ACT ONE

Read pp.1-2, (the stage directions for Act 1) and bullet point key information about Willy:

Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the following words used to describe Willy:

1. Mercurial

2. Turbulent

Bullet point key information about Linda:

Read pp.3-4 and answer the following questions:

1. Where has Willy just returned from?

2. Why is Linda worried about him?

3. What two excuses does Linda make to make Willy feel better about his driving?

4. What age is Willy?

5. What does Linda want Willy to ask his employers?
Read p.5 and answer the following questions about Biff and his relationship with his father Willy:

1. Why did Willy and Biff fight that morning?

2. When does Linda think the fighting and arguing will stop?

3. What age is Biff and why is Willy angry with him?

4. What word does Willy use to describe his son Biff?

5. How does Willy contradict himself on this page?

THEME: nature versus urban development

Read p.6 and look at Willy’s comments about wanting fresh air and how he cannot grow grass or carrots anymore in the backyard.

Willy is not simply talking about grass and carrots! Write a short paragraph below about the importance of this.

Read p.8 and make notes about the following characters:

Biff:

Happy:
Read pp.9-13 and find supporting quotations to support the following points about Biff and Happy.

Biff is ...

1. Someone who was previously very confident.

2. Confused about why his father treats him the way he does.

3. Confused about his future.

4. Someone who has had many jobs since he left school.

5. Someone who feels he is wasting his life.

6. A nature lover.

7. Someone who describes himself as young/a child.

Happy is ...

1. Disrespectful of women.

2. Insensitive about his father’s mental illness.

3. Competitive.

4. Selfish and jealous of those who earn more than him at work.

5. Spiritually empty.
Read pp.15-18.

This action takes place in Willy’s mind. It is when the characters were much younger. Write a short paragraph of six sentences to describe the relationship between Willy and his boys in this scene? Use the following key words in your piece:

- warm
- positive
- idolise
- believe
- love
- impress
- eager

Write down five things you learn about Bernard on page 19.
Read p.22.

Make a list of all the payments that Willy needs to make.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

How much does Willy owe in total?

Read pp.23-25.

Make a list of the concerns/doubts that Willy has about himself and what Linda says in response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willy’s doubts</th>
<th>Linda’s response</th>
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Read pp.25-26. This action takes place in the past.

What words describe the figure of Bernard in these pages?

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Read pp.25-26. This action takes place in the past.

The audience now finds out more about Biff, most of it negative. Find supporting quotations to support the fact that Biff is:

- a cheat
- a thief
- aggressive
- intimidating
Read pp.29-35.

As Willy plays cards with Charley he is actually talking to his older brother Ben. This takes us back into the past as Willy once again reminisces.

The character of Ben. Find evidence for these points:

1. He is always in a hurry.

2. He is not impressed with where Willy lives.

3. He is idolised by Willy.

4. He is a successful businessman.

5. He is prepared to break the rules in order to succeed.

6. He mocks Charley and Bernard like Willy does.

Read pp.32-33, the extracts in which Ben tells Willy about his father. What are the similarities between Willy and his father? Write them below:

1. 

2. 

3. 
Read pp.37-42. In these pages Linda speaks honestly and critically to her sons, Biff and Happy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make a list of the things Linda says to criticise Biff.</th>
<th>Make a list of the things Linda says to criticise Happy.</th>
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On pp.38 and 39 Linda lists a number of things which makes the audience feel sorry for Willy despite his many faults. List some of the things she says that makes you feel sorry for Willy.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 

What terrible news does Linda give the boys about their father on page 41?
In your exercise book, or on the back of your workbook, create character sketches for Linda, Willy and Happy.

Read pp.44-49.
What is Biff’s and Willy’s business plan for the future?

What is your opinion of this plan? Is it a good one?

Look at the stage directions on p.45. What do they suggest?

Make a list of the advice Willy gives Biff on pp.46-47

What words describe the way in which Willy talks to Linda on these pages?
Read pp.50-54.

Act Two starts with a very positive tone/atmosphere.

Make a list of quotations to support this idea.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Read the following quotations from these pages and write down why they are significant.

1. ‘Once in my life I would like to own something outright before it’s broken.’

2. ‘Will you stop mending stockings? At least while I’m in the house. It gets me nervous.’

3. ‘But it’s gone! Imagine! He took it away himself, it isn’t there!’
Read pp.54–61. In this scene Willy visits Howard Wagner to ask for a job based in New York with no travel.

Answer the following questions.

1. What are the reasons for Arthur Miller including the incident with the recording machine and Howard Wagner’s family?

2. Underline the words below which you feel describe the way in which Howard Wagner treats Willy.
   - respectfully
   - fairly
   - disrespectfully
   - rudely
   - impatiently
   - patiently
   - honestly
   - caringly
   - contemptuously

3. Make list of the stage directions used by Miller to describe Willy in this scene.

4. What impression is created here of the business world?

Read pp.66–71. In this scene Willy goes to ask Charley for money and meets Bernard.

Complete the following paragraph of writing about Bernard which clearly highlights the differences between his childhood character and his adult life. Note the use of words of contrast.

Bernard is very changed when the audience meets him in Act 2. In the first scene he is portrayed as a _______________, _______________ child who is _______________ by the Loman boys. Willy is _______________ of Bernard because he is not _______________ whereas in Act 2 he plays tennis which suggests that he is sporty. Bernard is also a success _______________ working at the Supreme Court as a lawyer. His job emphasises his honest nature. In contrast, Happy and Biff are still essentially dishonest. Unlike the Loman boys, Bernard is also _______________ about his achievements and does not boast or brag. Willy had little time for Bernard as a child. However, Willy actually asks Bernard for _______________ later in the play. Interestingly, Bernard gives Willy the same advice as Charley.

- modest
- sporty
- professionally
- advice
- bookish
- ridiculed
- academic
- athletic
- scathing
Step-by-step

Read pp.72-78.

This scene takes place in Frank’s Chop House.
Write down all the lies told by Happy in these pages.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

Biff’s appointment with Bill Oliver is a disaster. List the disastrous things that happen to Biff. The first one has been done for you.

- Biff had to wait for six hours to see Oliver.
Read pp.79-83.

In this scene Biff tries to get his father to accept reality. Look at these important quotations from that scene and comment on their significance.

‘And a lot of - instances - facts, Pop, facts about my life came back to me. Who was it, Pop? Who ever said I was a salesman with Oliver?’ (Biff to Willy)

‘I’m not interested in stories about the past or any crap of that kind because the woods are burning, boys, you understand? There’s a big blaze going on all around.’ (Willy to Biff)

‘You tell him something nice ... Say you got a lunch date with Oliver tomorrow.’ (Happy to Biff)

‘Let’s talk quietly and get this down to the facts, huh?’ (Biff to Willy)

‘The gist of it is that I haven’t got a story left in my head, Biff. So don’t give me a lecture about facts and aspects. I am not interested.’ (Willy to Biff)
Read pp.84-85.

Answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think that Biff’s attitude suddenly changes on p.84?

2. Why is Biff the odd man out in this conversation?

3. What does Willy claim is Biff’s motivation in this scene?

Read pp.86-94.

Willy’s mental fragility is most evident in this scene and the moment in which his affair is discovered by Biff as a young boy is relived.

What words describe the characters in this scene?

The woman:

Willy:
Billy:

In an interview, Arthur Miller made this comment.

‘Death of a Salesman is about being a father and the moment when your son is no longer swept by the myth of your greatness.’

What do you think he meant by this? How does it relate to this important scene?
Read pp. 94-105.
In this scene Billy finally tells Willy his true feelings.

**Quotation search**
Find supporting quotations to support the fact that Biff sees himself as ordinary.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

Find supporting quotations to support the fact that Biff blames his father for creating a web of lies around the finally.

1. 

2. 

3. 
Read pp.106-108 which are entitled ‘Requiem’.

What does the word ‘requiem’ mean?

Why has Willy taken his own life?

What is ironic about the timing of his death according to Linda?

Has Willy achieved the ‘death of a salesman’?

What has Happy learned from this situation?
Write a short paragraph of six sentences about each of the following motifs.

Diamonds:

Stockings:

The hose pipe: