

IB Senior English Students
Finish Strong!

Well, students, I think no one would have scripted this scenario as the final senior year quarter. And there remain so many unanswered questions as we move forward regarding textbook returns, senior letters, honor cords---all of those end of year 'normals' that now present new challenges. I am as uncertain as you how we will proceed; I will let you know when I know.

We have talked on multiple occasions in class about finishing the year strong. I think that is very important. So, now with IA's and language oral assessments completed, I would like to suggest we complete the coursework in English A: Literature HL. We have one more text to complete and everyone has a copy of the play in your text you have at home. The play is Arthur Miller's ***Death of a Salesman***. The play is the culminating text for our year's study in terms of thematic connection. We can apply the same theme to every text we have read: *Individuals in search of personal identity will ultimately have to resolve conflicts within himself and with his society*. This last play on our syllabus is the essential example of Emerson's maxim "To thine own self be true; every heart vibrates to that iron string" (***Nature***, Ralph Waldo Emerson).

As with *Master Harold*, the play is a compression of a family's entire life history told through exposition and flashback in 24 hours. Willie Loman, an aging salesman, is moving between past and present in his mind, certainly creating alarm for his family and confusion for the reader. Take note of the staging directions, and soon you will see the predictable triggers to note the flashbacks. And Ben, Willy's brother, is seen by Willy only---a ghost of his past, if you will.

You will be happy to know there will be NO STUDY GUIDE to complete. I will post some insights and commentary next week after you have had some time to read. I hope you will read and enjoy the play; it is an icon in American literature of the twentieth century.

Here is the assignment: Read ***Death of a Salesman*** by Arthur Miller in your textbook ***Literature***, pages 1897-1969.

Stay safe and healthy and socially distanced. I miss you all!

Mrs. JJ