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# RADIO GOLF

## By August Wilson

Directed by Lou Bellamy  
Presented by Cargill

October 1 through October 25, 2009  
Previews September 29 & 30

## TOOLS FOR TEACHING

The following are a series of questions you may use to prompt discussion, critical analysis or dialogue about this play. They may be used either before or after the play, either to guide audiences toward specific issues as they watch or, to stimulate conversation about topical issues afterward.

Penumbra Theatre Company now offers Lesson Plans that use the script, the production, and the study guide to investigate specific themes! Developed by high school teachers and curriculum consultants Kimberly Colbert and Kaye Peters, these questions are intended to meet the state standards for High School Language Arts and Literacy set by the Board of Education. (Grades 9 through 12). Each plan can run from approximately 15 to 45 minutes for discussion. Please contact Penumbra Theatre's Education Director for more details:  
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### A Guide for Teaching August Wilson's *Radio Golf*

#### Overview:

This guide provides a broad framework in which teachers may anchor their own classroom practice. For easy reference, lessons have been divided into three strands (historical context, literary, and thematic). Teachers may choose to follow one strand for the unit or weave together elements and/or lessons from the various strands. A broad essential question for the entire *Radio Golf* unit is suggested, as well as more specific essential questions aligned with strands (highlighted below). The essential question provides a foundation for study, with guiding questions for study imbedded in each lesson which will allow for a range of critical thinking and analysis within both English/language arts and social studies content areas. Anchor, or suggested, lessons are provided for each strand along with resource readings and classroom tools we have found effective in our own classrooms.

The suggested lessons are designed to meet high-school level Minnesota Reading and Literature and Writing standards and Minnesota Social Studies standards for Institutions and Traditions in Society. The standards are noted by the possible lessons in boldface type. "LA" is Language Arts standards and "SS" is Social Studies standards. The numbers and letters refer to the specific standard.

**LA** – is Language Arts standards

**SS** – is Social Studies standards

## Vocabulary of Important Terms

<b>Affirmative action</b>	positive steps taken to increase the representation of women and minorities in areas of employment, education, and business from which they have been historically excluded.
<b>Blighted</b>	To have a deleterious effect on; ruin. Something that has a deleterious effect on, or ruins.
<b>Civil Rights Movement</b>	(1955–1968) refers to the reform movements in the United States aimed at abolishing racial discrimination against African Americans and restoring suffrage in Southern states.
<b>Colorblind</b>	the notion that a person does not notice the difference between people of different races and/or ethnicities based on the way that they look. Penumbra Theatre Company does not practice colorblind casting, for example, because we believe that it is important to take into account the life a person experiences through their body.
<b>Gem of the Ocean</b>	, set in 1904, begins August Wilson's century-long cycle chronicling black American life. Bewildered by the collapse of the old slave regime, the first generation of black Americans recently freed from slavery are unprepared for the backlash against their newly acquired freedom by whites. Many venture north and find themselves at Aunt Ester's door, seeking solace, advice, or a place to heal. Aunt Ester makes room in the world for those cast aside. She examines and treats wounded souls. Her wisdom is ancient, timeless, connected to the source from which black Americans had been taken. <i>Gem of the Ocean</i> introduces us finally to Aunt Ester, keeper of the flame.
<b>Ham</b>	according to the Table of Nations in Genesis, was a son of Noah and the father of Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan. Ham was cursed for uncovering the nakedness of his father, considered a great taboo. The interpretation of this passage that declared Ham's shame a "stain" upon him, was interpreted by European slavers to indict Africans as an accursed lot.
<b>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</b>	The second play in August Wilson's ten-play 20th Century Cycle is set in a Pittsburgh boarding house in 1911. This play was inspired by Romare Bearden's painting <i>Mill Hand's Lunch Bucket</i> . Harold Loomis was modeled after the brooding, ominous figure in the center. Recently freed from bondage, Loomis has traveled north to Pittsburgh with his young daughter in tow. They are looking for his wife, estranged from him when Joe Turner arrested him for gambling. For seven years Joe Turner held Loomis hostage on his illegal plantation. The experience recreated the nightmare of slavery and Loomis lost his "song." <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> is the haunting tale of a community of transient people who band together to heal one man and ultimately heal one another.

- King Hedley II** is the ninth play in August Wilson's ten-play 20<sup>th</sup> Century Cycle chronicling the lives of African Americans decade by decade. Set in the 1980s, it is the sequel to *Seven Guitars*, a play in which young Ruby chose Hedley and she named their child King. We meet King the second as a grown man, fighting to survive a life that seems never to look bright. King carries the weight of the world on his shoulders. At times, he even seems strapped with a curse. Yet King imagines that he is crowned instead, adorned with halo whose meaning he does not yet know. *King Hedley II* is a riveting play about the past revisiting a man struggling to free himself from the grip of his family's legacy while desperate to hold on to his loved ones.
- Matrilineal** Relating to, based on, or tracing ancestral descent through the maternal line.
- Negro League** was an American professional baseball league comprising predominantly African-American teams. The term may be used broadly to include professional black teams outside the leagues and it may be used narrowly for the seven relatively successful leagues beginning 1920 that are sometimes termed "Negro Major Leagues." The first professional team, established in 1885, achieved great and lasting success as the Cuban Giants, while the first league, the National Colored Base Ball League, failed in 1887 after only two weeks due to low attendance. The Negro American League of 1951 is considered the last major league season.
- Oppositional binary** Opposing concepts that are locked into a relationship in which one is dependent upon the existence and negation of another.
- Patriarchy** The systemic oppression of women by way of exclusion, restriction to resources, objectification, sexual violence, and gender descriptions that privilege and value men over women. It describes a society that is structured around the notion of men as breadwinners, leaders and representatives of the society. This kind of society is marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family and the legal dependence of wives and children. Additionally, a patriarchal model traces birth lineage back through the father's bloodlines, which often determines inheritance. In more broad terms, patriarchy describes the control by men of a disproportionately large share of power over the rest of society.
- Race man** A man or woman who finds support, camaraderie, strength and sense of self through valuing, associating with, investing in and fighting to preserve the cultural integrity of members of his or her own race. Most typically used by African Americans.
- Tiger Woods** (December 30, 1975 - present) is an American professional golfer of African American and Asian descent whose achievements to date rank him among the most successful golfers of all time. Currently the World No. 1, he was the highest-paid professional athlete in 2007, having earned an estimated \$122 million from winnings and endorsements. According to *Golf Digest*, Woods made \$769,440,709 from 1996 to 2007, and the magazine predicts that by 2010, Woods will become the world's first athlete to pass one billion dollars in earnings. Woods has won fourteen professional major golf championships, the second highest of any male player, and 65 PGA Tour events, third all time. He has more career major wins and career PGA Tour wins than any other active golfer. He is the youngest player to achieve the career Grand Slam, and the youngest and fastest to win 50 tournaments on tour.

**Two Trains Running**

The seventh play in August Wilson's ten-play cycle *Two Trains Running* is set in a modest diner frequented by the same group of folks. Memphis is hardly making a large profit with his small café, in fact, he's probably barely scraping by. But the place has sustained a small community of folks in Pittsburgh's Hill District, and it is his. It is 1969. The country is rapidly changing. The Civil Rights Movement has folks floored, reeling from its fervor and insistence. The Hill District, too, is seeing change as developers buy historic buildings with plans to tear them down to make way for new developments. They have come for Memphis' diner. He has vowed to make the city give him a fair price for his place and is willing to go through fire to get it. No one knows quite what Memphis has been through, but all soon realize that this is his most important stand. *Two Trains Running* illuminates the simple poetry in justice, that in trade one should be given what one is due. Too many times the people of the diner have been duped or shortchanged, and in the name of one man whose simple logic of fair trade has driven him literally to madness, this group of disenfranchised, depressed few finds the integrity on which they make a final stand

**Segregation**

Segregation, or "Jim Crow law" the enforced, at one time legal, separation of the races in the United States based on racial prejudice and assumptions of racial superiority that was contested largely in the public realm as it pertained to people of color accessing social services such as public transportation, public drinking fountains and bathrooms, schools, theaters and stores. Segregation also influenced miscegenation (interracial or interethnic marriage or dating) hiring practices, legal representation, voting practices, medical care and housing. Citizens, business owners, state and federal officials, terrorist mob groups and the KKK enforced segregation. The Civil Rights Movement spurred the US Supreme Court to declare segregation officially unconstitutional in 1954. Its retraction throughout the country proved both slow and very violent.

**Wilson, August**

(April 27, 1945—October 2, 2005) was a Pulitzer Prize-winning African American playwright. Called "one of the most important voices in the American theater today" by Mervyn Rothstein in the *New York Times*, August Wilson's authentic sounding characters have brought a new understanding of the black experience to audiences around the country. For example, *Fences*, tells the story of a black baseball player who broke national records by leaps and bounds but was prevented from playing outside of the Negro Leagues. *Fences* opened on Broadway in the spring of 1987 to enormous critical acclaim and earned Wilson his first Pulitzer Prize. Wilson's work gives audiences the opportunity to go back and reexamine American history through characters that are epic, poignant and defiantly struggling against the institutionalized legacy of racism in this country.

**Yoruba**

a large ethno-linguistic group or ethnic nation in Africa; the majority of them speak the Yorùbá language. The Yoruba constitute approximately 30 percent of Nigeria's total population, and around 40 million individuals throughout the region of West Africa. While the majority of the Yoruba live in southwestern Nigeria, there are also substantial indigenous Yoruba communities in Benin, Ghana and Togo, as well as large diasporic Yoruba communities in Sierra Leone, Brazil, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Trinidad, the Caribbean, and the United States.

## Teaching the Play

### **Overview:**

According to the Library of Congress, the term, “American Dream” was first used by James Truslow Adams in his book *The Epic of America* which was written in 1931. He states: "The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position" (“American Dreams”).

*Radio Golf* is the last in August Wilson’s cycle of African American history, explored through the stories of characters who lived throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This final story brings the cycle full circle as characters in the play encounter the home of Aunt Esther, a character from the first story in the Wilson Cycle, *Gem of the Ocean*. Harmond Wilks and Roosevelt Hicks, a successful lawyer and businessman who have been making money in real estate are faced with the dilemma of whether or not to let this historic home be demolished and replaced by an upscale commercial development. The play brings up interesting contrasts in traditional African American values and those of an up and coming more affluent generation including a change in paradigm – golf as a metaphor for the American Dream.

This study guide explores in particular the question of our responsibility to others, community and self in the face of economic success.

### **Unit Essential Question:**

The American Dream is rooted in the belief that everyone in America is free to live up to his or her abilities. What responsibility do we have to others and ourselves when we have “reached” the American Dream?

### **Literary Device Strand Essential Questions: Setting, Characterization, Metaphor**

1. In what ways does the golf metaphor represent the complex nature of racism and classism in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries?
2. What do the characterizations of Harmond and Roosevelt teach us about the evolution of racism and classism in America?
3. How does setting help develop the characters Harmond and Roosevelt in *Radio Golf*?

### **Theme Strands Essential Questions: American Dream, Responsibility to Self/Responsibility to Others**

1. How is the American Dream represented in *Radio Golf*?
2. What responsibility do we have to honor our own personal histories? What are the best ways to do this?

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**Theme Strand: The American Dream**

**Introductory Lesson: 1 day**

**LA Standards: I.C. 4, 5, 7; I.D. 1, 3, 5, 10, 12**

**SS (Peoples and Cultures) Standards:**

- A. Identifying societal concepts that influence the interaction among individuals, groups, and institutions in society.**
- B. Examining tension between individuality and conformity.**

**Essential Question**

- 1. How is The American Dream represented in *Radio Golf*?
- 2. What responsibility do we have to honor our own personal histories? What are the best ways to do this?

**Guiding Questions:**

- 1. What is the American Dream?
- 2. How does the concept of the American Dream define us as a country?
- 3. How does the American Dream define the way we see the world and our place in it?
- 4. In what way(s) is the American Dream achievable for all Americans? How is it unachievable?
- 5. Compare and contrast golf and baseball, symbols used by August Wilson to represent the American Dream in *Radio Golf* and *Fences* respectively. What are the differences and similarities between the ways in which golf and baseball are perceived as sports? (Consider the history and accessibility of each sport?)

**Preparatory Set:**

- 1. Quick write: Define the American Dream. Discuss how you think the definition of the American dream has evolved during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Lesson:**

- 1. Divide the class into groups of three.
- 2. Ask students to read and take notes on Adams' definition of the American Dream (above).
- 3. In groups of three answer the following guiding questions:
  - What does it mean to have a rich and full life? How does your definition of these terms help to make the "American Dream" more specific?
  - What does Adams mean when he says, "It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it." Is that true for upper class Americans today?
  - How do you think the definition of the American Dream has evolved since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?
  - Do you know anyone who you believe is living the American Dream? Why do you believe this?
- 5. Combine groups in to six members
- 6. Hand out markers and long sheets of paper.
- 7. Ask students to share their discussion results with each other.
- 8. Create a timeline starting in the 1900s that includes significant historical events that you believe triggered a change in how people viewed the American Dream. Record along that line, record explanations for why you believe the definition of American Dream changed.
- 9. Post timelines and share in a gallery walk.

**Anchor Lessons:**

**LA Standards: D1, 4, 6, 10, 13, 14**

**Literary Strand (setting and characterization): Hill District, Harmond, Roosevelt and The American Dream**

*“You don’t understand. Politics is about symbolism. Black people don’t vote but they have symbolic weight.” -- Harmond, Act 1*

**Essential Questions**

1. How does setting help develop the characters Harmond and Roosevelt in *Radio Golf*?

**Setting Activity**

**Background Information**

**Model Cities**

“Model Cities, an element of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, was an ambitious federal urban aid program that ultimately fell short of its goals. Passed by Congress in 1966 but ended in 1974, Model Cities originated in several concerns of the mid-1960s. Widespread urban violence, disillusionment with the Urban Renewal program, and bureaucratic difficulties in the first years of the War on Poverty led to calls for reform of federal programs. The Model Cities initiative created a new program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) intended to improve coordination of existing urban programs and provide additional funds for local plans. The program's goals emphasized comprehensive planning, involving not just rebuilding but also rehabilitation, social service delivery, and citizen participation.” (Encyclopedia of Chicago).

**Urban Renewal**

“Following World War II, and continuing into the early 1970s, “urban renewal” referred primarily to public efforts to revitalize aging and decaying inner cities, although some suburban communities undertook such projects as well. Including massive demolition, slum clearance, and rehabilitation, urban renewal proceeded initially from local and state legislation, which in Illinois included the Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation Act of 1941 (amended in 1953), the Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act of 1947, the Relocation Act of 1947, and the Urban Community Conservation Act of 1953. The earliest emphasis was placed on slum clearance or “redevelopment,” which was followed by a focused effort to conserve threatened but not yet deteriorated neighborhoods. (Encyclopedia of Chicago).

The new legislation had three primary functions. First, it expanded the city's power of eminent domain and enabled it to seize property for the new “public purposes” of slum clearance or prevention. Second, it pioneered the “write-down” formula, which permitted the city to convey such property to private developers at its greatly reduced “use” value after the municipality subsidized its purchase and preparation. Last, the state provided assistance in relocating site residents—an absolute necessity in a time of severe housing shortages to enable the clearance of crowded, inner-city sites. The federal Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954, and their later amendments, mirrored the Illinois initiatives, providing a national framework and greater financial resources for the renewal effort. The clear intent was to offer public assistance to the private sector in the hope of heading off an urban crisis.”

### Hill District

The Hill District is a collection of neighborhoods that was once considered by many to be the cultural center of African-American life in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the United States. Harlem Renaissance poet Claude McKay once called the district "the crossroads of the world," referring to the neighborhood's heyday in the 1930s–1950s. It is known to many Pittsburghers as simply "The Hill". It is bordered by the Downtown on the west, the Strip District and Polish Hill on the north, the Bluff (Uptown) on the southwest, and Oakland on the east and southeast. (Wikipedia).

### Shadyside

Shadyside is a neighborhood in the East End of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States. It has zip codes of both 15232 and 15206, and has representation on Pittsburgh City Council by the council member for District 8 (East Central Neighborhoods). The moniker Shadyside is drawn from the 19th century Pennsylvania Railroad station in the area, named for its unique shady lanes. Shadyside is home to many of the more upscale stores and boutiques in Pittsburgh. (Wikipedia).

### Materials:

Paper, markers, colored pencils

### Lesson Plan

Setting is defined as “the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs. (Abrams 192) The setting of *Radio Golf*, as well as allusions to different locations in Pittsburgh, holds metaphorical significance for the play. Investigate a historic neighborhood in your city or town or another place with which you are familiar. Draw a map, carefully detailing the location of historic buildings and noting through color coding or another form of identification, the nature of the businesses that occupy them.

### Guiding Questions

1. What do the businesses tell you about the nature of the area of town represented in your map?
2. *Radio Golf* opens with Mame, Harmond and Roosevelt discussing the location of Harmond’s campaign office. Discuss the significance of references made to Model Cities, Urban Renewal and contemporary landmarks like Whole Foods and Barnes and Noble. What do we learn about The Hill District? About Shadyside? About Mame and Harmond?
3. When Mame tells Harmond they have decided to locate his office in Shadyside, he responds, “I’m from the Hill District. . . You don’t understand. Black people don’t vote but they have symbolic weight.” (Act 1) What is Harmond trying to tell Mame? Support your answer with textual evidence.
4. How does setting help develop the exposition of *Radio Golf* and lay the groundwork for the characterization of Harmond and Roosevelt?
5. Discuss the concept of eminent domain – the ability of a municipality to essentially seize ownership of property. How do instances of eminent domain (the issue of blight) help to develop character in the play?

### Reflection

Post maps. Do a gallery walk so everyone can see the maps.

## Setting Activity 2

### Philosophical Chairs

In this activity students will examine their attitudes about one aspect of urban renewal.

### Guiding questions

1. With whom are you willing to share your neighborhood?
2. What kinds of people would you rather not live near? Why?

### Lesson Plan:

1. Discuss or review information about urban renewal.
2. Define gentrification.

Gentrification: the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents. (Miriam Webster Online)

3. Philosophical Chairs
  - a. Place two rows of chairs or desk on each side of the room. The chairs or desks should be facing each other. Determine and mark which side of the room is for those who agree and which side is for those who disagree.
  - b. Choose a moderator who will act as a neutral voice and will help move the discussion along. The teacher may want to take this role in the beginning.
  - c. Present a statement about related to the guiding questions to the students. You can use a statement listed below or an excerpt from the text. Make sure to write the statement somewhere so all students can see and reference it.
  - d. Students who agree with the statement should move to the “agree” side of the room and vice versa. Encourage the students to continue moving in a respectful and orderly fashion throughout the discussion. Moving from “agree” to “disagree” does not necessarily indicate a total change of mind. Rather, the argument presented may be compelling enough to generate agreement or disagreement for the moment.

**Modification:** Begin the discussion with just two sides. If students have difficulty deciding which side to choose, encourage them to take the side they feel most strongly about. After a few minutes, add a section between the two sides with a few chairs for those who remain undecided. Once students get used to the activity you can begin the game with three sides.

The teacher may also choose a small group of students to act as observers and notetakers for reflection. These students will use notes to debrief the activity with the participants prior to a full-class reflection.

- e. The mediator will begin the activity by reading the discussion statement. She will then recognize someone who agrees with the statement to begin discussion. Next, she will recognize someone from the opposite side. The mediator should make sure that all students who want to speak have the chance to do so and that no one dominates discussion. This person may also paraphrase comments for clarification. In this case the mediator should always check with the speaker to make sure the paraphrase is accurate.
- f. Discussion can continue on the same statement throughout the class period or can change depending on the momentum. Time should be allotted for debriefing and reflection.

**Philosophical Chairs Discussion Statements**

1. When neighborhoods begin to gentrify, cities should set aside a certain number of properties for low-income residents.
2. It is the responsibility of homeowners in gentrified neighborhoods to welcome low-income families into their community by encouraging development of affordable housing.
3. It is natural and alright for people to be displaced by neighborhood improvements if they can't afford to renovate their property.
4. Low-income, middle-income and affluent families cannot live side-by-side in the same neighborhood.
5. Since affluent people have more money it is natural that they should be able to live wherever they want.
6. When people enter the middle class, they forget about those who are in the lower socioeconomic class and want to move away from them.
7. I would welcome transitional housing for ex-offenders in my neighborhood.
8. I would welcome a group home for disabled adults next door to my house.
9. I want my neighbors to keep up their yard on a regular basis.
10. I don't mind living next door to people with a lot of animals.
11. The best neighborhoods are those where the people are mostly alike in terms of socioeconomic class.

**Literary Strand (characterization)**

**Essential Question**

1. What do the characterizations of Hammond and Roosevelt teach us about the evolution of racism and classism in America?

**Jigsaw Discussion**

**Materials:**

Excerpts from *Radio Golf*

**Guiding Questions**

1. How do Harmond and Roosevelt personify the American Dream?
2. In what ways do you believe Harmond's and Roosevelt's life experiences to be "typical" of African Americans, particularly men, in the U.S.?
3. In what ways are their experiences atypical of African Americans in the U.S.?
4. What societal factors do you believe influence each of your answers to questions three and four?
5. How do Harmond's and Roosevelt's life experiences affect their world view? How are the world views of each character alike? Different?
6. Static characters do not change; dynamic characters change. How would you classify Harmond and Roosevelt? Support your answer with textual evidence. Discuss the specific ways in which each character evolves or does not evolve.

**Lesson Plan**

1. Count off students into groups.
2. Provide each group with copies of an excerpt from the play and copies of guiding questions.
3. Each group should discuss and take notes on their excerpt. They will become the "experts" of this passage. (There are nine passages available. Those not used for the jigsaw can be used for reflection as well.)
4. Regroup the students making sure each new group has one person representing each excerpt. Using their notes, each "expert" should relay the information about their passage to new group members. At the end of the activity, all students should have complete notes on the guiding questions and excerpts.

**Reflection**

Discuss the unit essential questions.

**Literary Strand (metaphor)**

The American Dream is often symbolized by baseball. The symbol changes in this particular play to golf. Using the excerpt below, have students explore the implications of the paradigm shift to golf.

**Essential Question**

1. Discuss the ways in which the golf metaphor represents the complex nature of racism and classism in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

**Fishbowl Discussion**

**Materials**

1. Excerpts from *Radio Golf*
2. Guiding questions

**Lesson Plan**

Provide students with copies of the excerpts and guiding questions in advance for study the night before the activity.

1. Set up chairs or desks placing a circle of five within a larger circle.
2. Choose five students to begin the discussion.
3. Instruct students on the outside circle to keep track of the conversation. They can take notes, or assign tick marks after the names of the discussion participants in order to keep track of the number of responses made by each.
4. Give the group one of the fishbowl excerpts to discuss. The essential question should be their guide. Limit their time to about five minutes of discussion.
5. Choose five new students to discuss a new question.

Variation: Allow students to tag out inner group members after they have had the chance to address the question.

**Reflection**

1. Reflect on the fishbowl process as a whole class.

## **Final Lesson**

### **Paideia Seminar**

This final activity will allow students to reflect on the entire play. Seminar questions should be assigned as homework.

#### **Seminar Questions:**

1. The American Dream is rooted in the belief that everyone in America is free to live up to his or her abilities. What responsibility do we have to others and ourselves when we have “reached” the American Dream?
2. Write down a single line from the play that you believe to be extremely important. Briefly explain why that line is essential/important/significant.
3. Write one question about the play. Your question can be about a character, scene or literary aspect. Your question must begin with the words, “why might” or “what might.”
4. Choose one idea from the play that you believe would make the world a better place if people would understand it. Explain your answer.

#### **Procedures:**

1. Set up the room in a way that allows students to have a large-group discussion as well as provide a place for those who come to class unprepared, to finish their work.
2. Check student’s homework as they enter the room. Send students who come prepared to a place in the discussion circle. Others should take a seat in the other part of the classroom and finish their homework. They may join the circle when they are finished.
3. Review ground rules for seminar:
  - no talking over the discussion
  - no talking under the discussion (e.g. whispering) or having side conversations
  - students should raise their hands to comment
  - students should try to speak in full sentences and/or paragraphs (to practice communicating complete thoughts)
  - students should refer to each other by name
  - the teacher facilitates only when necessary; the discussion belongs to the students.
4. Begin the seminar by allowing each student in the circle to answer one of the questions. This way no one dominates and student who are more shy are forced to participate. You can open the discussion for further comments after the round robin has finished. At this point, the teacher steps in only to remind students of ground rules, ask for textual evidence or briefly jump-start silence. In general, however, students can be trusted to fill pregnant pauses.
5. When you begin the response part of the discussion, read the essential question and step back to let the students take over. Every once in awhile it might be necessary to call on people who are not responding to draw them into the discussion.
6. Continue to answer the questions throughout the class period. You might want to debrief the process or have kids respond to the process itself on paper before they leave.

**Fishbowl Excerpt #1**

Act I, Scene I (p. 13)

HARMOND:               How's the golf camp going?

ROOSEVELT:            I signed up two more kids last week. That makes eighteen. I just want these kids to know what it feels like to hit a golf ball. I hit my first golf ball I asked myself where have I been? How'd I miss this? I couldn't believe it. I felt free. Truly free. For the first time. I watched the ball soar down the driving range. I didn't think it could go so high. It just kept going higher and higher. I felt something lift off of me. Some weight I was carrying around and didn't know it. I felt like the world was open to me. Everything and everybody. I never did feel exactly like that anymore. I must have hit a hundred golf balls trying to get that feeling. But that first time was worth everything. . . .That was the best feeling of my life.

HARMOND:               That's what gets you hooked.

ROOSEVELT:            That's why I keep my golf clubs in the trunk of my car just in case I drive by a golf course. I keep looking for that feeling. That's what I want those kids to have. That'll give them a chance at life. I wish somebody had come along and taught me how to play golf when I was ten. That'll set you on a path to life where everything is open to you. You don't have to hide and crawl under a rock just 'cause you black. Feel like you don't belong in the world.

**Fishbowl Excerpt #2**

Act I, Scene 2 (p. 21)

OLD JOE: Is you really running for mayor? They ain't gonna let you be mayor.

HARMOND: This is 1997. Things have changed. This is America. This is the land of opportunity. I can be mayor. I can be anything I want.

OLD JOE: But you got to have the right quarter. America is a giant slot machine. You walk up and put in your coin and it spits it back out. You look at your coin. You think maybe it's a Canadian quarter. It's the only coin you got. If this coin ain't no good then you out of luck. You look at it and sure enough it's an American quarter. But it don't spend for you. It spend for everybody else but it don't spend for you. The machine spits it right back out. Is the problem with the quarter or with the machine? Do you know? Somebody running for mayor ought to know that.

HARMOND: If it don't take all the quarters you fix it. Anybody with common sense will agree to that. What they don't agree with is how to fix it. Some people say they don't want to be bothered with fixing it. You mix them all in a pot and stir it up and you got America. That's what makes this country great.

OLD JOE: I say get a new machine. What you say?

HARMOND: We're fixing it. We're going to redevelop this whole area. We'll get the Hill District growing so fast people from all over will start moving back.

OLD JOE: If you do win Mayor they gonna change the rules and only give you half the keys. You know that don't you?

HARMOND: Naw, I'm going to have all the keys and they're going to have to make me some new ones. We are going to build up everything. Look at this.

**Fishbowl Excerpt #3**

Act I, Scene 2 (pp. 22-23)

HARMOND *shows* OLD JOE *the rendering*:

HARMOND: We finally get a supermarket in the Hill District. New apartments. The Sarah Degree Health Center. Do you know Sarah Degree was the first black registered nurse in Pittsburgh? This is just the beginning.

OLD JOE: You gonna put some lights up on Kennard Field?

HARMOND: We're going to put a golf driving range up there. Make it part of the City Parks project.

OLD JOE: See? You ain't even got to be mayor and you acting like one. The first word come out your mouth is "no." The people been waiting 50 years for some lights. Why can' we have some lights? Everybody else got them. They had some kids go blind playing up there at night without no lights. They started going blind in 1959. The people been trying to get some lights up there since 1952 and they ain't got them yet. I'm gonna die and they still ain't gonna have no lights up there.

HARMOND: There's nobody using that field now except for a few kids.

OLD JOE: That's what I'm saying. . . they don't want to go blind. If you put some lights up there the people will come. They ain't gonna come for nothing. But you put some lights up there and watch the people come from all over. They'll come dancing. They gonna throw a big party. You put some lights up there and the people will hang a picture of you in their living room.

HARMOND: You teach the kids how to play golf and they have all the rules they need to win at life. You ever play golf?

OLD JOE: Don't you need some grass? Ain't no grass around here. Archie had a golf club. He used to carry it around in case somebody messed with him. That's the only time I ever seen a golf club. I asked myself then what good was it?

**Fishbowl Excerpt #4**

Act I, Scene 3 (pp. 31-32)

MAME: . . . Did they take anything? I told you to get a new alarm.

HARMOND: They got my clubs.

MAME: Thank God they didn't take the car.

HARMOND: I'd rather they took the car and left the clubs. You can always get a new car.

MAME: Our homeowners insurance will cover your clubs.

HARMOND: You can't replace them. I got those clubs when I started playing golf twelve years ago. Right before taxes when I needed to spend some money before the government took it. I didn't know then those clubs would become a part of me.

MAME: Should we call the police?

HARMOND: Why?

MAME: You need their report to file the insurance claim. Is the car damaged any?

HARMOND: Only the lock. They popped it off clean. We don't need to file an insurance claim. I'll take it over to the shop and get the lock replaced.

*MAME starts to leave.*

MAME: Think over what we talked about. You only got one shot at this Harmond.

**Fishbowl Excerpt #5**

Act I, Scene 3 (p. 35-36)

ROOSEVELT *enters dressed in his golf clothes. He is excited.*

ROOSEVELT: Hey Harmond, you should have seen it. I made two birdies on the back nine. I shot my best round ever. I couldn't believe it. The ball kept falling for me.

OLD JOE: Did I say I was leaving? I got to take care of some important business. I got places to go and people to see.

OLD JOE *exits.*

ROOSEVELT: Bernie couldn't figure out what was happening. I told him next time we played I'd give him some strokes.

HARMOND: Did Bernie Smith pay your greens fee?

ROOSEVELT: Hell Bernie paid the greens fee, paid for our caddies and picked up the tip. From the minute I set foot in Cedar Oaks Golf Course it was made clear my money was no good there. This is the big time.

HARMOND: How'd it go at the 19<sup>th</sup> hole? How many cards you pass out?

ROOSEVELT: I was the center of the table. Everybody was buying me drinks cause of my game. The one guy was Australian, some kind of junk bond investor. And all I could get from the other guy was he must be independently wealthy. He plays golf twice a day. That's gonna be me one day.

HARMOND: Yeah, after you retire. If you can still walk.

ROOSEVELT: Naw , Harmond. It's gonna be much sooner than that.

ROOSEVELT *smiles like the cat who ate the canary.*

**Fishbowl Excerpt #6**

Act II, Scene 1 (p. 53)

*The lights come up on the office. In HARMOND's area of the office the campaign poster is up: "HOLD ME TO IT Harmond Wilks for Mayor." HARMOND sits listening to the radio. ROOSEVELT'S voice comes out of the radio.*

ROOSEVELT: . . . When you find yourself on the back nine and up by more than four strokes never forget you're always one stroke away from disaster. Take it on hole at a time. I learned this watching Neville Alcorn at the '88 Master's. He was a shot away from putting on the green jacket when he chose his seven iron from 180 yards out. He could've made it in two strokes had he chosen his pitching wedge. With the seven iron you can get more distance but you give up ball control. The ball came out hot and looking for water. It took him ten strokes to finish the hole. That's why on the back nine you should always play it safe from the fairway. If you're up by at least four strokes you can afford to be conservative. Also, to maintain ball control remember to glide through your stroke. That's the best way to get to your putter. Next week I'll tell you the secret to getting your handicap down. This is Radio Golf with Roosevelt Hicks. Making your game hotter with every stroke. (Instrumental version of "Blue Skies begins playing.) Wishing you blue skies and stay out of the sand traps. WBTZ. It'll burn ya!

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**Jigsaw Excerpt #1**

Act I, Scene 1 (pp. 11-12)

- HARMOND: I don't know how Model Cities got on there. It should say Sarah Degree Health Center.
- ROOSEVELT: It's not going to say anything if the city doesn't declare the Hill District blighted. How are we going to do this if we don't get the fed money?
- HARMOND: What are you worried for? The feds are ready to fund the project. And the city's not going to mess that up. They're not going to pass up five million dollars even if it is for minority redevelopment. They're going to declare it blighted.
- ROOSEVELT: We're out two hundred thousand dollars ourselves if they don't. That's real money out of our pockets. We paid the architect fee, contractor's holding fee, surveyor's fee, the demolition fee. It cost five thousand dollars just for the building permits. That's coming out of our pockets. This shit should have been taken care of months ago.
- HARMOND: You know it takes six months to get a street light replaced.
- ROOSEVELT: If things don't turn around in six months the bank will have the keys to my house and Arleen's new SAAB. I'll have to drive Arlen to work and rent a house from you if the blight don't come through. They'll have to fight me over my Lexus. I can't afford six months like you.
- HARMOND: City council has to go through all that bureaucracy. But it'll come through. Any fool can look around here and see that the Hill District's blighted. Herm's on top of it.
- ROOSEVELT: He's not but so much on top of it. The other city councilmen still want to shake Gordy's hand. It's him that's holding it up. Gordy with his do-nothing ass. When the newspapers started calling him "Do-Nothing Gordy" that's the only tie they ever got anything right.
- HARMOND: Everybody knows the Democratic Party's looking to dump Gordy. When I announce my candidacy at the groundbreaking ceremony next month you'll feel the ground shift and the wind will start blowing our way. Once the party's behind me, all the city council will be in line to shake *my* hand. See how fast the Hill District's declared blighted then.
- ROOSEVELT: I'll trust you on that. Just don't forget about getting me my office.

**Jigsaw Excerpt #2**

Act I, Scene 2 (pp. 19-20)

OLD JOE: Are you a lawyer? I need a lawyer. I'd go to see the gypsy if I knew where to find one.

HARMOND: This is a redevelopment office. You have to go to Hill House. They'll get you a lawyer down there.

OLD JOE: Somebody sent me by here. Say you was a big man. I always wanted to be a big man. like you.

HARMOND: I ain't a big man. I'm going to run for mayor. If I win I'll be a big man.

OLD JOE: They ain't gonna let no black man be mayor. Got too many keys. The mayor got more keys than the janitor. They ain't gonna let you have that many keys.

**Jigsaw Excerpt #3**

Act I, Scene 2 (p. 28)

ROOSEVELT: Look at this.

HARMOND *reads* "Roosevelt Hicks. Vice President. Mellon Bank." This is long overdue. Now you can afford to take me out to lunch.

ROOSEVELT: That's the second card I gave out. I gave the first one to John Albrecht so he won't forget I'm a Vice President at Mellon Bank. He's still pissed it came from above him that he had to promote me. He had somebody else in mind. Wait till Bernie Smith sees that. This is the big time. Nothing but blue skies.

*Sings*

Blue skies smiling at me  
Nothing but blue skies do I see

Never saw the sun shining so bright  
Never saw things going so right

ROOSEVELT *suddenly notices something out the window and bolts for the door.*

ROOSEVELT: Hey! Hey! Get off my car!

**Jigsaw Excerpt #4**

Act I, Scene 3 (p. 36)

- HARMOND: What? What happened? What are you talking about?
- ROOSEVELT: I was the center of the table and the conversation was going as good as my game. There I was holding my own, breaking out ahead of the pack at a table of millionaires. Then I look up and it was just me and Bernie sitting there. Man to man. I thought to myself this is where I've been trying to get to my whole life. And then it happened. Bernie Smith wants to partner with me to buy W-B-T-Z Radio.
- HARMOND: What? You're putting me on.
- ROOSEVELT: Not only that but I'd be in charge. Bernie wants to be a silent partner. I call all the shots! I get to run day to day operations. I'm in charge of programming. Most important I set the ad rates. My ship has come in.
- HARMOND: But you don't know shit about radio.
- ROOSEVELT: I know radio is the best advertising platform out there. You have no idea how much money's to be made in radio right now. Rates are sky high and climbing every day.
- HARMOND: Why's Bernie Smith want to partner with you? What's he get out of this?
- ROOSEVELT: We get to buy the station for two-thirds of what it's worth. We buy it at an undervalued price and right out of the gate we're ahead making money.
- HARMOND: That doesn't make any sense. Why would the owner of the station sell it undervalued? Is the station in debt?
- ROOSEVELT: The owner gets a tax incentive. It's an advantage for him and an advantage for us.
- HARMOND: Incentive for what? What do you bring to the table?
- ROOSEVELT: The FCC offers a Minority Tax Certificate.
- HARMOND: So you're the black face? You're just the front?
- ROOSEVELT: Naw, Harmond. Naw. I get to get in the door. Remember in school we used to say we wanted to be in the room when they count the money? You're there already. This is my shot.
- HARMOND: You'll get in the room. All it takes is some time. You can't let Bernie Smith use you like this.
- ROOSEVELT: This is how you do it! This is how everybody does it. You don't think Mellon has ever been used? We're talking about an eight million dollar radio station! This is the game! I'm at the table! There was a time they

didn't let any blacks at the table. You opened the door. You shined the shoes. You served the drinks. And they went in the room and made the deal. I'm in the room! Them motherfuckers who bought and traded them railroads... how do you think they did it? This is business. This is the way it's done in America. I get to walk away with a piece of an asset worth eight million dollars. I don't care if somebody else makes some money cause of a tax break. I get mine and they get theirs. I pull this off and next time I'm on the other side of the deal, sitting at the head of the table. Right now I'm sitting here. I'd rather that than to be sitting on the other side of the door. Harmond, I have to take this. This is not going to come along again. The window of opportunity is already starting to close. If I don't do this Bernie will get somebody else.

**Jigsaw Excerpt #5**

Act I, Scene 4 (p. 42)

STERLING: I ain't here to interfere with your work. I just stopped by to check on the job.

HARMOND: When I called the union and tried to get you on the job they said you weren't a member.

STERLING: Naw...you don't understand. I'm my own union. I got my own everything. Except my own bank. But I got my own truck. I got my own tools. I got my own rules and I got my own union. I don't play no games. I have to have my own. That's the only way I got everything. I've been going through the backdoor all my life. See people get confused about me. They did that ever since we was in school. But I know how to row a boat. I been on the water a long time. I know what it takes to plug the holes. I ain't dumb. Even through some people think I am. That give me an advantage. I found that out when I was in the orphanage. Mr. Redwood taught me that. He told me you ain't dumb you just faster than everybody else. I was so fast it made me look slow. I was waiting for them to catch up...that made it look like I was standing around doing nothing. They kept me behind in the fourth grade 'cause I wouldn't add twelve and twelve. I thought it was stupid. Everybody know there's 12 to a dozen and 24 to two dozens. I don't care if it's donuts or oranges. They handed me the test and I turned it in blank. If you had 17 dollars and bought a parrot for 12 dollars how many dollars would you have left? Who the hell gonna spend twelve dollars on a parrot? What you gonna do with it? Do you know how many chickens you can buy for twelve dollars? They thought I didn't know the answer. Every time somebody come to adopt me they say, "Well, Sterling's a little slow." That stuck with me. I started to believe it myself. Maybe they knew something I didn't know. That's when Mr. Redwood told me, "You ain't dumb. You just faster than everybody else." I've been going in the backdoors all my life 'cause they don't never let me in the front.

**Jigsaw Excerpt #6**

OLD JOE: That's a nice pin you got there. That look like the flag.

HARMOND: Yeah that's the stars and stripes. I can get you one.

OLD JOE: Naw. I just say that's a nice pin. Nice colors. The Red White and Blue. We had a flag during the war. Company B 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Fellow named Joe Mott carried the flag. He got shot in the head on the second of November 1942. He was betting against it but he lost.

HARMOND: My brother died under that flag.

OLD JOE: Lots of men died under that flag. That American flag was everywhere. Joe Mott carried it into battle but it was everywhere. In the mess hall. In the dance hall. We had a great big mess hall and they would bring the women in from the town and we'd have a great big old dance. You look up and there would be that flag hanging behind the bandstand. They had two. One behind the bandstand and another one on the other side of the hall. They look nice. That flag was everywhere. You saw it in the morning when you woke up and you saw it at night before you went to bed. Sometimes you saw it in your sleep. When the time come and I saw Joe Mott with that flag...shot right through the head... bullet went in one end and come out the other...I don't know where it went after that. When I saw him fall I said, 'No I ain't gonna let you get away with nothing like that.' That's what I said when I picked up that flag. This the flag on *this* side of the battle. That's what side I'm on. Joe Mott ain't died for nothing. If his life don't mean nothing then my life don't mean nothing. If his life don't mean nothing then my life don't mean nothing. I had sense enough to see that. A lot of people can't see that. I can't let him die and let the flag lay there. I was the closest one to it. I didn't even think about it. I just picked it up and carried it right up to the day I got discharged. December 4, 1945. I got out the army and went and saw Joe Mott's mother. She live down in Georgia. I went down there and saw her. walking down the street a white fellow stopped me. Reached up and tore my flag off my coat. Told me I ain't had no right to walk around with an American flag. I hope they let you keep yours.

**Jigsaw Excerpt #7**

- HARMOND: If I win I'm going to be mayor of the city of Pittsburg. I'm gonna be mayor of all the people.
- STERLING: The white mayor he be the mayor of white folks. Black folks can't get the streets cleaned. The schools don't have no textbooks. Don't have no football uniforms. The mayor be the mayor for white folks. As soon as black folks start a club or something the first thing they say is it just ain't gonna be for blacks. Why not? They got five hundred thousand things that be just for white folks. If they have fourteen hundred students out at Pitt eating lunch in the cafeteria and they have five black people eating lunch together they say. 'Look, see, they segregate themselves.' They ain't said nothing about them thirteen hundred and ninety five white folks eating lunch by themselves. What's wrong with being the mayor for black folks?
- HARMOND: I'm going to be the mayor of everybody. It's not about being white or black it's about being American. Did you see in the paper today where Cincinnati's trying to get Wilson Sporting Goods to relocate there? I'm working on a plan to bring them to Pittsburg by putting together a hundred million dollar tax incentive based on manufacturing hours. Offer them that site for a manufacturing facility right there where the steel mill was. A hundred million dollars is a powerful incentive. Cincinnati's not going to do that. Plus you have the rivers and railroads. We have the airports and the banks. And this is a sports town. Cincinnati can't compete with us.

**Jigsaw Excerpt #8**

- MAME: I just drove by the site. They got two bulldozers sitting up there.
- HARMOND: What are you talking about bulldozers? They can't tear down the house. I got a temporary injunction.
- NAME: There's a bunch of people up there too. They're passing out these fliers. *(reads from the flier)* "COME ONE COME ALL Paint Party 1839 Wylie Avenue Thursday 10AM." That's what they're having... a party. Got music blasting. Got the barbecue cooking. Kids running around. Looks like the Fourth of July.
- HARMOND: I don't care what's going on. They can't tear down the house.
- NAME: *(looking at the campaign poster)* "Harmond Wilks for Mayor. Hold Me To It." Mayor Wilks... That was almost you. You could've been mayor then governor then Senator Wilks. All that was ahead for you. It was right there. All you had to do was follow the plan.
- HARMOND: I've been following plans my whole goddamn life. My father set Wilks Realty out before me when I got out of school. All I had to do was follow the plan. It was a Monday. I got that morning and went into work with him. We walked in Wilks Realty and there on one of the doors was my name "Harmond Wilks". That looked good. I thought, "Yeah, this is what I'm supposed to do". My father didn't say anything to me about it. He walked ahead into his office and I walked into mine. Sat there at the desk. There were new tablets...new pens in the drawers. Now what? I sat there awhile. Then the phone rang and I answered it. All I had to do was follow the plan. I can't follow the plan this time. I'm afraid you look away from what's right too long you won't turn back. Start all the time looking for what's in this for me.

**Jigsaw Excerpt # 9**

STERLING: I got money too. You think you the only one got money. Money make you special?

*(STERLING goes into his pocket and takes out some bills.)* There. Now what? Show me your money. Come on. Show me your money. I ain't sure you got none. There's mine. Where's yours?

ROOSEVELT: I said money. You don't know what money is. When I go to the bank I need a wheelbarrow. They send me straight to the weighing station. Say they weigh it up now and I count it later.

STERLING: You know what you are? It took me a while to figure it out. You a Negro. White people will get confused and call you a nigger but they don't know like I know. I know the truth of it. I'm a nigger. Negroes are the worst thing in God's creation. Niggers got style. Negroes got blindyestist. A god knows it's a dog. A cat knows it's a cat But a Negro don't know he's a Negro. He thinks he's a white man. It's Negroes like you who hold us back.

ROOSEVELT: Who's us? Roosevelt Hicks is not part of any of us. It's not my fault if your daddy's in jail, your mama's on drugs, you little sister's pregnant and the kids don't have any food cause the welfare cut off the money. Roosevelt Hicks ain't holding nobody back. Roosevelt Hicks got money. Roosevelt Hicks got a job because Roosevelt Hicks wanted one. You niggers kill me blaming somebody else for your troubles. Get up off your ass. . . quit stealing. . . quit using drugs. . . go to school. . . get a job. . . pay your taxes. Oh I see you can't do that cause Roosevelt Hicks is holding you back.

STERLING: Yeah you holding me back. You go around kissing the white man's ass then when they see me they think I'm supposed to kiss it too. You ever notice how glad they are when they see you coming. Go on downtown and kiss some more ass cause you ain't wanted around here. I'm talking to Mr. Wilks.

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