



Prestwick House
Response Journal™

Sample

Prestwick House

Response Journal

Reflections: A Student Response Journal



*A Streetcar
Named Desire*
Tennessee Williams

Click here
to learn more
about this
Response Journal!



Click here
to find more
Classroom Resources
for this title!



Prestwick House

More from Prestwick House

Literature

Literary Touchstone Classics
Literature Teaching Units

Grammar and Writing

College and Career Readiness: Writing
Grammar for Writing

Vocabulary

Vocabulary Power Plus
Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots

Reading

Reading Informational Texts
Reading Literature



 **Prestwick House**
Response Journal
Reflections: A Student Response Journal



*A Streetcar
Named Desire*

Tennessee Williams



Prestwick House

Copyright © 2006 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.
1-800-932-4593 • www.prestwickhouse.com

Permission to copy this unit for classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. This material, in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.

ISBN 978-1-60389-652-8

Item No. 302161

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

A Streetcar Named Desire

Pre-Reading

1. This play has a very unusual title. Judging by the title, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, what do you think this play is about? Without looking at the play, make a list of plot points or events that you think will happen in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Then, using those plot points, write a paragraph in which you explain what happens in the play.
2. Like many of Tennessee Williams' plays, *A Streetcar Named Desire* was made into a film. In your opinion, which is a more valid or more important art form, film or theater? Write a short article for *Arts Monthly* magazine, explaining whether film or live theater is a better art form and why. If you feel that both forms are equally valid, write your article comparing and contrasting the positive and negative aspects of each form.
3. The playwright of *A Streetcar Named Desire* is known by his nickname, "Tennessee." His given name, however, was Tom. "Tennessee" was a sort of stage name for him.

What would you call yourself if you were creating your own stage name? Create a stage name for yourself. Then, in a short essay, explain why you selected that name and why you think it suits you.

Scene One

9. Williams' description of the setting at the opening of this scene is extremely detailed and creates a vivid image in our minds as we read it. He not only tells us what the scene looks like, but also how it smells and the kinds of sounds that surround it. "You can almost feel the warm breath of the brown river beyond the river warehouses with their faint redolences of banana and coffee." Even the color of the sky is specified as "a peculiarly tender blue, almost a turquoise." He puts us into the scene.

Think of a setting familiar to you: your classroom, your room at home, or a favorite outdoor place, etc. Using the sort of description Tennessee Williams uses, write the notes for a play about your life, setting the scene as thoroughly as Williams does. Remember to describe what it looks like, what it sounds like, and any smells associated with it. Put your audience into a scene from your life.

10. Williams' stage directions compare Blanche to a moth, noting that her clothes and her "uncertain manner" are like the insect. Which animal do you think best represents your personality? A coat of arms was originally used by Knights as a way to make their shield stand out so that they could be quickly identified during combat. In a short essay, describe what your coat of arms would look like based on an animal that you think represents your personality. Then, explain why you think the animal you selected represents you well.
11. The directions Blanche refers to tell her that she should take a streetcar named Desire to get to the house. This, we will see later, is Tennessee Williams' way of creating irony. Desire, as indicated by the play's title, has a significant role in this work.

Write a list of other ironic street names and situations. Then, write a brief note explaining to a visitor from a foreign country why those names are ironic. Here are a few to get you started

A Streetcar Named Desire

19. When Stanley first enters, Tennessee Williams gives us stage instructions about what kind of man Stanley is. We know what he looks like, what he treasures in life, and how he treats others, particularly women.

How do you think Tennessee Williams would describe you if you were a character in *A Streetcar Named Desire*? Write a character description of yourself that accurately portrays who you are and what you stand for. Be sure to include a physical description of yourself, as well as a description of your personality.

20. Stanley's motto, or so he says, is "be comfortable." In a short essay, create a motto by which you live your life and explain why that motto fits you so well.
21. Blanche was an English teacher, while Stanley says he "never was a very good English student." What is your best subject in school? Do you have a favorite subject? Write a letter to the teacher of your favorite subject, telling him or her what you like about the class.

Scene Five

41. Blanche thinks that she can charm her former boyfriend, Shep Huntleigh, into giving her some money. She is desperate, and she tries all she knows how to do to gain financial independence. Other than writing to old boyfriends for loans, what can Blanche do to get money? Write out a financial plan for Blanche, giving her instructions on how to regain financial security.
42. Blanche has probably always relied on her good looks and charm to get what she wants. Is it easier, do you think, for good-looking people to get ahead? Write the script for a radio show that discusses whether good-looking people have an advantage in life. You may begin like this

Announcer: Good evening. We begin tonight...

43. When Stella asks Blanche if she wants Mitch, Blanche replies that she “want(s) to rest...[and] breathe quietly again.” It seems that she worries more about being in a relationship than the person with whom she shares that relationship. Create a flyer to be handed out to teenagers, explaining why it’s not good to be in a relationship with someone you don’t love.
44. When the Young Man comes collecting for the newspaper, Blanche remarks about how rainy afternoons in New Orleans make it seem like you have all eternity to do what you want to do. If you had a wealth of free time with no obligations, no school, no work, no worries, what would you spend it doing? Write an essay that describes what you would do if you had unlimited leisure time.
45. You’ve probably noticed that even though this play isn’t a musical, Tennessee Williams has incorporated a lot of music into his stage directions for it. Which modern song do you think best exemplifies this scene of Blanche and the Young Man? If you were directing a modern version of this play, which song would you choose to play during this scene? In a cohesive paragraph, explain which modern song you think would be appropriate to play during this scene and why you would choose that song.