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A Streetcar Named Desire

BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Author Research**

Objective: Researching the author to determine the relevance of the author's experiences to the story

Activity

Learn as much as you can about the life and times of Tennessee Williams. Write at least four paragraphs about the Williams, using biographical information, but focusing on those particular events in his life that have had the greatest influence on his writing.

The following is a list of events that are said to have shaped Williams's life. In your research, try to identify the ways that these events affected and appeared in his writing. Once you have finished your essay, submit it to your teacher.

- the paralytic disease that struck Williams from ages five to seven
- the physical abuse that Williams received from his father Cornelius
- the favoritism that Williams's parents showed to his brother, Dakin
- Williams's relationship with George Black
- Williams's relationship with his sister, Rose
- Rose's schizophrenia and her unsuccessful lobotomy
- Williams's relationship with Frank Merlo
- Williams's ongoing problems with alcoholism and crystal methamphetamine use
- Williams's admiration for the writings of Hart Crane

Name: _____

Date: _____

Scene One

Setting

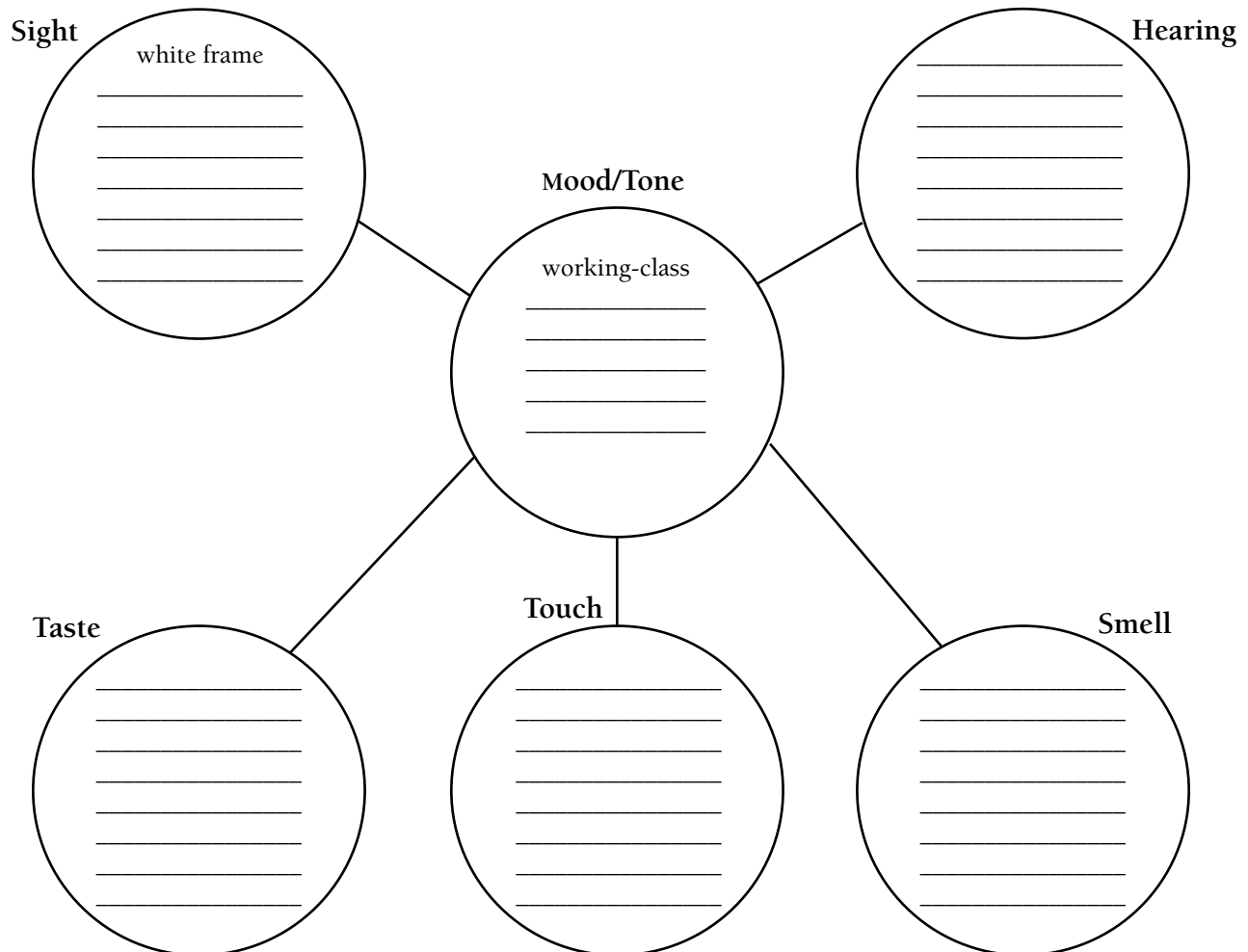
Objective: Visualizing and categorizing descriptive imagery to establish a sense of setting and mood

Activity

Effective description engages all five of the reader's senses. In the stage directions for Scene One, the author uses imagery from just about every sense to create a specific mood.

In the following diagram, write the mood or tone that you sense from the stage directions in the middle circle. Assign each of the five circles on the outside of the diagram to one of the five senses. List at least one image for each sense that contributes to the mood. We have started it for you.

SETTING CHART



Name: _____

Date: _____

Scene One**Names and Places**

Objective: Exploring the symbolic and ironic names given to characters, objects, and places

Activity

Williams chose the names of his characters and places in this play quite carefully. Think about the names and places mentioned in Scene One. Many are symbolic, representing the characters' key personality traits and/or flaws.

Use an encyclopedia, dictionary, or the Internet to research the traditional meanings of the following names:

1. Stella: _____
2. Stanley: _____
3. Blanche: _____
4. Mitch: _____
5. Belle Reve is French. What does it mean? _____

Now, answer the questions on the following page:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Scene Two

Compare and Contrast

Objective: Comparing and contrasting character interaction to understand the conflicts and complexities of relationships in literature

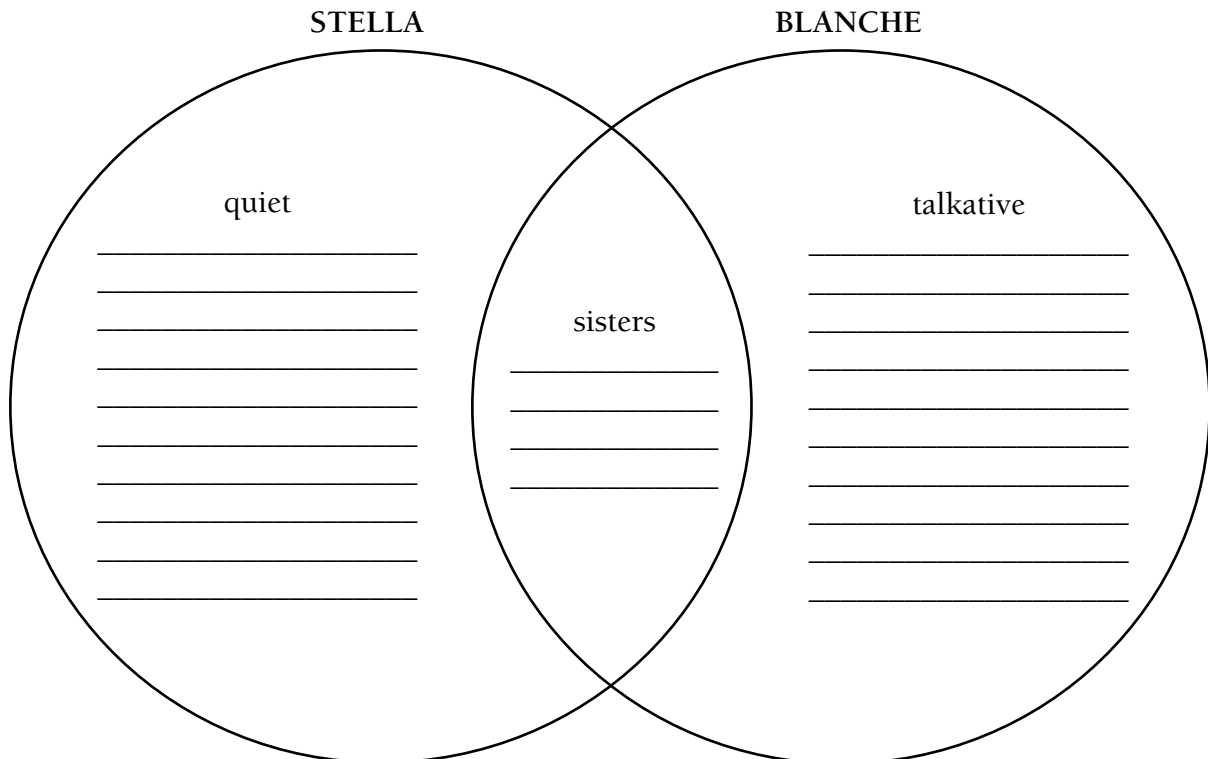
Activity

The relationships that are central to the plot and theme in this play are those among Stanley, Stella and Blanche. From the beginning, the way that Stanley and Stella interact has significant similarities and differences in comparison to the way that Stanley and Blanche interact. These nuances will prove crucial to the play's resolution for both women.

As you read through Scene Two, pay special attention to the ways in which Stanley and Stella relate, the ways in which Stanley and Blanche relate, and the ways in which the sisters relate.

Using the following Venn diagrams, list similarities and differences between the three personalities and relationships. We have started the diagrams for you.

STELLA AND BLANCHE DIAGRAM



Name: _____

Date: _____

Scene Four**Think-Pair-Share****Objective:** Analyzing the characters' backgrounds to clarify relationships**Activity**

After you read Scene Four, you should have a good understanding of Stella's motivations for marrying Stanley. They are complex and operate on a number of levels within human consciousness. Think about the reasons why Stella and Stanley are together, how they met, and what their wedding must have been like.

Working with a partner, write a wedding announcement, as it would have appeared in the newspaper. Include Stella and Stanley's backgrounds and a brief summary of the type of love they share. Wedding announcements usually include the both the bride's and groom's family names and homes, as well as a description of the bride's dress, the ceremony, the location of the honeymoon, and the city and state where the couple will reside. You can piece together much of this information from the play. You should make reasonable inferences to describe the ceremony.

Once you have finished working with your partner, prepare to share your announcement with the class. As you listen to other pairs, make note of similarities and differences between your article and theirs. When it is your turn to share, you should not only share your announcement, but also be prepared to discuss why you describe Stella and Stanley's relationship as you do.

DuBois – Kowalski

Name: _____

Date: _____

Scene Six

Found Poem

Objective: Creating a “found” poem

Activity

A “found” poem is a poem made up entirely of phrases, sentences, or quotations found in the text. Go back through Scene Six, and make up a found poem of your own. The poem could tell the reader something about the emotional state of the characters, but this is not necessary; it may be totally unrelated to the action of the play, which is one of the best parts of writing a found poem.

Your poem should be at least 10 lines long. The lines do not need to rhyme, but they certainly may. You can arrange the phrases in any way you like and change the punctuation, but do not change any of Williams’s actual words. Give the poem a title, which may or may not come from the play. The following is an example taken from Scene Two:

Her Little Weakness

How do I look?
Let me enlighten you on a point or two, baby—
A woman’s charm is fifty percent illusion.
Open your eyes to this stuff—
The treasure chest of a pirate
Pearls, bracelets of solid gold, too—
And diamonds!
Some men are took in by this Hollywood glamour stuff—
And some men are not.
She didn’t say nothing...
