even more strongly about what he considers Our Town's failure. He says:

"The merit of any play, apart from its theme, is plainly predicted on its characters, its dialogue, and its philosophy. In Our Town, there is no single achievement of character drawing, no single memorable line of dialogue, and the philosophy of death which its last act expounds amounts in sum to the remarkable celebration that while life is turbulent death is serene and that the dead wouldn't care to come back if they could because they would be unhappy living in a world whose future they would know and foresee. "...the exhibit, in short, remains fundamentally a stunt."

But critics, on the whole, feel that Our Town has established itself, not merely in the English-speaking theatre, but all over the world, as a candidate for classical statue. Tyrone Guthrie states this position when he says:

"So far neither (Our Town or The Skin of Our Teeth) has been what is called a Smash Hit. Professional dramatic critics, being but human, are leery about praising the unorthodox; the public rarely shows enterprise when in search of entertainment. Yet


these two plays have quietly earned acceptance the world over among discriminating opinion as works of importance. Where the discriminating lead, the herd invariably follows. These are likely contenders for survival long, long after scores of money-making comedies, which the critics commended and the public adored, have reached utter and deserved oblivion."

3. Study Guide Questions

Act I:

1. Find the speech which explains the purpose of the play. Does the first act achieve this purpose?

2. What sort of happenings fill this act? What appeal do they have for an audience?

3. Does the admission that Grover's Corners pays little attention to social justice or to culture and beauty affect your attitude toward the town? Recall the evidences of "culture" Editor Webb lists as typical of his town. Are they familiar to you?

4. What relationships between members of families or between neighbors have been presented in this act?

5. How do the parents handle their children's failings or foolishness?

6. Although Act I seems simply to picture the life of the town, it presents several situations that hold promise of future action. Identify them and tell what future developments could arise from each situation.

7. The end of the act in a play always has special significance. Why does the author choose Rebecca's story about the peculiarly addressed letter to end this one?

Act II:

1. What effect is achieved by having the second act open with the same people and the same activities as the first?
2. Why do both the parents and the young people have spells of reluctance to go on with the wedding? What had been Dr. Gibbs' own terror about getting married? Explain his statement that "everybody has a right to his own troubles."

3. Does the conversation between Emily and George after school help you to understand "how all this began," as the Stage Manager says?

4. Why had Emily resented George's absorption in baseball?

5. Do they seem to realize what a serious step they are approaching? Find lines that show that they do, and others that make them sound young and inexperienced.

6. How does the rainy wedding day fit the shifting mood of the characters most concerned?

7. Why does the Stage Manager say that this is a "good" wedding?

8. What does Mrs. Soames think of it? What do you think of Mrs. Soames? Give her credit for her good qualities.

9. Do you think George's parents handled the situation well when they permitted him to make his own decision? Or should they have given him more advice than they did?

10. What titles does the Stage Manager give the first two acts? How do these titles support the purpose of the play? What is your own guess for the title of Act III?

**Act III**

1. The introductory note to Act III explained to the reader the significance of the people sitting in rows of chairs. What is the first explanation a theatre audience would get?

2. Why is this representation of the dead easier to accept in Act III than it would have been in the opening scene of the play?
3. Now that you have read Act III, what title would you give it?

4. As you think back to the opening of the play, what significance do you see in the case the doctor has been attending?

5. Was the general tone of the birthday scene much like the others earlier in the play? Did it have the same emotional effect on you? Why? or why not?

6. Have you ever thought that poetry about death and immortality is unnecessarily obscure? Read the Stage Manager's speech on this subject. Is the thought poetic? Does it lose effectiveness from being simply expressed?

7. In his final speech, what does the Stage Manager imply is the trouble with this world? Why are his last words a particularly appropriate ending for the play?

8. What is the author's philosophy of death as given to us in Act III?

9. In a full-length play, the chief characters usually undergo some change in attitude or thinking during the course of the play. What changes did you notice in Emily and George? In other characters? What caused the changes?

The remaining core activities must be done by all students.

4. Write a critical review of a play you have seen on television, in the movies or on the stage. Keep these considerations in mind:

   a. the play itself

   b. the casting

   c. the acting

   d. the directing
e. the setting
f. the costuming

Read critical reviews in the newspaper or one of the magazines included in your reading list before you write your own review.

5. Read one other play that Thornton Wilder has written. With others in the class prepare a panel discussion (to last one class period) based on the following points:
   a. plot
   b. characters
   c. dialogue
   d. setting
   e. theme
   f. tone

6. Read and summarize a minimum of two magazine articles that are referred to in the Core Activities 1 and 2 or two articles of your choice concerning Our Town. Do not forget the "Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature" which is in the library. This can help you greatly.

7. Become an "expert" on at least one other well-known play and its author. Be able to discuss intelligently both author and play and be prepared to compare both with Thornton Wilder and Our Town.

OPTIONAL RELATED ACTIVITIES

Listed below are various activities from which you may select two or more. Consult the teacher before you begin work. If you and other members of the class are interested in using one of the activities for a panel discussion or group project, consult the teacher before you begin your work.
1. From the newspapers and magazines which you find on your reading list, collect four different criticisms of one professional production on the professional stage. Point out how the critics differ in their opinions of the play.

2. Did your imagination create clear pictures of the characters in *Our Town*? Describe two of the following:
   a. Emily
   b. George
   c. The Narrator
   d. Editor Webb
   e. Mrs. Webb
   f. Mrs. Soames

3. If your interest lies in the direction of music, select the background music that you would consider appropriate for a moving picture version of *Our Town*. On a sheet of paper list the scenes on the left side and the information about the appropriate music opposite it on the right side of the page. This will be put on the bulletin board. Have an extra copy for your notebook. Be prepared to bring some of the recordings to class to illustrate your choices for the other students.

4. Design and build a model set for one of the acts in *Our Town*. Draw your design on paper suitable for use on the bulletin board.

5. If you were to choose a "Stage Manager" after *Our Town's* pattern to supervise a play about your home town, what sort of person would you select? Write an opening speech for the Stage Manager about your own community, presenting two families whose lives would be as typical as those of the Webbs and the Gibbs in Grover's Corners.

6. Appear in a panel to discuss questions that arise during the study of this unit. For example:
   a. What are the universal themes of literature?
b. Are the problems faced by the people of Grover's Corners the same as the problems we face today?

c. How does drama as a form of literature differ from other forms of literature? In what ways is it similar?

7. Select five movies or television plays that you have seen and enjoyed. In each, tell what you enjoyed particularly. Was it the plot? The acting? The scenic background? The characterization? Try to select or plays that you enjoyed for different reasons.

8. Using your reading list as a guide, write a "history" of one play which was first produced between 1930 and 1940. More material will be available if you choose one of the "award" plays, such as a play that won the Pulitzer Prize.

9. Discuss in not less than 750 words the following remark made by Thornton Wilder:

"In the first place, I think Emily should live. I've always thought so. In a movie you see the people so close to that a different relation is established. In the theatre they are halfway abstractions in an allegory; in the movie they are very concrete. So, insofar as the play is a generalized allegory, she dies—we die—they die; insofar as it's a concrete happening it's not so important that she die; it's even disproportionately cruel that she die. Let her live—the idea will have been imparted anyway."

Theatre Arts, 24:815-824.

Although you will write your discussion of the ideas in the above quotation, be prepared to speak on this subject in class.

10. Summarize in not more than six sentences each, the plots of three pictures or plays you have enjoyed. Remember, it is often difficult to state many ideas concisely.
11. Write a letter to a friend pretending you are visiting the Webbs in Grover's Corners. Describe the town and the people you have met there.

12. Draw a diagram to show the dramatic structure of the play:
   a. Introduction
   b. Rising Action
   c. Climax
   d. Descending Action
   e. Denouement

   Be sure to outline the main event in the play that is part of the dramatic structure. This would be most effective if it were done on large poster paper available in the art department.

13. Discuss in not less than 500 words the following quotation. This is definitely a research activity. List your reference sources in proper bibliographical form at the end of your paper. Your reading list will give you the names of some books you may use for source material. Concentrate on Our Town.

   "Outside of China, playhouses have been established wherever considerable numbers of Chinese are domiciled, but their theatre has had little direct influence on the Occidental stage. In addition to the exceptions previously noted, George C. Hazelton and H. H. Bennett with their play The Yellow Jacket (1913), Eugen Vakhtangov with his production of Tartarot in Moscow in 1922, Okhlopkov with his staging at the Realistic Theatre, and Thornton Wilder with his Our Town (1938) have been conspicuously successful in drawing on the principles of the Chinese and Japanese stage."

14. Make a study of the colorful and picturesque speech in Our Town. Be prepared to discuss your findings for the benefit of the other students.

15. Write a composition of not less than 300 words comparing Emily, as shown in Act III, and the beginning of the poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay which begins:

"O world I cannot hold thee close enough!"

16. Write a composition of not less than 500 words comparing Thornton Wilder's ideas in Our Town and Emily Dickenson's poem:

"After a hundred years
Nobody knows the place.
Agony that enacted there
Motionless as peace."

17. Write a composition comparing Robert Frost's "To Earthwood" and the remarks of the Stage Manager in Act II.

"Love at the lips was touch
As sweet as I could bear
And once that seemed too much;....
I craved strong sweets, but those
Seemed strong when I was young;
The petal of the rose
It was that stung....

18. In a group prepare one act of Our Town for presentation on the auditorium stage. The performance will be given during a class period and the other students will be asked to comment on your interpretation of the play. Do not use the auditorium for rehearsal without a written permission slip.

19. If you have suggestions for activities that you would prefer to do in addition to or in place of the listed Optional Related Activities, see your teacher about them.

20. Any other suggestions for additions or changes to this unit should be written on 5"by 3" index cards and handed in at the end of any class period.
POOLING OF EXPERIENCES PHASE

Before beginning these activities the teacher should review with the class the aims of effective speaking and listening in terms of the previously determined objectives.

1. Those questions from core activity #3 (Study Guide Questions) not already discussed will be considered. Some questions may be reviewed at the discretion of the teacher.

2. Class participation in the remaining core activities and in the optional related activities.

3. Exhibitions of various projects.

4. Panel discussions and oral reports.

5. Written objective test (final test).
BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR PUPIL ACTIVITIES

The following list of references is to be used in relation with the Core and Optional Related Activities.

Books


   Pages 3-33 and the Glossary are helpful in reviewing the form of drama and special terms used in the study of drama.


   A reviewer's first impressions and his reconsiderations of plays and people set down while they were still "hot". Helpful evaluation of *Our Town* on pp. 187-193.


   A history of the theatre beginning with the Greek theatre and going through to the present American theatre. Section on American drama is not too large.


   A collection of plays with good editorial introductions before each play and playwright. *"Modern American Drama"*, pages 770 to 785 should prove very helpful. Thornton Wilder and *Our Town*, pages 926-949.


   This book will be helpful to the student who feels he needs help in reading drama to get the most from it.
A discussion of Thornton Wilder's place in American drama.

A good review of Our Town shortly after it opened.

A discussion of Thornton Wilder's life and his ability as a playwright.

This article traces the ways in which the theme, the family, has been used by modern dramatists with references to Thornton Wilder.

A review of the play shortly after its opening.

Letters written by Thornton Wilder at the time Our Town was being made into a movie.

An interview with the author shortly after *Our Town* opened on Broadway. Some of the differences between novels and plays are discussed.


A good discussion of the theme of *Our Town* and its appropriateness in today's world.


A review of the play shortly after it opened on Broadway.

**Collections**

The following list of modern plays and radio and television plays may be used when doing the Core Activities and the Optional Related Activities.

**Modern Plays:**


Nagelberg, M. M., *Drama in Our Time*. Harcourt, Brace, 1948


Radio and Television Plays:


BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR TEACHER'S USE

Books


**Magazines:**


**Film Strip:**

"Four Ways to Study Drama," (33 minutes). University of California, Grades 10-12.
EVALUATIONS

Listed below are check lists which could be filled out by each student estimating various aspects of the work accomplished during the unit.

CHECK LIST FOR WRITTEN WORK

1. Have I seen an increased ease in expressing my thoughts in writing?
2. Did I plan an outline for my work?
3. Did I check for errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization?
4. Have I improved in the ability to write concisely?
5. Were my ideas expressed clearly, logically and in a well-organized manner?
6. Did I write legibly at all times?

CHECK LIST FOR LISTENING

1. Did I listen politely to others?
2. Did I listen constructively?
3. Did I listen for main points?
4. Did I listen effectively in group discussions in order to contribute ideas to the group?
5. Did I listen for new words and write them down as I heard them?
6. Did I listen critically to others in order to present helpful evaluations of their work?
CHECK LIST FOR SPEAKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Did I read aloud with understanding of the written words?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Did I speak with expression in my voice?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Was I selective in the facts necessary for an effective presentation of my topic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Was I able to convey my meaning to others?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHECK LIST FOR STUDENT NOTEBOOK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Did I record those answers to the study guide questions which would assist me most in actively participating in the class discussions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Did I record accurately other information which would assist me in completing the core activities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Did I maintain a neat notebook?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHECK LIST FOR PUPILS' EVALUATION OF THE UNIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Did you find the unit interesting?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Did you find it challenging?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Did it have meaning for you in terms of your own personal life?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Would you enjoy reading other plays?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complete the following statements in as much detail as possible. Be sure to give specific reasons for your answers.

1. The part of the unit I liked the most was ..............

2. The part of the unit I liked the least was ..............

3. I would improve this unit by ..............................
OUR TOWN
FINAL TEST

I. In the space provided before each of the items in Column I place the letter of the item in Column II most nearly associated with it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column I</th>
<th>Column II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( ) 1. Mr. Cartwright</td>
<td>a. Milkman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) 2. Joe Crowell, Jr.</td>
<td>b. Newspaper Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) 3. Mr. Webb</td>
<td>c. Town Gossip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) 4. Hovie Newsome</td>
<td>d. Left Grover's Corners to go West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) 5. Simon Stimson</td>
<td>e. Acted part of Stage Manager in original Broadway production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) 6. Mrs. Soames</td>
<td>f. Gravedigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) 7. Mr. Warren</td>
<td>g. Banker, richest citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) 8. Thornton Wilder</td>
<td>h. Church organist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) 9. Sam Craig</td>
<td>i. Town Constable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) 10. Frank Craven</td>
<td>j. Newspaper boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k. Dramatist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Short Answer Questions:

1. What are the names given to the three acts by the Stage Manager?
   a. 
   b. 
   c.
2. What award did *Our Town* win? When?
   a.
   b.

3. What is the name of Thornton Wilder's most recent play? When was it produced?
   a.
   b.

4. Name two differences concerning the staging of *Our Town* in comparison with the staging of most other plays.
   a.
   b.

5. Name two novels that Thornton Wilder has written.
   a.
   b.

III. List five drama critics who have written about *Our Town*. Name the book in which their criticism appears. In the case of magazine writers, either the name of the article or the name of the periodical will be accepted.

1. a.
   b.

2. a.
   b.

3. a.
   b.

4. a.
   b.
IV. Define:
   a. Climax
   b. Form
   c. Tragedy
   d. Style
   e. Atmosphere

V. Discuss the ideas in the following quotations in connection with Our Town:
   a. "Whenever you come near the human race, there's layers and layers of nonsense."
   b. "...it's a good idea to throw the young people into the sea and let 'em sink or swim, as soon as they're ready."
   c. "Everybody has a right to his own troubles...."
   d. "Some people ain't made for small-town life."
   e. "There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being."
I.

(g): 1
(j): 2
(h): 3
(a): 4
(c): 5
(i): 6
(k): 7
(d): 8
(e): 10

II. 1. a. Daily Life
   b. Love and Marriage
   c. Answer determined in class discussion.

2. a. Pulitzer Prize
   b. 1938

3. a. The Victors
   b. 1943

4. a. A Narrator
   b. Little scenery

5. a. The Cabals
   b. The Bridge of San Luis Rey

III. The authors listed in the Student Bibliography may serve as answers to this question.

IV.

a. Climax: The most intense moment of the conflict; the turning point.

b. Form: The total organization of materials—ideas, characters, situations, scenes, etc.; the arrangement of all the parts to create a desired effect; The way in which the author sets forth his theme.
c. Tragedy: That form of drama in which the protagonist undergoes a morally significant struggle; in which the conflict is rather within a character than between characters or between a character and external forces.

d. Style: The selection and arrangement of words.

e. Atmosphere: Mood or feeling created by events, places, and situations.

V. The answers to Question V will be based upon the student's interpretation of the play as evolved through individual reading and class discussion.
APPENDIX A
A CONSIDERATION OF THE WORK OF ROBERT E. SHERWOOD

In *Twenty-Five Best Plays of the Modern American Theatre*, John Gassner writes concerning the work of Robert Sherwood:

"The distinguished career of Robert Sherwood is mainly a phenomenon of the thirties and forties. To these decades belong his greatest achievements in comedy and in serious drama...."

As distinguished as Mr. Sherwood's career was in the years between 1930 and 1950, we cannot overlook the earlier years in which he first appeared as a promising contributor to modern American drama. The exact point at which this drama began is difficult to determine, as Barrett Clark and George Freedley tell us, because:

"...the line of demarcation between the old and the new is usually clearer elsewhere than it is in the United States."

These authors credit Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* as being characteristically modern and American, and comment that Robert Sherwood's *The Road to Rome* (1927)


is not only a typical modern play, "it has fulfilled a historical function in helping in a small way to create modern American drama." This drama appeared between 1920 and 1930, a decade written of in great detail by Glenn Hughes in his History of the American Theatre 1700-1950. Hughes discusses the rise of the Theatre Guild and repertory theatres which helped to glorify the modern literary drama by bringing the best in European, English, and American drama to the audiences of the United States. He writes:

"Undoubtedly the 1920's saw a richer assortment of world drama and theatre technique than has any other decade in our history. Even more remarkable during this period was the rise of the native playwright."

In connection with such playwrights, Hughes includes, under the caption, "Promise To Be Fulfilled", this statement concerning Robert Sherwood:

"...he began his theatrical career as a critic but in 1927 became a successful playwright with the production of The Road to Rome...."

The Road to Rome (1927).—This play was first presented

1/Ibid., p. 641.
4/Ibid., p. 403.
in New York by William Brady, Jr. and Dwight Deere Wiman on January 31, 1927 at the Playhouse Theatre. Described by Glenn Hughes as "A travesty on the life of the ancient Carthaginian general Hannibal" the play provided a field day for the talents of Philip Merivale and Jane Cowl, popular stars of the day. The criticism which followed its opening varied widely as to the merits of Mr. Sherwood's first play. Burns Mantle called it a production "...lightly touched with satire, a quasi-historical romance, an imaginative romance with a semi-historical background, a good run." Edith Isaacs wrote of it as an actable comedy but a false play with the main characters, Hannibal and Amytis having no reality of character. Loretta Mannix concludes:

"...although The Road to Rome is far from great and his characters leave much to be desired the play is certainly witty and a good evening's entertainment...."

Following The Road to Rome, Mr. Sherwood wrote The Love Nest (1927), The Queen's Husband (1928), Waterloo Bridge (1930) and This is New York (1930), the latter being a very poor melodrama which was withdrawn from New York.


after some fifty-nine performances. Glenn Hughes tells us that "...this playwright contributed very little of merit to the theatre of the 1920's". The years from 1931 to 1940, however, saw the production of seven plays by Sherwood, three of which won for their author the Pulitzer Prize award for drama. Indeed the promise of which Hughes spoke was fulfilled. An account of Mr. Sherwood's career is an account of these years and of the theatrical seasons to which he contributed so extensively. Burns Mantle, and later John Chapman and Louis Kronenberger, in Mantle's "Best Play" series give us a vivid picture of these seasons.

Season 1931-32—Reunion in Vienna.—This was one of the early depression years and business at the theatre box offices was bad. But as in any season, there were several outstanding hits. Responsible for two of these, was the Theatre Guild which produced both O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra and Robert Sherwood's Reunion in Vienna starring Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne which opened at the Martin Beck Theatre on November 16, 1931. From Burns Mantle we learn that it was "...rapturously received by a majority of the newspaper reviewers and Theatre Guild subscribers flocked enthusiastically to its support."

1/Glenn Hughes, op. cit., p. 403.

Clark and Freedley tell us:

"...acted by the Lunts with enormous success, we have one of the best of the Sherwood plays, a happy combination of character comedy and idea,... Sherwood concerned himself with a decaying European society contrasted with new forces and new ideas, yet never did the writer forget an idea in a play had no validity unless it is made part and parcel of the characters and inextricably woven into the texture of the plot."

The Lunts' acting, always popular with the New York audiences, undoubtedly helped the play to run nearly three-hundred performances before leaving New York.

Season 1934-35—The Petrified Forest.—Regarding this season, Mantle wrote that there were far "more performances of distinction than there were plays of distinction." Toward the end of the season, however, two productions appeared which in a way prophesied some of the good things to come. They were Lillian Hellman's The Children's Hour and the very successful musical Anything Goes starring Ethel Merman, Victor Moore and William Gaxton. About Christmas time of 1934, one of the better plays of the season appeared. It was S.N. Behrman's Rain from Heaven with Jane Cow. Immediately following it, Sherwood's The Petrified Forest arrived during the first week of 1935.

and proved to be one of the outstanding hits of the season.

In Brooks Atkinson's opinion:

"Mr. Sherwood's career as a working dramatist also began with this robust shooting show. Now his career rises high against the skyline of modern drama...."

An instant popular success this play revealed "a writer more concerned with ideas and the desire to comment on life than he had yet shown himself in any play."

Opening at the Broadhurst Theatre on January 7, 1935, it was well received by the critics. Atkinson in his New York Times review of January 8 begins with:

"If it is not too unethical to say so in the first sentence, Robert Sherwood's new show is a peach".

He continued with "...a roaring Western melodrama with a few artful decorations of thought, sentiment and humor."

Undoubtedly made even more popular by the performance of Leslie Howard, The Petrified Forest continued on Broadway for a total of one hundred and eighty-one performances.

Season 1935-36--Idiot's Delight.-- Mr. Mantle tells us:


2/Barett H. Clark and George Freedley, op. cit., p. 705.


"It is quite generally admitted by those most familiar with the situation that this theatrical season has been the most exciting and the most satisfying of any New York has enjoyed since the years that preceded the crash of '29."

The season was off to a good start with the production of Ayn Rand's melodrama Night of January 16. In the same month one of the highlights of the season occurred with the appearance of Maxwell Anderson's Winterset which later won the New York Drama Critics' Circle award for that season. In the months following, Helen Hayes appeared in the popular Victoria Regina and in March of 1936 Katherine Cornell enjoyed a great personal triumph in a revival of Shaw's Saint Joan. In the same month, Robert Sherwood's Idiot's Delight opened at the Shubert Theatre. Enthusiastically received by both audiences and critics, it went on to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama. In commenting upon the social problems of the day; namely the war between nations, Mr. Sherwood attempted a blend of philosophy and high comedy. Frank O'Hara describes his success in this way:

"...audiences came away not only with a picture of a world on the brink of being blown to chaos but also chuckling over the antics of a sextette of dancing girls and puzzling over the amusing enigma of where precisely, Harry Van first met the worldly-wise Irene. It may even be that the word Sherwood wished to say about the wholesale horrors of war does not stay with us so long as the contemporary portraits brought to life by Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne;\footnote{Frank Hurburt O'Hara, Today in American Drama. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1939, p. 258.}"
on the other hand it is possible that his message will linger because of their portraits...."

One of the more enthusiastic reviews which appeared the next day was that of Brooks Atkinson who commented on Sherwood's play as "...one of his most likable entertainments" and called it "...a robust theatre charade, not quite so heroic and ebullient as The Petrified Forest but well inside the same tradition." Like Mr. O'Hara, Atkinson inferred that the "genial humor of his dialog, his romantic flair for character and his relish for the ridiculous overshadow his serious argument," but concludes that the playwright "...has spoken passionately about a grave subject and settled down to write a gusty show." 

Idiot's Delight played a total of three hundred performances in New York.

Season 1936-37--Tovarich.--One of the features of this season was what Mantle calls the "unexpected revival in popularity of a poetic dramatist named William Shakespeare." Two productions of Hamlet were seen: one with John Gielgud in the title role, the other starring Leslie Howard. Mr. Gielgud's more traditional portrait of Hamlet won out over Mr. Howard's portrayal in both popular and critical appraisal. Early fall brought George Kelly's Reflected


Glory with Tallulah Bankhead, and in October, traditionally a favorable month on the Broadway calendar, both *Stage Door*, George Kaufman's play starring Margaret Sullivan and Robert Sherwood's *Tovarich* were highly successful. Mantle calls this play "...a play with a history."

Adapted from the French dramatist, Jacques Deval, it ran for a year in London before a new company was organized for the New York production. It opened in New York at the Plymouth Theatre on October 15, 1936, and duplicating its European success, ran through the season for a total of two hundred and eighty-five performances.

*Season 1938-39—Abe Lincoln in Illinois.*—This was the season of Philip Barry's *The Philadelphia Story* and Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, the latter starring Tallulah Bankhead and giving both Miss Bankhead and Miss Hellman one of their most outstanding successes. More important perhaps, it was the season which saw the formation of the Playwrights' Company, a producing corporation composed of Sherwood, Maxwell Anderson, Sidney Howard, S.N. Behrman and Elmer Rice. Its purpose was to produce plays by members of the group. According to Hughes:

"The new venture got off to a happy start with the production of Sherwood's *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*

which turned out to be the smash hit of the season."

Season 1939-40—There Shall Be No Night.—Mantle notes that the most remarkable event at the beginning of this season was that Tobacco Road was in its seventh year on Broadway. The new season officially began with Gertrude Lawrence's appearance in Skylark by Samson Raphaelson early in October. A week later, The Man Who Came to Dinner became "the comedy sensation of the new season". The months that followed saw Helen Hayes in Ladies and Gentlemen and the productions of William Saroyan's The Time of Your Life and Lindsay and Crouse's Life With Father. In January, delighted New Yorkers welcomed James Thurber's The Male Animal. The months from January to early March were rather uneventful. But in April, Robert Sherwood's There Shall Be No Night, a drama of intellectual patriotism in Finland during the Russo-Finnish war, definitely "gave a lift to the closing weeks of the season." Mantle called it the "most stirring event of the theatre season" and "an event unequaled in many ways in all the recent history of the American theatre. Beautifully played by Lunt and Fontanne, it was over-

2/Ibid., p. 8.
whelingly received in its Washington D.C. try-out performances but as Mantle notes:

"An exciting but less unanimous welcome followed in New York; the critics being strong in their endorsement of the staging and acting, the eloquence of the text and the sincerity of purpose backing the author and the actors in their effort, but intimating with professional caution that perhaps the timeliness of subject had much to do with the play's popularity."

More specifically, the New York critics endorsed the eloquent theme of the drama while tending to criticize the play as a work of stage craft. Brooks Atkinson concluded:

"As a play There Shall Be No Night is not masterful; it has a shiftless second act and less continuity of story than one likes to see. It does not hang together particularly well. But as acted by Mr. Lunt and Miss Fontanne with thoroughly awakened sincerity, it is on the whole enormously impressive.... Although There Shall Be No Night is uneven drama, it honors the theatre and the best parts of it speak for the truth with enkindling faith and passionate conviction."

Richard Watts, Jr. of the New York Herald Tribune echoed Atkinson's criticism in calling the play "...a lofty and passionate tragedy of the assault on Finland...." "...but uncomfortable in its incidents and overabundant in its talk." He concludes that "There Shall Be No Night

1/Ibid., p. 30.

2/Brooks Atkinson, New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1940, Volume 1, Number 19, 1940, p. 323.

is impressive through the eloquence of its indignation."

There Shall Be No Night played in New York until June of 1940. After a summer lay-off it was resumed in September and completed its total run of one hundred eighty-one performances.

Season 1945-46—The Rugged Path.—Mr. Mantle comments that this was "our first Victory theatre season following close upon the successful conclusion of World War II." It was marked by a considerable amount of talent-sharing between the United States and England. We imported both the Old Vic Theatre group and Maurice Evans who played his "G.I. Hamlet" with outstanding popular success. In turn, we gave the British playgoers our long-time favorites, Lunt and Fontanne.

It was also the season which experienced Mr. Sherwood's return to the Broadway scene after an absence of some five years. On November 10, 1945, Spencer Tracy opened at the Plymouth Theatre in The Rugged Path, Sherwood's new drama about a journalist who enlists in the Navy in order to find out, as Sherwood's own words tell us, "...whether there really is anything in this world worth fighting for and dying for."

Neither the critics nor the public showed enthusiasm

for Mr. Sherwood's message. Lewis Nichols wrote in the 
New York Times:

"To get the bleak news over with immediately, 
Robert E. Sherwood's first play in five years has 
not been written with his best pencil."

He continued in the same review with:

"He has dropped the role of prophet and force-
ful advocate, which lent power to There Shall Be No 
Night and has become the historian.... Mr. Sherwood's 
oficial welcome home must be postponed until the 
next one after The Rugged Path."

After ten weeks of controversy concerning the play's 
fate, it was withdrawn, having played a total of eighty-
one performances.

Season 1949-50—Miss Liberty.—In 1949, Mr. John 
Chapman spoke of the season 1949-50 as one in which the 
"reviewers were kinder than the public, which ruthlessly 
rejected many offerings which had received favorable 
notices." Two productions on which both the public and 
the critics agreed were The Cocktail Party and The Consul. 
Another, on which they were not in accord was the musical 
comedy called Miss Liberty. Regarding its general reception 
we learn:

1/Lewis Nichols, New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1945, 
Volume 6, Number 22, 1945, p. 112.

2/John Chapman(Editor) The Burns Mantle Best Plays of 

3/Ibid., p. 4.
"The public began its season of showgoing on July 15, 1949, by making a success out of a musical which had received few enthusiastic notices—Miss Liberty by Irving Berlin and Robert Sherwood."

Atkinson, in the New York Times began:

"To come right out and say so in public, Miss Liberty is a disappointing musical comedy."

Howard Barnes' review in the New York Herald Tribune called it "...scarcey inspired" and termed Sherwood's libretto "both aimless and witless."

The public ruled, however, and Miss Liberty remained at the Imperial Theatre for three hundred eight performances.

Season 1956-57—Small War on Murray Hill.—Louis Kronenberger speaks of this season as that which can be proud mainly of the appearance of Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night. It was a bad season for drama but "the weak showing of the season's comedy seemed less forgivable." One of these was Sherwood's Small War on Murray Hill, his last contribution to the American theatre, the playwright having passed away slightly more than a year before. Set against the historical background of


4/Thid., p. 6.
the Revolutionary War, it attempted to portray how people feel and behave about war while it is going on. Kronenberger states:

"Clearly the impact of a far greater war had colored Sherwood's thinking; and it gave his play, at moments, a certain pensive grace. But Small War was small beer; it had neither dramatic fiber nor intelligent focus, the writing suggested neat prose rather than lively dialog, and the effect was much too heavy for light comedy and much to unstimulating for a comedy of ideas."

The reviews which followed its opening at the Ethel Barrymore theatre on January 3, 1957, were likewise unfavorable. Atkinson's review concluded:

"All but one of Robert Sherwood's admirable qualities can be found in the posthumous Small War on Murray Hill....the quality that is missing is his humor—the drollery and geniality of his earlier plays."

He concluded that the play:

"...is an enlightening inquiry into the true nature of a spicy bit of American history, worthy of a fine, patriotic mind. But the spirit is tired."

Walter Kerr's remarks in the New York Herald Tribune offer more discerning comments than are usually found in newspaper reviews and in evaluating the play in terms of Sherwood's previous achievements, writes:

1/Ibid., p. 13.


"The late Robert Sherwood whose last completed play this is, also paused in his lively theatrical occupations to mess about in politics during a war. The messimg, as it turned out proved extraordinarily useful messing—producing some of the finest rhetoric heard during World War II and a final monument in the exhaustive and genuinely brilliant Roosevelt and Hopkins. The experience did show Mr. Sherwood how the other half—the non-theatrical half lives—and, I think, it changed him.

He never quite came back to the brisk, colorful, ironic, bumptuous, sometimes savage and sometimes funny world of the practical theatre, the theatre that is a satisfying end in itself. He turned dutifully sober in The Rugged Path and hesitatingly gay in the musical Miss Liberty. But the whip that could once be swung freely and with a shout of laughter was permanently hung on the wall; the satirist had turned quietly reflective."

Small War on Murray Hill closed after twelve performances.

Roosevelt and Hopkins; An Intimate History—1948.—From Sherwood's association with President Franklin D. Roosevelt begun during the campaign of 1940, was to come in 1948 his masterful study, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History. In 1949 it won for him his fourth Pulitzer Prize. Mr. Sherwood published it as a serious work and to his surprise it became a best seller, "proving to be not only the most intimate study of the late President and his administration yet published, but also an engrossing and dramatic human portrait."  

"his finest drama and the most titanic in scale he has so far written." 1/ In the New York Times, Henry Steel Commager wrote that its richness "will be the delight of the journalist and the arsenal of the historian." 2/

In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, the book received the Bancroft prize for distinguished writing in American history, was named Book of the Year by the Saturday Review of Literature and received the Gutenberg Award of the Book Manufacturers Institute.

Conclusion and evaluation of Sherwood's work:--The critics have seemingly written little in general concerning the work of Robert Sherwood. They have limited themselves, for the most part, to more specific opinions about specific plays. These opinions are quite varied as a few quotations from the works of these writers will indicate.

Eleanor Flexner speaks of his tendency to be repetitious in regard to his plots by saying:

"A man—wise, cynical, charming—finds the answer to his quest for a meaning in life in a woman; suddenly he falls in love, no less suddenly his life is wrenching violently from its old pattern, and in

1/Ibid., p. 905.
2/Ibid., p. 905.
three cases out of four, he goes gallantly to his death in consequence. Another item common to all these plays is a background of war or violence which endangers the lives of the characters. This is Sherwood's device for sustaining tension, a device forced upon him by his inability to construct a play in which suspense will rise from the actions of the characters themselves...central characters...completely passive, a symbol of futility. Since such immobility makes for a poor brand of theatre, Sherwood falls back on air raids and gangsters to bolster up his plots."

Granville Vernon praises Sherwood's box-office appeal, his possession of certain convictions, his subtle mind, his knowledge of the world and his ability to write for all classes of people. He adds, however:

"And yet with this admirable equipment he has never written a whole play worthy of his abilities.... In all his plays there are magnificent scenes, even complete acts, but never that indomitable unifying spirit which is the sign and seal of great art."

Harlan Hatcher, more enthused over Sherwood's work tells us:

"Robert E. Sherwood emerged in the late 1930's as the chief dramatic spokesman against the demiurgic threat of brute barbarity completely to destroy such civilization as man in his enlightened moments has achieved.... He has an extraordinary talent for stating in terms of effective, often exciting, theatre the issues consistently before the community of democratic minds. His statements are starkly realistic, but not drained of hope. His work is the epitome of the modern form of the topical thesis drama; the production of his plays has added life to the useful theatre.... In his honest grappling with themes of high seriousness, he has attained dignity and authority as one of

1/ Granville Vernon, Commonweal (May 10, 1940) p. 62.
contemporary America's finest dramatists."

George Jean Nathan offers a contrary opinion:

"The majority of my colleagues, I find, entertain a critical point of view opposite to mine and argue that dramatic journalism of the species mentioned is not only desirable in this period of world crisis but even superior to a more aloof aesthetic drama. That it may be publicly desirable, I shall not argue the one way or the other, but that has nothing to do with the appraisal of drama as a fine art. For fine drama is timeless and merely journalistic drama, however good and however interesting, as evanescent as news itself.... And though it is plain in There Shall Be No Night that Mr. Sherwood's intent assuredly was drama rather than editorialization, the result is insubordinately and very considerably more the second than the first.

It thus follows that while the exhibit as editorial is satisfactorily eloquent it leaves something to be desired as drama.... So far as drama goes, Mr. Sherwood communicates whatever of it may be implicitly in his editorialism mainly by means of such Sardouish subterfuges as the radio, letters, and reports from the outside brought in by suddenly introduced and partly extraneous characters. And when periodically he realizes the necessity for some straightforward dramatic diversion from his editorializing he falls back upon such makeshift and outward devices as the man who, with an ache in his heart, forces a quarrel with a woman he loves so that she may leave him and be spared future pain, as the young woman desperate when she finds herself with child, and as the playing upon a piano to relieve a scene of emotional tension.

With this conclusion, Nathan singles out the basic question in regard to Sherwood's writing; namely, is he writing drama or is he writing editorials? He adds:

"The usurpation by most of our leading play-


2/Ibid., p. 31.
wrights, duly encouraged by the majority of our critics, of the profession of newspaper editorial writers, cable editors, and Necca Temple Ciceros, seriously threatens that advance of the American drama which began so auspiciously twenty years ago and which, until lately, promised to grow space.

Sherwood himself helps answer the question of why he is writing in the theatre.

"Whether I like it or not, I know that the theatre is still the best possible place in which to express my most profound convictions... The Theatre is the spiritual home of one who is barred from the church by distaste for dogma but who still requires and demands expression of great faith... I must go on trying to say what I want to say in the one way that is best for me to speak... What all great dramatists have said is that man is frail, vain, and mortal but still capable of reaching into heaven and snatching fire from the hand of God... The American dramatist today can know that he has immeasurably more to write about than Sophocles had, or Shakespeare, and he is far freer to say what he pleases. He does not have to look into legend to find assurance of the essential heroism and nobility of man; he has only to look into this morning's newspaper, and the American dramatist can know also that he has available more good actors and directors and scene designers to interpret his words."

Despite the shortcomings obvious to many of the critics, Robert Sherwood stands as one of the foremost men of the modern theatre, both as a craftsman and as a writer constantly and sincerely attempting to put into the theatre the messages which he feels are vital to all Americans and to all peace-loving people everywhere.

1/Robert E. Sherwood, "The Dwelling Place of Wonder", Theatre Arts Monthly (February, 1941) pp. 120 ff.
As Loretta Mannix tells us:

"He has not experienced in his career one successful play after another, each more successful than the first. His achievements have gone from good to bad to worse, to good again, and back to bad.... Even if Sherwood cannot be placed with the truly great of the drama, it can be said that he has written some entertaining and good plays and that many times he was the only playwright actually working at his craft, seriously endeavoring to produce something worth-while and unafraid to speak his mind in the face of opposition and often apathetic audiences."

In 1946, Brooks Atkinson wrote concerning Robert Sherwood:

"... Out of his brooding mind, out of his courage and integrity have come Abe Lincoln in Illinois and There Shall Be No Night which have made an impression on the morals of this country. Although Mr. Sherwood is not a creative dramatic poet like Eugene O'Neill, he is, I think our greatest contemporary. I have never known another man so completely fulfilled."


2/ Bennett Cerf and Van H. Cartmell (editors) op. cit., p. vi.
APPENDIX B

THE DRAMA AS A FORM OF LITERATURE

The drama as a form of literature should be clear to the student beginning the study of a specific play. Various aspects of the drama should be considered. Among these are the following abridged from Understanding Literature, Cleanth Brooks and Robert Heilman, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1945, pp. 24-34.

"1. The Elements Common To Drama And Other Forms

We can see, in conclusion, that drama, fiction, and poetry have certain common elements, characteristics which distinguish literature from such types of writing as history, biography, philosophy. All the forms of literature, we may say, "present a situation," which stimulates the reader's imagination and thus leads him to apprehend the meaning or meanings latent in it. The situation is specific; but the significance is more extensive; it is "general." The situation is meant to elicit certain emotional responses, which the author is expected to control by means of his materials (for instance, the other men's laughing at Menecce. The situation must be developed by contrast; as we shall see in Oscar Wilde's Lady Windermere's Fan (in fact, as contrast is intensified, developed in emotional terms, and made overt, it becomes the conflict that we especially associate with drama). In drama and story, the situation involves characters talking and acting; poetry may, and often does, use the same materials. The action may be inner or outer, physical or psychological, or a combination of both, with different effects and to fit the medium. An ingredient in the situation is setting...... Finally, drama and poetry use the same devices of language (imagery, etc.), and drama and story share certain technical devices of construction: focusing the reader's attention, preparing for subsequent effects, motivating the occurrences

*From Some Like Them Short by William March
which develop the situation.

2. The Differences Between Drama
And other Forms

As we have seen, the dramatist cannot himself take a
hand as can the novelist or poet. The latter two, of
course, are governed by the effects they wish to produce;
but the dramatist is restricted in a very special sense.
For, whereas poetry may use characters speaking and fiction
does use dialogue a good deal, drama can do nothing else.
The author cannot intrude, unless a certain character acts
as his mouthpiece; and this device is likely to be pro-
hibitively awkward. Hence a vast amount of materials
accessible to fiction and poetry are not accessible to drama.

1. There can be none of the direct description—of
persons, places, sounds, sights, smells—upon which both
fiction and poetry heavily depend; the characters' speeches
can do little of this without becoming strained and im-
plausible.... In acted drama, of course, we have costumes,
settings, and "properties"; but drama as literature has no
such appurtenances. The absence of a technique of descrip-
tion will account partly for the fact that, in general,
drama is much less free than fiction in making changes in
place....

2. There can be no direct comments by the author,
on the meaning of an action, a situation, an expression,
a gesture, and so on. If made by a character, such comments
are likely to be very awkward.... Thus one whole method of
giving clues, of suggesting deeper and richer meanings, is out.

3. There can be little direct use of action that is
purely mental or psychological; some direct mental probing
can be done, as in Shakespeare's soliloquies, but in
genereal this will have to be occasional and subordinate....
This does not mean that drama is not concerned with psy-
chological action; far from it. But this action must come
in the outer forms of dialogue and action, and what lies
behind them must in general come only by implication.
Poetry can deal directly with an inward situation; drama
requires a more perceptible kind of movement.

This catalogue of limitations (fiction, we notice, comes
closer to drama as it gives up its own special prerogatives)
may make drama seem only a kind of literary shortcut, lead-
ing to blunt effects and incapable of much completeness or
subtlety. But it is clear that poetry and fiction, for all
their greater resources, may, and often do, produce crude
and ineffective work. It is less the wealth of materials
than the skill of the user that is important. In proper
hands, drama can make its own way very effectively. For instance, the very fact of its limitations (in extent, in ability to cover great reaches of time and space and to include large numbers of fully developed characters) gives it a special kind of concentration of effect. One's attention is focused on a relatively small area of human experience and held there firmly until it has been completely explored. We may extend matters far beyond that area by implications, but there is no room for direct elaboration of the larger world. We stay with our restricted action, and every stroke must count. If the characters may not speak as much as the do in a novel, they must in one sense speak with greater compression... Now in this compression, treatment of a bare conflict divested of all attendant circumstances, is itself a source of tension—that effect of "tightening up" which in a work denotes crucial events and in ourselves a heightened attention and concern. And this increase in tension means that the language naturally develops toward that of poetry—toward a more perceptible rhythm and the use of figures that is characteristic of heightened emotion. It has been argued that great drama must take poetic form. Very frequently it does just that. And now the student will observe that our very discussion of the limitations of drama has gradually led us into another subject—the breaking of those limitations. That is, if drama seems on the one hand to give up so many means of expression that it must become blunt and fumbling, it at the same time makes compensating adjustments. For it gains the precision and exactness essential in literature, first, by the very act of eliminating everything but a bare central theme and, second, by dealing with that theme in the most expressive but at the same time the most controlled kind of language. So, ironically, in considering the special symbols of drama we have inevitably come around to an earlier point, its sharing of the symbols of poetry. One cannot strictly compartmentalize drama, for at its height it combines two modes of concentration.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DRAMA

Just as the drama has certain characteristics in common with other literary forms, so the dramatist has certain problems in common with other writers: he must find concrete ways of saying what he has to say; he must find specific situations through which he can control the responses of the reader; he must explore and develop these situations; he must find and develop characters who give a sense of reality. But because of the differences of drama
from other forms, the dramatist must face certain problems. The problems arise out of the two main aspects of drama—the fact that it is limited in scope, and the fact that it works entirely through dialogue.

1. Problems of Scope

The Dramatic Situation. First of all, then, the dramatist must find a special kind of situation—one that is compact of its own nature or that can be made compact without vital loss. "Selection" is an important principle in the creative process of every artist, but the dramatist must utilize it most rigorously. He must get down to the bare center of a situation. Drama works at the height of a situation; it must ignore earlier and later ramifications; if a situation does not have or cannot be made to have some high point, it is not a good one for drama. An obvious corollary is that the dramatist must work with relative rapidity; he must use fairly heavy emphasis in each step; he must cut out every possible suggestion of waste motion.

Number of Characters. Similarly the dramatist is much more limited than the novelist in the number of characters he can use. In much fiction, of course, as in drama, the conflict tends to shape up between two, or among several, main characters. But while the novelist is under no obligation to accept such a form, the dramatist must center his main action in a character or two. For this reason it is most important that he select the right kind of "lead," that he recognize clearly just what the issue is and whose actions are really significant.

Place. The dramatist does not have the practically complete freedom in the use of place that the cinema and novel do. While in theory he is not restricted, in actual practice he finds it expedient to restrict himself. A tightly concentrated piece of action involving a limited number of characters is not normally spread over a dozen different places; i.e., the more protracted and inclusive in action, the more probable it is that it will have ramifications and echoes in different places; but the more it is cut down to climactic events, the more likely it is to be concentrated in a smaller number of places. The action may be appropriate to some general locale, which will be automatically determined for the dramatist.

2. Problems of Dialogue

Further special problems arise from the fact that the dramatist must do everything in dialogue. It must be progressive. In addition to striving for this fundamental
quality, the dramatist must face other problems of structure and method that arise from his dependence on dialogue.

**Progression.** Consider, for instance, the need of the dialogue to be progressive. In each scene the lines must not only be developing the situation with which that scene is concerned, but they must also be quietly directing us toward the future—quietly and yet rapidly, for we cannot have the leisureliness permitted by the amplitude of the novel....

**Exposition.** The problem of dealing with the past, faced by all writers of narrative, becomes specialized when the sole medium is dialogue. This is the problem of "exposition", that is, of acquainting us with the background facts and the starting situation from which the main action moves forward. Fiction-writer and narrative-poet can begin with direct exposition or interpose it later, and fiction and cinema can both utilize different kinds of flashbacks. In drama the characters themselves must let us know what is what, and they must do it while they are talking about something else. They cannot inform us directly lest they speak for the author instead of themselves and thus get "out of character." What any person says must be consistent with his character generally, and with what he knows and what his auditor or auditors know.

**Plausibility.** What lies behind this discussion is the necessity that the dialogue be plausible as dialogue, so that mechanical defects will not militate against its efficacy in presenting and developing the situation of the play. That is, dramatic dialogue is a specialized form of conversation and therefore to be effective has to have some of the generic qualities of conversation. Thus it will achieve "naturalness."

**Tempo.** The quality by means of which the dialogue gives us the sense of moving forward we call its "movement" or "tempo." This movement may be barely perceptible, or it may be fairly rapid; it seems clear that, depending upon the author's intentions, the movement will be different in different plays or even in different parts of the same play (in general, for instance, it is likely to be rather slow in the early part of the play, where the author faces the large problems of exposition and of laying the groundwork for all the subsequent action.... It is plain that a basic problem of the dramatist is giving to his dialogue that quality that will make it seem to move at a desirable speed and so allotting his limited space that we will not feel he has wasted any of it on less important materials...."