

Character Based Literacy Program

Independent Study Lesson Plan

Our Town, Week 1



PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.



Integrity Requires Wholeness. Integrity requires that the way I live my life is whole, entire, undivided, sound, coherent, and principled. Integrity moves me to do difficult and new things, not just easy and accustomed things.

What are latitude and longitude?

What does Mrs. Webb mean by “[putting] up forty quarts”?

What is a Board of Selectmen?

What is “Bless Be the Tie that Binds”?

What is “Art Thou Weary, Art Thou Languid”?

Word Wall Here are vocabulary words to add to the Word Wall.

scenery (3)	dawn (4)	sentinel (5)	remarkable (6)	scolding (11)
gradual (16)	unobtrusively (16)	burst (19)	discontented (20)	legacy (20)
obliged (23)	editor (24)	illiterate (24)	indifferent (24)	diligent (25)
abrupt (27)	careening (28)	recite (30)	features (31)	yards (35)
descends (37)	retired (38)	scandal (39)	gossip (41)	grouchy (41)

READ

Review Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

Start at the beginning and review the story so far

- mention the setting and main character
- point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

Read Read the selection.

p. 2-46

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RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important on the timeline.

Think about what you read today and begin your timeline

- First, *fix the facts*: who, what, when, where, why
- Then, decide on the most important events and begin your timeline with these.

Over the course of the next week, you will be required to read a number of pages. It would be best if you spread the reading out over the week and not try to do everything at the last minute before your next appointment.

Map Add to ongoing activities like a KWL chart or map: where did the characters go?

- Begin a map of Grover's Corners
- Add details about the Gibbs and Webb houses and yards to your map.
- Add some of the new town statistics to your map of Grover's Corners. Create a population subset with a bar graph or pie chart describing politics and religion.
- On your map, mark the spot where the time capsule might be buried. Draw in a tin can telegraph between George and Emily's windows.
- Add something to your map. Perhaps add the police station, where Constable Warren would work, or Simon Stimson's house.

EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

Create a 1g6 Setting Chart for Grover's Corners.

Draw a sketch of what you think Grover's Corners looks like.

Materials:

- paper suitable for drawing, like 9x12 manila paper
- pencil, pen, crayon, marker, or chalk as desired

Step One: List the details.

1. Read pages.
2. Make a list of all the details.

Step Two: Draw a sketch.

Variations of this Sketch

1. The same process can be used to create a setting sketch for any story.
2. The same process can be used to create a visual of the future wishes of characters in any story.

Variations for Writing: This sketch can be used to help write a setting paragraph.

Use a Venn diagram to compare your town or community to Grover's Corners.

Create a time capsule. Draw a picture of what it might look like and create visual representations of at least five things you would include in it.

Write a newspaper article about the day's events in Grover's Corners. Be sure to write an exciting headline and mention a few of the town's more important events of the day.

Discussion

Key Questions (p. 2-11)

1. How is the Stage Manager introduced to the audience?
2. The play opens with minimal scenery-just a table and three chairs. What is the advantage of having just a few props when you're producing a play? What do you think the furniture represents?
3. Why do you think the Stage Manager is an omniscient (having total knowledge or knowing everything) narrator?
4. What do we know about the characters that they don't yet know themselves? What do we find out about Joe?
5. What hints are there of the prejudice that exists in Grover's Corners?
6. Why does the Stage Manager give us so many details about the layout of the town?
7. Why did Thornton Wilder choose to set the play in the year 1901?

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Key Questions (p. 12-21)

1. What is the personality of each child – Emily, Wally, George, and Rebecca? How do you know?
2. How do you think being a doctor was different in 1901 than being a doctor in 2013?
3. Why is Mrs. Gibbs worried about her husband? Do you think her worries are valid? Explain your answer.
4. Why do you think Mrs. Webb would need to “put up forty quarts?” What does this mean?
5. Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Webb have a conversation about selling a piece of furniture for a lot of money. What does this conversation reveal about the women, their families, and the town?
6. If you had no TV, radio, computer, cell phone, or iPod, what would you do for entertainment? (Please select an appropriate activity).
7. What foreign country would you like to visit and why? Be descriptive in your response.

Key Questions (p. 21-27)

1. Why is it important to know the history of people who lived in your area?
2. How does the population of Grover’s Corners (which is less than 3,000) compare to the population of your city?
3. The editor of a newspaper is responsible for the overall content of the publication, and this person determines whether or not an article is newsworthy. Why would an editor of a paper be a good reference when researching a town?
4. Based on the figures Mr. Webb shares, what do you think the people in the town are like?
5. What do the statistics tell you about the education of the people in Grover’s Corners?
6. Do people like living in Grover’s Corners? How do you know this to be true or not?
7. What do people in the town do for entertainment?
8. Would you like to live in Grover’s Corners? Why or why not?
9. Do the citizens of Grover’s Corners have integrity? (Integrity means being honest and fair and always doing the right thing, even when no one is looking) Provide examples from the story to support your response.

Key Questions (p. 27-36)

1. Describe the relationship between Emily and George.
2. Emily talks with her mother. She has some concerns. What does she specifically ask her mom? Does she believe her mom?
3. Are Emily and George typical teens?
4. What are the six items the townspeople put into the time capsule?
5. According to the Stage Manager, how are people throughout time similar or alike?
6. What part of us is important to share with future generations?
7. Do you think that George really needs help with math?
8. What do you think George's and Emily's future relationship will be?
9. Why do you think the author chose "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" as the hymn that was heard throughout the play?

Key Questions (p. 36-46)

1. How does Dr. Gibbs convince his son to do the chores?
2. Simon Stimson is an alcoholic. Why do you think he drinks?
3. Everyone wonders, "how it will end" for Stimson – how do you think it will end?
4. What does Dr. Gibbs mean by "they're all getting citified"?
5. What kinds of questions does Rebecca ask? Are these things you wonder about as well?
6. Why is the editor one of the last people to go to bed at night?
7. Why do you think the author chose "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" as the hymn that was heard throughout the play?
8. What do you think the Second Act will be about?
9. Why does the address on the last page end with "the Mind of God"? What do you think this means?

EXTEND

Write Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Key Passage

"Mrs. Gibbs died first – long time ago, in fact. She went out to visit her daughter, Rebecca, who married an insurance man in Canton, Ohio, and died there – pneumonia – but her body was brought back here. She's up in the cemetery now – in with a whole mess of Gibbsses and Herseys – she was Julie Hersey 'fore she married Doc Gibbs in the Congregational Church over there. In our town we like to know the facts about everybody" (pg. 7).

This story is written as a play and it is about a typical American town. In today's reading, the Stage Manager gives the audience far more information than it really needs. As he says, "In our town we like to know the facts about everybody."

During this novel, you're going to be writing a monologue (a long speech or lecture) about your town, city, or neighborhood. Begin today by writing two paragraphs describing the main street of your town, city, or neighborhood. Include major landmarks, retail and other businesses, billboards, landscape, etc. Be descriptive – your audience should be able to draw a map based on your description. If possible, read your description to a partner.

Key Passage

"Children! Now I won't have it. Breakfast is just as good as any other meal and I won't have you gobbling like wolves. It'll stunt your growth, that's a fact. Put away your book, Wally" (pg. 15).

Mrs. Webb's attitude about mealtime is a very traditional one for her time. Every family has different rules, traditions, and customs when it comes to sharing a meal.

To add to your monologue, write two paragraphs describing a meal at your home. You may choose to describe a special holiday meal or just a regular everyday meal. Who is at this meal? What kind of food is being served at the meal? Who does the preparing and cooking? Where does everyone sit? Is it at a table in your dining room? Or do you have your meal around a kitchen table? Maybe it's on the couch in front of the TV? What is the mood at the meal? Is it hurried and rushed like the Webb breakfast? Or is it relaxed? Tense? Fun? Do you always eat together, or does everyone eat on their own schedule? Are there any rules at your table? Is there conversation? Is any music played? If possible, read your paragraph out loud to a partner and compare differences and similarities.

Key Passage

“Well, I dunno.... I guess we’re all hunting like everybody else for a way the diligent and sensible can rise to the top and the lazy and quarrelsome can sink to the bottom. But it ain’t easy to find. Meanwhile, we do all we can to help those that can’t help themselves and those that can we leave alone” (pgs. 25-6).

The section we read today reveals a lot about the people who live in Grover’s Corners. We hear about their religion, politics, interests, and work ethic. What are people like where you live? We live in a much larger and diverse community (with multi-ethnic components), which can make it seem challenging to describe all the people in your area. In addition, people are more likely to move often in larger cities, thus you may not have had the opportunities to get to know people. Focus on those with whom you have regular contact when responding to questions about religion, politics, interests and work ethic. This will allow you to provide a more in-depth perspective about their lives.

Write a two paragraph narrative essay describing the people you would see walking down a street in your community. Write as if you’re the Stage Manager, objectively describing people as you see them on the street. What do they look like? Dress like? How do they act in public? What kinds of jobs do people have in your community? What do people in your community care about? Is your community diverse (different ages, ethnicities, etc.), or would you see a pretty homogeneous (similar and common) population in your area? Be very descriptive with specific details.

Key Passage

“Y’know – Babylon once had two million people in it, and all we know about ‘em is the names of the kings and some copies of wheat contracts... and contracts for the sale of slaves. Yet every night all those families sat down to supper, and the father came home from his work, and the smoke went up the chimney, same as here. And even in Greece and Rome, all we know about the *real* life of the people is what we can piece together out of the joking poems and the comedies they wrote for the theatre back then” (pg. 33).

The Stage Manager points out that ancient societies are known by the artifacts (cultural or historical objects) that have survived them. He also talks about what they should leave for future generations in a time capsule in Grover’s Corner.

What artifacts represent your community? Write a three paragraph narrative essay describing at least three things you would place in a time capsule of your community. Describe each of the three items in vivid detail. Also, explain the significance of each item and why you chose it. How would these items represent your community?

Key Passage

"I guess I know more about Simon Stimson's affairs than anybody in this town. Some people ain't made for small-town life. I don't know how that'll end; but there's nothing we can do but just leave it alone. Come, get in" (pg. 41).

Simon Stimson, the town drunk, is the scandal of the town. No one is sure what will happen to him in the future, and many are worried about him. He doesn't necessarily cause any trouble – even the police ignore his public drunkenness – but everyone wonders about his future.

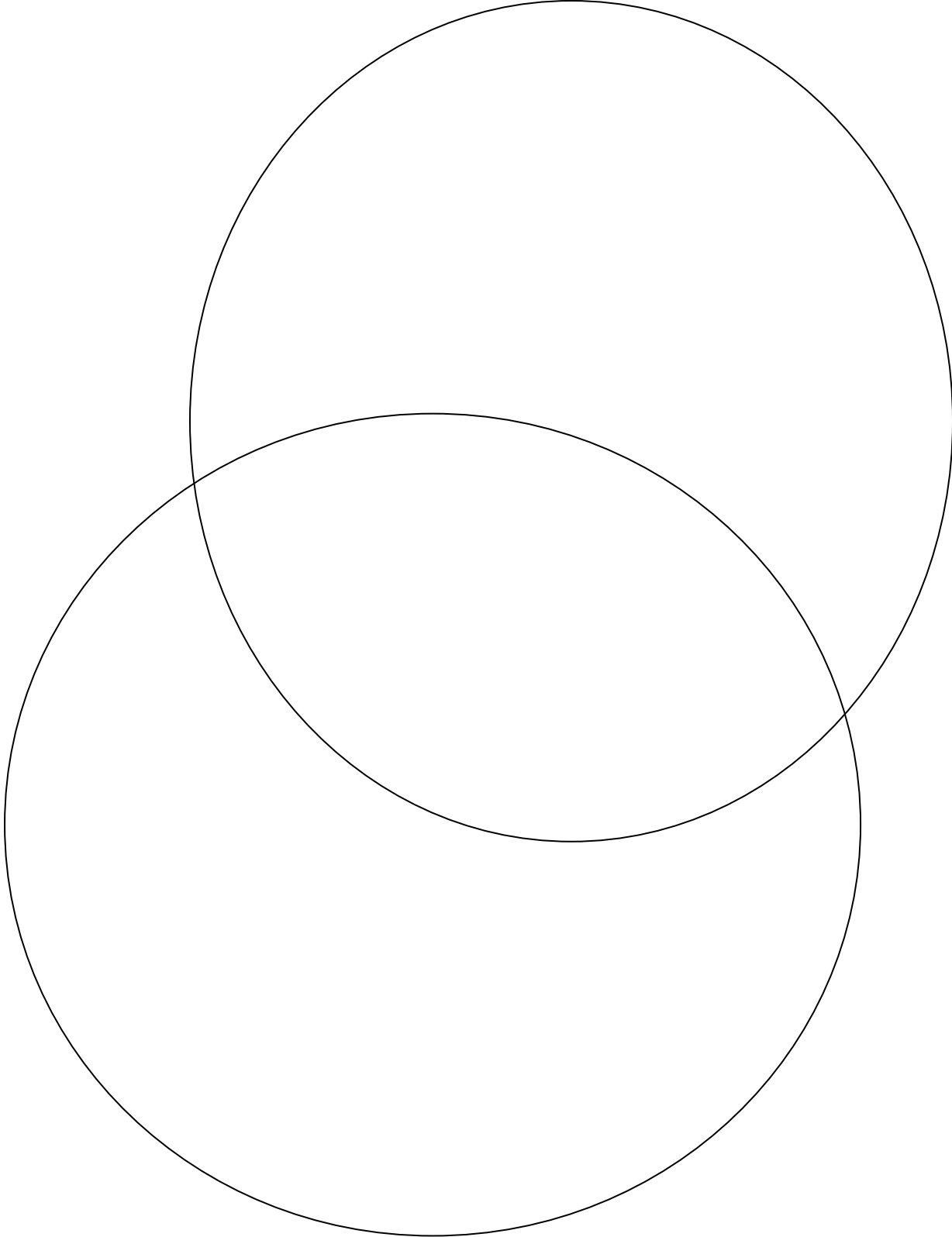
In Grover's Corners, drinking all the time is a scandal. What would be scandalous or shameful behavior where you live? Who is the subject of constant gossip? Write a two paragraph narrative about a person – factual or fictional – who would be considered disgraceful in your community. Describe the person in detail. What does this person do that is so morally reprehensible? Why do you think the person chooses to be this way? Do you think it is appropriate to gossip about this person? Would you want to help this person and give him or her advice, or would you not want to get involved? Remember, you can make up a person or describe a real person. If you choose to write about a real person, change the person's name.

1g6 Setting Chart

Where	When
Time	Weather

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6g6 Venn Diagram Chart



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Character Based Literacy Program

Independent Study Lesson Plan

Our Town, Week 2



PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.



Integrity Requires Wholeness. Integrity requires that the way I live my life is whole, entire, undivided, sound, coherent, and principled. Integrity moves me to do difficult and new things, not just easy and accustomed things.

Why is it bad luck for the groom to see the bride before the ceremony on the wedding day?

What does Emily mean when she says “I’ve got to – tell the truth and shame the devil”? (pg. 65)

What’s in an ice-cream soda?

What is the “March from Lohengrin” and Mendelssohn’s “Wedding March”?

What is appendicitis?

Word Wall Here are vocabulary words to add to the Word Wall.

commencement (48)	drenched (48)	reckon (50)	farces (53)	meditatively (54)
apt (59)	irritates (60)	incubator (61)	bewildered (62)	faults (66)
agriculture (69)	soils (70)	alarm (72)	mounting (72)	grave (73)
congregation (74)	ashamed (78)	anxiously (79)	shrill (81)	intermission (83)
range (86)	eternal (87)	weaned (88)	exertion (89)	bereaved (90)

READ

Review Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

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- point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

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Read Read the selection.

p. 47-91

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important on the timeline.

Think about what you read today and begin your timeline

- First, *fix the facts*: who, what, when, where, why
- Then, decide on the most important events and begin your timeline with these.

Over the course of the next week, you will be required to read a number of pages. It would be best if you spread the reading out over the week and not try to do everything at the last minute before your next appointment.

Map Add to ongoing activities like a KWL chart or map: where did the characters go?

Today, be sure the river is on your map of Grover's Corners – after all, it might flood!

Be sure to add the high school to your map.

Add Morgan's drugstore to your map of Grover's Corners.

Add the baseball field to your map. Where do George's buddies hang out?

Add the cemetery to your map of Grover's Corners.

EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

Complete a Character Profile Chart on George. Focus on those traits that will be important to his relationship with Emily.

Create a campaign poster for Emily and/or George's run for class office. Be sure to include at least one slogan and one illustration.

Create a Character Interaction Chart that reveals the relationships between Mr. Webb, George, and Emily.

Design the wedding notice that will appear in *The Sentinel* reporting on George and Emily's wedding. Be sure to mention the time, place, bride and groom's families, what everyone was wearing, etc. You might even describe the food at the reception. Assuming you have lived a long life and die at the ripe old age of 105, what would the epitaph on your tombstone say if you could design and write it yourself?

Discussion

Key Questions (p. 47-58)

1. Why is the second act about love and marriage?
2. What do you think the third act will be about?
3. Why does the Stage Manager point out that neither Mrs. Webb nor Mrs. Gibbs ever had a nervous breakdown?
4. Do you agree that "you've got to love life to have life, and you've got to have life to love life?" (pg. 49) Explain your answer in detail.
5. Are weddings, as Mrs. Gibbs points out, "farces?" (pg. 53) A farce is something that is funny, full of energy and it usually involves misunderstandings and improbable or questionable events. Do you agree and why or why not?
6. How is the tone (the overall feeling you get from a story) of the second act different from the first act?
7. Are you surprised that Emily and George are getting married? Why or why not?
8. How do you think the wedding will go?
9. What do you think George and Mr. Webb will talk about while they are alone in the kitchen?

Key Questions (p. 58-67)

1. At the beginning of today's reading, Mr. Webb and George are alone and having a conversation. Why do you think they are embarrassed?
2. Do you agree with the tradition of the bride and groom not seeing each other before the wedding ceremony or do you think the bride and groom should have some time together alone before the ceremony? Explain your answer.
3. Do George's and Emily's parents approve of their marriage? Support your answer with evidence from the reading.
4. Why does Mr. Webb become irked at his wife on page 61? What does he specifically say to her?
5. How does Wilder use humor to make a simple conversation between a young man and his future father-in-law interesting to the audience?
6. Mr. Webb stated that "no bridegroom should see his father-in-law on the day of the wedding, or near it"? (pg. 62) Why not?
7. Only a year ago, Emily was unhappy with George. Why?
8. Are you surprised that Emily and George ended up together?
9. Do you think they will have a long, successful marriage?

Key Questions (p. 67-73)

1. George and Emily were on their way to get ice cream sodas and then Emily's mood changed. What did she do and why?
2. Grover's Corners is changing. What are the changes? Do you think this is good or bad? Why?
3. Why is George worried about leaving Grover's Corners?
4. Whose advice should George seek about going to school?
5. When George decides not to go, do you think he's making the right choice?
6. How do Emily and George feel about each other?
7. Have you ever liked someone more than platonically, but you were afraid to tell the person? If so, why?
8. What is the fault or weakness in George's character?
9. What can George do to improve his character?
10. How does Mr. Morgan respond when George can't pay for the ice cream?
11. If you forgot your money, do you think a restaurant employee would respond the same way in your community?

Key Questions (p. 74-83)

1. Why does the Stage Manager play the part of the minister?
2. The Stage Manager says "The real hero... isn't on the stage at all" (pg. 75). Who is the real hero?
3. On page 76, Mrs. Webb is crying and fretting about something. Something that she should talk to Emily about. Something all mothers should discuss with their daughters. What is Emily's mother afraid to about?
4. Why are George and Emily afraid of marriage?
5. There are all sorts of mixed emotions at weddings and when vows are exchanged it becomes very apparent. Why do you think people cry happy and sad tears at such a sacred event?
6. What does the Stage Manager mean when he says "Once in a thousand times it's interesting" (pg. 82).
7. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Mrs. Soames stresses the importance of being happy. Do you believe happiness is the most important thing in life? Why or why not?
8. What do you think will happen in the Third Act?

Key Questions (p. 85-91)

1. What changes have happened in Grover's Corners since George and Emily's wedding?
2. The Stage Manager told us the titles of Acts I and II – what is the title of Act III?
3. What is the mood of Act III?
4. Why do we bury our dead in beautiful places?
5. Do you think the dead forget the living? Explain your answer.
6. Has someone close to you died? Do you remember the person? Do you have memories that you cherish or as time passes do you not spend much time thinking about the deceased? Do you think most people move on and forget those who have died?
7. What troubles or challenges do you think Simon Stimson experienced in his life that drove him to suicide?
8. Who do you think will be the next person to die?

EXTEND

Write Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Key Passage

"I declare, Frank, I don't know how he'll get along. I've arranged his clothes and seen to it he's put warm things on, —Frank! they're too *young*. Emily won't think of such things. He'll catch his death of cold within a week" (pg. 53).

For the young people in Grover's Corners, marriage is the usual rite of passage young people undertake after high school. Different times and different communities have different traditions of what young people do after high school. What is considered "normal" for people who have just graduated high school to do in your community?

Write two paragraphs that describe a rite of passage that young people in your community often experience. Think about your friends, family members, and classmates. What do most people do when they finish high school? Do they go away to college? Get a job? Get married right away? Move out of their parents' homes? Perhaps a ceremony that represents a major transformation, such as becoming transitioning into adulthood, might be common amongst young people in your community or family *before* they finish high school, like a *quinceañera* or a *bar mitzvah*. Be sure to describe the details of the experience. Is it prevalent in your community to have a specific ceremony, party, or event that accompanies this rite of passage (like a wedding ceremony and reception)? If possible, read your story out loud to a partner or small group.

Key Passage

“EMILY: I always expect a man to be perfect and I think he should be.

GEORGE: Oh... I don't think it's possible to be perfect, Emily.

EMILY: Well, my *father* is, and as far as I can see *your* father is. There's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be, too.

GEORGE: Well, I feel it's the other way round. That men aren't naturally good; but girls are.

EMILY: Well, you might as well know right now that I'm not perfect. It's not as easy for a girl to be perfect as a man, because we girls are more – more – nervous. – Now I'm sorry I said all that about you. I don't know what made me say it" (pg. 66).

Clearly, George and Emily believe that boys and girls are different, and have separate roles in society. Men and women in Grover's Corners play different roles in society. From what the Stage Manager has shows us, men work to support their families, and women run the homes and raise the children.

Write a three paragraph narrative essay for your monologue in which you describe typical gender roles in your community. Besides the obvious biological differences, how are men and women different? How are men and women treated differently in your community? Are the expectations for boys and girls the same? Do different standards of behavior exist for boys and girls? Are men expected to be the sole supporter of the family and are women expected to stay home and take care of the children and household duties? Do you agree with these gender roles? If you agree, explain why. If not, what do you think would be better? If possible, read your essay out loud to a partner or small group.

Key Passage

“Two strawberry ice-cream sodas, yes sir. Yes, sir. There are a hundred and twenty-five horses in Grover’s Corners this minute I’m talking to you. State Inspector was in here yesterday. And now they’re bringing in these auto-mo-biles, the best thing to do is to just stay home. Why, I can remember when a dog could go to sleep all day in the middle of Main Street and nothing come along to disturb him” (pg. 68).

Change is inevitable. In other words, it’s going to happen eventually. Change comes to small towns and big cities, apartment buildings and farms, schools, churches, and families of all sizes, ethnicities, and economic status. The Stage Manager, as Mr. Morgan, seems to imply in the above key passage that change is a bad thing. Sometimes, though, as we know, change is positive and necessary, not just for people of integrity and even more so for people who have had major or severe challenges that have brought about negative consequences.

In a two paragraph narrative essay, describe a positive change that you have witnessed or would *like* to witness in your community. What makes this change a good one? Why do you think this change is necessary? How does, or will, this change affect you and your family? Do you think this change will enhance the integrity of your neighborhood? If possible, read your thoughts out loud to a small group.

Key Passage

“The cottage, the go-cart, the Sunday-afternoon drives in the Ford, the first rheumatism, the grandchildren, the second rheumatism, the deathbed, the reading of the will, —Once in a thousand times it’s interesting” (pg. 82).

In the above paragraph, the Stage Manager outlines a typical life for a typical couple. He indicates that the pattern of life is predictable, and almost the same for everybody in Grover’s Corners.

In a two paragraph essay, describe the general details of a typical life of a person in your neighborhood. In the first paragraph, list the major life experiences that most people will encounter in their lifetimes. Be specific—don’t just say people will “get sick” or “have fun.” In the second paragraph, be even more specific and give details of someone close to you who is considerably older, thus having had the time of

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experiencing more due to living longer than someone close in age to you. If possible, share your story by reading it out loud to a small group.

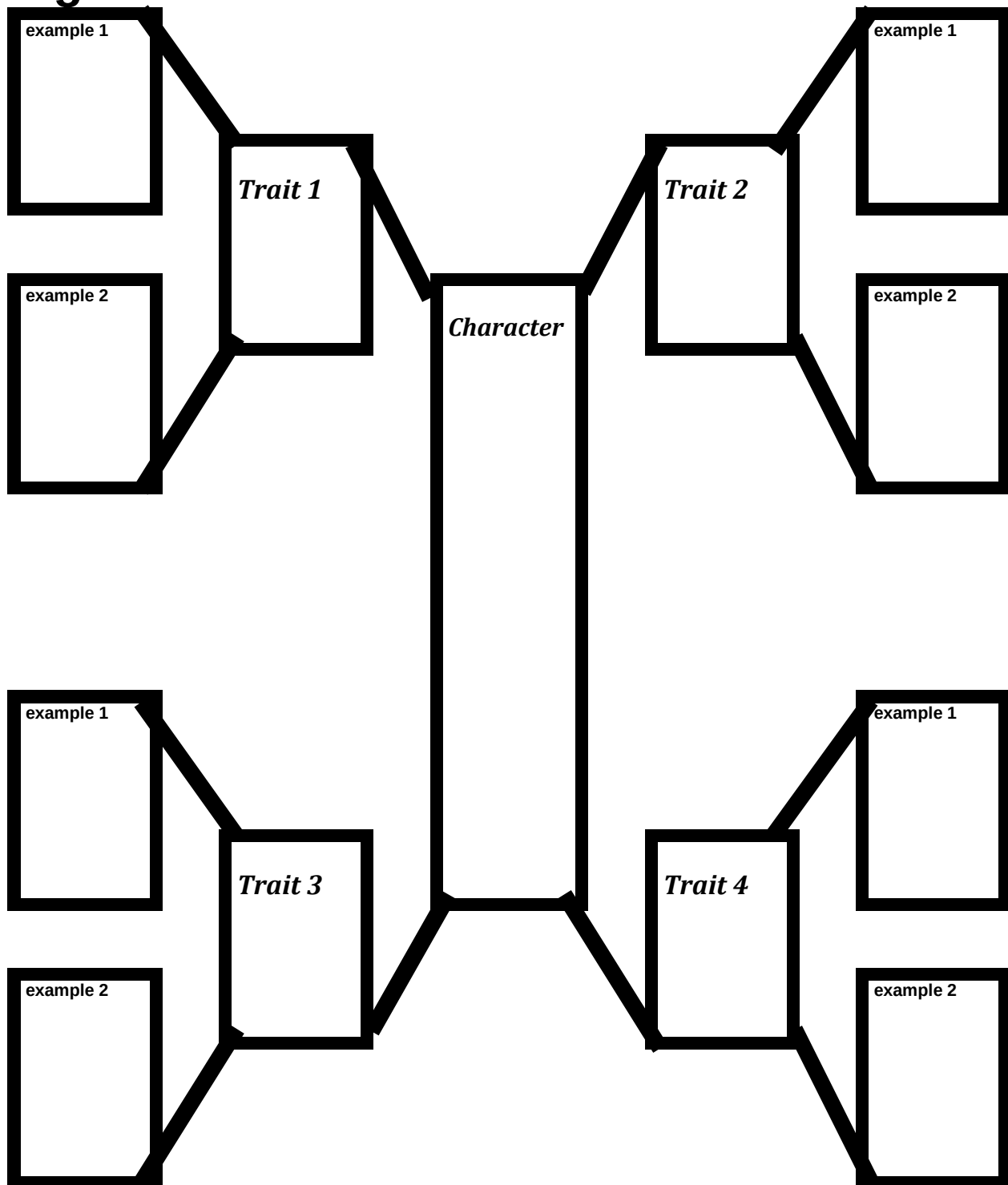
Key Passage

“Yes, beautiful spot up here. Mountain laurel and li-lacks. I often wonder why people like to be buried in Woodlawn and Brooklyn when they might pass the same time up here in New Hampshire” (pg. 86).

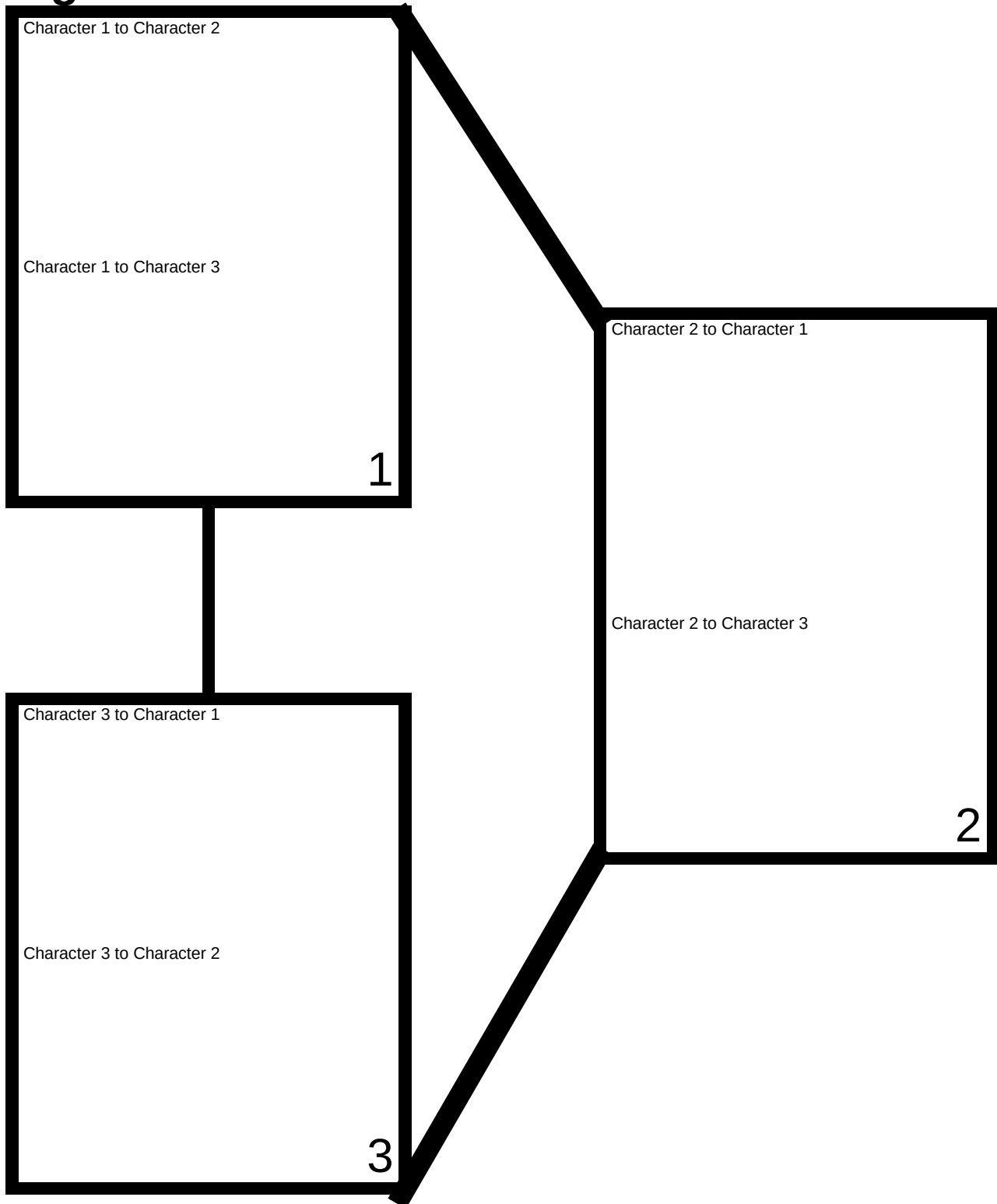
The Stage Manager describes the Grover’s Corners cemetery as a place of beauty and quiet. He wonders why other people would want to be buried in city cemeteries, because New Hampshire is such a perfect, beautiful place.

In a two paragraph essay for your monologue, describe the place near your community where you would like to eventually be buried or laid to rest. Of course, it is hoped for and expected that you will only be buried after living a long, happy, and productive life full of integrity, love, and compassion. Do you want to be buried, or perhaps cremated? This could be a traditional cemetery in your neighborhood where other family members are buried or a different place. Describe all of the sights and sounds of your final resting place. Why is this place special to you? Why would you want your earthly remains to spend the rest of eternity in this place? If possible, share this story by reading it out loud to a small group.

4g6 Character Profile Chart



5g6 Character Interaction Chart



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Character Based Literacy Program

Independent Study Lesson Plan

Our Town, Week 3



PREPARE

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Was it common for women to die in childbirth?

What was happening in 1899?

What was the original audience reaction to *Our Town*?

Word Wall Here are vocabulary words to add to the Word Wall.

glance (93)	faintly (94)	hymn (94)	subside (94)	vacant (94)
urgently (98)	afterwards (99)	several (100)	delight (101)	anguished (106)

READ

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Start at the beginning and review the story so far

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- point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

Read Read the selection.

p. 92-112

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important on the timeline.

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Over the course of the next week, you will be required to read a number of pages. It would be best if you spread the reading out over the week and not try to do everything at the last minute before your next appointment.

Map Add to ongoing activities like a KWL chart or map: where did the characters go?

Add Emily's grave to your map of Grover's Corners.

Fill in any blanks on the map. Add Polish Town, the livery stable, and the white fence around the Webb house.

Add any final or missing details to your map of Grover's Corners.

EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

Though we see Emily, we do not hear anything from George at the funeral. Create an Open Mind Portrait for George, outlining what he might be thinking in the aftermath of his wife's death.

Materials:

- large piece of stiff paper for each character, like 11x17 oak tag
- paper for bubbles with scissors and glue sticks
- markers, crayons, pens, pencils, or paint
- construction or tissue paper, scissors, and glue sticks (if desired)

Step One: Create a large head shot of the character.

1. Imagine what you think the character looks like from the descriptions in the text as well as your imagination. You can make a list of these details to help you draw the character, if you wish.
2. Decide how much of the character you wish to show: just the head and face? From the shoulders up? From the waist up? The whole person? You might want to include at least the shoulders to include some clothing details. You might want to show the size differences between characters.
3. Draw the characters headshot including the face on the large piece of paper. You could also cut the paper to form the head.
4. Illustrate your portrait with colors, construction paper or whatever will make the character colorful.

- Step Two: Place cartoon bubbles of character thoughts around the portrait.

1. Cut cartoon bubbles out.
2. Write things the character thinks or says to himself on each bubble.
3. Put the bubbles up around the portrait.

- Step Three: Add bubbles as you learn new things about the character.

1. Read the story further and identify new things you have learned about the character or ways the character has changed.
2. Follow step 2 to create and place additional bubbles.

- Variations of this Open Mind Portrait

1. You can use this process for any character in the story.
2. You can use bubbles for what the character says, says to himself or herself, or does. You could make each of these different colors if you wish.
3. You could add bubbles for what the character learns or ways the character changes and use different colors for each.
4. You could use different colors for the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Remember in the beginning you are introduced to the setting, the characters, and the problems they have. In the middle, you learn about the roadblocks to the characters solving their problems, and conflicts occur. In the end of the story those conflicts reach a peak and then resolve with a resolution of the character's problems.
5. You could use different colors for the phases you see in a story or the development of a particular character.
6. Instead of using bubbles you could write the bubble contents on the back of the portrait. You could use any of the variations above with color or print, or create columns or boxes for different categories or phases.

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7. You could open the head like a hinge and list the contents (as though they were escaping from the space) using any of these variations.
 8. You could make an Open Mind Portrait of yourself using any of the above variations.
- Variations for Writing: You could use the OMP to help write a character sketch or
 - to help decide what a character might do in a story.

Write Emily's obituary for *The Sentinel*. How will Grover's Corners remember her after she is dead? Remember she was a good student, a young mother, and a good farm wife.

Choose one of the side stories in the play – perhaps the man almost drowning in Polish town, Wally's death from appendicitis, or the results of the local school election – and create a final newspaper article. Put all the newspaper stories together for your very own issue of *The Sentinel*.

Discussion

Key Questions (p. 92-97)

1. When did you first realize that Emily had died?
2. Why doesn't the Stage Manager tell us up front who the funeral is for?
3. Why would the author have the dead people return to critique the living? What purpose does this serve?
4. Why would the author choose something as miraculously beautiful as childbirth as the reason for Emily's death?
5. What do you think Mrs. Soames meant when she said "My, wasn't life awful – and wonderful" (93)? Does this relate to your life?
6. How does Emily first treat the dead?
7. What did Emily share with Mrs. Gibbs when they were reminiscing about the time when they were alive?
8. What does Emily mean when she says "they're sort of shut up in little boxes, aren't they?" (pg. 96)
9. What is Dr. Gibbs mood at the funeral?
10. What do you think Emily's afterlife will be like?

Key Questions (p. 98-105)

1. Why does Emily want to go back into the living?
2. Why do the women warn her not to go back?
3. What day does Emily choose to visit? Why does she choose this particular day?
4. What emotions does Emily first experience as she goes back to that long-ago day?
5. What were the happiest times in Emily's life?
6. Do you think Emily should go back to the living or should she take the others' advice and not go back? Explain your answer.
7. How is Emily's experience in her past similar to Dickens' Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*? What are the differences? What is the common theme of both novels?

Key Questions (p. 106-112)

1. Why do simple things, like getting a hug from her mother, cause pain for Emily?
2. What did George give Emily for her birthday?
3. What does Emily urgently want from her mom?
4. What are the eight items Emily bids goodbye to on page 108? What do you think is the significance of these items?
5. Can you think of a poet who "realize(s) life while they live it?" (pg. 108).
6. How does Emily describe all human beings?
7. What is Simon Stimson's attitude toward life? How does it differ from that of the other characters?
8. Why does the author include the conversation about stars at the end of the story?
9. How does George's reaction to death contrast to Emily's?
10. What does the very end of the play have in common with the very beginning of the play?
11. What is the mood at the end of the play?

EXTEND

Write Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Key Passage

“EMILY: Live people don't understand, do they?

MRS. GIBBS: No, dear – not very much.

EMILY: They're sort of shut up in little boxes, aren't they? I feel as though I knew them last a thousand years ago” (pg. 96).

In Thornton Wilder's vision of death, the souls of the dead remain in the cemetery, silent observers of life. Though they know what is going on with the living, it seems that they don't have much interest in them. They both envy and pity the living.

Every culture, religion, family, and individual has a different opinion on what happens after you die. Write a three paragraph essay that explains your personal view of the afterlife. Do people go to heaven or hell? Do our souls live on as ghosts? Do we become reincarnated as something or someone else? In Mexico, those who have died are celebrated, honored and revered every Halloween with a tradition known as Dia De Los Muertos (or Day of the Dead). Do you have a similar ritual? How do others in your life choose to remember loved ones who have died? What do you believe will happen to you after you die?

Key Passage

“That's not the only reason why you shouldn't do it, Emily. When you've been here longer you'll see that our life here is to forget all that, and think only of what's ahead, and be ready for what's ahead. When you've been here longer you'll understand” (pg. 99).

Against the advice of the other dead people, Emily chooses to go back and relive a day in her life. She doesn't choose the happiest day, nor does she choose an unimportant one. She chooses to relive a favorite childhood memory – her twelfth birthday.

If you could go back and relive one day, which would you choose? Write two paragraphs describing your favorite day from your past, and explain why you would relive that day if you could. What made it a happy day? Was it a special day, like a holiday or a birthday? Were family and friends with you? Or were you by yourself? Was there a special place, food, or music associated with this day? How could you recreate this day for yourself in the future

Key Passage

“I didn’t realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Take me back – up the hill – to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look.

Goodbye, Goodbye world. Goodbye Grover’s Corners... Mama and Papa. Goodbye to clocks ticking... and Mama’s sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths... and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you’re too wonderful for anybody to realize you” (pg. 108).

In one of the most immortal passages in American literature, Emily says goodbye to the world. She mentions the everyday, mundane things that she will miss. Notice: nowhere does Emily mention a favorite possession or an exciting activity.

For your monologue, write two paragraphs about the little things that make your life worthwhile. These are the things that make your life important. What or who would you miss if you left your life today? Mentally examine and visualize an ordinary day in your life, and think of the small things you take for granted. Do you take anyone for granted? If so, who? What are the sights, sounds, and places that make your life worth living? What are the best parts about your community? What aspects of life give your community and your life integrity?

Final Writing Prompt

Key Passage

“The sky is beginning to show some streaks of light over in the East there, behind our mount’in.

The morning star always gets wonderful bright the minute before it has to go, —doesn’t it?

Well, I’d better show you how our town lies. Up here—is Main Street” (pg. 4).

The Stage Manager tells us, more or less, about a typical day in Grover’s Corners. He includes Daily Life, Love and Marriage, and Death. Many times, he uses monologue to tell us about Grover’s Corners, its citizens, its happy events, and its tragedies. By the end of the play, the audience understands the community and is interested in its authors.

As a Stage Manager of your own play, write and perform a monologue describing life in your community. Describe what life is like in your community; tell us about daily events, rites of passage, and attitudes toward death. What gives your community its integrity? It might help to follow the checklist on the following page.

1.	☐	Lay out your writing prompts from days 1 to 13.
2.	☐	Choose your best ten paragraphs.
3.	☐	Put your paragraph from day 1 on the top – this will be your introduction.
4.	☐	Put your best ten paragraphs in logical order. • This might be chronological – how they happened in your life. • You might use the order of <i>Our Town</i> – Daily Life, Love and Marriage, Death. • Or, put them in an order that flows for the reader.
5.	☐	Write a short closing paragraph for your monologue. Be sure to say goodbye or good night to your audience, just like the Stage Manager.
6.	☐	Now, write a rough draft by putting all of your paragraphs together. Be sure to use the first person (“I”) throughout your monologue.
7.	☐	Type or neatly write a final draft.
8.	☐	Practice reading your monologue out loud. If possible, memorize it.