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Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Twelve Angry Men

by Reginald Rose

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Twelve Angry Men

Notes

The play originally aired on CBS's Studio One in 1954, but this production was a shortened version of Rose's original work. It is this version that appeared in print in *Six Television Plays* and later in school anthologies.

The film version of this play starring Henry Fonda was produced in 1957. Its running time is 93 minutes. There is a 1997 version of *Twelve Angry Men* available on video with a racially mixed jury and with Jack Lemmon in Henry Fonda's role. Additionally, an alternative version of the play with a female cast exists called *Twelve Angry Women*. The dialogue is basically the same as the 1954 play. The original remains the superior version, even though it is a bit dated.

This play deals with the sensitive issues of prejudice and racism, relying heavily on the portrayal of stereotypes. The ultimate purpose of these portrayals is to delineate the value of justice and morality, looking past stereotypes and prejudice. The stereotyped group, however, remains unnamed; nevertheless, students must be alerted to the fact that the views, improper as they are, did indeed influence jury decisions for many years. This controversy emphasizes the play's important theme of justice prevailing, even when only one person stands up for what is right.

All references come from The Dramatic Publishing Company edition of *Twelve Angry Men*, copyright 1983.

Twelve Angry Men

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Plot – the pattern of events in a literary work; what happens.

Characterization – the methods, incidents, speech, etc., an author uses to reveal the people in the book. Characterization is depicted by what the person says, what others say, and by his or her actions.

Theme – the central or dominant idea behind the story; the most important aspect that emerges from how the book treats its subject. Sometimes theme is easy to see, but, at other times, it may be more difficult. Theme is usually expressed indirectly, as an element the reader must figure out. It is a universal statement about humanity, rather than a simple statement dealing with plot or characters in the story. Themes are generally hinted at through different methods: a phrase or quotation that introduces the novel, a recurring element in the book, or an observation made that is reinforced through plot, dialogue, or characters. It must be emphasized that not all works of literature have themes in them. **Example:** In a story about a man who is diagnosed with cancer and, through medicine and will-power, returns to his former occupation, the theme might be: “Real courage is demonstrated through internal bravery and perseverance.” In a poem about a flower that grows, blooms, and dies, the theme might be: “Youth fades, and death comes to all.”

Dialogue – conversation between two or more characters.

Dramatist personae – the cast of characters

Drama – plays intended to be acted; performances of plays. **Example:** Arthur Miller’s *All My Sons*.

Motivation – the reasons behind a character’s actions. **Example:** Huckleberry Finn travels down the Mississippi River in order to escape the Widow Douglas, who wants to “sivililize” him.

Protagonist – the central or main character in a story around whom the plot centers. **Examples:** Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*; David Copperfield in *David Copperfield*.

Antagonist – the person or force that is in conflict with, or opposes, the protagonist. **Example:** Nurse Ratched opposes McMurphy throughout *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*.

Climax – the point of greatest dramatic tension or excitement in a story. **Examples:** Othello’s murder of Desdemona. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the person chasing Scout is killed.

Stage business – a physical interaction of the character, usually with a prop, piece of scenery, or other character, designed to move the action, reveal character, or provide movement.

Stereotyping – the act of putting people into groups based on race, religion, nationality, physical appearance, social class, or some other easily identifiable characteristic. **Example:** In *The Last of the Mohicans*, Magua and Uncas are the stereotypical ideals of evil and good Indians, respectively.

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LEGAL TERMS

Prosecutor—the district attorney who tries to prove the guilt of the suspect.

Defense Counsel—the lawyer who represents the defendant and tries to maintain innocence.

Verdict—the final decision made by the jury.

Foreman—a juror chosen to lead a jury and deliver the verdict to the judge.

Convict—to find the suspect guilty of the crime.

Acquit—to find the suspect innocent.

Reasonable Doubt—the element in law, which states that if a sensible amount of uncertainty, exists, a juror must vote to acquit. If jurors were not there to see the suspect commit the crime, they cannot be one hundred percent certain the suspect is guilty; however, even without being certain, they may vote to convict if they believe the defendant committed the crimes. If they have a real question in their minds as to the suspect's guilt or innocence, this is "reasonable doubt," and their votes should be to acquit.

Innocent until proven guilty—a fundamental principal of law that means the state must prove guilt; the suspect does not have to prove innocence.

The Fifth Amendment—a fundamental principle of law which states that a person cannot be forced to testify against him or herself in a court of law. This Amendment also provides freedom from double jeopardy.

Double Jeopardy—a fundamental principle of law that states that a person cannot be tried twice for the same crime. This means that if a defendant is acquitted, that person cannot be tried again for the same crime, even if evidence arises that proves that person's guilt.

Cross-examination—question a witness called by the opposing counsel.

Deliberate—to consider or discuss carefully.

Premeditated—planned or plotted in advance.

Homicide—the killing of one person by another.

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OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. identify and define these element of drama: plot, character, thought, dialogue, and staging.
2. state how the staging reveals the setting, time, and place of the play, and how staging contributes to the mood.
3. identify the protagonist and the main antagonist in the play and state what the nature of their conflict is.
4. distinguish between drama and melodrama and identify *Twelve Angry Men* as one or the other, supporting the choice with evidence from the play.
5. explain how playwright Reginald Rose differentiates between his characters.
6. define the term stereotype and explain how stereotypes are used in this play.
7. cite examples from the play to prove the point that all the details in a drama are important in:
 - A. providing character motivation/differentiation
 - B. advancing the action of the plot
 - C. revealing theme.
8. discuss the following themes in the play and indicate how they are revealed to the reader:
 - A. Justice and fairness will prevail if there is one just man who believes in them.
 - B. Intolerance and prejudice may be mundane in appearance but are nonetheless persuasive.
 - C. For one man to stand alone against the group takes courage.
9. comment on the motivation of three of the major characters and discuss whether this motivation is a convincing and believable explanation for their behavior.
10. identify the dramatic climax at the end of each act and state what produced it

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QUESTIONS FOR ESSAY AND DISCUSSION

1. How does melodrama differ from drama? Is this play more of a drama or melodrama? Explain.
2. At the end, the audience cannot be completely sure that the boy was *not guilty*. Why do you think Miller left the boy's guilt or innocence uncertain?
3. What is the mood of this play, and what elements of staging contribute to the mood? Explain.
4. Define the term stereotype and identify at least six stereotypes found in this play.
5. Write an essay in which you prove, by referring to incidents and comments in the play, that each of the following are themes in this play:
 - A. Justice and fairness may prevail even if there is only one just man who believes in them.
 - B. Intolerance and prejudice may be mundane in appearance but are nonetheless persuasive.
 - C. It takes courage for one man to stand alone against the group.
6. A good drama is supposed to make the reader think and respond. Did this play succeed in this? Why or why not?

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TEST

I. Match the number of the jurors (right column) with the corresponding major figure or stereotype (left column).

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| _____ 1. The just man | A. Four |
| _____ 2. The bigot | B. Three |
| _____ 3. The poor but honest man | C. Eleven |
| _____ 4. The old man | D. Eight |
| _____ 5. The sadist | E. Two |
| _____ 6. The refugee | F. Ten |
| _____ 7. The businessman | G. Nine |
| | H. Five |

II. Vocabulary.

8. To plan or plot in advance
A. deliberate
B. premeditate
C. acquit
D. convict
E. verdict
9. The killing of one person by another
A. verdict
B. sadist
C. premeditate
D. deliberate
E. homicide
10. To set free
A. acquit
B. convict
C. sadist
D. verdict
E. unanimous
11. To consider or discuss carefully
A. premeditate
B. deliberate
C. acquit
D. sadist
E. refugee

III. Multiple Choice

12. The sets, props, and actions of the characters are
 - A. plot.
 - B. thought.
 - C. staging.
 - D. dialogue.
 - E. characterization.
13. The character in conflict with the main character is the
 - A. sadist.
 - B. dramatist.
 - C. antagonist.
 - D. protagonist.
 - E. playwright.
14. Combing hair or walking across the stage to put a dish away is an example of
 - A. modern melodrama.
 - B. dramatic personae.
 - C. dramatic climax.
 - D. stage business.
 - E. dialogue.
15. Character types that appear so often that their natures are immediately familiar to the reader or audience are
 - A. dramatists.
 - B. sadists.
 - C. stereotypes.
 - D. dramatic.
 - E. average.
16. The point or points in the play where the action becomes most emotional is called.
 - A. stage business.
 - B. dramatic climax.
 - C. dramatic personae.
 - D. antagonist.
 - E. stereotype.
17. Frequently, the staging of a play will tell us something of
 - A. the place where the action is taking place.
 - B. the time when the play is occurring.
 - C. the mood of the play.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C

18. In the opening of this play, the judge tells the jurors that for a guilty verdict
- A. at least seven jurors must vote *guilty*.
 - B. the vote must be unanimous.
 - C. the jurors must be convinced of the person's innocence beyond a reasonable doubt.
 - D. must deliver the death penalty.
 - E. the jurors must decide within three hours.
19. The oppressive heat in this play is part of the
- A. conflict.
 - B. staging.
 - C. setting.
 - D. motivation.
 - E. dialogue.
20. The evidence against the young man is
- A. a knife that looks like his.
 - B. an eyewitness who saw the murder.
 - C. a witness who heard the murder committed.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. A, B, and C
21. At the end of Act I, the protagonist proposes that
- A. they tell the judge they cannot agree on a verdict.
 - B. all the rest vote again, but he will not.
 - C. juror Three quit, since he is prejudiced.
 - D. they review the floor plan.
 - E. they reenact the crime.
22. Juror Three hates all young men because
- A. he was beaten up and robbed by two teenagers.
 - B. a nineteen-year-old killed his only son.
 - C. his son punched him and then ran away from home.
 - D. he experienced a particularly difficult adolescence.
 - E. he will say anything to end his jury duty.

23. "How can you believe him, knowing what he is? I lived among 'em all my life. You can't believe a word they say." (Act I)
The comment above indicates that the speaker is
- A. a person who thinks a great deal.
 - B. a person who is open-minded.
 - C. a person who is trying to be fair.
 - D. a person who has already made up his mind.
 - E. a person who wants to weigh the facts.
24. Juror Nine, the first one to change his vote, admires the antagonist because
- A. he is a handsome man.
 - B. he has the courage to stand alone against the group.
 - C. he seems to be a smart, professional man.
 - D. the protagonist stands up to the bully.
 - E. both of them are of the same religious belief.
25. Act II ends on a dramatic note with juror Three shouting,
- A. "I'll kill you!"
 - B. "Let's be fiends."
 - C. "That boy deserves to die."
 - D. "I'm free."
 - E. "Let's think about this."
26. It is shown that the woman who claimed to have seen the murder
- A. is lying because she disliked the boy.
 - B. could not have seen the murder because a train went by.
 - C. wears glasses and did not have them on while in bed.
 - D. just wants to get attention.
 - E. provides an accurate account of the murder.
27. Eight shows that the old man could not have heard the boy shout because
- A. he is deaf.
 - B. he was sleeping.
 - C. the sound could not travel through the walls.
 - D. the man would not be able to hear over the sound of the train.
 - E. the man lived across the street.
28. Nine suspects that the old man may have told his story because
- A. he needs attention.
 - B. he dislikes the boy.
 - C. he dislikes the boy's father.
 - D. he is a liar.
 - E. he distrusts teenagers.

29. The boy spent time in a juvenile facility for
- A. having robbed a store.
 - B. having been in a knife fight.
 - C. having mugged an elderly woman.
 - D. having assaulted his father.
 - E. having stolen a car.
30. The angle of the wound indicates that whoever stabbed the man used
- A. an overhand thrust.
 - B. a long knife.
 - C. an underhand thrust.
 - D. tremendous force.
 - E. a pocketknife.
31. The dramatic climax of Act III occurs when
- A. Three slaps his hand on the table and says, "All right."
 - B. Four ages to a not guilty verdict.
 - C. Two cannot see the clock.
 - D. the Foreman summons the guard.
 - E. Eleven remembers the woman's bifocals.
32. The setting for this story is a
- A. courtroom on a hot summer day.
 - B. a jury room on a cold winter day.
 - C. a courtroom on a cold winter day.
 - D. a jury room on a mild spring day.
 - E. a jury room on a hot summer day.

IV. Essay (Answer any two.)

1. By referring to incidents and comments in the play, prove the following statement: *Justice and fairness may prevail over intolerance and prejudice if there is only one fair and just man who is willing to speak out.*
2. Using this play as an example, identify the reasons that drama, although perhaps less exciting than melodrama, is more realistic and more important to a society.
3. Define the term “stereotype” and identify and discuss at least three of the stereotypes found in this play.
4. Identify two factors of staging that influence the jurors’ behavior. Using details from the play, explain how these elements affect behavior and how the deliberation may have proceeded differently under different conditions.

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ANSWER KEY

- I. 1. D
 2. F
 3. H
 4. G
 5. B
 6. C
 7. A

- II. 8. B
 9. E
 10. A
 11. B

- III. 12. C
 13. C
 14. D
 15. C
 16. B
 17. E
 18. B
 19. B
 20. E
 21. B
 22. C
 23. D
 24. B
 25. A
 26. C
 27. D
 28. A
 29. B
 30. C
 31. A
 32. E

Twelve Angry Men

Study Guide Teacher's Copy

Act I

Vocabulary

unanimous—complete agreement with no one dissenting

refugee—a person who flees one country and seeks safety somewhere else.

elevated train—a train running on elevated tracks. This type of train is usually found in a large city.

1. In your own words, state what instructions the judge gives to the jurors. How many jurors must vote guilty for the accused to be convicted?

He tells them they must decide the guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. All twelve must vote guilty; otherwise there will be no verdict, and it will be a hung jury.

2. Describe the staging for this play and indicate what mood the staging generates. (In addition to the set, mention something about the climate and temperature of the set.)

It is a bare, drab room that is probably depressing, even in good circumstances. On the day which is depicted, it is hot and stuffy, late in the day, and everyone is tired and uncomfortable.

3. Of what is the defendant accused and what evidence is there against him?

A young man is accused of murdering his father.

- a. *The murder weapon looks like a knife that he had but claims to have lost.*
- b. *He has been in trouble with the law himself and has served time for participating in a knife fight.*
- c. *The woman across the street claims to have seen the boy do it.*
- d. *The man downstairs claims to have heard the boy threaten and stab his father. The man also claims to have gotten to his door in time to see the boy run down the stairs.*

4. Who is the protagonist in this play and what is he doing when we first see him?

Juror Eight is the protagonist. When we first see him, he is staring thoughtfully out of the window.

5. Who does it appear will be his major antagonist? How is this antagonist differentiated from the other jurors?

Juror Three is loud, bossy, and opinionated, and will probably be opposed to the protagonist.

6. What will be the cause of the conflict between the protagonist and antagonist?

On the surface they are arguing about the guilt of the boy. It later becomes, however, a personality clash and an argument about justice and fairness.

7. To quickly identify and differentiate among his characters, Rose uses a number of stereotypes. Identify at least three of them.

1. *Juror Four is the quiet, efficient, businessman type. He is just interested in facts and how they add up.*
2. *Juror Five is the good-hearted, poor man, who grew up in the slums.*
3. *Juror Ten is a bigot.*
4. *Juror Eight is the type of man who is fair, thoughtful, and kindly; he considers the hard life of the accused as a factor.*
5. *Juror Three is a type of loud man with strong opinions. At one point, Eight calls him a sadist.*
6. *Juror Nine is a kindly, old man stereotype.*
7. *Juror Seven is a loud, flashy salesman stereotype.*
8. *Juror Two is a meek, quiet man.*
9. *Juror Eleven is the long-suffering refugee type.*

8. What is the cause of Three's anger toward all young men?

His anger toward his own son seems to be why he feels as he does. His son, who was beaten by his father when he was young, knocked his father down as a teenager. Then he ran away from home and has not seen his father since.

9. What does Ten's following comment reveal about himself? "How can you believe him, knowing what he is? I lived among 'em all my life. You can't believe a word they say." (Act I)

Clearly he is a very prejudiced person. He distrusts a whole race or class of people based on very limited exposure.

10. What dramatic climax occurs toward the end of act one?

Juror Eight jabs a knife into the wall. The knife is identical to the murder weapon.

11. What proposal does Juror Eight make at end of the act? What is his motive for making the proposal?

He proposes they vote again, and states that he will not vote. If all eleven agree on guilty, he will change his vote to guilty. He expects at least one juror, maybe more, to vote not guilty.

Act II

Vocabulary

technicality—a minor detail affecting a legal decision. a suspect can be freed on a technicality if certain legal procedures are not followed accurately.

sadist—one who takes pleasure in hurting someone else.

1. What causes the conflict between jurors Three and Five at the opening of this scene?

Three, who firmly believes that the boy is guilty, thinks that Five was the one who changed a vote. The changed vote indicates that deliberations must continue.

2. Why had Nine changed his vote? Who is Nine?

He admired Eight for having the courage to stand alone, so he gave him his support in order to hear more. Nine is an elderly man.

3. What is the point that Eight makes about a passing elevated train?

The train makes so much noise it would not have been possible for the old man to hear the boy shout at his father, "I'm going to kill you."

4. Nine thinks the old man might have said what he said in order to get attention, not because he actually heard anything. What led him to this conclusion?

Nine sees the witness as a poor, old, insignificant man, perhaps like himself. He can understand the need for attention that such a man may have.

5. When Three and Nine are arguing over whether the old witness said that it took him fifteen or twenty seconds to get to the door, what does Three say?

Three says that he is an old man. Half the time he is confused; how could he be positive about anything?

6. Why does Three immediately look sheepish after he says this?

He was the one who was relying so heavily on the witness' word about the guilt of the boy.

7. What is the point of all the measuring that Eight does?

He is proving the point that the old man could not have gotten out of bed and to the door in fifteen seconds.

8. Why is it so important for Three that the boy be convicted?

Three seems to have an unreasoning, all-consuming hatred of the accused boy. Perhaps because his son is about the same age as the boy, the accused reminds Three of the bad feelings he has for his son.

9. On what dramatic note does this act end? What makes the dramatic climax so significant?

Three has to be held back because he has gone after Eight and is shouting "I'll kill you." Everyone realizes that he is just using it as an expression, just as the boy might have when he said it to his father.

ACT III

Vocabulary

hung jury—a jury which cannot reach a unanimous verdict; even an eleven to one vote calls for a hung jury.

tenement—a large apartment building offering only the basics, located in an urban setting.

1. In the opening of Act III, Eleven praises the fact that people can hold unpopular opinions in this country. He continues speaking about democracy. Why does Reginald Rose give him these lines?

Because he is a refugee, he appreciates things the others take for granted. In this respect, he is the stereotypical refugee.

2. What does Three do to Eight in the beginning of Act III that causes the others to cry, "Look out!"

Three, in pretending to stab Eight, comes very close. Because of his anger toward Eight, at the end of Act II, the others are not sure he will stop.

3. Why is Five convinced that the boy did not stab his father? What makes Five an authority?

The young man is experienced with a knife. No experienced knife fighter would stab overhand because of the way a switch blade opens. Five is an expert in this field because he witnessed many knife fights growing up in the slums.

4. After Five's comments about the knife, another vote is taken. How does the count stand after this vote?

Nine votes not guilty; Three votes guilty.

5. In the scene where Ten starts going on about “those people,” why do the other jurors get up from the table?

He is a ranting bigot, and none of the others can put up with him any longer. By leaving the table, they are disassociating themselves from him.

6. To Four, what is the most convincing evidence that the boy is guilty?

The woman across the street claims to have seen the boy commit the murder.

7. What is brought up to refute the woman's claim that she saw the boy kill his father?

She claims she woke up and looked out the window as she lay in bed. Yet she wore glasses; since she did not wear them to bed, the question arises whether she could see anything clearly without her glasses.

8. What piece of stage business forces the jurors to think about the woman and her glasses?

Juror Two could not read the time on the clock because he had his glasses off.

9. Why does Four change his vote to not guilty?

He says that now there is reasonable doubt in his mind.

10. What is the dramatic climax of this act?

Three slams his hand on the table and says, “All right.”

11. Did Three finally believe the boy was not guilty, or did he vote just to get it over with? Support your answer.

Opinions will vary because there is no conclusive answer, but they should be supported with details from the play.

Twelve Angry Men

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2. Describe the staging for this play and indicate what mood the staging generates. (In addition to the set, mention something about the climate and temperature of the set.)
3. Of what is the defendant accused and what evidence is there against him?
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8. What piece of stage business forces the jurors to think about the woman and her glasses?
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11. Did Three finally believe the boy was not guilty, or did he vote just to get it over with? Support your answer.

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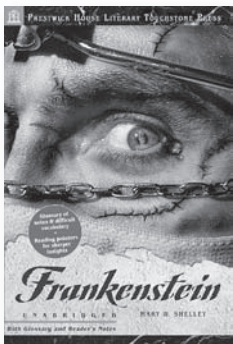
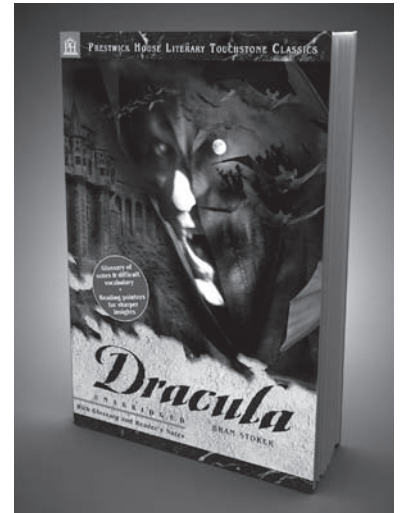
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