

1. Finish reading the play of *Death of a Salesman*
2. Continue to look for and write down examples of the following:
 - Any mention of the qualities of the American Dream
 - Any example of Willy's American Dream
 - Compare and contrast Willy's American Dream with the definition we discussed in class.
 - i. . By textbook definition, the American Dream is the concept of success and opportunity for all whatever your social status: those who work hard will gain wealth and freedom.
3. Answer the following:
 - discuss what the American Dream is and what it means to you.
 - How does your definition compare to Willy's?
 - Create a list of emotions and action words that represent your version of the American Dream. Do the same for Willy's version.
 - The car symbolizes Willy's journey and failure to achieve the American Dream, from his past glory of watching Biff wax the Chevy to his suicide.
 - Examine each mention of 'the car' in the play.
 - What car does Willy have? How is it represented in the past and in the present?
 - How does the car deteriorate?
 - How far is his commute to work?
 - What car does he drive in the past and what does he drive in the present?
4. Reality versus Illusion is a major theme in *Death of A Salesman*. It permeates the story, the structure, the characters and even the set. In order to get the dream he wants, Willy has created a world of illusion: He's great at his job, he has material wealth, he's well liked and has many friends, his sons are on their way to something big. Willy is so used to lying that he believes his created world is reality. He is dead certain of himself when he tells Howard he averaged one-hundred and seventy dollars a week, even though Howard knows this is not the case. This is why his eventual fall is so devastating: Willy has to admit that nothing in his world is true. The reality/illusion concept is most interesting in how it is interpreted by the other members of the Loman family. Each of them are fully caught in the web of Willy's illusion:
 - a. Answer the following questions:
 - i. Does Linda help or hurt Willy by playing along with his illusions?
 - ii. Why does Charley never abandon Willy?
 - iii. Neither Biff nor Happy have married. What is the reality/illusion of their relationships with women?
 - iv. Does Happy think he's better than Biff?
 - v. What is the moment in Willy's life that his illusion starts to crack?

- vi. Willy says that if his boss' father was still alive, he (Willy) would be in charge of the New York office. Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

5. In class we discussed Willy Loman being compared to a Tragic Hero.

Definition: The term **hero** is derived from a Greek word that means a person who faces adversity, or demonstrates courage, in the face of danger.

You created a chart with the following sections. Look through the play and find examples of how Willy fits this criteria. If you disagree, and you don't believe Willy meets the definition of a tragic hero, explain why he doesn't fit any of the following criteria.

Here we have basic characteristics of a tragic hero, as explained by Aristotle:

- **Hamartia** – a **tragic flaw** that causes the downfall of a hero.
- **Hubris** – excessive pride and disrespect for the natural order of things.
- **Peripeteia** – The reversal of fate that the hero experiences.
- **Anagnorisis** – a moment in time when hero makes an important discovery in the story.
- **Nemesis** – a punishment that the protagonist cannot avoid, usually occurring as a result of his hubris.
- **Catharsis** – feelings of pity and fear felt by the audience, for the inevitable downfall of the protagonist.