

Name _____

Class Period _____

Students entering **English II Honors** should print and complete this assignment. Handwrite the responses neatly in complete sentences. **Due the first Friday of school.**

Questions: aseeling@holysaviormenard.com

English II Honors Summer Reading

Our Town by Thornton Wilder

In his "Foreword," Donald Margulies calls Our Town a radical play largely because it is so minimalistic, consisting of "a bare stage, spare language, archetypal characters." As you read, notice the "radical" techniques that Thornton Wilder uses to portray the people and lives of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire.

Consider this question as you read Our Town: What does Wilder want us to recognize and understand about these people and about their lives? **EVERY DETAIL MATTERS** – Given the quotation, as you read, consider the idea that every word and detail the author has included in this play carries great significance. What are the significant details you notice, and why might these details be important and worthy of our thoughtful attention?

ACT ONE

Explain how Wilder develops the motifs of birth and death in Act I. Include specific quotations to support your answer.

ACT TWO

How much time passes between the end of Act I and the beginning of Act II? How do the Stage Manager's comments suggest the theme of the cycle of life? Use text to support your answer.

ACT THREE

Paraphrase the Stage Manager's comments about death. According to him, what happens to people after they die? Answer thoroughly using text for support.

Short Readings

Theme is the overall meaning of a literary work. Some common literary themes are “good and evil,” “perseverance,” survival,” “family ties,” “faith,” “death and loss,” and “generosity.” As you read the assigned short readings, consider a prominent theme and how the author develops the theme in the story. Then, **write a five-to-six sentence explanation for each**. Include **textual evidence** as support. Use the third person only; do not use contractions. Prefer strong verbs and adjectives. Write about literature using the present tense of the verb.

1-“Rip Van Winkle”

2-“The Snows of Kilimanjaro”

3-“Straws Into Gold: The Metamorphosis of the Everyday”
