



**Social Studies
School Service**

www.socialstudies.com

Downloadable Reproducible eBooks

Thank you for purchasing this eBook from
www.socialstudies.com or www.writingco.com.

To browse more eBook titles, visit
<http://www.socialstudies.com/ebooks.html>

To learn more about eBooks, visit our help page at
<http://www.socialstudies.com/ebookshelp.html>

For questions, please e-mail eBooks@socialstudies.com

Free E-mail Newsletter—Sign up Today!

To learn about new eBook and print titles, professional development resources, and catalogs in the mail, sign up for our monthly e-mail newsletter at
<http://socialstudies.com/newsletter/>

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Our Town
by Thornton Wilder

written by Darcy Carmichael

Copyright © 2007 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 1-58049-895-7

Reorder No. RJ8957

T o T h e T e a c h e r

In order to allow the teacher maximum flexibility in his or her approach, we have grouped the prompts by sections. The teacher may, therefore, assign specific prompts or allow the students to select one or more prompts from each section

For *O u r T o w n*, we also have these materials:

Book
Teaching Unit
Activity Pack

See our catalogue, visit our web site at www.prestwickhouse.com, or call 1-800-932-4593 for more information.

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.

Class Record Sheet

[illegible]

Pre-reading

1. Thornton Wilder once wrote, “The response we make when we ‘believe’ a work of the imagination is that of saying: ‘This is the way things are. I have always known it without being fully aware that I knew it. Now in the presence of this play or novel or poem (or picture or piece of music) I know that I know it.’”

Write a paragraph or two about your reaction and thoughts to what Wilder wrote. Do you agree or disagree?

2. Thornton Wilder is definitely one of America’s greatest playwrights. Some even go so far as to say he was “the *first* American playwright.”

Research Thornton Wilder and write a brief biography on his life. The biography should also include a paragraph in which you give your opinion of whether he was the “first” American playwright or just one of the greatest.

3. Dramas have been a major part of history and still are a major part of today’s society (although more in the form of screenplays than actual theater). People are drawn to the stories and lives presented in drama. Thornton Wilder wrote in the preface to *Our Town*, “The theater longs to represent the symbols of things, not the things themselves.”

Thinking of all plays, do you agree with this statement? Is it the symbolic meanings that draw people to drama? Does it really matter who the characters are or exactly what they are doing, or do major themes keep playing over and over in dramas throughout time? Write your feelings in an essay with examples to support your thoughts.

Our Town

4. *Our Town* is noted as one of the best All-American plays even though it didn't have a very successful beginning. Once the amateur and stock rights became available, it had been performed in at least 795 communities in a year and a half. Tappan Wilder says in the Afterword, "This laid the foundation for the *Our Town* rule of thumb ever since: It is performed at least once each night somewhere in this country. Behind these figures lies a play that has marvelous parts for young people, it is not expensive to mount, is glorious to teach, and treats life, death, and love in such an immediate fashion as to leave indelible and typically nostalgic impressions on generations of students."

With such a noteworthy statement being said about the play, what do you expect to read, feel, and understand by reading it? Create a list of what your expectations of the play are.

Our Town

Act I

5. One of the best known aspects of *Our Town* is the minimal stage decorations. The use of very few stage decorations allows the audience to picture themselves and their memories into the play while they are watching. It creates an opportunity for everyone to use their imagination.

According to the first stage directions, how does the stage strike you? How does your own compare to the one that is described? Do you think it is a good or bad thing to use a minimalist stage?

6. To start the play, the stage manager is describing the town and the people of the town. He briefly states where things are in relation to each other to help the audience visualize the town. When he begins describing the people of the town, he still doesn't say much until he mentions Mrs. Gibbs. The more in-depth description of Mrs. Gibbs creates a connection with her.

How might someone describe you? Write two short sentences that someone might say about you. Would someone feel like they knew you after reading this description? Now, write a longer description of yourself that you might use for a work-related or personal web page.

7. An important part of understanding a play (or any writing for that matter) is the ability to relate to the storyline in some way. The audience may relate with a character, a situation, a location, or even a feeling. Since *Our Town* is about a small town, most people would assume that those who are also from small towns would be better able to relate, and, therefore, understand the play better. However, that might not be the case.

Create two columns in which you compare and contrast Grover's Corners to your town. Can you find similarities that aren't completely obvious? Do these similarities help you relate to the characters, situations, etc., better? Write a brief paragraph explaining how you think these similarities will benefit you as you read *Our Town*.

Our Town

8. After watching a brief interchange between Dr. Gibbs and Joe Crowell, Jr., the Stage Manager takes a break to inform the audience about the future of Joe. He tells the audience about how smart and successful Joe was before the war broke out. He then states that Joe Crowell's education was all for nothing because he died at such a young age.

How do you feel about the subject? What is your opinion on education? If you knew you were only going to live for another five years, would you continue your education? Why?

9. The audience watches the Webb and Gibbs kids getting ready for school. The kids complain about what to wear and not studying enough the night before. They fight with each other and their mothers have to reprimand them.

How does this compare to your school mornings? Do you see any similarities and/or differences? Create two columns on your paper and try to write down at least one thing for similarities and differences.

10. Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Webb are talking while stringing beans. Women used to do chores together as a way of showing their friendship by sharing the load of work. They also used this time to talk about what was going on in their lives. During their talk, Mrs. Gibbs says, "I've got to tell you something, because if I don't tell somebody I'll burst."

Have you ever felt that way? If so, did you tell someone? Did telling someone change how you felt? Write a journal entry about the time that you felt you had to tell someone something.

Our Town

11. Mrs. Webb and Mrs. Gibbs talk about wanting to go to Paris. They long to visit somewhere exotic and different from their own little town. Mrs. Gibbs thinks it is important for everyone to visit another country sometime in their life.

Why do you think she feels that way? What are some reasons you can think of that would benefit a person from seeing a foreign country? Make a list of pros and cons for visiting another country.

Now that you have considered the benefits and disadvantages of visiting a foreign country, if you could visit any country in the world, where would you go? Why?

12. Grover's Corners is the typical small town in America. As is common in most small towns, many of the people who grow up in Grover's Corners stay after graduation or return after completing their education or military service. When people grow up in small towns, they either can't wait to leave or have what is known as "small town pride"—they want their kids to experience life just as they did.

Do you plan on settling in your own town? Why or why not?

13. The Stage Manager incorporates the audience into the play when he asks if anyone has any questions for Editor Webb. A woman asks a question and then a belligerent man in the back of the auditorium becomes part of the play. He asks, "Is there no one in town aware of social injustice and industrial inequality?"

Explain what you think he means by this question. Do you agree or disagree?

Our Town

14. George and Emily have a discussion about how they like school. George doesn't like sitting still for that long and struggles with his schoolwork. Emily does well in school, but views it as just "something you have to go through."

How do you feel about school? Write a letter to either George or Emily explaining why you relate to his or her feelings or not.

15. Emily and George's conversation turns from the purpose of school to George's future. He mentions that he wants to take over his Uncle's farm and implies that he doesn't need to be bright and do extremely well in school to be a farmer. Running a farm, however, is no easy task. As a farmer, he will need to be able to calculate how much to plant to get the yield he needs, he will need to understand soil contents and its affect on the crop, and he will need to be able to be able to save money and crops for times that are not as prosperous.

Do you think you need to do well in school to be successful in life? What are the benefits of having an education even if you don't go onto college? Imagine you are a guidance counselor talking with George about this very thing. Write a dialogue you may have with him.

16. Parents always hope they will have a good relationship with each of their children. Most kids wish they had a better relationship with their parents. It seems that Emily and Mrs. Webb don't have the closest relationship when Emily timidly asks her mother if she is good looking or not. Mrs. Webb skirts the issue by saying she has "good features." If they had a good relationship, Emily wouldn't have worried about asking and her mother would have been more forthcoming with an answer.

Do you have a good relationship with your parents? Why or why not? Write a letter to your mom and/or dad expressing your feelings.

Our Town

17. Since Emily and Mrs. Webb don't seem to have a good relationship with each other, it isn't surprising that Emily feels that Mrs. Webb keeps things from her. It is hard to form a close relationship with someone who isn't truthful with you. Emily tells Mrs. Webb, "you never tell us the truth about anything."

Do you think your parents keep the truth from you? If so, what do they keep from you? Why do you think they would do that? If not, do you think it is beneficial for them to tell you the truth about everything? Why or why not?

18. The Stage Manager tells the audience about the time capsule that the Cartwright family is putting in the new bank's cornerstone. The contents of the capsule are to tell what the town was like when the building was built. Time capsules are used for many reasons: they explain technology at the time; they can show a society's hobbies, work habits, etc.; they can even show the people who open the capsule later things that are no longer used or in existence. For example, a rotary phone or a cassette tape.

What would you put in a time capsule of your home? What would those items tell us about you and your family? Make a list of at least ten items. Choose one of them and write a sentence or two explaining why you chose that particular item.

19. Dr. Gibbs and George have a discussion about George not doing his chores. He mentions how Mrs. Gibbs does things all day long that benefit George and she doesn't need any more work to do. He explains why George should be helping out more around the house. Dr. Gibbs is trying to make George feel guilty for not doing his chores.

How does this compare to your home? What do you do to help out with chores? Should you do more to help? Why or why not?

Our Town

20. Most teens and adults don't go to bed until ten or eleven o'clock at night. The setting of the sun no longer signals the end of the day like it used to. The Stage Manager lets us know the day is over for Grover's Corners by telling us that the time is "Nine thirty. Most of the lights are out."

Is this typical for you? What time do you go to bed? What about the rest of your family? Create a timeline for a typical day for you and your family. Then, in a brief paragraph, explain why you think life has changed so much from when *Our Town* was written.

21. A typical address for a person includes that person's name, street number and street name, city, state, and zip code. Rebecca tells George that her friend got a letter from her minister with a strange address written on it. It said, "Jane Crofut; The Crofut Farm; Grover's Corners; Sutton County; New Hampshire; United States of America...Continent of North America; Western Hemisphere; the Earth; the Solar System; the Universe; the Mind of God."

What do you think is the significance of this address? Why would the minister not just write a normal address? Explain your thoughts about the address to Rebecca by writing her an email.

Act II

22. There are a number of different ways to express the passing of time. We can talk about minutes, hours, days, weeks, etc., or we could even talk about how many Sunday's have passed. The Stage Manager begins Act II with, "Three years have gone by. Yes, the sun's come up over a thousand times." Both expressions describe the same amount of time, but they each have a different feel to them.

Which expression seems to be a longer time and why? Which way do you prefer to look at time and why?

23. Authors and playwrights often need to "skip" time periods to make their works be certain lengths. They could use a flashback sequence to fill the audience in on what happened in the past or they could start in the past and then flash forward to a more present time. While looking at a person's life, three years doesn't seem like much in the grand scheme of things. However, a lot can happen and change in three years.

What has happened to you in the past three years? Could you sum up those three years into a paragraph? Why or why not?

24. It seems as though some people always have things together while others live in chaos continually. Although either lifestyle might drive you crazy, people in either situation can be happy with the lives they are leading. The Stage Manager gives the audience some insight on why that is. He says, "It's like what one of those Middle West poets said: You've got to love life to have life, and you've got to have life to love life."

What are your feelings about what the Stage Manager said? Do you agree or disagree? Put your own thoughts about life in a single sentence.

25. Many people say that love is the greatest thing in life—to love and be loved. Others, however, strive for perfection in their talent such as a great athlete, a wealthy business professional, a successful doctor or lawyer, a prize-winning author, etc. Si Crowell couldn't understand why George would give up the chance to be a great baseball player to get married.

Would you give up something you were good at for love? Would you find a way to do both? What is more important—success or love? Complete a survey of at least ten people asking them the above questions. Then write a brief summary of your results.

26. In today's society, the issue of marriage is a tough debate. Some believe that everyone should get married some day while others disagree. Dr. Gibbs and Mrs. Gibbs conversation on marriage began when Mrs. Gibbs said, "Yes...people are meant to go through life two by two. 'Tain't natural to be lonesome."

Do you agree or disagree? Why? Write an editorial on your thoughts.

27. Superstitions are beliefs that certain things outside of your control will happen if you do specific things. Some people completely believe in superstitions and others find them absolutely ridiculous; however, the majority of people live by some even if they say they don't believe in any. When talking about the superstition of a groom seeing his bride before she walks down the aisle, Mr. Webb says, "There's a lot of common sense in some superstitions, George."

What are some superstitions you know? Do you know anyone who believes in them? Make a list of at least ten superstitions and then ask at least ten people if they believe in them or not and why. Write a summary of your results and a paragraph on whether you agree with Mr. Webb.

Our Town

28. When people need advice, they can go to any number of different people to ask—a friend, parent, teacher, pastor, professional counselor, or even a stranger on the street. Often, we receive unsolicited advice from all the above. Mr. Webb and George are talking about marriage the morning of the wedding. When the conversation seems to be leading towards George asking for Mr. Webb’s advice, Mr. Webb tells him a story about a time when his father gave him bad advice. He continued to say that he had learned “never to ask advice on personal matters.”

Who do you go to when you seek advice? Is it always a good thing to seek the advice of others? As George, write a letter to an advice column asking about marriage. Then, as the advice columnist, write a response back to George.

29. Life is short; time flies by. It may seem at times that you will live for a very long time and you have all the time in the world to accomplish what you want to do, but the truth of the matter is that time is finite and it goes by so quickly that we barely have time to stop and breathe. After watching the morning preparations for George and Emily’s wedding, the Stage Manager says, “You know how it is; you’re twenty-one or twenty-two and you make some decisions; then whissh! You’re seventy: you’ve been a lawyer for fifty years, and that white-haired lady at your side has eaten over fifty thousand meals with you.”

Have you ever thought about what you want to do and/or accomplish by the time you are seventy? Do you want to get married, have kids, write a book, etc? Create a list of at least 25 things you would like to do and/or accomplish before you retire (approximately age seventy).

O u r T o w n

30. Nobody is perfect, yet many people strive for perfection and seek perfection in those around them. Emily tells George that she expects him to be perfect because there isn't a reason he can't be. George disagrees and says that women are the ones who can be perfect because they are naturally good.

Do you agree with George or Emily? Why? Pretend you are a friend who overheard George and Emily talking and write a short dialogue between the three of you in which you express your opinions on the subject.

31. Everyone seeks to find at least one person to share things with, to be completely open and honest with, and to lean on in times of need—friendship is a prized possession. During the flashback of George and Emily, Emily had a hard time telling George what people had been saying about him. She wasn't sure if telling him was the right thing to do, but George was very grateful that she had told him. He said he had “a friend who tells me all the things that ought to be told me.” He appreciated that Emily cared enough to chance hurting his feelings by telling him the truth.

What makes a true friend? Write a want advertisement for a “true friend” and describe all the qualities you are looking for in this person.

32. Some people view children as a miracle and a gift. Others believe children are just the world's way of repopulating itself—an affect of the circle of life. Before George and Emily's ceremony, the Stage Manager says, “It's like what one of those European fellas said: Every child born into the world is nature's attempt to make a perfect human being.”

What is your reaction to this statement? Do you agree or disagree? Imagine you are writing an editorial in response to this statement.

Our Town

33. It isn't always easy to put your thoughts and feelings into words, especially during an emotional time. Mrs. Webb is very emotional before George and Emily's wedding. She tells the audience she doesn't know why she is crying and that she hopes some of Emily's friends have told her a thing or two about marriage because she couldn't bring herself to say those things.

What do you think Mrs. Webb wanted Emily's friends to tell her about marriage? Imagine you are one of Emily's friends. Have a conversation with her and tell her what she should expect when she gets married. Then, write a second dialogue in which you verbalize Mrs. Webb's thoughts to Emily. How do the two dialogues differ?

34. People often get "cold feet" when the time of the marriage ceremony approaches. It is natural to second guess if you have made the right decision because the decision to marry is not to be taken lightly. George and Emily both seem to have "cold feet" right before the ceremony. Mrs. Gibbs talks to George and Mr. Webb talks to Emily.

If you were responsible to talk George or Emily about their "cold feet," what would you say and why? As a friend, write a persuasive letter to either George or Emily on this issue.

35. Society tends to put a lot of stress on the issue of happiness. People often say, "If it feels good and makes you happy, then you should do it." However, this way of thinking can cause a lot of problems if you aren't considering the effects your actions can have on other people. During George and Emily's wedding, Mrs. Soames comments, "The important thing is to be happy."

In your opinion, what is the most important thing in life? Write an editorial about what the important thing in life is and how people can achieve it.

Act III

36. A lot can happen in nine years—people change, places change, society changes. As new technologies arise, the old way of doing things is put away. As people grow older, they put childish ways behind them. As new catastrophes occur, people get either more scared of life or more determined to beat it. The Stage Manager begins Act III by saying that nine years have passed. He tells about the decrease in horses and increase in vehicles and about how people have started locking their doors at night. He also mentions that, for the most part, things are still the same.

Is the overall lack of change a benefit or detriment to the town? Imagine you are running for mayor of Grover's Corners and write a campaign speech that expresses your feelings about the state of change in the town.

37. We are all searching for something—searching for the one thing that will fulfill us, complete us, and make us timeless. Some people believe what makes them eternal is an afterlife, some believe it is the impact they leave behind, and still others believe it is the life they will live eternally with Christ. The Stage Manager says, “We all know that *something* is eternal... There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being.”

What do you think that thing is that is eternal deep down in every human being? Write an article for a magazine answering this question. Which magazine do you think will publish it?

Our Town

38. A common saying seen often on bumper stickers is, “He who dies with the most toys wins.” A saying in response to that is, “He that dies with the most toys still dies.” Both statements say a lot about life. People strive to achieve so much in life and their self worth is based in “things.” However, it doesn’t matter if people are dirt poor or if they are multi-millionaires—everyone will die someday. When the Stage Manager introduces Act III, he tells about the people who are buried in the cemetery. There is “mother ’n daughter...husband ’n wife...enemy ’n enemy...money ’n miser...all those terribly important things kind of grow pale around here.”

What kinds of things are important in life? Write a letter to yourself for when you are ten years older and write about what you think are the important things in life. After receiving it back from your teacher, seal it in an envelope and write on the seal the date of when you can open it (ten years from when you write it). Hopefully you can keep it that long and remember to read it in ten years and see how much things have changed, if at all.

39. No one has had a perfect life because it is impossible for every aspect of life to be great. Although everyone has endured some difficult times (some more than others), it is safe to say that we can learn from our difficulties and the difficulties of others. Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Soames are talking about how Emily died and Mrs. Soames comments, “My, wasn’t life awful—and wonderful.”

Make two columns in which you list at least five things that have been awful about your life and at least ten things that have been wonderful. Then, ask ten other people to list at least one awful thing and two wonderful things in their lives. It is always better to dwell on the positives in life!

Our Town

40. Most plays have aspects that run throughout the play to tie it all together. Not only do the same characters show up again and again, but many times little things within the scenery, parts of spoken lines, or topics reoccur in each act. While watching Emily's funeral, we hear the mourners start to sing "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds." This hymn was also sung at George and Emily's wedding in the second act and was the song the choir was rehearsing in Act I.

Why do you think Wilder chose this song to be a part of each act? If you don't know the song, find the lyrics on the Internet or in a hymnal. Write your explanation of the recurring song. Also, suggest another song that would serve the same purpose.

41. People who lead "sheltered lives" don't experience much more than what is around them and they are often accused of "not thinking outside the box." Emily makes a comment about the living after she joins Mrs. Gibbs in the cemetery. She says, "They're sort of shut up in little boxes, aren't they?" This statement is ironic as those who are buried in the cemetery are literally "shut up in little boxes."

Do you feel like you are shut up in a little box? What makes you feel the way you do? Write a diary entry on your thoughts.

42. People often say that they would give anything to relive a moment of their lives again. People constantly make mistakes and want to turn back time to take back something they said or did (or didn't say or didn't do). We cannot, however, time travel and experience our life again. Emily wants to go back and live her life over again; she wants to savor the everyday moments of life.

If you could relive a day from your past, which day would you want to relive and why? Write a short story describing the day and include your thoughts as to why you have chosen that day.

Our Town

43. There are a number of stories, movies, and television shows that glamorize knowing the future. Being able to tell the future isn't always a good thing, however. When Emily is trying to pick a day to live over again, she is told not to relive a day because she will be watching herself live the day over, and because she knows how everything will turn out this will affect her reaction to the memory.

If you could tell the future, what are the top five things you would want to know? How would knowing those things affect your daily life? Would you act any differently?

44. By learning from other people's mistakes, we can see the outcome of situations before enduring them ourselves. Although we can look back and see how things worked out for someone else, sometimes we still want to try it for ourselves. Emily wants to go back and relive part of her life, but the other "dead" are telling her not to do it. They don't give specific reasons as to why she shouldn't do it, but even if they did, it probably wouldn't have made a difference. Emily says, "it's a thing I must know for myself."

Have you ever wanted to experience something for yourself even when others advised you against it? Did you do it anyway? Was it a wise decision to not listen to the advice you had received? Imagine you are advising a younger sibling to not do something that you had already had a bad experience with. What would you say?

45. Have you heard the expression "Hindsight is 20/20"? It means that whenever you look back at an event, you can see everything clearly. You may also have a new appreciation for what someone did or said; you have a whole new perspective on the issue. When Emily relives her 12th birthday, she comments on her mother looking so young. When teenagers grow up and reach the age the age of their parents, they often don't think that the age is so "old."

Can you remember a time when you experienced hindsight? Write a journal entry about what the initial experience was and what you "realized" when you looked back on it.

46. It is easy to misunderstand what someone says. You can misread the person's body language or just misinterpret his or her words. It is also possible that by not paying attention, you miss something that would change your understanding of what the person said or did. When Emily relives her birthday, she tries talking to her mother. She wants to tell her mother about all the things that are to come in her life.

Imagine you can go back in time and tell someone hear about his or her future. That person wouldn't know you were saying it; it would be like a thought in the back of his or her mind. Who would you want to say something to, what would you say, and why would you want to say it? How would your words change things?

47. People often miss out on life because they are too busy doing something else. You might study so much to get good grades that you miss just being a kid. You might start working at a young age and work so much that you miss out on the "fun" of being a teenager. You might strive so hard for that new job, next promotion, etc., that you miss finding the love of your life. Now that Emily is on the other side, she realizes that she missed so much in her life. She asks the Stage Manager, "Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it?—every, every minute?" The Stage Manager answers, "No."

Do you agree or disagree? How would you explain your answer? Pretend that you are answering Emily's question and write a brief dialogue between the two of you in which she questions your opinion.

Our Town

48. A very common saying is “Ignorance is bliss.” This can be true in some aspects, but completely wrong in others. After Emily is upset about reliving a part of her life, Simon Stimson harasses her about wanting to go back and live that life of “Ignorance and blindness.”

Can you see the truth in both statements about ignorance? Imagine you are part of a debate team and you must be prepared to argue both sides of this debate. Write your defense of both statements and use examples from *Our Town* to support your position.

49. We do not completely know what is on the other side of life for us. Some believe they will go to heaven, some believe in reincarnation, and others believe there is nothing except their bodies in the ground. No matter how we view death, we should view life similarly. Emily and Mrs. Gibbs are talking about George coming to Emily’s grave. Emily asks her mother-in-law, “They don’t understand, do they?” Mrs. Gibbs replies, “No, dear. They don’t understand.”

What do the living not understand? Pretend you are Emily and are talking to George in a dream and trying to get him to “understand.” What would you say?

Wrap-Up

50. Actors and playwrights read reviews of their plays all the time. Sometimes they are happy with what they read, while at other times, they completely disagree with what was written. *Our Town* is noted as one of the best all-American plays; however, there are a lot of people that don't like it.

Imagine you are a drama critic and write a review of *Our Town*.

51. There are many ways for people to relax and get into a "thinking" mood. Thornton Wilder liked to take walks when he needed/wanted to write. He was quoted as saying, "At a rough guess, one day's walk is productive of one fifteen-minute scene. Everything I've ever done has come into being that way and I don't think I could work out an entire play or novel at a desk now if I tried."

What do you do when you need to think? Where do you go?

52. Watching television prepares people to see the unusual and weird; today we frequently watch dead people talking as ghosts or zombies or in people's dreams. During Wilder's time, however, this was considered a bit unusual. One review used the headline, "SPEECH-MAKING BY 'CORPSES' UNUSUAL FEATURE."

Do you find it unusual to listen to and watch corpses talk? Why or why not? Pretend you are writing a letter to the editor in response to the above quotation.

53. Many times when people see a play or read a book, they think it should have ended differently or have continued on with the storyline. For a number of years, books where the reader could choose the next event were very popular. Today, when you purchase a DVD, "alternate endings" are often included so that people can see if they like another way better. Wilder made the decision to make the play into a movie. In the movie, Emily does not die, but instead experiences Act III as a dream.

Which ending do you think would have been better? Why? After answering these questions, rewrite the ending in a different way.

Our Town

54. The Stage Manager tells us in Act I about the time capsule the town is putting into the cornerstone of the new bank in Grover's Corners. They put in important things like a copy of the *New York Times*, a copy of Mr. Webb's *Sentinel*, a Bible, the Constitution of the United States, Shakespeare's plays, and a copy of *Our Town*. The copy of *Our Town* was to show how everyday life was like. He specifically says, "So—people a thousand years from now—this is the way we were in the provinces north of New York at the beginning of the twentieth century.—This is the way we were: in our growing up and in our marrying and in our living and in our dying."

Do you think the play accomplishes this purpose? Imagine you are an archeologist from the year 2038 and you opened this time capsule. Write an article explaining what life was like in 1938 based on *Our Town*.

55. The preface to *Three Plays* contains the most quoted line in theater programs. "The play is an attempt to find a value above all price for the smallest events in our daily life." Wilder handwrote an editorial note about this line in his papers. He said, "But that is absurd. The generations of men follow upon one another in apparently endless repetition. They are born; they grow up; they marry; they have children; they die. Where shall we seek a "value above all price" in these recurrent situations?...each life—though it appears to be a repetition among millions—can be felt to be inestimably precious. Though the realization of it is present to us seldom, briefly, and incommunicably. At that moment there are no walls, no chairs, no tables: all is inward. Our true life is in the imagination and in the memory."

What are your thoughts on the line from the preface as well as Wilder's note about it? Write a brief paragraph for each explaining your take on the quotations.

Our Town

Notes

Test

1. Grover's Corners is in
 - A. Rhode Island.
 - B. New Hampshire.
 - C. Massachusetts.
 - D. Vermont.
2. Mrs. Gibbs wants to go to
 - A. Paris.
 - B. Florida.
 - C. Italy.
 - D. Washington D.C.
3. Emily _____ school.
 - A. likes
 - B. dislikes
 - C. has fun in
 - D. tolerates
4. What is NOT put in the time capsule?
 - A. Bible
 - B. Constitution of the United States
 - C. a copy of the play
 - D. a photograph of the town
5. How much time has passed between Act I and Act II?
 - A. One year
 - B. Three years
 - C. Five years
 - D. Nine years

O u r T o w n

6. George gives up _____ to marry Emily.
 - A. a career
 - B. money
 - C. baseball
 - D. his family

7. What does Mr. Webb tell George the morning of the wedding?
 - A. Take good care of Emily.
 - B. Don't ask for advice on personal matters.
 - C. Make lots of money.
 - D. He can't see Emily before the ceremony.

8. George and Emily first knew they were meant for each other
 - A. when they started high school.
 - B. after high school.
 - C. when George tells Emily she has to be his girlfriend.
 - D. when Emily tells George the truth about how he had been acting.

9. Who DOESN'T have doubts about George and Emily getting married?
 - A. George
 - B. Emily
 - C. Mrs. Webb
 - D. Mr. Webb

10. How much time has passed between Act II and Act III?
 - A. One year
 - B. Three years
 - C. Five Years
 - D. Nine Years

Our Town

11. Emily died
 - A. in a car accident.
 - B. in childbirth.
 - C. in a farming accident.
 - D. by natural causes.
12. Emily says the living
 - A. are shut up in little boxes.
 - B. make the most of life.
 - C. don't care about the dead.
 - D. are asleep.
13. Emily chooses to relive
 - A. the day she knew she loved George.
 - B. her wedding day.
 - C. her 12th birthday.
 - D. a normal day.
14. Emily comes to realize that people live in
 - A. ignorance.
 - B. misery.
 - C. ecstasy.
 - D. simplicity.
15. The hymnal that is repeated through *Our Town* is
 - A. "Amazing Grace."
 - B. "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds."
 - C. "What a Friend."
 - D. "Blessed Assurance."

O u r T o w n

16. In his speech opening Act III, the Stage Manager states that in spite of what people say, everyone believes that
- A. death is full of sorrow.
 - B. cemeteries are beautiful places.
 - C. something is eternal.
 - D. change is inevitable.
17. The Stage Manager calls the second act of the play
- A. "Daily Life."
 - B. "Romance."
 - C. "Love and Marriage."
 - D. "The Beginning."
18. After high school, George wants to
- A. inherit his uncle's farm and become a farmer.
 - B. leave Grover's Corners and get a job in the city.
 - C. take over his father's medical practice.
 - D. join the army.
19. The point of view of the Stage Manager seems to be that
- A. life doesn't really offer a great deal of choice.
 - B. people haven't much to look forward to after death.
 - C. most people lead dull, unhappy lives.
 - D. life can be rich and happy, and death serene.
20. The person who sees only the negative side of life is
- A. Mrs. Soames.
 - B. Joe Crowell.
 - C. Simon Stimson.
 - D. Dr. Gibbs.

Our Town

Test
Student Answer Sheet

Name: _____

1. _____

11. _____

2. _____

12. _____

3. _____

13. _____

4. _____

14. _____

5. _____

15. _____

6. _____

16. _____

7. _____

17. _____

8. _____

18. _____

9. _____

19. _____

10. _____

20. _____

Response Journal

An Annotated Bibliography on Response Journals

Response Journals: Inviting Students to Think and Write Literature

By Julie Wollman-Bonilla

This slim volume covers the how and why of having students keep response journals. From defending your choice to use response journals as a part of your writing and literature class, to techniques for assessing the impact of response journals.

ISBN: 0590491377 \$12.95

Publisher: Scholastic

Old Faithful: 18 Writers Present Their Favorite Writing Assignments

Edited by Christopher Edgar and Ron Padgett

Creative writers and teachers describe their single best writing assignment—the one that never fails to inspire students.

ISBN: 0915924455 \$14.95

Publisher: Teachers and Writers Collaborative

Journal Jumpstarts: Quick Topics and Tips for Journal Writing

By Patricia Woodward and Patricia Howard

Contains over 400 writing topics that appeal to young people.

ISBN: 0939791366 \$7.95

Publisher: Cottonwood Press

Journal Keeping with Young People

By Barbara A. Steiner and Kathleen C. Phillips

A great deal of useful information pertaining to Response Journals is contained in this book's 80 pages.

ISBN: 0872878724 \$12.95

Publisher: Teacher Ideas Press

Idea Catcher for Kids: An Inspiring Journal for Young Writers

By Bill Zimmerman

Hundreds of creative writing prompts, including prompts written by students responding to Mr. Zimmerman's previous book, *A Book of Questions*.

ISBN: 0316120200 \$9.99

Publisher: Little, Brown & Company

Our Town

Test
Answer Key

1. ___B___

2. ___A___

3. ___D___

4. ___D___

5. ___B___

6. ___C___

7. ___B___

8. ___D___

9. ___D___

10. ___D___

11. ___B___

12. ___A___

13. ___C___

14. ___A___

15. ___B___

16. ___C___

17. ___C___

18. ___A___

19. ___D___

20. ___C___

The Perfect Balance Between Cost and Quality for Classic Paperbacks

WITH ALL OF THE DIFFERENT EDITIONS of classics available, what makes *Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Classics™* better?

Our editions were designed by former teachers with the needs of teachers and students in mind. Because we've struggled to stretch tight budgets and had to deal with the deficiencies of cheaply made paperbacks, we've produced high-quality trade editions at remarkably low prices. As a result, our editions have it all.

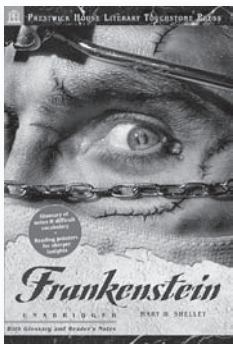
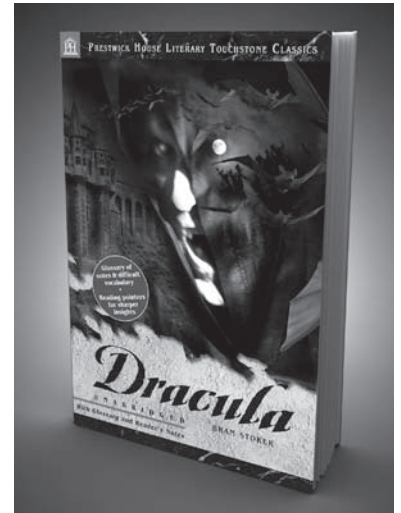
Value Pricing – With our extraordinary Educators' Discount, you get these books at **50% or more off the list price.**

Reading Pointers for Sharper Insights – Concise notes that encourage students to question and consider points of plot, theme, characterization, and style, etc.

Glossary and Vocabulary – An A-to-Z glossary makes sure that your students won't get lost in difficult allusions or archaic vocabulary and concepts.

Sturdy Bindings and High-Quality Paper – High-quality construction ensures these editions hold up to heavy, repeated use.

Strategies for Understanding Shakespeare – Each *Shakespeare Literary Touchstone Classic™* contains line numbers, margin notes, and a guide to understanding Shakespeare's language, as well as key strategies for getting the most from the plays.



Special Introductory Discount for Educators only – At Least 50% Off!

New titles are constantly being added; call or visit our website for current listing.

	Retail Price	Intro.	Discount
200053..... <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> - Twain TU RJ AT AP	\$4.99	\$2.49	
200473..... <i>Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The</i> - Twain TU RJ AT	\$4.99	\$2.49	
202116..... <i>Alice's Adventure in Wonderland</i> - Carroll TU RJ	\$3.99	\$1.99	
202118..... <i>Antigone</i> - Sophocles TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99	
200141..... <i>Awakening, The</i> - Chopin TU RJ AT AP	\$3.99	\$1.99	
202111..... <i>Beowulf</i> - Roberts (ed.) TU	\$3.99	\$1.99	
204866..... <i>Best of Poe, The: The Tell-Tale Heart, The Raven, The Cask of Amontillado, and 30 Others</i> - Poe	\$4.99	\$2.49	
200150..... <i>Call of the Wild, The</i> - London TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99	
200348..... <i>Canterbury Tales</i> - Chaucer TU	\$3.99	\$1.99	
200179..... <i>Christmas Carol, A</i> - Dickens TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99	
201198..... <i>Crime and Punishment</i> - Dostoyevsky TU	\$6.99	\$3.49	
200694..... <i>Doll's House, A</i> - Ibsen TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99	
200190..... <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> - Stevenson TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99	

202113..... <i>Dracula</i> - Stoker TU RJ	\$5.99	\$2.99
200166..... <i>Ethan Frome</i> - Wharton TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
200054..... <i>Frankenstein</i> - Shelley TU RJ AT AP	\$4.99	\$1.99
202112..... <i>Great Expectations</i> - Dickens TU RJ AT AP	\$5.99	\$2.99
202108..... <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> - Swift TU	\$4.99	\$2.49
200091..... <i>Hamlet</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT AP	\$3.99	\$1.99
200074..... <i>Heart of Darkness</i> - Conrad TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
202117..... <i>Hound of the Baskervilles, The</i> - Doyle TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
200147..... <i>Importance of Being Earnest, The</i> - Wilde TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
301414..... <i>Invisible Man, The</i> - Wells TU RJ	\$3.99	\$1.99
202115..... <i>Jane Eyre</i> - Brontë TU RJ	\$6.99	\$3.49
200146..... <i>Julius Caesar</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
201817..... <i>Jungle, The</i> - Sinclair TU RJ AT	\$5.99	\$2.99
200125..... <i>Macbeth</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT AP	\$3.99	\$1.99
204864..... <i>Medea</i> - Euripides TU	\$3.99	\$1.99
200133..... <i>Metamorphosis, The</i> - Kafka TU RJ	\$3.99	\$1.99
200081..... <i>Midsummer Night's Dream, A</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
202123..... <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
301391..... <i>My Antonia</i> - Cather TU RJ	\$3.99	\$1.99
200079..... <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> - Douglass TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
301269..... <i>Odyssey, The</i> - Butler (trans.) TU RJ AT	\$4.99	\$2.49
200564..... <i>Oedipus Rex</i> - Sophocles TU	\$3.99	\$1.99
200095..... <i>Othello</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT AP	\$3.99	\$1.99
202121..... <i>Picture of Dorian Gray, The</i> - Wilde TU RJ	\$4.99	\$2.49
200368..... <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> - Austen TU RJ AT	\$4.99	\$2.49
202114..... <i>Prince, The</i> - Machavelli TU	\$3.99	\$1.99
200791..... <i>Pygmalion</i> - Shaw TU	\$3.99	\$1.99
200102..... <i>Red Badge of Courage, The</i> - Crane TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
200193..... <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$0.99
200132..... <i>Scarlet Letter, The</i> - Hawthorne TU AT AP	\$4.99	\$2.49
202119..... <i>Siddhartha</i> - Hesse TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
204863..... <i>Silas Marner</i> - Eliot TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
200251..... <i>Tale of Two Cities, A</i> - Dickens AT AP	\$5.99	\$2.99
200231..... <i>Taming of the Shrew, The</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
204865..... <i>Time Machine, The</i> - Wells TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
202120..... <i>Treasure Island</i> - Stevenson TU RJ	\$4.99	\$2.49
301420..... <i>War of the Worlds</i> - Wells TU RJ	\$3.99	\$1.99
202122..... <i>Wuthering Heights</i> - Brontë TU AT	\$5.99	\$2.99

TU Teaching Units RJ Response Journals AP Activity Pack AT AP Teaching Units



PRESTWICK HOUSE, INC.

"Everything for the English Classroom!"

P.O. Box 658 • Clayton, DE 19938 • (800) 932-4593 • (888) 718-9333 • www.prestwickhouse.com



Order Form

Prestwick House, Inc.
P.O. Box 658
Clayton, DE 19938

School:	
Name:	
Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone:	Email:

[illegible]

Subtotal	\$
Shipping 12% S&H (\$6.00 minimum)	\$
Total	\$

Expedited Delivery
for expedited delivery ask about the following options:

- Overnight Air
- 2nd day air
- 3 Day Select

Because charges for air delivery are based on weight and distance, heavy packages can be expensive to ship air freight. Typographic and photographic errors are subject to revision. Prestwick House is the sole source of all proprietary materials listed in this catalogue. Please be sure to include a street address. FedEx ground/UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box.