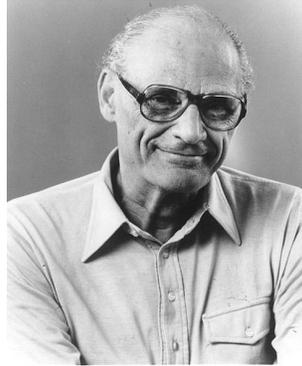


# DEATH OF A SALESMAN

by Arthur Miller



## THE AUTHOR

Arthur Miller (1915-2005) was born and raised in New York City. He worked his way through college at the University of Michigan, and by the time he graduated in 1938, he had already received a number of awards for plays he wrote in his undergraduate years. After a number of early professional attempts that failed, he produced his first theatrical success with *All My Sons* in 1947. The play generally considered his masterpiece, *The Death of a Salesman*, won him the Pulitzer Prize in 1949 and catapulted him into the company of America's greatest living playwrights. Other successes included *The Crucible* (1953), a drama about the Salem witch trials in which he reflected on the McCarthy era (Miller was convicted of contempt of Congress in 1956 for refusing to testify about the political views of his friends), *A View from the Bridge* (1955), *After the Fall* (1964), *The Price* (1968), *The American Clock* (1980), and *Broken Glass* (1995). He also wrote the script for the movie *The Misfits* (1961 - the script was written as a starring vehicle for his wife, Marilyn Monroe, but the two divorced shortly after the movie was produced) and the Emmy Award-winning television special *Playing for Time* (1980).

*Death of a Salesman* is derived partially from Miller's childhood experiences. A family friend, Manny Newman, was the inspiration for Willy Loman - he was a traveling salesman who was constantly comparing his children's accomplishments to Arthur's, dreaming and talking big, and ultimately committed suicide. Miller's father was a coat manufacturer during the materialistic Roaring Twenties, and Miller himself was a high school athlete who, like Biff, failed algebra. The play is noted largely as a searing critique of the materialism of the American Dream. The shallowness of the post-World War II economic boom and the devastating impact it had on those who never seemed to be able to achieve what it promised is at the center of the play. It also touches on the importance of self-realization and defining oneself rather than allowing oneself to be defined by the values of the surrounding society.

## MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Willie Loman - The salesman of the title, he is sixty-three and is an utter failure, never having achieved the grandiose dreams that he has long pursued for himself or for his children.

- Linda - Willie's wife, she loves and admires him and is more than willing to overlook his faults because of the attractiveness of his unfulfilled dreams.
- Biff - Their son, age 34, works on a farm for very little money. He is still trying to "find himself." He and his father are often at odds.
- Happy - Biff's younger brother, age 32, is a perpetual philanderer; he too is a failure despite having a steady job, but is more content than his older brother, though both are self-deceived.
- Uncle Ben - Willy's brother who made a fortune mining diamonds in Africa. He died shortly before the play takes place, but often appears in Willy's memories and imagination.
- Charley - Willy's next-door neighbor, he lends Willy money, they play cards together and he puts up with Willy's fits of temper.
- Bernard - Charley's son, he and the boys are friends. He is a good student, but is looked down on by Willy and his sons as a wimp. He eventually becomes a successful lawyer.
- Howard Wagner - Willy's boss, he refuses to change Willy's territory and give him an advance on his salary, laying him off instead.
- The Woman - Willy's mistress in Boston. When Biff discovers them together he loses all confidence in his father and gives up on finishing high school and going to college.

### **NOTABLE QUOTATIONS**

"You're my foundation and support, Linda." (Willy, Act I)

"I've always made a point of not wasting my life, and everytime I come back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life." (Biff, Act I)

"Someday I'll have my own business, and I'll never have to leave home any more." (Willy, Act I)

"Be liked and you will never want. You take me, for instance." (Willy, Act I)

"Why, boys, when I was seventeen I walked into the jungle, and when I was twenty-one I walked out. And . . . I was rich." (Ben, Act I)

"Never fight fair with a stranger, boy. You'll never get out of the jungle that way." (Ben, Act I)

"I just can't take hold, Mom. I can't take hold of some kind of a life." (Biff, Act I)

"He's the dearest man in the world to me, and I won't have anyone making him feel unwanted and low and blue." (Linda, Act I)

“I don’t say he’s a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He’s not the finest character that ever lived. But he’s a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He’s not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person.” (Linda, Act I)

“Be loving to him. Because he’s only a little boat looking for a harbor.” (Linda, Act II)

“You can’t eat the orange and throw the peel away - a man is not a piece of fruit.” (Willy, Act II)

“It’s not what you do, Ben. It’s who you know and the smile on your face! It’s contacts, Ben, contacts!” (Willy, Act II)

“Funny, y’know? After all the highways, and the trains, and the appointments, and the years, you end up worth more dead than alive.” (Willy, Act II)

“Dad is never so happy as when he’s looking forward to something.” (Happy, Act II)

“Dad, you’re never going to see what I am, so what’s the use of arguing?” (Biff, Act II)

“We never told the truth for ten minutes in this house.” (Biff, Act II)

“I never got anywhere because you blew me so full of hot air I could never stand taking orders from anybody!” (Biff, Act II)

“I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash can like all the rest of them” (Biff, Act II)

“He never knew who he was.” (Biff, Requiem)

“A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory.” (Charley, Requiem)

## NOTES

**Act I** - The setting is Brooklyn, the home of Willy Loman, the salesman of the title. He is just returning home from a long, tiring day on the road. He is so exhausted that he could no longer keep his car on the road, so he decided to come home rather than make any more calls. His wife Linda tries to make excuses for him, but he rejects each of them in turn. She encourages him to ask his boss to assign him to New York so he won’t have to travel so much, but he doesn’t think the boss will be willing to change his territory despite the fact that he is largely responsible for building up the New England clientele from scratch. She tells him that their sons, Biff and Happy, went on a double date that night, which sets off Willy on a rampage about the do-nothing Biff, who is still trying to “find himself” at the age of 34. He then goes on a rant about the apartment houses that have risen on all sides of their house, blocking the view and cutting off the air. His shouting wakens the boys, and then his mind starts wandering again, confusing his present car, with which he frequently gets into accidents, with ones he had long ago.

The boys, awake now in the bedroom, worry about their father's declining driving skills, fearing that he will lose his license, and with it his livelihood. They reminisce about their exploits with women, then Biff asks Happy why their father always mocks him. He bemoans the fact that he is not making anything of himself, bouncing around from job to job and place to place. Happy, despite having a steady job and his own car and apartment, is lonely no matter how many women he succeeds in bedding. The two then dream of buying a ranch together out West. Hap insists that he has to show his bosses what he's really worth first, then he can quit. They then discuss the girls they slept with that evening, but both claim that want to find a steady relationship. This doesn't keep Hap from bedding women engaged to the executives in his company or from taking bribes; he can't seem to help himself. Biff decides that he is going to seek out Oliver, a previous employer, and get a loan to buy the ranch. In the kitchen, Willy's meanderings get so loud that the boys fear he will wake their mother.

The scene shifts into Willy's imagination. He is thinking of earlier days, warning Biff about how to deal with girls and praising the boys for the way they waxed the car. He gives them a punching bag, and Biff shows him the football he "borrowed" from school. Willy tells them that someday he will have his own business and not have to travel all the time. He brags to the boys about how well-known he is among all the finest people of New England and how the police protect his car whenever he parks it. Biff then tells him he'll score a touchdown for him in the game that Saturday. At that point Biff's friend Bernard enters, warning Biff that if he doesn't study he'll flunk math despite the fact that he has three scholarship offers from colleges. They boys go inside and Linda asks Willy how much money he made on his trip he exaggerates at first, but then admits he only made about seventy dollars, which is nowhere near enough to pay their bills. She tells him he will do better next week, but he admits that, despite his bragging, people just don't seem to take to him.

The scene changes again as Willy remembers a woman with whom he had an affair in Boston. She soon fades and he is talking to Linda again. She is mending her stockings (he had just given a pair of stockings to the girl in Boston), and he tells her to throw them out instead. Bernard then enters again and tells Willy that Biff didn't show up to study, but Willy tells him to give him the answers on the test. Linda warns him that Biff is too rough with the girls and is driving without a license. Willy stubbornly insists that his son has spirit and personality.

The scene moves back to the present, where Willy is muttering to himself in the kitchen, talking about his brother Ben who made a fortune in Alaska. Hap tries to get him to go to bed, but Charley, the next-door neighbor, comes over to complain about the noise. Hap goes back to bed and Willy and Charley start playing cards. As they play, Willy's mind wanders and he imagines that Ben, who died a few weeks earlier, has entered the room. Willy carries on a conversation with Ben, confusing Charley, who only hears half of it. Willy gets confused about the card game and Charley, in frustration, goes home.

Now we are in the past again, as Willy remembers the first time he introduced Ben to Linda. He asks Ben how he became a success and Ben tells him that he didn't go to Alaska, but to Africa, where he made a fortune in diamond mines. Willy introduces Ben to his boys, citing him as an example of what a man can make of himself. Ben tells Willy about their father, who had traveled the country selling flutes. Ben then spars with Biff, trips him, and nearly sticks the point of an umbrella in his eye. Linda is horrified, but Ben warns Biff never to fight fair with a stranger. The boys then run off to the construction site where the new apartments are being built, and a much younger Charley warns Willy that Biff and Happy are stealing from the site. Willy already knows

this, but praises their fearlessness. Ben fades away after assuring Willy that he is doing a fine job with his sons.

Back in the present again, Linda tries to get Willy to come to bed, but he asks her about a diamond watch fob Ben had given him long ago. She reminds him that he pawned it to pay for a radio correspondence course for Biff twelve years earlier. Willy wanders outside in his slippers and the boys come downstairs again. Linda tells them he is often like this, but is worse when Biff comes home. She wonders why they have to fight all the time. She reminds him that he owes his father something, not because he is a great man, but because he is a human being. She tells them that the company had cut his salary, putting him on straight commission after thirty-six years of faithful service. He makes so little money that he has to borrow some from Charley every week. Biff reluctantly agrees to stay home, get a job, and share some of his pay with the family, but Linda wants nothing to do with perpetual arguing. Biff blurts out that his father is a fraud, but Linda tells the boys that Willy is dying; in fact, he is trying to kill himself with his supposed car accidents and by inhaling gas fumes. The boys then begin arguing, each blaming the other for their lack of work ethic and their failures. Willy walks in during their argument and ridicules Biff's idea about getting a job in sporting goods with a former employer. Biff and Hap then talk about starting their own sporting goods business, which would allow them to play ball anytime they wanted with no bosses yelling at them for skipping work. Willy becomes enthusiastic about the idea and soon he is talking about million-dollar profits and advising the boys how to ask for the loan they need, but soon they are all arguing again, and Willy leaves the room. He goes to bed, the boys come up to say goodnight, and he continues to pour out advice about their meeting the next day.

**Act II** - The next morning Willy sleeps in and finds that the boys have already left to see Oliver. Willy intends to ask his boss to transfer him to work in New York and dreams about retiring to a cottage in the country and building two guest houses so the boys can visit with their families after they get married. Linda reminds him that he needs an advance from his boss to pay their outstanding bills. The boys are planning to take Willy to Frank's Chop House that night to celebrate the loan they anticipate getting.

The scene now switches to the office of Willy's boss, Howard Wagner. He is busy demonstrating a new recording machine and playing practice recordings he made of his family members and pays no attention to Willy. When Willy asks for a transfer, Howard refuses even though Willy repeatedly lowers his financial demands and brings up new arguments. Instead Howard lays him off.

Willy's mind starts to wander again as he remembers Ben offering him a job on his Alaska timberland. Linda opposes the idea because Willy's boss (Howard's father) promised to make him a partner if he keeps up his good work. Biff is leaving for the New York City championship football game at Ebbets Field, and Willy brags about his college scholarship offers that will make his future because of the contacts he will make through football. Happy and Bernard argue over who will carry Biff's equipment.

The scene switches back to the present, to Charley's office. Bernard is saying goodbye to his father in preparation for a trip to Washington to argue a case before the Supreme Court. Willy, who is there to ask Charley for a loan, questions Bernard about why Biff never made anything of himself after the big football game at Ebbets Field. Bernard has no answers except to remind Willy that Biff never graduated from high school because he failed math and never made it up in summer school. He visited his father in Boston, then when he came back he burned his sneakers and basically gave up on life. Their conversation is interrupted by Charley, who gives him fifty dollars

and offers him a job. Willy refuses the job but takes the rest of the money he needs to pay his insurance premium.

The scene now moves to the restaurant where the boys plan to treat their father to dinner. Happy is helping the waiter set up the table and soon begins flirting with a beautiful woman who sits nearby. When Biff arrives, Happy tells the girl that he graduated from West Point and Biff is a quarterback for the New York Giants. After the girl leaves, Biff tells Happy that, after waiting six hours to see Oliver, finds that the man doesn't even recognize him and refuses to talk to him. He then steals a fountain pen from Oliver's office and runs away. Biff and Hap then discuss what kind of lie to tell their father. When Willy shows up, Biff hems and haws trying to tell him what happened, but before he can do so Willy tells him that he was fired. Biff finally succeeds in telling his father that Oliver wouldn't even talk to him. Willy's mind wanders again, however, and he doesn't understand what Biff is saying, so Biff tells him that Oliver is considering his proposal and is having lunch with him tomorrow. When he breaks down and tells his father the truth, Willy hits him. Willy then goes to the rest room, after which the girl who had been there earlier comes back with her friend and the boys and the two of them leave for a double date. Willy, meanwhile, is remembering Biff's unexpected visit to Boston; what turned him off to life was that he discovered Willy in his hotel room with another woman.

When the boys get home, Linda is furious with them for deserting Willy at the restaurant. She throws them out of the house and tells them not to come back. Biff wants to talk to his father, but Linda tells him to leave Willy alone; he is busy outside in the dark planting a garden, which he knows will never grow. Willy is again talking to Ben in his mind, but this time is talking about committing suicide so Linda can cash in on his \$20,000 life insurance policy. Ben warns him, however, that the company will refuse to pay if he takes his own life. Willy then envisions his funeral, with people coming from all over New England; finally his son will realize what an important man he is. Ben however, warns him that Biff will hate him for being such a coward and a fool. Biff then brings Willy back to the present by telling him that he can never grow a garden in a small plot between tall apartment buildings, then says he is leaving for good. Willy refuses to shake his hand, then Biff loses his temper and shows him the rubber hose he intended to use to kill himself by inhaling gas in the basement. He admits to his father that he lost every job he ever had because he stole from his employers, and he blames his father for blowing up his self-image so high that he was never willing to take orders from anyone. After exhausting himself with his rant, Biff breaks down in tears and goes upstairs to bed. Willy, seeing his son's tears, finally realizes that Biff loves him after all. Happy, after repeating the usual empty promises, heads to bed as well. Linda follows them, leaving Willy alone downstairs. After an imaginary talk with Ben about the twenty thousand dollars he will leave his family, he rushes outside and speeds away in the car. The scene ends with Linda, the boys, and Charley and Bernard dressed in mourning staring down at Willy's grave.

**Requiem** - The epilogue picks up where Act II ended. The others try to get Linda to leave the cemetery and come home, but she wonders why no one else came to the funeral. She notes the irony in the fact that finally, for the first time in their lives, the family is out of debt.

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* contains a considerable amount of profanity. Do you consider the language used by the characters essential to the plot and to the realism of the story, or could the playwright have developed his themes just as effectively without the use of offensive language?
2. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman is constantly asking people "What's the secret?" What secret does he have in mind? What does the question itself imply about him and his view of how life works? Why is this attitude central to his failure and that of his sons?
3. Near the end of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Charley says, "A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory." Willy Loman is a dreamer. Do his dreams help him or hurt him, sustain him or destroy him? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with specifics from the play.
4. Near the end of Act II in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Biff says, "I never got anywhere because you blew me so full of hot air I could never stand taking orders from anybody!" Is Biff justified in blaming his father for his problems? To what extent is Willy responsible for the failures of his sons and to what extent are they to blame? Be sure to consider both sides of the question and deal with Biff and Happy separately when appropriate.
5. Near the end of Act I of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Linda says, "I don't say he's a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived." Evaluate her definition of greatness. To what extent is this shaped by Willy's own perception of what makes a man great? Compare her definition to that found in the Bible. Be sure to use specific references in your exposition.
6. Near the end of Act I of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Linda says, "But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid." What kind of attention does she have in mind? From biblical perspective, what sort of "attention" is due to people simply because they are human beings? Why is this true?
7. In Act II of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Linda says of Willy, "he's only a little boat looking for a harbor." How does this description sum up Willy's condition near the end of his life? What is the "harbor" he seeks? Is this a worthy quest?
8. The classic definition of a tragic hero is "a great man who comes to a bad end because of a flaw in his character." Is Willy Loman, the protagonist in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, a tragic hero according to this definition? Why or why not? Support your arguments with specifics from the play.

9. In one of his imaginary conversations with his brother in Act II of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman says, "It's not what you do, Ben. It's who you know and the smile on your face! It's contacts, Ben, contacts!" What Willy, as a salesman, sincerely believed, many have cynically affirmed as the secret to success business. Is who you know really more important than what you do, the smile on your face more important than your integrity as a person? To the extent to which this is true, what does it say about our society? What factors contribute to the environment this statement implies?
10. Classic tragedies from the ancient Greeks to William Shakespeare focused on noble characters whose downfall mattered because they as people mattered. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, the playwright has sought to alter that definition by creating a tragic hero who is more Everyman than nobleman, yet whose wife Linda argues that "attention must be paid." To what extent does Miller succeed in his endeavor? Is Willy a great enough person for his fall to elicit catharsis from the audience? Why or why not?
11. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, does the playwright present his protagonist as a tragic hero? If this is his intention, is he seeking to redefine the concept of greatness in the process, moving it from the realm of the exceptional to the realm of the ordinary? Is this a worthy endeavor, or does the concept of greatness as exceptional have value? Does he succeed in his intention? Why or why not?
12. Near the end of Act II in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Biff says, "We never told the truth for ten minutes in this house." Discuss the consequences of the frequent lies that are told over decades in the Loman household. How do they affect each member of the family and their relationships with each other? Why is lying such a devastating practice? Support your arguments with details from the play and appropriate passages of Scripture.
13. Socrates is reputed to have said, "Know thyself." In the Requiem at the end of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Biff says of his father, "He never knew who he was." Is this an appropriate description of the protagonist? How important was his lack of self-knowledge to the outcome of his life?
14. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons*, the central figures have dirty secrets that contribute to the destruction of their families when they are revealed. The concealed actions are on the surface very different, yet are rooted in similar underlying sins. Compare and contrast the secrets concealed by the two men in terms of the root causes, means of concealment, and consequences of the secrets being revealed.
15. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons*, the protagonists treat their wives badly. What are the underlying sins that cause such behavior and to what extent are these underlying sins responsible for the ultimate failures of the two men at the end of their lives?
16. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons*, the protagonists are at odds with their sons. Compare and contrast the reasons why this is so. To what extent are unreasonable expectations on the part of the fathers responsible for their alienation from their sons?

17. Discuss the ways in which Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons* serve as critiques of the American Dream. To what extent does society's definition of success contribute to the downfall of both Willy Loman and Joe Keller? Does the playwright intend to highlight what he believes are inherent flaws in the American way of life? Why or why not? Support your arguments with specifics from both plays.
18. Both Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons* end with the suicide of the protagonist. Compare and contrast the deaths of Willy Loman and Joe Keller. Do they kill themselves for the same reasons? What about the impacts of their deaths on the survivors? Do their deaths reflect self-discovery or ongoing denial? Support your arguments with specifics from the two plays.
19. Both Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and his *All My Sons* deal with families where the father favors one son over the other. In both cases the favoritism is grounded in the father's delusions regarding the favored child. Compare and contrast these two sets of relationships. What effect does paternal favoritism have on the favored child? on the one who is less favored?
20. In Philippians 4:11, Paul writes, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances." To what extent is the story of Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* the tragedy of one who never learned this lesson? How would his life, and the lives of his family members, have looked different if he had heeded Paul's teaching?
21. The stage directions in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* contain numerous musical cues. What is the function of these in the play? Do they communicate information to the audience, set different moods, or describe different characters? Use specific examples from the script in your analysis.
22. As Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* progresses, does Willy Loman learn, grow, or change in any way? Discuss the character development of the protagonist, noting ways in which his eyes are opened and ways in which he remains as blind at the end of the play as he was at the beginning.
23. Compare and contrast Biff and Happy, the two sons of Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. In your essay consider the reasons for their failures, the goals that they have set for themselves, and the extent of self-knowledge they gain by the end of the play.
24. To what extent is the protagonist in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* trying to live his life through his children, determined that they should succeed where he has failed? What is the impact of this on their lives, and on his as well?
25. Imagine the continuation of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* after the final page. Of the three surviving members of the Loman family, who has the best chance of achieving happiness? Why do you think so? Analyze the future prospects of each character, supporting your conclusions with specifics from the play.

26. Both Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* are accounts of a parent seeking to control the lives of his or her children in order to realize the parent's ambitions. Though the stories are in most ways very different, the negative impacts of this behavior on the children and their relationship to their parents are somewhat similar. Give particular attention to Biff and Lydia as you discuss the negative consequences of what some today might refer to as "helicopter parenting." How and why did Jane and Elizabeth manage to avoid similar consequences?
27. Both Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters* are accounts of a parent seeking to control the lives of his or her children in order to realize the parent's ambitions. Though the stories are in most ways very different, the negative impacts of this behavior on the children and their relationship to their parents are somewhat similar. Give particular attention to Biff and Cynthia as you discuss the negative consequences of what some today might refer to as "helicopter parenting." How and why did Molly manage to avoid similar consequences?
28. Both Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* are accounts of a parent seeking to control the lives of his or her children in order to realize the parent's ambitions. The negative impacts of this behavior on the children and their relationship to their parents are equally crippling. Give particular attention to Biff and Laura as you discuss the negative consequences of what some today might refer to as "helicopter parenting." How and why did Tom manage to avoid similar consequences?
29. Both Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* are accounts of a parent seeking to control the lives of his or her children in order to realize the parent's ambitions. Though the stories are in most ways very different, the negative impacts of this behavior on the children and their relationship to their parents are somewhat similar. Give particular attention to Biff and Walter as you discuss the negative consequences of what some today might refer to as "helicopter parenting."
30. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is critical of the American Dream, but does it really present an accurate picture of that dream? Willy seems to obsess on surface qualities such as likeability and attractiveness rather than the Horatio Alger approach of hard work and lifting oneself up by one's own bootstraps. Is Miller attacking the American Dream in itself or the debasement of that dream by the materialism of the postwar era?
31. While Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* was written in a very different era, to what extent may the play be read as a critique of the culture of entitlement? Do the central characters in the story believe themselves to be deserving of the rewards society has to offer simply by virtue of being part of that society? Focus particularly on the jealousies, unrealistic expectations, and disruptions in personal relationships that result from the sense of entitlement seen in the lives of the members of the Loman family.
32. Male characters in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* are often told by others to "grow up." To what extent are the central figures suffering from stunted growth? What causes men like Willy and his son Biff to fall short of what is required for genuinely adult behavior?

33. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* moves with great fluidity between the present and the past, with the past often colored by Willy Loman's less-than-accurate memories. Why does the playwright choose to structure the play in this way? What does it tell the audience about Willy's state of mind and his concept of himself and life in general? Why could these things not be communicated as effectively with a linear narrative?
34. Both Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* are treatises on the emptiness of the American Dream. Both are set in postwar eras - one after World War I and the other after World War II. Both periods are materialistic in different ways. Both protagonists desperately seek the approval of others and want to be well-liked, and both end in failure and tragedy. Which of the works do you consider a more effective critique? Why? Support your arguments with specific incidents and quotations from both books.
35. The tendency to base one's identity on one's job is a significant problem, especially among men. How does Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* illustrate this danger? To what extent is Willy Loman's failure to find his identity in something deeper than his occupation the central cause of his problems in life? From a biblical perspective, how should a Christian understand his place in the world and how should this relate to his occupation?
36. A *foil* is a character in a story who, because he or she contrasts so strongly with a central character, serves to bring out that central character's qualities more clearly. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, which character serves as the best foil for the protagonist, Willy Loman? Support your decision with specifics from the play.
37. At the end of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, the title character kills himself. Why does Willy Loman commit suicide? Many answers are possible and the reasons are undoubtedly complex. Choose three reasons that you think are at least possible explanations and evaluate them using details from the play.
38. The original title of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* was *The Inside of His Head*. Which title do you prefer, and why? Which brings out more clearly the essence of the play?
39. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, to what extent would it be fair to say that the Loman men lie, cheat, and steal because they feel cheated? While this is certainly no justification in any objective moral universe, is it an accurate representation of how the characters feel and what motivates them?
40. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Biff and Happy often discuss becoming partners in some venture or another. Would they be able to function successfully as a team? Why or why not? Support your arguments with specifics from the play.
41. Would the central character in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* have been happy if he had been successful financially? Why or why not? Be sure to consider his personality and his relationships and how they might have operated had he fulfilled his dream to some extent.

42. When Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* was first performed in Spain, the Catholic-oriented press praised it as a demonstration that the spirit of man is unable to survive when there is no God. The Bible would obviously concur with such a conclusion, but what about the play would contribute to such an interpretation? Use specifics from the play to support or refute the interpretation of the Spanish journalists.
43. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* never indicates what Willy Loman has spent his life selling. When the playwright was asked what was in the traveling salesman's bags, he replied, "Himself." Use quotations from the play to support the idea that Willy was obsessed with selling himself, not only to his customers, but also to his family and friends. What insight does this idea give into his ultimate failure?
44. When describing the central image in his play *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller wrote of "a need to leave a thumbprint somewhere on the world." To what extent is this the underlying motive that drives Willy Loman in all of his futile struggles? Use quotations from the play to expound upon the importance of this central image.
45. Compare and contrast the attitudes toward suicide in Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The two protagonists kill themselves because they believe that the shame they have brought on themselves leaves them no choice. Do you agree? Are their motives really similar? Cite details from both works of literature to support your arguments.