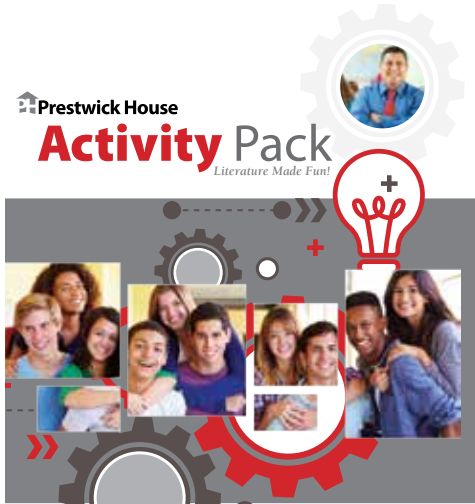




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Our Town
BY THORNTON WILDER


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All references come from the Perennial Classics edition of *Our Town*, copyright 2003.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Anticipation Guide

Objectives: Analyzing personal values
Anticipating events in a drama
Relating to the drama with personal beliefs that help the readers understand the characters and the plot

Activity

On a separate piece of paper, answer the following questions. Don't worry. There are no right or wrong answers. These are all concepts that you will encounter while reading *Our Town*. You will find it helpful to know where you stand on these issues.

1. Describe an unimportant day in your life.
2. What are the most important things in life?
3. Your house catches on fire, and you only have about one minute to grab a few things. What do you save? Why?
4. Are rich people happier than poor people? Explain.
5. Do women view weddings and marriage differently than men? Explain.
6. Do people appreciate life and living? Explain.
7. On a scale of 1-10, how important is companionship in life? Why?
8. Do you take your loved ones and friends for granted? How often?
9. Are certain parts of the past more important than others? Explain.
10. How does life in a small town differ from life in a large city?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I**Context Clues****Objective:** Using context clues to determine the meaning of words**Activity**

Read each quote and explain what each underlined word or phrase means using context clues. Page numbers are provided in case you need to look up the quote. Most words can be defined without using a dictionary, but you certainly may use one if necessary. The first question has been done for you as an example.

1. "Strawberry phosphates—that's what you spend it on." (Pg. 16)

strawberry soda

2. "I've been saving it up gradual." (Pg. 16)

3. "N he wormed his way into my parlor, and, Myrtle Webb, he offered me three hundred and fifty dollars for Grandmother Wentworth's highboy, as I'm sitting here!" (Pg. 19)

4. "Well, I did beat about the bush a little and said that if I got a legacy—that's the way I put it—I'd make him take me somewhere." (Pg. 20)

5. "Yes...anthropological data: Early Amerindian stock. Cotahatchee tribes...no evidence before the tenth century of this era...hm...now entirely disappeared...possible traces in three families." (Pg. 22)

6. "We're all very much obliged to you, I'm sure." (Pg. 23)

7. "We've got one or two town drunks, but they're always having remorses every time an evangelist comes to town." (Pg. 25)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I

Group Assignment

- Objectives:**
- Relating to the play with personal experiences and prior knowledge that help the readers understand the plot
 - Working cooperatively to plan and carry through a group assignment
 - Using technology to create and organize a presentation of information
 - Locating and using library, Internet, or town resources to acquire information
 - Delivering informative presentations based on research

Activity

Several descriptions of Grover's Corners are offered in Act I of *Our Town*. The Stage Manager offers a basic description of Grover's Corners. Then, others are invited onstage to give their own accounts, which include scientific and anthropological data; a political and social description; and evidence of culture or love of beauty. Your group will be assigned one of the following topics to research and write about your hometown.

- Describe the location and give a basic description of your town. Use the Stage Manager's description of Grover's Corners on pages 4 – 6 as your model. You may use the Stage Manager's line as your beginning: "Well, I'd better show you how our town lies. Up here—" Use the same tone that the Stage Manager uses.
- Explain the history behind your town. Use Professor Willard's description of Grover's Corners on pages 21 – 22 as your model. Describe any historical landmarks, anthropological data, and the current population. Use the same tone that Professor Willard uses.
- Give a political and social report for your town. Use Mr. Webb's comments on pages 24 – 25 as your model. Describe voting practices, class (such as lower, middle, or upper), political parties, religion, and social practices. Use the same tone that Mr. Webb uses.
- Tell about your town's culture or love of beauty. Use Mr. Webb's answer to the Lady's question on page 26 as your model. Describe any love of music, art, or books, for example. Use the same tone that Mr. Webb uses.

Research your information using materials in the library, your town's city hall or chamber of commerce, or on the Internet. Within your own groups, each group member should choose a particular topic to research and write about, such as the population or historical landmarks.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Acts I and II

The Stage Manager

Objectives: Demonstrating an understanding of a character by explaining the reasons for a character's actions
 Responding to a character's actions through written response

Activity

Thornton Wilder created the Stage Manager in *Our Town* to function as an omniscient (all-knowing) narrator to help the audience understand several aspects of the play. Analyze the Stage Manager's actions and comments in Acts I and II and cite instances (with page numbers) when he performs each of the following functions:

- 1. He provides facts about Grover's Corners.

- 2. He plays the part of a character in the play.

- 3. He tells the audience about the past.

- 4. He tells the audience about the future.

- 5. He controls the actions of other characters in the play.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act III

Reading Check

Objectives: Understanding events in a drama
 Identifying speakers of various quotations
 Interpreting importance of specific quotations from a drama

Activity

Many important quotations from the drama are listed in this activity. For each of the following quotations, your task is to determine:

- Who is speaking?
- To whom?
- About what?
- What importance does the quotation have in the play? For example, what do you learn about a character, the plot, or a theme?

The first question has been done for you.

1. "I'm always uncomfortable when *they're* around." (Pg. 90)

Simon Stimson, one of the dead, speaks to the other dead. He expresses his dislike of being around the living. This statement shows the distance between the dead and the living. The dead gradually lose touch with the living and get "weaned away from earth." (Pg. 88)

2. "Hung himself in the attic. They tried to hush it up, but of course it got around." (Pg. 91)

3. "The road up here must have been awful muddy. What did she die of, Julia?" (Pg. 93)
