

HIGH SCHOOL | BLUE VALLEY DISTRICT NOVEL RATIONALE

## ***Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller**

### **English Language Arts, 12th Grade**

#### WHAT'S THE STORY?

Willie Loman is an aging salesman who is finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. In fact, he is no longer able to support himself and his wife Linda without borrowing money weekly from his next door neighbor Charley. Linda is a supportive 1950's wife who seeks to comfort and encourage Willie, but he is bordering on senility and is deeply depressed. He has attempted suicide on more than one occasion. Biff and Happy, the two grown boys, unfortunately are not real grown-ups. Biff is jobless, and although Happy has a job, he is not being promoted as rapidly as he would like. Linda summons them home to try to decide what to do about Willie. This play is a poignant examination of the American Dream, family values, aging, and the life and death of a salesman.

#### CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM\*

*The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.*

- **Unit 4: Universal Human Experience**
  - Essential Question: "How can reading reveal universal truths about the human experience?"

#### KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. W.12.4
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. RL.12.1
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. RL.12.11
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. RL.12.12