

Worksheet 1. Expressionist Techniques (Teacher Version)

Expressionist techniques in modern theatre:

- Internal experience that is subjective, not objective or real
- Fragmented characters that are often social or spiritual archetypes
- Abstract space/time that is suggestive and symbolic, not explicitly stated
- Atmospheric lighting that is expressive of emotion
- Spatial devices that are suggestive and symbolic, not explicitly stated (i.e., staircases)
- Acting style that includes expressive movements and loud utterances

Tennessee Williams used these characteristics to relate the following themes:

- Reality is subjective;
- “Memory” is valuable;
- Modern urban culture is dehumanizing and grotesque
- Life in mid-20th-century America causes angst

Instructions: Enter the information requested in the boxes for each of Williams’ expressionist techniques. The techniques have already been listed for you in Column 1.

Column 2. Give one example of each technique from the play using quotations from the text.

Column 3. Indicate “toward what ends” Williams was driving when he included that expressionist technique in *The Glass Menagerie*—tell which theme he was trying to get across to the audience or reader.

In the space below write your initial thoughts about the connections between the examples and Williams’ themes. Use quotations from the text.

Note that some of your examples may illustrate more than one theme. Put them wherever they fit, but be sure to answer “toward what ends?” for each.

Expressionist Technique	Examples from <i>The Glass Menagerie</i> (include quotations)	Toward what ends? (Identify which theme is being expressed)
Internal experience that is subjective	Scene 6: Amanda’s reminiscence of her girlhood days in Mississippi ... “Stop! Stop! I see jonquils...”	Memory is valuable

Why Expressionism? “The Glass Menagerie”: A Common Core Exemplar

Initial thoughts		
Characters that are fragmented	Scene 3: Tom’s outburst to Amanda “You ugly—babbling old—witch.”	Modern urban culture is dehumanizing and grotesque
Initial thoughts		
Abstract time or space references that are suggestive and symbolic	Scene 7: Tom’s ending speech: “I didn’t go to the moon, I went much further...I left St. Louis.” ...”	Reality is subjective
Initial thoughts		

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Atmospheric lighting that conveys emotion	Scene 3: “The dining-room area is lit with a turgid smoky red glow...their gesticulating shadows are cast on the cling by the fiery glow.”	Life in mid-20th-century America causes angst
Initial thoughts		
Spatial devices that are suggestive and symbolic	Scene 1: Description of setting, ‘The apartment faces an alley ... narrow alleys which run into murky canyons of tangled clothes lines, garbage cans, and the sinister latticework of neighboring fire escapes ... it is up and down these side alleys that exterior entrances and exits are made during the play ...’	Modern urban culture is dehumanizing and grotesque
Initial thoughts		

Why Expressionism? “The Glass Menagerie”: A Common Core Exemplar

Acting style that includes expressive movements	Scene 7: Amanda “Tonight I’m rejuvenated! The gaiety of the occasion...Ooooo! I’m baptizing myself!”	Reality is subjective
Initial thoughts		