

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

Ⓢ BELASCO THEATRE

111 West 44th Street

A Shubert Organization Theatre

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EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

JOEY PARNES SUE WAGNER JOHN JOHNSON

PRESENT

SALLY JOE
FIELD MANTELLO

IN

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS'
THE GLASS MENAGERIE

MADISON AND FINN
FERRIS WITTROCK

SCENIC DESIGN

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DIRECTED BY

SAM GOLD

THE GLASS MENAGERIE IS PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH, SEWANEE, TENNESSEE.
THE PRODUCERS WISH TO EXPRESS THEIR APPRECIATION TO THE THEATRE DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR ITS SUPPORT OF THIS PRODUCTION.

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INTRODUCTION

“ In this ‘memory play’ Tennessee Williams transports us into private worlds where desire clashes with obdurate reality, where loss supplants hope. After more than a half a century we continue to be drawn to a play that explores so many aspects of the human condition. ”

Robert Bray, Introduction to *The Glass Menagerie* (New Directions Edition)

Welcome to the teacher resource guide for Tennessee Williams’ play, *The Glass Menagerie*. We are delighted that students will be able to experience this American classic in a stunning new Broadway production starring two-time Academy Award winner Sally Field as Amanda Wingfield and two-time Tony Award winner Joe Mantello as Tom Wingfield. Director Sam Gold, winner of the Tony Award for the musical *Fun Home*, will be recreating a production he first directed at Toneelgroep Amsterdam.

The Glass Menagerie provides many learning opportunities for students in areas related to:

- › playwright Tennessee Williams and his legacy;
- › one of the most popular American plays in history;
- › the literary devices and thematic elements embodied in *The Glass Menagerie*; and
- › understanding *The Glass Menagerie* through a personal lens.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Arts experiences resonate most strongly for students when themes and ideas from the play can be aligned to your curriculum. This resource guide has been created to help prepare your students to see *The Glass Menagerie*. We also hope to direct you to resources that can further your classroom exploration of the play. We encourage you to print and share pages of this guide with your students. Throughout the guide you will find resources, including links to materials and videos available online, as well as discussion questions and suggested classroom activities that you can use before or after seeing the production.

The overall goals of this guide are to:

- › connect to your curriculum with standards-based information and activities;
- › engage your students’ critical and analytical thinking skills; and
- › provide your students with an educational framework for their visit to the theater.

THE PLAY

The Story

As the play opens, Tom Wingfield, the play's narrator, addresses the audience. He explains that the events that are to follow are fragments of his memory. Set in a cramped St. Louis apartment in the 1930s, Tom's story revolves around his troubled relationship with his overbearing mother Amanda and his shy and fragile sister Laura, who walks with a limp due to a childhood illness. Tom's father abandoned the family years earlier, and Tom must support his mother and sister by doing a job he detests at a shoe factory.

As Tom steps into the action of the play, the personalities and tribulations of the family members spring to life: Amanda's desperate and often outrageous attempts to relive her idealized past and better the lives of her children; Laura's extreme reclusiveness and withdrawal from reality; and Tom's fiery desire to escape the burdens placed on him by his family and circumstances.

When Amanda asks Tom if he will bring home a "gentleman caller," or potential suitor for Laura, and promises that once Laura is married he will be free to leave home for good, the stakes rise for each of the characters. As Jim O'Connor, Tom's co-worker from the factory and Laura's high school crush, enters the story, the dreams and hopes of the characters come to the surface in a shattering conclusion.



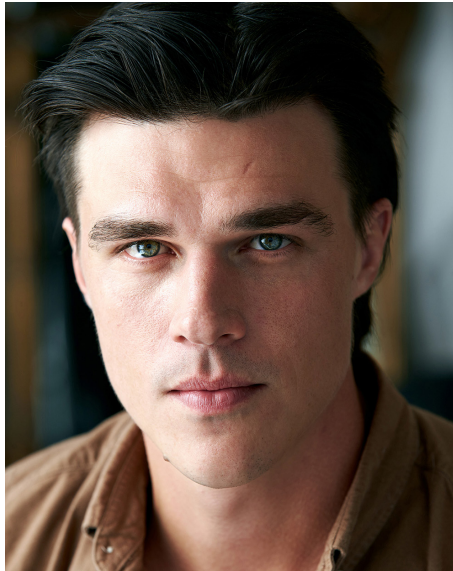
Madison Ferris, Sally Field, and Joe Mantello in *The Glass Menagerie*. Photo by Julieta Cervantes.

The Characters

**Sally Field plays
Amanda Wingfield.**



**Finn Wittrock plays
Jim O'Connor.**



**Madison Ferris
plays
Laura Wingfield.**



**Joe Mantello plays
Tom Wingfield.**

AMANDA WINGFIELD: Laura and Tom's mother.

› For a full character analysis, visit:

<http://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-glass-menagerie/characters/amanda-wingfield>

TOM WINGFIELD: Amanda's son and Laura's younger brother.

› For a full character analysis, visit:

<http://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-glass-menagerie/characters/tom-wingfield>

LAURA WINGFIELD: Amanda's daughter and Tom's older sister.

› For a full character analysis, visit:

<http://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-glass-menagerie/characters/laura-wingfield>

JIM O'CONNOR: A friend and co-worker of Tom's, and a former high school classmate of Laura's.

› For a full character analysis, visit:

<http://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-glass-menagerie/characters/jim-o-connor>

The Writer

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS was born Thomas Lanier Williams in Mississippi in 1911. During his early childhood, Williams' family lived with his grandparents in rural Mississippi while his father traveled for work as a salesman. When Williams was seven, his father took a job at a shoe factory in St. Louis, Missouri. Adjusting to life in a cramped city apartment was difficult for Williams and his siblings Dakin and Rose, as well as for his mother. As tensions grew between his alcoholic father and unhappy mother, Williams sought refuge in the imaginary worlds he created with Rose, and in the poems and short stories he began to write at the age of 12.

In 1929, Williams enrolled in the Missouri School of Journalism. However, in 1932, when his grades began to slide his father removed him from school and forced him to take a job at the shoe factory where he was employed. For months, Williams worked at a job he hated during the day and spent his evenings

writing, often straight through the night. These constricting circumstances led Williams to have an emotional and physical breakdown. He eventually returned to school and graduated from the University of Iowa in 1938. While he was away at college, his sister Rose became more and more unstable, and eventually was admitted to a sanitarium where she was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

In 1943, Williams completed a short story with characters inspired by his mother and Rose called *Portrait of a Girl in Glass* that he later adapted into a screenplay called *The Gentleman Caller*. When MGM Studios rejected the screenplay, Williams adapted it into the play that became *The Glass Menagerie*. That same year, Rose was



Above: Tennessee Williams at the 20th Anniversary performance of *The Glass Menagerie*. The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, 1965. Photo by Orlando Fernandez.

Left: Tennessee Williams. NYTWS Collection. The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.



given a pre-frontal lobotomy, a now-obsolete brain operation that was used to treat mental illness. This operation left her mentally disabled for the rest of her life.



The following year, *The Glass Menagerie* was produced in Chicago where it received accolades from the critics and became an instant success. The following spring it opened on Broadway to sold-out audiences, running for 563 performances and skyrocketing Williams from obscurity to fame.

Throughout his life, Williams would write two novels, two books of poetry, 15 screenplays, an autobiography, numerous essays, and 70 plays, including: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, and *The Night of the Iguana*. During his career he won two Pulitzer Prizes for drama, four New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, a Tony Award, and he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Jimmy Carter. He died when he was 73 years old in 1981.

Tennessee Williams. The New York Public Library Digital Collections, 1955.

Additional resources

The Poetry Foundation

- ▶ A comprehensive biography that traces the full trajectory of Williams' life, career, and works, as well as his prominent place within the world of twentieth-century literature and drama.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/tennessee-williams>

PBS American Masters

- ▶ A succinct overview of Williams' life and work with supplementary details about his personal and artistic challenges.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/tennessee-williams-about-tennessee-williams/737/>

Study.com: Tennessee Williams

- ▶ A comprehensive student-friendly biography and examination of Williams' style. A video biography is also included.

<http://study.com/academy/lesson/tennessee-williams-biography-works-and-style.html>

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

There are a multitude of high quality online resources about the stylistic elements of Williams' writing, and specifically, *The Glass Menagerie*. The following section breaks down the most prominent elements in the play and provides a comprehensive overview of supplementary resources and lesson plans.

Poetic Language

“Williams, much more than any other American playwright, succeeded in finding a poetic diction for the stage. I immediately identified with that ambition, with the desire to write language that simultaneously sounded like spontaneous utterance but also had the voluptuousness in daring, peculiarity, quirkiness, and unapologetic imagistic density of poetry.”

Playwright Tony Kushner



Finn Wittrock and Madison Ferris in *The Glass Menagerie*. Photo by Julieta Cervantes.

Resources to explore:

- › **University of Texas: Q and A: Playwright Tony Kushner Speaks About the Influence of Tennessee Williams**
An interview with esteemed playwright Tony Kushner (*Angels in America*) in which he discusses Williams' legacy and how it has influenced his writing.

<http://blog.hrc.utexas.edu/2011/05/19/q-and-a-playwright-tony-kushner-speaks-about-influence-of-tennessee-williams/>

- › **National Endowment for the Humanities: Why Expressionism? “The Glass Menagerie”: A Common Core Exemplar**

A three-lesson curricular unit that explores the role of expressionism and the poetic devices in *The Glass Menagerie*.

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/curriculum-unit/why-expressionism-glass-menagerie-common-core-exemplar>

The Memory Play

“The memory play is a very successful non-linear structural pattern in modern American drama. Post-World War II, many American playwrights began to tap into the power of memory as a narrative device. Influenced by the forces that were shaping American society, especially the psychoanalytical concepts of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, these playwrights used the concept of memory to fuel non-linear plots and intense character development.”

ArtsEdge/The Kennedy Center

Resources to explore:

› **ArtsEdge/The Kennedy Center: *Memory Play Lesson Plan***

A multi-faceted lesson plan focused on *The Glass Menagerie* that explores the structural and technical devices of the memory play.

https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-9-12/Memory_Play

› **Utah Shakespeare Festival: *What is the Underlying Truth?***

An essay analyzing *The Glass Menagerie* and Williams’ creative use of memory as a means to explore the humanity and psychology of his characters.

<https://www.bard.org/study-guides/what-is-the-underlying-truth>

› **The New York Times: *That Uncertain Muse and Witness: Memory***

A reflection on contemporary and classic plays that utilize memory as a storytelling and theatrical device in impactful ways. A video of actor Zachary Quinto performing one of Tom’s monologues is also included in the article.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/08/theater/that-uncertain-muse-and-witness-memory.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FWilliams%2C%20Tennessee&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics®ion>

Plastic Theater

“His sensitivity to emotional ambience helped him fashion what he termed ‘plastic theatre’: theatre as a unified system fusing language, staging, music and casting into a whole gestalt. His plastic theatre mingled expressionistic memory and fantasy, Chekhov’s psychology, Ibsen’s social realism, O’Neill’s mythic imagination, Faulkner’s history-stunned south and Williams’s own symbolic imagination. With a bit of gothic melodrama thrown in for fun, his productions sharply diverged from mainstream theatre’s conventional, linear narrative.”

Sarah Churchwell, *The Guardian*

Resources to explore:

› **The Guardian: *Tennessee Williams Review: John Lahr’s ‘compulsively readable’ biography***

A book review highlighting significant content from John Lahr’s seminal biography of Williams, including Williams’ invention of “plastic theater,” a dramatic departure from the theatrical realism of the time.

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/oct/29/tennessee-williams-mad-pilgrimage-of-the-flesh-john-lahr-review>

› **Tennessee Williams Studies: *“The Sculptural Drama”: Tennessee Williams’ Plastic Theater***

A scholarly article breaking down the components of plastic theater and examining the ways Williams integrated them into *The Glass Menagerie*.

<http://www.tennesseewilliamsstudies.org/journal/work.php?ID=45>

Autobiography

"If you chart what he was doing at the time he wrote the plays in his personal life, it becomes an emotional autobiography so that the plays reflect the man and the man reflects the plays."
John Lahr, Williams biographer



Mrs. Williams with Rose and Tennessee. The New York Public Library Digital Collections, 1911-1920.

Resources to explore:

- › **Los Angeles Review of Books: *Talking Tennessee: A Conversation with John Lahr***
An interview with Williams' biographer, John Lahr, about the life and art of Tennessee Williams.
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/talking-tennessee-conversation-john-lahr/>
- › **The Paris Review: *Tennessee Williams, The Art of Theater***
A 1981 interview with Tennessee Williams about his life, his work, and the intersection of the two.
<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/3209/tennessee-williams-the-art-of-theater-no-5-tennessee-williams>

- › **Primestage Study Guide: *Putting it in Context* (p.7)**
Succinct historical, geographical, and literary information contextualizing the setting, themes, and stylistic components of *The Glass Menagerie*.
http://www.primestage.com/files/pdf/resource_guides/resource_guide_glass_menagerie.pdf

- › **American Repertory Theater Study Guide**
Contextual information outlining similarities between Tennessee Williams' personal life and his writing.
From Tom to Tennessee (pgs. 16-19)
St. Louis in the 1930s (pgs. 22-23)
https://issuu.com/americanrep/docs/glass_toolkit_fulldraft



Young Tennessee Williams. The New York Public Library Digital Collections, 1900 - 1957.



Rural Mississippi home. The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

- › **Denver Center Study Guide**
Contextual information about the similarities between Tennessee Williams' personal life and his writing.
Similarities between the William's Family and the Wingfields (p.3)
Southern Women (p.6)
<https://www.denvercenter.org/docs/default-source/Show-Study-Guides/2016-17/glass-menagerie-study-guide.pdf>
- › **Studio Tenn Study Guide: *Autobiographical Comparison Chart* (p.8)**
A chart outlining the autobiographical aspects of Williams' life that can be found in *The Glass Menagerie*.
<http://www.tpac.org/education/HOT/PDF/The%20Glass%20Menagerie%202015%20FINAL-WEB.pdf>

THEMES & SYMBOLS

Thematic Elements

Below you will find the main thematic elements outlined, as well as discussion questions that can be used to launch a classroom exploration of *The Glass Menagerie*. In addition, many of the discussion questions can be used in debate activities or essay writing assignments. Additional thematic resources can be found at the end of this section.

ILLUSION VERSUS REALITY

- › In what ways are the characters disappointed and dissatisfied by the circumstances of their lives? In what ways are they disappointed and dissatisfied with each other? In your opinion, is their disappointment and dissatisfaction justified?
- › What strategies do the characters use to cope with their disappointment and dissatisfaction?
- › What are some of the specific ways the characters use illusions to escape the reality of their lives?
- › During which moments in the play are the characters forced to accept reality?
- › What symbols does the playwright use to explore this theme?

FAMILY TIES

- › How would you describe the relationships between the family members?
- › What obligations does Amanda have to her family? How does she try and uphold them?
- › What obligations have been thrust upon Tom in the absence of his father? How do these obligations limit him?
- › What are Laura's obligations? How does she succeed or fail at fulfilling them?
- › How does each character control the others? How is each character controlled by the others? How does this lead to conflict?

TRAPS AND ESCAPE

- › How are each of the characters trapped by their environment, their gender, their class, and their circumstances?
- › What actions can they take to escape?
- › What would be the consequences of those actions?
- › Is true freedom possible for any of the characters? What would be required for each character to gain their freedom?
- › What does Jim symbolize for this family?

MEMORY AND TIME

- › Why do you think the playwright chose to present this story as a “memory play?”
- › What are the limitations of memories?
- › What is each character's relationship to their past, present, and future?
- › How does their memory of the past affect their actions in the present and affect the way they see the future?
- › In what ways is this play “timeless?” How might the struggles of the characters play out today?

Symbols

“Symbols are nothing but the natural speech of drama.”

~Tennessee Williams

Symbols for further exploration:

- › Laura’s glass animals
- › The unicorn
- › The fire escape
- › Blue Roses
- › The movies
- › The victrola
- › The Merchant Marines
- › “Malvolio the Magician”
- › The typewriter
- › Darkness
- › Candles
- › Jonquils



Finn Wittrock and Madison Ferris in *The Glass Menagerie*. Photo by Julieta Cervantes.

Additional Resources

- › **Denver Center Study Guide: *Themes* (p.8)**
An overview of the primary themes found in *The Glass Menagerie* with specific textual references.
<https://www.denvercenter.org/docs/default-source/Show-Study-Guides/2016-17/glass-menagerie-study-guide.pdf>
- › **Spark Notes: *Themes***
An exploration of the following *The Glass Menagerie* themes: illusion, escape, and memory.
<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/menagerie/themes.html>
- › **Theatrefolk.com: *Tennessee Williams Analysis and Exercises***
An analysis of symbols in the play and a downloadable/printable ‘Symbols Worksheet’ for classroom use.
<https://www.theatrefolk.com/spotlights/analysis-and-exercise-tennessee-williams>
- › **Bright Hub Education: *Teaching Symbolism in The Glass Menagerie***
Two classroom activities for exploring the symbols in *The Glass Menagerie*.
<http://www.brighthubeducation.com/high-school-english-lessons/51212-teaching-symbolism-in-the-glass-menagerie/>
- › **Novelguide.com: *Symbolism in The Glass Menagerie***
An overview of the primary symbols found in *The Glass Menagerie*.
<http://www.novelguide.com/reportessay/literature/novels/symbolism-glass-menagerie>

PRODUCTION NOTES

From the Director

“I was in my teens when I saw *The Glass Menagerie* for the first time. I recognized myself in Tom back then. In his search for identity and freedom. In his longing for a life as a poet. In the jail he lived in. In him, I recognized the fears and the dreams of every young American man. The play directly addressed me. Now that I am reading it again twenty years later, I am the father of a daughter and for me it is not so much a play about Tom anymore, but more about Amanda, whom I don't see as the slightly comical, bossy mother. It surprises me that I recognize myself in her now, in her tormented love for her children. My bond with the play is still as strong as it used to be, but it is very different.



Director Sam Gold

At the time, the poetic language and the ingenious form appealed to me strongly. But now I see that it is also a very naturalistic play. With great subtlety and an eye for detail, it provides a view on a family in St. Louis during the late 1930s. I find it interesting to research the poetic language and the banality of the environment at the same time. I am really looking forward to bringing this fragile, fearless and harrowing autobiographical view of an artist on his own life and family to the stage.”

~*The Glass Menagerie* director Sam Gold; Toneelgroep Amsterdam website

[<https://tga.nl/en/employees/sam-gold>]

Post-Performance Discussion

- › Sam Gold's production has been called “minimalist” by reviewers. What does that mean to you? How does his minimalist approach to the set and the staging support the story? How did you envision the set?
- › What choices does the director make to illustrate that this is a memory play told from Tom's point of view?
- › How does Tom's opening monologue set the tone for the play? How does it prepare you for what you are about to see and experience?
- › How is music used? How does it affect the storytelling and mood?
- › Why do you think the director chose to use the full extent of the stage, including the parts that are traditionally masked or hidden from the audience by curtains and set pieces?
- › What choices does the director make to highlight Laura's physical challenges and vulnerability?
- › How is the stage transformed during Laura's romantic interaction with Jim?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

A Web of Symbols: Visual Art Activity

› Identify

As a class, after reading or seeing the play, brainstorm a list for each character identifying and outlining their qualities, attributes, and personality traits.

› Collect

Ask students to choose a character and collect three images and/or objects that they feel are representative of their character, reminding them to think symbolically as well as literally.

› Create

Place a large piece of mural paper with the outline of a spider's web on the classroom floor. (A sample can be found here: <http://www.clipartbest.com/clipart-Kcjobxadi>). Divide the web into four quadrants and label each one with a character's name. Have students fasten or place their images/objects in the appropriate character's quadrant.

› Discuss

As a class, look at the web and have students compare and contrast the different ways their classmates chose to visually represent the characters. What were the similarities and differences? What symbolic elements stand out? What thematic elements stand out? Are there similarities among the characters? Ask students to comment on why the images and objects have been placed in a "web." What is the significance of the web as it relates to the Wingfield family?

› Choose

Tell the class that they must decide on one overall symbol/image that will represent the entire play. Use the mural to solicit suggestions and then vote on the ultimate symbol for *The Glass Menagerie*. Have students work individually to artistically create their interpretation of the agreed-upon symbol.

› Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Family Drama: Analytical Activity

› Investigate

Hand out three Post-it notes to each student in the class. Divide the class into groups and assign each group to the one of the three Wingfield family members: Laura, Tom, or Amanda.

Ask students to answer the following questions on their notes in the format below:

- › What does my character want for myself? (LAURA: I want peace and safety.)
- › What does my character want *for* one of the *other* characters? (LAURA FOR TOM: I want him to be free.)
- › What does my character want from that same character? (LAURA FROM TOM: I want him to take care of me.)

› Discuss

Have students reflect on what they have written and share any discoveries they have made about the character relationships based on this exercise.

› Post

Put up a large piece of mural paper in the classroom, divide it into three areas and assign each area to a character. Have the students post their notes in the area that corresponds to their character.

› Examine

Give the students time to silently read over all the notes that have been posted for each character. Ask if they have made any further discoveries about the relationships based on all the notes.

› Re-arrange

Ask students to come up with different ways the notes may be configured to further explore the relationships in the play. As a class, regroup and rearrange the notes in various ways. For example, all the notes that refer to the characters feeling “trapped” might be grouped together. Have students reflect on what new information or insights they have gained about the relationships. What patterns can they see between the different family members? In what ways do they have similar hopes and dreams? In what ways are they at odds? What potential conflicts are revealed?

› Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

The Power of Memory: Creative Writing Activity

› Reflect

Ask students to think about a time in their past when they were disappointed—by someone, some thing, or themselves. Have students share some examples. Next, ask students to choose and reflect upon a significant family event from their past in which they were disappointed. Students should choose an event that they are comfortable sharing with the group. Give them two minutes of quiet time (they can close their eyes) to call up their memories of this event.

› Share

Ask students to share something about the experience of reflecting back on this event. How easy or difficult was it? Did pictures come into their mind or specific sounds or smells? Did it bring up certain emotions? Were there certain details that were very clear? Were there specific details they couldn't recall?

› Write

Have students go back to this memory again and write about it, including as many details as possible. Ask for student volunteers to share their stories with the class, and discuss the following:

- › Do you feel as disappointed as you did when this event originally happened, or have your feelings changed?
- › Did this event influence or change you in any way?
- › How might your other family members see this event differently?
- › If your life story was a play and you were going to stage this “memory scene” how would you stage it so that the audience would understand it was a memory?

› Re-imagine

For homework, have students write about their memory again, but from the point of view of a different member of their family.

› Connect

Discuss the relevance of *The Glass Menagerie* being a “memory play” and explore how the play would be different if it were told from Laura or Amanda's point of view.

› Standards

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3](#)

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4](#)

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

One on One: Monologue Activity

This activity builds on *The Power of Memory* activity above.

› Identify

As a class, identify what a monologue is, and brainstorm examples of monologues in literature. For additional information about monologues, refer to this resource: http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/apenwell/Index/welcome_to_the_world_of_monologue_81193.pdf.

› Examine

Have students read Tom's final monologue of *The Glass Menagerie* (found here: <http://www.monologuedb.com/dramatic-male-monologues/the-glass-menagerie-tom-wingfield/>) and notate when the language is conversational and when it becomes poetic. Have students identify examples of imagery, symbolism, and metaphor in the poetic language, and answer the following:

- › Who is Tom talking to?
- › Why is he expressing these thoughts and feelings at this moment in time?
- › Why might a playwright use monologues in a play? What effect do they have on the audience?

› Watch

Watch this video of John Malkovich as Tom in a film version of the play, and have students share their reactions to it. <http://www.monologuedb.com/dramatic-male-monologues/the-glass-menagerie-tom-wingfield/>

› Reinvent

Have students return to their written account of their family memory, and choose one or two sentences from it to adapt into poetic form, using symbolism, imagery, metaphor, alliteration, and any other poetic devices they are familiar with.

› Share

Have students share their poetic lines with the class.

› Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.



Madison Ferris and Sally Field in *The Glass Menagerie*. Photo by Julieta Cervantes.

Life in Art: Research Activity

› Reflect

After seeing the play, explain to the class that Tennessee Williams drew on many personal details from his own life when writing *The Glass Menagerie*. Have students reflect on the play and create a list of ten questions they have about the characters, setting, relationships, conflicts and plotlines that they would like to investigate further and see how they parallel Williams' life. For example: Is Laura based on Williams' real sister? Did Williams ever work in a shoe factory?

› Research

Direct students to the websites listed in the *Elements of Style: Autobiography* section of this guide to research their questions and identify which elements on their list were: autobiographical, influenced by autobiographical aspects from Williams' life, or fictional.

› Discuss

What other artists have created art (visual arts, music, theater, films, etc.) drawn directly from their personal lives and experiences? What are the benefits and disadvantages of making art out of your own life? Do you think the audience needs to know if a work of art is autobiographical? How might that change the audience's experience of the piece?

› Standards

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4](#)

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.



Joe Mantello and Sally Field in *The Glass Menagerie*. Photo by Julieta Cervantes.

Who's in Control: Acting Activity

› Prepare

- › Make copies of an excerpt from Scene Three of *The Glass Menagerie*. (A good three-page excerpt for this exercise would be starting with Tom's "What in Christ's name am I..." and ending with Amanda's "You're going to listen, and no more insolence from you! I'm at the end of my patience!")
- › Place one chair at the front of the room and ask for three student volunteers to read and act out the scene.
- › Have the actors simply read the scene aloud for the class once as a practice round.

› Explain

For round two, explain to the actors that as they read the scene a second time, they will use the chair to show who has the most power at each moment. The character with the most power should claim the chair (by sitting on it, standing on it, holding it, etc.). When they lose power, they lose the chair. In many instances, more than one character might be in conflict over who gets the chair.

› Predict

Before the actors go through the exercise, ask the class to make predictions about what they think they will see. Who will be sitting the most? Who will get the chair the least?

› Discuss

After the actors go through the exercise, discuss the following:

- › How did the use of the chair help illustrate the power struggles between the family members?
- › What did we learn about the power dynamics between the characters?

› Standards

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4](#)

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively



Joe Mantello and Sally Field in *The Glass Menagerie*. Photo by Julieta Cervantes.

Character Investigation: Performance Viewing Activity

› Choose

Ask students to choose one of the four characters from *The Glass Menagerie* that they feel connected to; the character they understand the most.

› Investigate

Using the handout provided, have students consider the following as they watch the production:

- › How are they trapped by their external circumstances?
- › How are they trapped by the other characters?
- › How are they trapped by their own beliefs, obligations, fears, and insecurities?
- › What are some of their escape options?
- › What will be the consequences if they try to escape?

› Create

After discussing the contents of their handouts, provide them with two options for a culminating project:

- › Create a symbolic visual representation of their character's trap.
- › Create an "Escape Plan" for their character that outlines actions they will take to get out of their painful situation.

› Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively



Joe Mantello, Sally Field, and Finn Wittrock in *The Glass Menagerie*. Photo by Julieta Cervantes.

The Glass Menagerie Character Investigation

My Character: _____

How my character is trapped by their external circumstances:

How my character is trapped by the other characters:

How my character is trapped by their personal beliefs, obligations, fears, and insecurities:

My character's escape options:

The consequences of escaping:

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