

# Unit 06: American Voices from the 1940s and 1950s

Content Area: **English**  
Course(s): **English 3**  
Time Period: **Semester 2**  
Length: **5 weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit Introduction

---

American drama can into its own after World War II with playwrights such as Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and Lorraine Hansberry. These playwrights tackle such weighty topics of the effects of industrialization, racism, sexuality and desire, isolation of the individual. Theater showed "realism compounded of acting, which emphasized intense psychological truth, and of visual elements, which eliminated nonessentials but retained realistic outlines."

## Progress Indicators for Reading Literature

---

LA.RL.11-12.2	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RL.11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
LA.RL.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (e.g., Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
LA.RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
LA.RL.11-12.6	Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
LA.RL.11-12.7	Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (e.g., Shakespeare and other authors.)
LA.RL.11-12.10a	By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.

## Progress Indicators for Reading Informational Text

---

LA.RI.11-12.1	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RI.11-12.3	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals,

	ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
LA.RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.10a	By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.

## Progress Indicators for Writing

---

LA.W.11-12.2.E	Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
LA.W.11-12.2.F	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
LA.W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.11-12.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.W.11-12.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (MLA or APA Style Manuals).
LA.W.11-12.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.

## Progress Indicators for Speaking and Listening

---

LA.SL.11-12.1.C	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
LA.SL.11-12.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.
LA.SL.11-12.3	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
LA.11-12.SL.11-12.2	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

## Progress Indicators for Language

---

LA.L.11-12.1.A	Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
LA.L.11-12.3.A	Vary syntax for effect, apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.
LA.L.11-12.4.B	Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., conceive, conception, conceivable).
LA.L.11-12.5.B	Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
LA.L.11-12.6	Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

## Essential Questions

---

What are the distinguishing features of drama as opposed to other literary forms? How does the playwright use symbolism to develop the themes in the play?

How do we construct our own gender roles, relations, and identities? How do our society and culture reinforce particular forms of masculinity and femininity?

How does social class impact our identities and our relationships with others? What does the class conflict in the play reveal about American society in the 1940s?

Has The American Dream changed over the years? What is The American Dream for the 21st Century?

## Content/Skills

---

**The Literature Selections include, but are not limited to:**

1. Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire" and "The Glass Menagerie"
2. Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun"
3. Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman"
4. Drama terms
5. Grammar study

**Supplementary Materials include, but are not limited to:**

**Vocabulary Applications include, but are not limited to:**

**Honors/Accelerated:**

Drama words in context

Literary terms and related words in context to reading selections

**College Prep:**

Advanced Vocabulary Skills, Fourth Edition

Literary terms and related words in context to reading selections

**Independent Reading Selections tied to Themes or Time Period:**