

Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller (1949)

TEXT ONE (03:17 – 10:29)

Willy Loman, a travelling salesman, is getting back home from a sales trip. He and his wife Linda have two sons, Biff, 34, and Happy, 32. Biff has just returned home after 15 years of drifting. Happy, who lives in his own apartment is also home to visit.

5	WILLY (<i>with wonder</i>): I was driving along, you understand? And I was fine. I was even observing the scenery. You can imagine, me looking at scenery, on the road every week of my life. But it's so beautiful up there, Linda, the trees are so thick*, and the sun is warm. I opened the windshield and just let the warm air bathe over me. And then all of a sudden I'm goin' off the road! I'm tellin'ya, I absolutely forgot I was driving. <u>If I'd gone the other way over the white line I might've killed somebody.</u>	thick : dense, impenetrable
10	So I went on again — and five minutes later I'm dreamin' again, and I nearly... (<i>He presses two fingers against his eyes.</i>) I have such thoughts, I have such strange thoughts.	
	LINDA: Willy, dear. Talk to them again. There's no reason why you can't work in New York.	
15	WILLY: They don't need me in New York. I'm the New England man. I'm vital in New England.	
	LINDA: But you're sixty years old. They can't expect you to keep* travelling every week.	to keep + ing : to go on + ing
20	WILLY: I'll have to send a wire* to Portland. I'm supposed to see Brown and Morrison tomorrow morning at ten o'clock to show the line. Goddammit, I could sell them! (<i>He starts putting on his jacket.</i>)	wire : cable, (here) telegram
	LINDA (<i>taking the jacket from him</i>): Why don't you go down to the place tomorrow and tell Howard you've simply got to work in New York? You're too accommodating, dear.	
25	WILLY: <u>If old man Wagner was alive I'd have been in charge of New York now!</u> That man was a prince, he was a masterful man. But that boy of his, that Howard, he don't appreciate. When I went north the first time, the Wagner Company didn't know where New England was!	
30	LINDA: Why don't you tell those things to Howard, dear?	
	WILLY (<i>encouraged</i>): I will, I definitely will. Is there any cheese?	
	LINDA: I'll make you a sandwich.	
	WILLY: No, go to sleep. I'll take some milk. I'll be up right away. The boys in?	
35	LINDA: They're sleeping. Happy took Biff on a date* tonight.	a date : (here) a rendez-vous
	WILLY (<i>interested</i>): That so?	
	LINDA: It was so nice to see them shaving together, one behind the other, in the bathroom. And going out together. You notice? The whole house smells of shaving lotion.	
40	WILLY: Figure it out*. Work a lifetime to pay off a house. You finally own it, and there's nobody to live in it.	to figure out : to imagine
	LINDA: Well, dear, life is a casting off*. It's always that way.	a casting off : a process of separation
	WILLY: No, no, some people- some people accomplish something. Did Biff say anything after I went this morning?	
45	LINDA: <u>You shouldn't have criticised him</u> , Willy, especially after he just got off the train. You mustn't lose your temper* with him.	to lose one's temper (with...) : to get angry (with...)
	WILLY: When the hell did I lose my temper? I simply asked him if he was making any money. Is that a criticism?	
	LINDA: But, dear, how could he make any money?	
50	WILLY (<i>worried and angered</i>): There's such an undercurrent* in him. He became a moody* man. Did he apologize when I left this	undercurrent : air, feeling moody : temperamental

morning?

LINDA: He was crestfallen*, Willy. You know how he admires you. I think if he finds himself, then you'll both be happier and not fight any more.

crestfallen : very sad

WILLY: How can he find himself on a farm? Is that a life? A farmhand? In the beginning, when he was young, I thought, well, a young man, it's good for him to tramp* around, take a lot of different jobs. But it's more than ten years now and he has yet to make thirty-five dollars a week!

to tramp : to walk (like a vagabond)

LINDA: He's finding himself, Willy.

WILLY: Not finding yourself at the age of thirty-four is a disgrace!

LINDA: Shh!

WILLY: The trouble is he's lazy, goddammit!

LINDA: Willy, please!

WILLY: Biff is a lazy bum!

LINDA: They're sleeping. Get something to eat. Go on down.

WILLY: Why did he come home? I would like to know what brought him home.

LINDA: I don't know. I think he's still lost, Willy. I think he's very lost.

WILLY: Biff Loman is lost. In the greatest country in the world a young man with such — personal attractiveness, gets lost. And such a hard worker. There's one thing about Biff — he's not lazy.

LINDA: Never.

WILLY (*with pity and resolve*): I'll see him in the morning; I'll have a nice talk with him. I'll get him a job selling. He could be big in no time. My God! Remember how they used to follow him around in high school? When he smiled at one of them their faces lit up. When he walked down the street... (*He loses himself in reminiscences.*)

LINDA (*trying to bring him out of it*): Willy, dear, I got a new kind of American-type cheese today. [...]

WILLY: Why do you get American when I like Swiss?

LINDA: I just thought you'd like a change...

WILLY: I don't want a change! I want Swiss cheese. Why am I always being contradicted?

LINDA (*with a covering laugh*): I thought it would be a surprise.

WILLY: Why don't you open a window in here, for God's sake?

LINDA (*with infinite patience*): They're all open, dear.

WILLY: The way they boxed us in here. Bricks and windows, windows and bricks.

LINDA: We should've bought the land next door.

WILLY: The street is lined with cars. There's not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don't grow any more, you can't raise a carrot in the back yard. They should've had a law against apartment houses. Remember those two beautiful elm* trees out there? When I and Biff hung the swing* between them?

LINDA: Yeah, like being a million miles from the city.

WILLY: They should've arrested the builder for cutting those down. They massacred the neighbourhood. (*Lost.*) More and more I think of those days, Linda. This time of year it was lilac* and wisteria*. And then the peonies* would come out, and the daffodils*. What fragrance in this room!

elm tree : orme ➡



swing : balançoire

lilac : lilas

wisteria : glycine

peony : pivoine

daffodil : jonquille

TEXT ONE : comprehension

1. Main facts :
 - a. What nearly happened to Willy on his way back home ?
 - b. What does Linda suggest to do about that ?
 - c. What happened in the morning before Willy left the house ?
2. Details :
 - a. Who is Howard Wagner ? What is wrong with him ?
 - b. What is the problem about the cheese ? What does that reveal about Willy ?
 - c. What is the problem with the windows ? What does that reveal about Willy ?
3. Quotes : pick up sentences from the script showing ...
 - a. ...Willy's opinions about his position in the firm.
 - b. ...Willy's opinions about Biff.
 - c. ...Willy's opinions about urban development.

TEXT ONE : grammar : *unreality in the past*

MODAL + HAVE + Participe Passé : "I might have killed somebody"

1. Lire le point 3.e.i (reproche) dans les pages jaunes, et 3.e.ii en entier
2. Traduisez en français les quatre énoncés soulignés dans le script.
3. Traduisez les énoncés suivants, en reprenant la tournure MODAL + HAVE + Participe Passé
 - a. Si Willy avait obtenu un poste à New York, il aurait été moins surmené.
 - b. Willy a dû perdre ses esprits quelques secondes en conduisant.
 - c. Linda aurait dû acheter du fromage suisse.
 - d. Biff aurait pu gagner beaucoup d'argent s'il n'avait pas été fainéant.
 - e. Les deux ormes devaient être magnifiques, tout comme les glycines et les pivoines.
 - f. Si le quartier n'avait pas été massacré, les jonquilles auraient pu y pousser.
 - g. Il se peut que Willy ait perdu tout sens de la réalité.

TEXT TWO (04:50 – 13:50)

The scene takes place in the boys' former bedroom. Willy can be heard downstairs speaking to himself.

	HAPPY (<i>getting out of bed</i>): He's going to get his license* taken away if he keeps that up. I'm getting nervous about him, y'know, Biff?	licence : (here) driving licence
	BIFF: His eyes are going.	
5	HAPPY: <u>I've driven with him. He sees all right. He just doesn't keep his mind on it. I drove into the city with him last week.</u> He stops at a green light and then it turns red and he goes. (<i>He laughs.</i>)	
	BIFF: Maybe he's color-blind.	
10	HAPPY: Pop*? Why he's got the finest eye for color in the business. You know that.	Pop : Dad
	BIFF (<i>sitting down on his bed</i>): I'm going to sleep.	
	HAPPY: You're not still sour* on Dad, are you, Biff?	sour : acid, (here) unfriendly
	BIFF: He's all right, I guess.	
15	WILLY (<i>underneath them, in the living room</i>): Yes, sir, eighty thousand miles — eighty-two thousand!	
	BIFF: You smoking?	
	HAPPY (<i>holding out a pack of cigarettes</i>): Want one?	
	BIFF (<i>taking a cigarette</i>): I can never sleep when I smell it.	
20	WILLY: What a simonizing* job, heh?	to simonize : to polish, to lustre (<i>Willy is talking to himself about the old Chevy. Biff had polished it before they sold it when it was 82000 miles old</i>)
	HAPPY (<i>with deep sentiment</i>): Funny, Biff, y'know? Us sleeping in here again? The old beds. (<i>He pats his bed affectionately.</i>) All the talk that went across those two beds, huh? Our whole lives.	
	BIFF: Yeah. Lotta dreams and plans.	
25	HAPPY (<i>with a deep and masculine laugh</i>): About five hundred women would like to know what was said in this room. (<i>They share a soft laugh.</i>)	
	BIFF: Remember that big Betsy something — what the hell was her name — over on Bushwick Avenue?	
30	HAPPY (<i>combing his hair</i>): With the collie dog!	
	BIFF: That's the one. I got you in there, remember?	
	HAPPY: Yeah, that was my first time — I think. Boy, there was a pig. (<i>They laugh, almost crudely.</i>) You taught me everything I know about women. Don't forget that.	
35	BIFF: I bet you forgot how bashful* you used to be. Especially with girls.	bashful : shy, reserved, timid
	HAPPY: Oh, I still am, Biff.	
	BIFF: Oh, go on.	
	HAPPY: I just control it, that's all. <u>I think I got less bashful and you got more so. What happened, Biff? Where's the old humor, the old confidence?</u> (<i>He shakes Biff's knee. Biff gets up and moves restlessly about the room.</i>) What's the matter?	
40	BIFF: Why does Dad mock me all the time?	
	HAPPY: He's not mocking you, he...	
45	BIFF: Everything I say there's a twist of mockery on his face. I can't get near him.	
	HAPPY: <u>He just wants you to make good, that's all. I wanted to talk to you about Dad for a long time, Biff. Something's — happening to him. He — talks to himself.</u>	
50	BIFF: I noticed that this morning. But he always mumbled*.	to mumble : to speak softly and unclearly
	HAPPY: But not so noticeable. It got so embarrassing I sent him to Florida. And you know something? Most of the time he's talking to you.	

55	BIFF: What's he say about me? HAPPY: I can't make* it out. BIFF: What's he say about me? HAPPY: I think the fact that you're not settled*, that you're still kind of up in the air...	to make something out : to understand settled : established
60	BIFF: There's one or two other things depressing him, Happy. HAPPY: What do you mean? BIFF: Never mind. Just don't lay* it all to me. HAPPY: But I think if you just got started — I mean — is there any future for you out there? BIFF: I tell ya, Hap, I don't know what the future is. I don't know — what I'm supposed to want.	don't lay it all to me : don't put all the blame on me
65	HAPPY: What do you mean? BIFF: Well, I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk*, salesman, business of one kind or another. And it's a measly* manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in summer. To devote your whole life to keeping stock, or making phone calls, or selling or buying. 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*.	shipping clerk : <i>manutentionnaire</i> measly : derisory, insufficient,
70	And still — that's how you build a future. [...]	
75	BIFF: <u>I've always made a point of not wasting my life, and every time I come back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life.</u> HAPPY: You're a poet, you know that, Biff? You're a — you're an idealist!	fella (fam) : fellow, colleague
80	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. Are you content, Hap? You're a success, aren't you? Are you content?	I'm mixed up : I'm confused oughta (fam) : ought to get stuck : get established
85	HAPPY: Hell, no! BIFF: Why? You're making money, aren't you?	
90	HAPPY (<i>moving about with energy, expressiveness</i>): All I can do now is wait for the merchandise manager to die. And suppose I get to be merchandise manager? He's a good friend of mine, and he just built a terrific estate* on Long Island. And he lived there about two months and sold it, and now he's building another one. He can't enjoy it once it's finished. And I know that's just what I would do. 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. But then, it's what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I'm lonely.	an estate : a house with some land around it
95		

TEXT TWO : comprehension

4. Main facts :
 - a. What are Willy's problems, according to Happy ?
 - b. What's wrong with Biff ?
 - c. What's wrong with Happy ?
5. Details : say if the following statements are right or wrong, and justify your point from the script.
 - a. Willy cannot distinguish colours.
 - b. Happy had been deeply in love with a girl called Betsy.
 - c. Biff never went to college.
6. Quotes : pick up sentences from the script showing that ...
 - a. ... Biff is not cross with his dad.
 - b. ... Biff does not understand his dad.
 - c. ... Biff does not know what he would like to do.

TEXT TWO : grammar : *present and past facts*

1. Lire le point 3.a, 3.b et 3c dans les pages jaunes.
2. Traduisez en français les quatre énoncés soulignés dans le script.
3. Traduisez les énoncés suivants avec la forme HAVE (HAD) + Participe Passé, ou le prétérit
 - a. As-tu déjà vu beaucoup de films avec Dustin Hoffman ?
 - b. J'ai vu *Tootsie* à sa sortie. Mais je n'ai pas encore vu *Le Lauréat*.
 - a. Moi j'ai vu *Kramer contre Kramer* mais j'avais déjà lu le roman.
 - b. J'ignorais que c'était tiré d'un livre.
 - a. Oh pardon, qu'as-tu dit ? Je n'écoutais pas !
 - b. Peu importe, j'ai dû dire une ânerie.

TEXT THREE (17:37 – 21:44)

The scene takes place downstairs during the night.

(Willy is gradually addressing — physically — a point offstage, speaking through the wall of the kitchen, and his voice has been rising in volume to that of a normal conversation.)

WILLY: I've been wondering why you polish the car so careful.
5 [...] *(He pauses, then nods in approbation for a few seconds, then looks upward.)* Biff, first thing we gotta do when we get time is clip that big branch over the house. Afraid it's gonna fall in a storm and hit the roof. [...] Soon as you finish the car, boys, I wanna see ya. I got a surprise for you, boys.

10 BIFF *(offstage)*: Whatta ya got, Dad?
WILLY: No, you finish first. Never leave a job till you're finished — remember that. *(Looking toward the »big trees«.)* Biff, up in Albany I saw a beautiful hammock. I think I'll buy it next trip, and we'll hang it right between those two elms. Wouldn't that be something? Just swingin' there under those branches. Boy, that would be...

15 *(Young Biff and Young Happy appear from the direction Willy was addressing. [...] Biff, wearing a sweater with a block »S«, carries a football.)*

20 BIFF *(pointing in the direction of the car offstage)*: How's that, Pop, professional?

WILLY: Terrific. Terrific job, boys. Good work, Biff.

HAPPY: Where's the surprise, Pop?

WILLY: In the back seat of the car.

25 HAPPY: Boy! *(He runs off.)*

BIFF: What is it, Dad? Tell me, what'd you buy?

WILLY : Never mind, something I want you to have.

BIFF *(turns and starts off)*: What is it, Hap?

HAPPY *(offstage)*: It's a punching bag!

30 [...]

BIFF: Gee, how'd you know we wanted a punching bag?

WILLY: Well, it's the finest thing for the timing.

HAPPY *(lies down on his back and pedals with his feet)*: I'm losing weight, you notice, Pop?

35 WILLY *(to Happy)*: Jumping rope is good too.

BIFF: Did you see the new football I got?

WILLY *(examining the ball)*: Where'd you get a new ball?

BIFF: The coach told me to practice my passing.

WILLY: That so? And he gave you the ball, heh?

40 BIFF: Well, I borrowed it from the locker room. *(He laughs confidentially.)*

WILLY *(laughing with him at the theft)*: I want you to return that.

HAPPY: I told you he wouldn't like it!

BIFF *(angrily)*: Well, I'm bringing it back!

45 WILLY *(stopping the argument, to Happy)*: Sure, he's gotta practice with a regulation ball, doesn't he? *(To Biff.)* Coach'll probably congratulate you on your initiative!

BIFF: Oh, he keeps congratulating my initiative all the time, Pop.

50 WILLY: That's because he likes you. If somebody else took that ball there'd be an uproar. So what's the report, boys, what's the report?

BIFF: Where'd you go this time, Dad? Gee we were lonesome for you.

WILLY *(pleased, puts an arm around each boy)*: Lonesome, heh?

55 BIFF: Missed you every minute.

to rise : to go up, to grow

to nod : to move one's head up and down

to clip : to cut (a branch)

hammock : ↘



football : ↘



locker room : ↘



uproar : big noise, tumult

WILLY: Don't say? Tell you a secret, boys. Don't breathe it to a soul. Someday I'll have my own business, and I'll never have to leave home any more.

HAPPY: Like Uncle Charley, heh?

60 WILLY: Bigger than Uncle Charley! Because Charley is not — liked. He's liked, but he's not — well liked.
[...]

WILLY: You nervous, Biff, about the game?

BIFF: Not if you're gonna be there.

65 WILLY: What do they say about you in school, now that they made you captain?

HAPPY: There's a crowd of girls behind him every time the classes change.

70 BIFF (*taking Willy's hand*): This Saturday, Pop, this Saturday — just for you, I'm going to break through for a touchdown.

HAPPY: You're supposed to pass.

BIFF: I'm takin' one play for Pop. You watch me, Pop, and when I take off my helmet, that means I'm breakin' out. Then you watch me crash through that line!

75 WILLY (*kisses Biff*): Oh, wait till I tell this in Boston!

(*Bernard enters. He is younger than Biff, earnest and loyal, a worried boy*).

BERNARD: Biff, where are you? You're supposed to study with me today.

80 WILLY: Hey, looka Bernard. What're you lookin' so anemic about, Bernard?

BERNARD: He's gotta study, Uncle Willy. He's got Regents next week.

HAPPY : Let's box, Bernard!

85 BERNARD: Biff! (*He gets away from Happy.*) Listen, Biff, I heard Mr. Birnbaum say that if you don't start studyin' math he's gonna flunk you, and you won't graduate. I heard him!

WILLY: You better study with him, Biff. Go ahead now.

BERNARD: I heard him!

90 BIFF: Oh, Pop, you didn't see my sneakers! (*He holds up a foot for Willy to look at.*)

WILLY: Hey, that's a beautiful job of printing!

BERNARD (*wiping his glasses*): Just because he printed University of Virginia on his sneakers doesn't mean they've got to graduate him. Uncle Willy!

95 [...]

WILLY: Don't be a pest, Bernard! (*To his boys.*) What an anemic!

BERNARD: Okay, I'm waiting for you in my house, Biff.

(*Bernard goes off. The Lomans laugh.*)

100 WILLY: Bernard is not well liked, is he?

BIFF: He's liked, but he's not well liked.

HAPPY: That's right, Pop.

WILLY: That's just what I mean. Bernard can get the best marks in school, y'understand, but when he gets out in the business world, y'understand, you are going to be five times ahead of him. That's why I thank Almighty God you're both built like Adonises.

105 Because the man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never want.

touchdown : ➡



helmet : ➡



Regents : university exams

to flunk : (fam) to fail an exam

to graduate : to receive a university degree

to want :

1. to desire sth.,
2. (here) to be in need

TEXT THREE : comprehension

1. Main facts :
 - Explain the situation : where and when does the scene take place ? who is Willy speaking to ?
 - Describe the atmosphere of the scene. Give details to show it.
 - Who is playing the role of the killjoy ? Why ?
2. Describe the screenshot below.



3. Quotes : pick up sentences from the script showing that ...
 - a. ... Willy has a lot of ambition.
 - b. ... Willy is proud of his two sons.
 - c. ... Bernard is not so good-looking as Biff or Happy.

TEXT THREE : grammar : *SOME – ANY – NO*

1. Lire le point 4.d.i. dans les pages jaunes.
2. Traduisez les énoncés suivants avec *SOME*, *ANY*, *NO*, ou un composé de type *SOMEBODY*, *ANYBODY*...
 - a. Des spectateurs étaient assis au balcon.
 - b. Il n'y avait pas de représentation le lundi soir.
 - c. Avez-vous vu quelque chose d'étrange sur scène ?
 - d. Y avait-il des figurants au premier acte ?
 - e. Je dormais à la couturière, je n'ai rien vu.
 - f. N'importe quel acteur peut faire cette tirade.
 - g. Il faut du courage et de la patience pour répéter le rôle de Willy.

TEXT FOUR (30:30 – 33:34)

Willy and his neighbour Charley are playing cards in the kitchen.

WILLY: I'm getting awfully tired, Ben.
(*Ben's music is heard. Ben looks around at everything.*)
CHARLEY: Good, keep playing; you'll sleep better. Did you call me Ben?
(*Ben looks at his watch.*)
5 WILLY: That's funny. For a second there you reminded me of my brother Ben.
BEN: I only have a few minutes.
CHARLEY: You never heard from him again, heh? Since that time?
WILLY: Didn't Linda tell you? Couple of weeks ago we got a letter from his
10 wife in Africa. He died.
BEN (*chuckling*): So this is Brooklyn, eh?
CHARLEY: Maybe you're in for some of his money.
WILLY: Naa, he had seven sons. There's just one opportunity I had with that man...
15 BEN: I must take a tram, William. There are several properties I'm looking at in Alaska.
WILLY: Sure, sure! If I'd gone with him to Alaska that time, everything would've been totally different.
CHARLEY: Go on, you'd froze to death up there.
20 WILLY: What're you talking about?
BEN: Opportunity is tremendous in Alaska, William. Surprised you're not up there.
WILLY: Sure, tremendous.
CHARLEY: Heh?
25 WILLY: There was the only man I ever met who knew the answers.
CHARLEY: Who?
BEN: How are you all? [...] Is Mother living with you?
WILLY: No, she died a long time ago.
CHARLEY: Who?
30 BEN: That's too bad. Fine specimen of a lady, Mother.
WILLY (*to Charley*): Heh?
BEN: I'd hoped to see the old girl.
CHARLEY: Who died?
BEN: Heard anything from Father, have you?
35 WILLY (*unnerved*): What do you mean, who died?
CHARLEY: What're you talkin' about?
BEN (*looking at his watch*): William, it's half past eight!
WILLY (*as though to dispel his confusion he angrily stops Charley's hand*). That's my bill!
40 CHARLEY: I put the ace...
WILLY: If you don't know how to play the game I'm not gonna throw my money away on you!
CHARLEY (*rising*): It was my ace, for God's sake!
WILLY: I'm through, I'm through!
45 BEN: When did Mother die?
WILLY: Long ago. Since the beginning you never knew how to play cards.
CHARLEY (*picks up the cards and goes to the door*): All right! Next time I'll bring a deck with five aces.
WILLY: I don't play that kind of game!
50 CHARLEY (*turning to him*): You ought to be ashamed of yourself!
WILLY: Yeah?
CHARLEY: Yeah! (*he goes out.*)
WILLY (*slamming the door after him*): Ignoramus!
BEN (*as Willy comes toward him through the wall-line of the kitchen*): So
55 you're William.

you'd froze : you would have frozen

the old girl : Mother

to dispel : to dissipate

the four aces :



Ignoramus : ignorant person

WILLY (*shaking Ben's hand*): Ben! I've been waiting for you so long! What's the answer? How did you do it?

BEN: Oh, there's a story in that.
(*Linda enters the forestage, carrying the wash basket.*)

60 LINDA: Is this Ben?

BEN (*gallantly*): How do you do, my dear.

LINDA: Where've you been all these years? Willy's always wondered why you...

WILLY (*pulling Ben away from her impatiently*): Where is Dad?

65 Didn't you follow him? How did you get started?

BEN: Well, I don't know how much you remember.

WILLY: Well, I was just a baby, of course, only three or four years old...

BEN: Three years and eleven months.

WILLY: What a memory, Ben!

70 BEN: I have many enterprises, William, and I have never kept books.

WILLY: I remember I was sitting under the wagon in — was it Nebraska?

BEN: It was South Dakota, and I gave you a bunch of wild flowers.

WILLY: I remember you walking away down some open road.

75 BEN (*laughing*): I was going to find Father in Alaska.

WILLY: Where is he?

BEN: At that age I had a very faulty view of geography, William. I discovered after a few days that I was heading south, so instead of Alaska, I ended up in Africa.

80 LINDA: Africa!

WILLY: The Gold Coast!

BEN: Principally diamond mines.

LINDA: Diamond mines!

BEN: Yes, my dear. But I've only a few minutes...

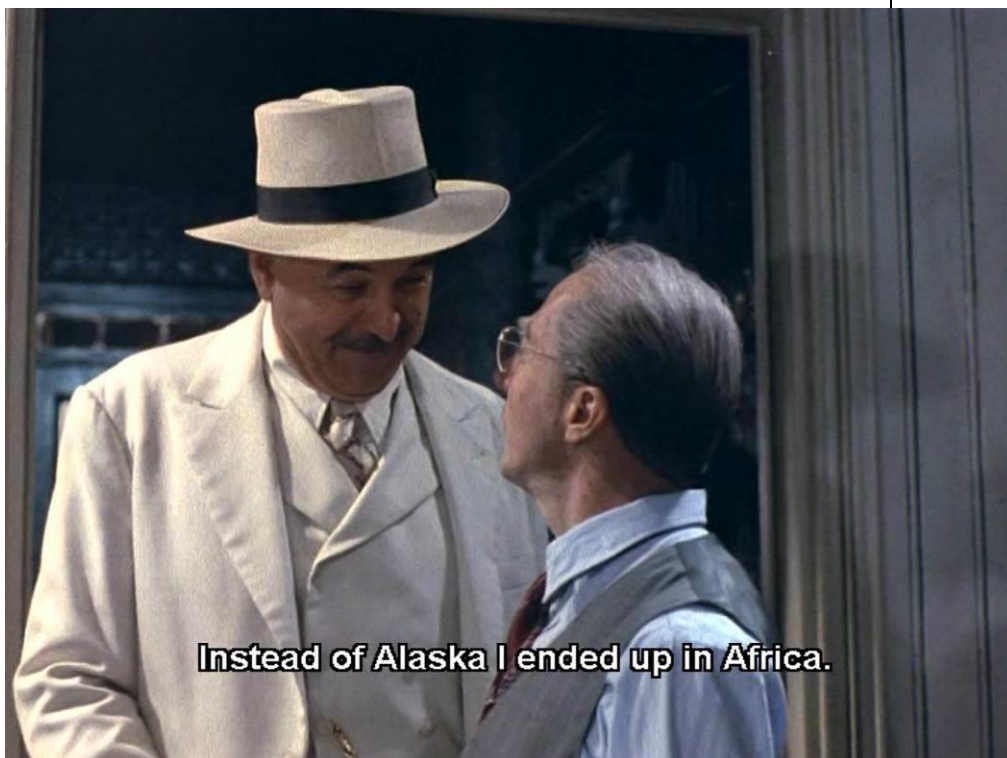
85 WILLY: No! Boys! Boys! (*Young Biff and Happy appear.*) Listen to this. This is your Uncle Ben, a great man! Tell my boys, Ben!

BEN: Why, boys, when I was seventeen I walked into the jungle, and when I was twenty-one I walked out. (*He laughs.*) And by God I was rich.

90 WILLY (*to the boys*): You see what I've been talking about? The greatest things can happen!

books : (here) books of accounts

faulty : imperfect, defective



TEXT FOUR : comprehension

1. Main facts :

- a. Why is Charley puzzled during his conversation with Willy ?
- b. What does Ben want to know ?
- c. How did Ben make a fortune ?

2. Details : say if the following statements are right or wrong, and justify your point from the script.

- a. Willy doesn't regret his decision of not following his brother to Alaska.
- b. Willy and Ben were separated when Ben was a very young boy.
- c. Ben never went to Alaska.

3. Describe the following still from the film.



TEXT FOUR : grammar : QUANTIFIERS

1. Lire le point 4.d.ii. dans les pages jaunes.
2. Traduisez l'énoncé suivant :

Certaines des répliques de Willy ne font pas sens aux yeux de Charley. A plusieurs reprises, Willy parle de choses qui ont peu de lien avec la conversation. Tous les spectateurs observent comment son esprit est envahi par de nombreux souvenirs, qui viennent sur scène et repartent quelques instants après. Peu de pièces ont autant exploré l'âme humaine.

TEXT FIVE (41:25 – 46:00)

Linda, Biff and Happy are talking about Willy in the kitchen, while Willy has gone out for a walk in his slippers at night.

	LINDA: No, a lot of people think he's lost his — <u>balance</u> . But you don't have to be very <u>smart</u> to know what his trouble is. The man is exhausted.	balance : equilibrium smart : (in US) clever, intelligent ; (in GB) elegant
	HAPPY: Sure!	
5	LINDA: A small man can be just as exhausted as a great man. He works for a company thirty-six years this March, opens up unheard-of territories to their trademark, and now in his old age they take his salary away.	
	HAPPY (<i>indignantly</i>): I didn't know that, Mom.	
10	LINDA: You never asked, my dear! Now that you get your spending money <u>someplace</u> else you don't trouble your mind with him.	someplace : somewhere
	HAPPY: But I gave you money last...	
15	LINDA: Christmas time, fifty dollars! To fix the hot water it cost ninety-seven fifty! For five weeks he's been on straight commission, like a beginner, an unknown!	
	BIFF: Those ungrateful bastards!	
20	LINDA: Are they any worse than his sons? [...]He drives seven hundred miles, and when he gets there no one knows him anymore, no one welcomes him. And what goes through a man's mind, driving seven hundred miles home without having earned a cent? Why shouldn't he talk to himself? Why? When he has to go to Charley and borrow fifty dollars a week and pretend to me that it's his pay? How long can that go on? How long? [...]And you tell	
25	me he has no character? The man who never worked a day <u>but</u> for your benefit? When does he get the medal for that? Is this his reward — to turn around at the age of sixty-three and find his sons, who he loved better than his life, one a <u>philandering bum</u> ...	but : except philandering : libertine bum : arse (British), ass (US)
	HAPPY: Mom!	
30	LINDA: That's all you are, my baby! (<i>To Biff.</i>) And you! What happened to the love you had for him? You were such <u>pals</u> ! How you used to talk to him on the phone every night! How lonely he was till he could come home to you!	pals : friends
	BIFF: All right, Mom. I'll live here in my room, and I'll get a job. I'll keep away from him, that's all.	
35	LINDA: No, Biff. You can't stay here and fight all the time.	
	BIFF: He threw me out of this house, remember that.	
	LINDA: Why did he do that? I never knew why.	
40	BIFF: Because I know he's a <u>fake</u> and he doesn't like anybody around who knows!	a fake : a cheater
	LINDA: Why a fake? In what way? What do you mean?	
	BIFF: Just <u>don't lay it all at my feet</u> . It's between me and him — that's all I have to say. I'll <u>chip in</u> from now on. He'll settle for half my pay check. He'll be all right. I'm going to bed. (<i>He starts for the stairs.</i>)	don't lay it all at my feet : don't put all the blame on me chip in : to pay one's part
45	LINDA: He won't be all right.	
	BIFF (<i>turning on the stairs, furiously</i>): I hate this city and I'll stay here. Now what do you want?	
	LINDA: He's dying, Biff.	
50	(<i>Happy turns quickly to her, shocked.</i>)	
	BIFF (<i>after a pause</i>): Why is he dying?	
	LINDA: He's been trying to kill himself.	
	BIFF (<i>with great horror</i>): How?	
	LINDA: Remember I wrote you that he smashed up the car again?	

- 55 In February?
 BIFF: Well?
 LINDA: The insurance inspector came. He said that they have evidence. That all these accidents in the last year weren't accidents.
- 60 HAPPY: How can they tell that? That's a lie.
 LINDA: It seems there's a woman... (*She takes a breath as:*)
 BIFF (*sharply but contained*): What woman?
 LINDA (*simultaneously*):... and this woman...
 LINDA: What?
- 65 BIFF: Nothing. Go ahead.
 LINDA: What did you say?
 BIFF: Nothing, I just said what woman?
 HAPPY: What about her?
 LINDA: Well, it seems she was walking down the road and saw his car. She says that he wasn't driving fast at all, and that he didn't skid. She says he came to that little bridge, and then deliberately smashed into the railing, and it was only the shallowness of the water that saved him.
- 70 BIFF: Oh, no, he probably just fell asleep again.
 LINDA: I don't think he fell asleep.
 BIFF: Why not?
 LINDA: Last month... (*With great difficulty.*) Oh, boys, it's so hard to say a thing like this! [...] I was looking for a fuse. The lights blew out, and I went down the cellar. And behind the fuse box — it happened to fall out — was a length of rubber pipe — just short.
- 80 HAPPY: No kidding!
 LINDA: There's a little attachment on the end of it. I knew right away. And sure enough, on the bottom of the water heater there's a new little nipple on the gas pipe.
 HAPPY (*angrily*): That — jerk.
 BIFF: Did you have it taken off?
 LINDA: I'm — I'm ashamed to. How can I mention it to him? Every day I go down and take away that little rubber pipe. But,
- 90 when he comes home, I put it back where it was. How can I insult him that way? [...] It sounds so old-fashioned and silly, but I tell you he put his whole life into you and you've turned your backs on him. [...] Biff, his life is in your hands!

evidence : proof, indication

skid : lose control of the car

shallow ≠ deep
 shallowness ≠ depth

fuse : *le plomb (électricité)*
 to blow out : to go off
 rubber : *le caoutchouc*
 a pipe : a tube

nipple : *téton, embout*



TEXT FIVE : comprehension

1. Main facts : choose an appropriate title to this passage and justify your choice :
 - a. Willy Loman's responsibility.
 - b. Linda lets it all out.
 - c. Biff's glorious future.
 - d. Happy's revenge.

2. Details : say if the following statements are right or wrong, and justify your point from the script.
 - a. Linda takes the defence of her husband against her son's accusations.

 - b. Biff knows something secret about his father.

 - c. Willy was rescued from a car accident by a woman.

3. Quotes : pick up sentences from the script showing that ...
 - a. ... Linda accuses Happy of being a superficial person.

 - b. ... she accuses Biff of having abandoned his father.

 - c. ... Linda has been unable to talk to Willy about Willy's problems.

TEXT FIVE : grammar revisions : *unreality in the past*

MODAL + HAVE + Participe Passé : "I might have killed somebody"

Traduisez les énoncés suivants

- a. Il se peut que Willy ait tenté de se tuer en voiture.
- b. Il n'a pas pu avoir tant d'accidents par pure coïncidence.
- c. Happy aurait dû s'occuper davantage de son père.
- d. Biff aurait pu s'apercevoir de la détresse de Willy.
- e. Le tuyau de caoutchouc n'a pas pu se trouver là par hasard.

Words with two pronunciations

Some words in English can be pronounced in two different ways: a **full form** (sometimes called “strong form”), and a **reduced form** (sometimes called “weak form”).

The reduced form is generally a schwa [ə], or sometimes an [ɪ].

These words are both monosyllabic words and grammar words. Lexical words are not concerned.









monosyllabic prepositions		monosyllabic pronouns and possessive adjectives		monosyllabic quantifier		monosyllabic auxiliaries	
full	reduced	full	reduced	full	reduced	full	reduced
at	ət	you	yə	some	səm	is	z
to	tə	he	hɪ / I	[sʌm]	(du – de la – des)	are	ə(r)
from	fɾəm	she	ʃhɪ	(certain)		was	wəz
for	fə	we	wɪ	'something	səm'body	were [wɜ:]	wə
on	ən	my	mɪ			been	bɪn
in	ən	your	yə(r)	than	θən	can	kən
		his	ɪz	that	thət (after a noun)	must	məst
						would	wəd
						should	ʃəd

These words are pronounced in their reduced forms, by default.

But they have the full form:

- when they are stressed, form example in an emphasis: “Yes, I *can* do it, contrary to what you think!”
- when at the end of a sentence: “Yes, indeed, we can !” / “What are you looking for?”
- when the auxiliary is negative : isn’t, aren’t, wasn’t, weren’t, can’t, mustn’t, wouldn’t, shouldn’t. Negative auxiliaries are always stressed.

Pair-work: one student will listen to a sentence, and ask his or her partner to read it. Then, give feedback. Then, for the next sentence, you swap over.

1.  What have they been doing? Have they been to London?
2.  Where were you? You were late at your lesson.
3.  He should apologise because he was missing at the last meeting.
4.  Something is wrong in this film. Can somebody explain that to me?
5.  She said that she can’t do it, it is more difficult for her than for me.
6.  You must speak louder to me, or you’ll never get an answer from me.
7.  What do you call it ?
8.  What did you say ?

<p><i>Biff had an interview with his former boss, Bill Oliver, who did not recognise him and did not even pay attention to him.</i></p> <p>BIFF: Yeah, Oliver. All day, as a matter of cold fact. And a lot of instances — facts, Pop, facts about my life came back to me. Who was it, Pop? Who ever said I was a salesman with Oliver?</p> <p>WILLY: Well, you were.</p> <p>BIFF: No, Dad, I was a <u>shipping clerk</u>. ([kla:k] brit / [kl3:k] US)</p> <p>WILLY: But you were practically...</p> <p>BIFF: Dad, I don't know who said it first, but I was never a salesman for Bill Oliver.</p> <p>WILLY: What're you talking about?</p> <p>BIFF: Let's hold on to the facts tonight, Pop. We're not going to get anywhere. I was a shipping clerk.</p> <p>WILLY (<i>angrily</i>): All right, now listen to me...</p> <p>BIFF: Why don't you let me finish?</p> <p>WILLY: I'm not interested in stories about the past or any crap of that kind because the woods are burning, boys, you understand? There's a big blaze going on all around. I was fired today.</p> <p>BIFF (<i>shocked</i>): How could you be?</p> <p>WILLY: I was fired, and I'm looking for a little good news to tell your mother, because the woman has waited and the woman has suffered. The <u>gist</u> of it is that I haven't got a story left in my head, Biff. So don't give me a lecture about facts. I am not interested. What've you got to say to me? Did you see Oliver?</p> <p>[<i>long and confused exchange between Biff and Willy...</i>]</p> <p>WILLY: Tell me what happened!</p> <p>BIFF (<i>to Happy</i>): I can't talk to him!</p> <p>(<i>The light of green leaves. Young Bernard enters</i>)</p> <p>YOUNG BERNARD (<i>frantically</i>): Mrs. Loman, Mrs. Loman!</p> <p>HAPPY: Tell him what happened!</p> <p>BIFF (<i>to Happy</i>): Shut up and leave me alone!</p> <p>WILLY: No, no! You had to go and <u>flunk</u> math!</p> <p>BIFF: What math? What're you talking about?</p> <p>YOUNG BERNARD: Mrs. Loman, Mrs. Loman! (<i>Linda appears in the house.</i>)</p> <p>WILLY (<i>furiously</i>): If you hadn't flunked you'd've been <u>set</u> by now!</p> <p>BIFF: Now, look, I'm gonna tell you what happened, and you're going to listen to me. I waited six hours...</p> <p>HAPPY: What the hell are you saying?</p> <p>BIFF: I kept sending in my name but he wouldn't see me. So finally he... (<i>He</i></p>	<p>A person who is employed in a shipping room to assemble, pack, and send out or receive goods</p> <p>The key idea</p> <p>to fail in an examination</p> <p>settled, established</p>
--	--

<p><i>continues unheard as light fades low on the restaurant.)</i></p> <p>[...]YOUNG BERNARD: Birnbaum flunked him! They won't <u>graduate</u> him!</p> <p>LINDA: But they have to. He's gotta go to the university. Where is he? Biff! Biff!</p> <p>YOUNG BERNARD: No, he left. He went to <u>Grand Central</u>.</p> <p>LINDA: Grand — You mean he went to Boston!</p> <p>YOUNG BERNARD: Is Uncle Willy in Boston?</p> <p>LINDA: Oh, maybe Willy can talk to the teacher. Oh, the poor, poor boy!</p> <p>BIFF (<i>at the table, now audible, holding up a gold <u>fountain pen</u></i>): so <u>I'm washed up</u> <u>with</u> Oliver, you understand? Are you listening to me?</p> <p>WILLY (<i>at a loss</i>): Yeah, sure. If you hadn't flunked...</p> <p>BIFF: Flunked what? What're you talking about?</p> <p>WILLY: Don't blame everything on me! I didn't flunk math — you did! What pen?</p> <p>HAPPY: That was awful <u>dumb</u>, Biff, a pen like that is worth —</p> <p>WILLY (<i>seeing the pen for the first time</i>): You took Oliver's pen?</p> <p>BIFF (<i>weakening</i>): Dad, I just explained it to you.</p> <p>WILLY: You stole Bill Oliver's fountain pen!</p>	<p>they won't give him the diploma</p> <p>New York railway station</p> <p>I don't have any more chance with</p> <p>stupid</p>
---	---



Vocabulary: Fill in the blanks with words underlined in the text.

Biff realises that he never was a salesman with Bill Oliver, but in fact he was just a _____. He can't remember how the idea that he had been a salesman was born. He wants to talk to Willy about his failure, when the _____ of the conversation is revealed: Willy has just been fired by his boss. The three protagonists talk in circles when Willy's mind is assaulted again by past memories.

Out of Willy's mind, Young Bernard shouts that Biff _____ math, and that his teachers refuse to _____ him. And without his diploma, he won't go to college and get _____. So Biff took a train from _____ to see Willy in Boston.

Back to the present, Biff says that he stole a _____ from Bill Oliver, which was a _____ thing to do, because now he is _____ with Bill Oliver.

Interpretation: listen to one commentary, then answer your partner's three questions.

[Commentary A](#) ↔ PARTNER'S QUESTIONS: How does Happy contribute to the denial of reality? / How does Willy force Biff to invent a fake story? / What does Biff understand about his life?

[Commentary B](#) ↔ PARTNER'S QUESTIONS: Why do the three characters have a twisted perception of reality? / What is the common point between Willie and Biff? / What can explain Happy's attitude with women?

How to pronounce very long words? These words are made with prefixes and suffixes.

Words based on verbs: prefixes cannot be stressed, weak suffixes have no impact strong suffixes have an impact:	Words based on nouns: If no suffix, the stress is on -3 weak suffixes have no impact strong suffixes have an impact :
To inform > informative > information (-2) informal > informality (-3)	America (no suffix = -3) > American > Americanise > Americanisation (-2)
To comprehend > comprehensible > incomprehensible	Psychology (no suffix = -3) > psychologise > psychologisation (-2) > psychologically (before ic)
To analyse (no prefix and no suffix = -3) > analyser > analyst	Analysis (no suffix = -3) > analytical (before ic) > analytically (before ic)

Strong suffixes indicate which syllable is stressed, but there can be exceptions:

EE / OO / ESQUE / IQUE : the stress is on syllable -1, or on the suffix
ION / IAL / UAL / UOUS / EOUS / IC : the stress is on syllable -2, or just before the suffix
ITY / IFY / ATE / LAR / OUS : the stress is on syllable -3, or two syllables before the suffix
ORY / ARY : the stress is on syllable -4, or three syllables before the suffix

Let's practise!



The psychological analysis of the scene is incomprehensible.



This information is on the Americanisation of the European society.



There is a particular relationship between the psychoanalytical aspect and the sociological aspect.



I'm interested in psychology, computer sciences and information technology.

Language practise: translation into English.

Nous sommes allés hier soir à la couturière de *Mort d'un Commis Voyageur*, la célèbre pièce d'Arthur Miller. On était assis à l'orchestre, la scène était sombre et on voyait à peine le décor vétuste. Dustin Hoffman avait le rôle de Willie Loman, le premier rôle masculin. Son jeu était excellent, tout comme le jeu de la plupart des acteurs. Mais Malkovitch nous a un peu déçus, étant donné qu'il surjouait le rôle du fils rebelle. S'il avait eu plus de sobriété, le spectacle aurait été bien meilleur.

The Hotel scene (1:35:30 – 1:45:00)

TEXT SEVEN: Sowing seeds (1:45:00 – 1:51:30)

WILLY: Carrots... quarter-inch apart. Rows... one-foot rows. *(He measures it off.)* One foot. Beets. Lettuce. One foot — *(Ben appears.)* What a proposition! Terrific, terrific. 'Cause she's suffered, Ben, the woman has suffered. A man can't go out the way, he came in, Ben, a man has got to add up to something. You can't, you can't — You gotta consider, now. Don't answer so quick. Remember, it's a guaranteed twenty-thousand-dollar proposition. Now look, Ben, I want you to go through the ins and outs of this thing with me. I've got nobody to talk to, Ben, and the woman has suffered, you hear me?

BEN *(standing still, considering)*: What's the proposition?

WILLY: It's twenty thousand dollars on the barrelhead. Guaranteed, gilt-edged.

BEN: You don't want to make a fool of yourself. They might not honor the policy.

WILLY: How can they dare refuse? Didn't I work [...] to meet every premium on the nose? And now they don't pay off? Impossible!

BEN: It's called a cowardly thing, William.

WILLY: Why? Does it take more guts to stand here the rest of my life ringing up a zero?

BEN *(yielding)*: That's a point, William. *(He moves, thinking, turns.)* And twenty thousand — that is something one can feel with the hand, it is there.

WILLY *(now assured, with rising power)*: Oh, Ben, that's the whole beauty of it! I see it like a diamond, shining in the dark, that I can pick up and touch in my hand. Not like — like an appointment! This would not be another damned-fool appointment, Ben, and it changes all the aspects. Because he thinks I'm nothing, see, and so he spites me. But the funeral... *(Straightening up.)* Ben, that funeral will be massive! They'll come from Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire! All the old timers with the strange license plates — that boy will be thunderstruck, Ben, because he never realized — I am known! Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey — I am known, Ben, and he'll see it with his eyes once and for all. He'll see what I am, Ben! He's in for a shock, that boy!

BEN: He'll call you a coward.

WILLY *(suddenly fearful)*: No, that would be terrible.

BEN: Yes. And a damned fool.

WILLY: No, no, he mustn't, I won't have that! *(He is broken and desperate.)*

BEN: He'll hate you, William. [...]

WILLY: And never even let me carry the valises in the house, and simonizing, simonizing that little red car! Why, why can't I give him something and not have him hate me?

BEN: Let me think about it. I still have a little time. Remarkable proposition, but you've got to be sure you're not making a fool of yourself. *(Ben goes out of sight.)*

WILLY: Where the hell is that seed? You can't see nothing out here! They boxed in the whole goddam neighborhood!

BIFF: There are people all around here. Don't you realize that?

WILLY: I'm busy. Don't bother me.

BIFF: I'm saying good-bye to you, Pop. I'm not coming back any more.

WILLY: You're not going to see Oliver tomorrow?

BIFF: I've got no appointment, Dad.

WILLY: He put his arm around you, and you've got no appointment?

BIFF: Pop, get this now, will you? Every time I've left it's been a fight that sent me out of here. Today I realized something about myself and I tried to explain it to you and I — I think I'm just not smart enough to make any sense out of it for you. To hell with whose fault it is or anything like that. *(He takes Willy's arm.)* Let's just wrap it up, heh? Come on in, we'll tell Mom.



the pros and
the cons

without delay

insurance
contract

guts: courage

ring up:
record an
amount on a
cash register.

disdains

license plate:




smart: clever


come to a
conclusion

Vocabulary: Fill in the blanks with words underlined in the text.

Back from the restaurant late at night, Willy is sowing seeds in the garden. He is talking about his life insurance _____ which is worth twenty thousand dollars. If he died, his family could get the money _____ (immediately). He is examining _____ of the question with his brother Ben. But Ben finds the idea cowardly: Willy doesn't have the _____ (bravery) to go on living. He hopes there will be a lot of people at his funeral, with many different _____ on their cars. When Biff sees them, he'll no longer _____ his father. However, Biff tells him he is going for good. This time, Biff wants to _____ and go away. But Willy cannot understand that.


Interpretation: listen to one commentary, then answer your partner's three questions.


 **Commentary A** ↔ PARTNER'S QUESTIONS: What do the seeds symbolise? / What's paradoxical about Willy's idea of his own funeral? / What do the twenty thousand dollars represent for Willy?


 **Commentary B** ↔ PARTNER'S QUESTIONS: How is the feeling of Willy's guilt suggested in the passage? / How does Willy believe he can find redemption? / Why has Biff decided to run away?


Pronunciation of consonants in British English.

The letter H

 Howard has eight houses in Hampshire.


 Harold hates art History.


 Henry, Homer, Harriet, Arnold, Harold.

 Henry himself had his own house.

The sounds P-T-K are more explosive in British English


Water / better / pretty


 I can't even tolerate this preposterous character.

 Peter's got a particular popularity in Kazakhstan.

The letter L has two sounds in English

- Light L (L+vowel): "lalala" (the same sound as in French)
- Dark L : "all all all"
 - L in a final position → girl
 - L+consonant → cold

 The little girl is beautiful and vulnerable.

 The little girl felt cold on the hillside.

Checklist: do you remember the meaning of the following words? What do they symbolise in the play?

two elm trees	bashful	to mumble	the locker room	to flunk	balance
shallow water	to graduate	I'm mixed up	touchdown	shipping clerk	a swing
to simonize	don't lay it all to me	a football	helmet	fountain pen	rubber pipe

Checklist: do you remember these grammar points?

"I **might have** killed somebody" → pages 3 and 15

"**Have** you ever **seen** Tootsie?" → page 6

"Did you see **anything** strange on the stage?" → page 9

"**Few** plays explored the human soul like this one." → page 12

"If he **had had** more sobriety, the play **would have been** way better." → page 19

Checklist: do you remember what we said about the pronunciation of

the letter O?

the letter A?

words with two pronunciations?

very long words?

the consonants H, PTK and L?