

Activities

Act One

From:	the opening of the play	p.
To:	<i>How can they whip cheese?</i>	p.

Write a brief summary of this section of the play.

What do we learn about:

Willy?

His job?

Linda?

Biff?

Happy?

From: *How can they whip cheese?* p.
To: *Sh...sleep, Biff.* p.

What is the significance of the flute?

What do we discover about the American Dream in this section of the play?

Add to your notes about Biff and Happy

From: *Sh...sleep, Biff.* p.
To: *... just kiss the life outta you.* p.

What do we learn about lies and deception in this section?

What do we learn about Bernard?

What is Willy's personal philosophy?

What do we learn about the differences between the reality of Willy's life and the façade that he presents?

The reality	The façade

From: ... just kiss the life outta you. p.
To: I can't drive a car! p.

Who is the WOMAN? Why might she be significant?

What do we learn about Ben? What is Willy's relationship with him like?

Add to your notes about the American Dream

From: I can't drive a car! p.
To: Ignoramus! p.

Who is Charley? What kind of person is he?

What is Ben's role in this section?

From: *Ignoramus!* p.
To: *I was right!* p.

What do we discover about Willy's family and his youth?

What else do we learn about Ben?

From: *I was right!* p.
To: The end of the scene p.

Why are Biff and Willy *so hateful to each other*?

What more do we learn about Willy and his family?

Think about the act as a whole:

Look at Miller's use of language. It can be colloquial, snappy and terse - but it can also be sentimental and amusing. Make notes about the language used:

Look at Miller's staging. What is unusual about it? How does it reinforce the theme of the importance of the past?

Act Two

From:	The opening of the scene	p.
To:	<i>Goodbye, Biff dear.</i>	p.

What do you notice about Linda's attitude to Willy in this section of the play?

What is the importance of the seeds and the refrigerator?

From: *Goodbye, Biff dear.* p.
To: *Pull yourself together, kid, there's people outside.* p.

How does Howard's attitude to business compare to Willy's?

Howard	Willy

What is the significance of Dave Singleman?

What is the effect of contrasting mundane events with what is happening in Willy's life?

From: *Pull yourself together, kid, there's people outside.* p.
To: *Jesus!* p.

What is *the greatest day of [Biff's] life*? What makes it so?

In the scene in Charley's office, Bernard gives us more information. How does this help to fill in the gaps in the background of the Loman family?

What impression do you get of the adult Bernard?

Compare him with Biff and Happy.

What do you think *happened in Boston*?

Find quotations to illustrate the following:

Bernard's modesty -

Willy's tendency to exaggerate -

Willy's tendency to blame others -

Clues to Willy's attempted suicide -

Charley's view on "being liked" -

Charley's generosity -

Why won't Willy accept Charley's offer?

From:	<i>Jesus!</i>	p.
To:	<i>I can't talk to him!</i>	p.

What evidence do we get of Happy sharing some of Willy's less attractive qualities?

Lying | Exaggeration

Why does Happy pick up the girl?

What happened at Bill Oliver's?

What does Biff mean when he says *I realized what a ridiculous lie my whole life has been?*

What are the difficulties that Willy and Biff have in communicating? What has been the effect of this?

From:	<i>I can't talk to him!</i>	p.
To:	<i>Well, whatta you looking at?</i>	p.

Whilst Willy remains in the restaurant, what else is happening? Use quotations to back up the points that you make.

In the restaurant	Elsewhere

Identify how Biff's attitude to his father changes during the scene in the hotel room.

Why is Biff so upset?

What is the significance of:

The suitcase -

The stockings -

The fact that the woman has no name -

From: *Well, whatta you looking at?*

p.

To: The end of the scene

p.

Linda's reaction to the events in the restaurant is violent. What does it show about her relationships with:

Willy?

Biff and Happy?

Why does Willy want to commit suicide?

What does Biff reveal about the reality of life as a Loman?

Requiem

What do you think Miller's intention with Requiem was?

At the end of the play, what do you feel?