Death of a Salesman / text 2 / Reading A

Answer the questions below on a separate paper:

1. Biff has been away for 15 years. What are the two brothers speaking about now?

HAPPY (with deep sentiment): Funny, Biff, y'know? Us sleeping in here again? The old beds. (He pats his bed affectionately.) All the talk that went across those two beds, huh? Our whole lives.

BIFF: Yeah. Lotta dreams and plans.

2. What feeling is suggested by Happy in these lines:

HAPPY: [...] You taught me everything I know about women. Don't forget that.

3. How does this feeling show in the picture below: camera angle, positions, gazes.



4. How did the younger brother and the elder brother evolve during Biff's absence?

HAPPY: [...] I think I got less bashful and you got more so. What happened, Biff? Where's the old humor, the old confidence?

BIFF: No, I'm mixed up very bad. Maybe I oughta get married. Maybe I oughta get stuck into something. Maybe that's my trouble. I'm like a boy. I'm not married, I'm not in business, I just —I'm like a boy.

HAPPY: [...] I don't know what the hell I'm workin' for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment —all alone. And I think of the rent I'm paying. And it's crazy.

5. What aspects of the American way of life is criticised in the passage?

BIFF: [...] To suffer fifty weeks of the year for the sake of a two week vacation, when all you really desire is to be outdoors, with your shirt off. And always to have to get ahead of the next fella. And still —that's how you build a future.

Ask the questions below to your partner:

- 1. What do we understand about the mental state of Willie Loman?
- 2. What's puzzling about Biff?

- 3. How do we understand that Willie feels guilty about Biff's failure in life?
- 4. All his life, Biff has felt like a bird in a cage; how does he express this feeling?
- 5. How is this feeling suggested in the picture below?

