

Lesson Plan: Experiencing *The Glass Menagerie* Live

Grade Level: 9–12

Duration: 2–3 class periods (before, during, and after the performance)

Objective: Students will analyze the themes, characters, and symbolism of *The Glass Menagerie* through the lens of live theatre, reflecting on how performance choices shape meaning.

1. Pre-Viewing Activities (1 Class Period)

Goal: Build context and curiosity before the performance.

- **Background Briefing**
- Introduce Tennessee Williams and the semi-autobiographical nature of the play.
- Discuss the historical setting: 1930s America, the Great Depression, and shifting family roles.
- **Key Themes to Watch For**
- Memory vs. reality
- Family obligation vs. personal freedom
- Fragility and escape
- **Character Anticipation**
- Provide short character sketches (Tom, Amanda, Laura, Jim).
- Ask students to predict conflicts and relationships based on descriptions.
- **Viewing Guide Handout**
- Include prompts like:
 - *Notice how lighting and music affect mood.*
 - *Observe how actors convey emotional distance or closeness.*
 - *Identify moments where reality blurs with memory.*

2. During the Viewing

Goal: Encourage active, mindful watching without disrupting the performance.

- **Silent Note-Taking**
- Students jot down brief observations on:
 - Memorable lines or gestures
 - Symbolic objects (glass animals, fire escape, lighting)
 - Emotional reactions to key scenes

3. Post-Viewing Discussion & Activities (1–2 Class Periods)

Goal: Deepen analysis and connect performance choices to the text’s meaning.

- **Group Discussion Questions**
- How did the live performance change or enhance your understanding of the characters?
- Which staging or acting choices stood out most, and why?
- How did the production convey the theme of memory?
- **Symbolism Mapping**
- In small groups, create a visual map linking symbols (glass menagerie, fire escape, lighting) to themes and character arcs.
- **Performance Review Writing**
- Students write a short review blending literary analysis with theatre critique.
- Encourage them to comment on set design, costumes, pacing, and emotional impact.

Assessment Options

- **Formative:** Participation in discussions, completion of viewing guide.
- **Summative:** Written review or thematic essay comparing the live performance to the script (if read in class).