INTEGRATING PLAYS AND POETRY INTO THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

A RAISIN IN THE SUN

By Lorraine Hansberry

Prepared for ESL 390: Language Through Literature

Susan L. Stern, Ph.D.
Professor of ESL
Irvine Valley College

Sabbatical Project, Fall 2010
# Table of Contents

**Resources:** Edition of play and movie used for module ................................................. 3

1. **Pre-Reading Activity** ................................................................. 4

2. **Cultural Setting and Background** .................................................. 7

3. **Brief Biography of Author** ........................................................ 12

4. **Comprehension Questions and Discussion Topics** ......................... 14
   a. Act I, Scene One ................................................................. 14
   b. Act I, Scene Two ............................................................... 17
   c. Act II, Scene One .............................................................. 20
   d. Act II, Scene Two .............................................................. 23
   e. Act II, Scene Three ............................................................ 26
   f. Act III .............................................................................. 29
   g. Overall Themes of the Play .................................................. 33

5. **Writing Activities** ................................................................. 34
   a. Descriptions of the Characters and Their Relationships (Act I) ......... 34
   b. Narrative Summary of the Plot (Act I) .................................. 35
   c. Letter of Advice from one Character to Another (Act I, Scene Two) ... 36
   d. Point of View Writing: Diary Entry (Act III) .......................... 38
   e. Personal Response Writing: Journal Entries (Act III) ................. 39
   f. Essay Topics for Overall Play .............................................. 40
   g. Essay Assignment: Universality of *A Raisin in the Sun* ............... 42

6. **Dramatic activities** ................................................................. 44
   a. Dramatization .................................................................. 44
   b. Role-play interviews .......................................................... 48
   c. Improvisation ................................................................. 49
   d. Sample Dramatic Activities for a Scene from *A Raisin in the Sun* ... 52

7. **Video-related activities** .......................................................... 58
   a. Showing the film version of play ......................................... 58
   b. Videotaping the students ................................................... 60


**Resources: Edition of play and movie used for module**

**Recommended textbook:**

This play is available in a number of texts, both in anthologies and as an individual book. For classroom use, I find the best edition to be:


Along with including the complete script of *Raisin in the Sun*, this paperback edition also includes a very insightful Introduction by Robert Nemiroff, the former husband of Lorraine Hansberry and a Broadway producer who championed her works. In his Introduction he gives background information about the play and the various productions, most especially the 1989 film version being used with this module (see reference below). The text also includes a short biography of Lorraine Hansberry (“About the Author”).

This is the textbook recommended for this module, and thus all the page references in the module correspond to this text.

**Videotape/DVD:**


There are three film versions of this play available: the 1961 movie version starring Sidney Poitier, and two made for television films (1988 and 2008). The most outstanding version of this play available on film, and the one I have selected for this module, is the 1988 version starring Danny Glover and Esther Rolle, which is referenced above. It is an American Playhouse production prepared for PBS, based on the 25th Anniversary stage production produced by the Roundabout Theatre Company. It was first shown on PBS television in 1989, and stars a superb cast: Danny Glover (as Walter), Esther Rolle (as Mama), Starletta DuPois (as Ruth), and Kim Yancey (as Beneatha). It is the full-length play (minus one short scene, p. 107-109), and runs 171 minutes.

One copy is in the IVC Library on reserve for ESL 390—Language through Literature. Students may check it out from the reserve desk for viewing in the library. One copy is in Susan Stern’s office available for use by ESL Instructors.
1. **Pre-Reading Activity**

**Before reading *A Raisin in the Sun***

Langston Hughes (1902-1967), born in Joplin, Missouri, was an American poet, novelist, playwright, short story writer, and columnist. He became a prominent participant in the Harlem Renaissance, a period in the 1920’s – 1930’s when African American art thrived in New York City’s Harlem neighborhood, and wrote about the state of African Americans in the United States. Hughes’s writing reflected two major themes: his love of country and his devotion to his race. His work is universal in theme and appeal, widely read and loved by people everywhere of all ages and backgrounds. One of his most famous stories, “Thank you Ma’am,” is widely included in high school and college literature anthologies, as are the poems “Dreams,” and the poem you are about to read, “Dream Deferred.”

The title of this play is taken directly from a line of one of Hughes most famous poems, *Dream Deferred*. Read the poem below, and answer the questions that follow it.

**Dream Deferred**

By Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

*Or does it explode?*
1. How does the poem make you feel? Why? What is the overall mood of the poem?

2. A sentence can be a statement, a question, or an interrogative (command). What kind of sentence does this poem use? Why do you think Hughes chose it? What is the effect on the reader?

3. Which images in the poem appeal to the senses?
   - Sight:

   - Hearing:

   - Taste:

   - Smell:

   - Touch:
4. In your own life, have you ever had a dream that has “dried up,” that never came true and just died away? If so, how did this affect you? What about someone you know well—has he or she ever had a dream that “dried up”? What happened to him or her as a result?

5. Describe an important dream that you currently have for the future. How do you plan to make it a reality, to make it come true?

6. If this dream is not fulfilled—if it dies and “dries up like a raisin in the sun,” or if it is taken away from you, how do you think this would affect you?
2. **Cultural Setting and Background**

*A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry opened on Broadway in 1959 starring Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee and Diana Sands. It was named the best American play of 1959, and ran on Broadway for nearly two years. The screenplay for the 1961 movie version of this play was written by the original playwright and starred these same actors and most of the original cast. In 1973, the play was turned into a musical, *Raisin*, and won the 1974 Tony Award for Best musical In 1989, it was made into an outstanding made for television film for PBS, starring Danny Glover, Esther Rolle, Starletta DuPois, and Kim Yancey, for which it received three Emmy Award nominations. Since then, it continues to be included in the repertoire of American theaters, including a Broadway revival in 2004 and a subsequent 2008 TV adaptation of this production, and is found in the curriculum of high school and college literature classes. In 2005, *A Raisin in the Sun* was selected for preservation in the United States of America National Film Registry by the [Library of Congress](https://www.loc.gov) as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."

*A Raisin in the Sun* is the story of an African-American family living in Chicago’s Southside sometime between World War II and the early to mid 1950s. This family is the Younger family, three generations of them, who live together in a small apartment in an old tenement building (bathroom down the hall). Although we can see that at one time, “the furnishings of this room were actually selected with care and love and even hope,” that was a long time ago. Now, the furnishings “are typical and undistinguished and their primary feature now is that they have clearly had to accommodate the living of too many people for too many years---and they are tired.” “Weariness has, in fact, won in this room. Everything has been polished, washed, sat on, used, scrubbed too often. All pretenses but living itself have long since vanished from the very atmosphere of this room.” *(pp. 23-24, stage directions)*

This description of the apartment (provided in the stage directions) reflects the weariness and loss of hope of the family members who live there, the Younger family, who may be described as follows:
Lena Younger (Mama):

The matriarch of the family; a woman in her early sixties, recently widowed. She is still a healthy, strong woman who carries herself with dignity and inner serenity. She is conscientious, concerned, pious, quiet, forceful, and somewhat domineering. Family means everything to her. Her big dream has always been for her family to have their own home with a little garden.

Walter Lee Younger:

Lena’s son, in his middle 30’s. A chauffeur who has bigger dreams for himself and his family. He is dissatisfied with his job and his life. His dream is to start a business with two friends—to open a liquor store. High-strung, deeply frustrated, and furious about his poverty and empty future, he daydreams about great financial triumphs.

Ruth Younger:

Walter’s wife and Travis’ mother, about 30 years old. We can see that she was a pretty girl, even exceptionally so, but now it is apparent that life has been little that she expected, and disappointment has already begun to hang in her face. She works as a housekeeper, and takes care of her family the rest of the time. She loves her husband dearly, but is tired of his schemes which she does not take seriously, and of all the hard work and drudgery of her life, with little reward. She is bone tired and discouraged.

Travis Younger:

Walter and Ruth’s ten-year-old son, a typical young boy of that age. He clearly loves his parents and grandmother and has a loving relationship with them, but doesn’t want to be treated like a baby.

Beneatha Younger:

Mama’s daughter and Walter’s younger sister. She is about 20 years old and is the only member of the Younger family to attend college. In this way her life and her ideas about life are very different from her mother, brother, and sister-in-law. Her dream is to attend medical school and become a doctor, which was not common at that time either for a woman or for an African American. She was also very interested in discovering her roots and in finding her identity as an African American.
*A Raisin in the Sun* portrays a few weeks in the life of the Younger family. Mama’s husband has recently passed away, and the action of the play centers around a life insurance check for $10,000 that they will soon receive. Each member of the family has ideas for how they should use the check to better the life of the family. Mama wants to buy a new house to fulfill a lifelong dream she shared with her husband. Mama’s son, Walter Lee, would rather use the money to invest in a liquor store with his friends. He is passionate about this dream, and sees the check as the one opportunity he will have to make this dream happen so that he can support his family. He believes that the investment will solve the family’s financial problems forever. Walter’s wife, Ruth, agrees with Mama, however, and hopes that she and Walter can provide more space and opportunity for their son, Travis. Finally, Beneatha, Walter’s sister and Mama’s daughter, wants to use the money for her medical school tuition to fulfill her dream of becoming a doctor.

As the play progresses, the Youngers clash over their competing dreams. Ruth discovers that she is pregnant but fears that if she has the child, she will put more financial pressure on her family members. When Walter says nothing to Ruth’s admission that she is considering abortion, Mama puts a $3,500 down payment on a house for the whole family. She believes that a bigger, brighter dwelling will help them all. She then gives Walter the remaining $6,500 and tells him to put $3,000 in a savings account for Beneatha’s medical schooling and $3,500 in a checking account for himself.

However, there is a problem with the house that Mama has put the down payment on, and suddenly the play adds a whole new dimension. Up through now (Act II, Scene 2), the play has centered on the Younger family itself, and all the conflicts that arise between them for a variety of reasons—the crowded living conditions and constant worry about money, the generational differences and values, the different dreams they have, and the big issue of how the insurance money should be used. There is conflict between husband and wife, mother and son, mother and daughter, sister and brother . . . all centered on family issues, and all centered on the home.
But at the end of Act II, the setting of the play suddenly expands from the Younger family’s home to encompassing the outside world as well, where racial prejudice exists and which the Youngers will soon be facing. We learn that the house that Mama put the down payment on is in Clybourne Park, an entirely white neighborhood. Here we need to make our students aware of the historical context of this time, to explain that this was before Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement. Segregation still existed in the South, and while this story takes place in Chicago, prejudice was very much alive and very much affected the lives of Black people throughout the country, limiting their opportunities educationally, professionally, and socially. When the Youngers’ future neighbors find out that African-Americans are moving in, they send Mr. Lindner, a representative from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, to offer the Youngers money in return for selling back the house and staying away.

These two issues—how the family is to resolve the conflict over the insurance money, and how they will deal with the prejudice and danger they face regarding their new home, both come together in a most unexpected and dramatic climax. When these issues are finally resolved, the play ends in an uplifting and satisfying way. The ending of the play goes beyond these two issues, bringing the family closer together and making them stronger and more hopeful than ever before. Their future seems uncertain and slightly dangerous, but they are optimistic and determined to live a better life. They believe that they can succeed if they stick together as a family and resolve to defer their dreams no longer.

* * * * *

Although the setting of the play is a specific time and place—the Southside of Chicago in the 1950’s, the play transcends both time and place: “A play rooted in its own time that speaks through the years to our own.” (Chicago Tribune). “The play that changed American theater forever . . . A seething interplay of past and present, of wisdom and passion.” ) New York Times. It is just as current and relevant to us today as it was then. As Roberet Nemiroff wrote in the Introduction to the text of the play used for this course:
Produced in 1959, the play presaged the revolution in black and women’s consciousness—
and the revolutionary ferment in Africa—that exploded in the years following the
playwright’s death in 1965 to ineradicably alter the social fabric and consciousness of the
nation and the world. As so many have commented lately, it did so in a manner and to an
extent that few could have foreseen, for not only the restored material, but much else that
passed unnoticed in the play at the time, speaks to issues that are now inescapable: value
systems of the black family; concepts of African American beauty and identity; class and
generational conflicts; the relationships of husbands and wives, black men and women;
the unspoken (if then yet unnamed) feminism of the daughter; and, in the penultimate
scene between Beneatha and Asagai, the larger statement of the play—and the ongoing
struggle it portends. (Introduction by Robert Nemiroff to A Raisin in the Sun, p. 5-6)

In commenting on how and why the play still remains so contemporary, Nemiroff continues:

For at the deepest level it is not a specific situation but the human condition, human
aspirations, and human relationships—the persistence of dreams of the bonds and
conflicts between men and women, parents and children, old ways and new, and the
endless struggle against human oppression, whatever the forms it may take, and for
individual fulfillment, recognition, and liberation—that are at the heart of such plays. It
is not surprising that in each generation we recognize ourselves in them anew.
(Introduction by Robert Nemiroff to A Raisin in the Sun, p. 13-14 (October.1988)

Audiences and readers everywhere can identify with the characters and their situations, with the
deep speculations about what is truly important in life that the play brings to our attention. This
explains the play’s universal appeal and truly defines it as an American classic.
3. **Brief Biography of Author**

Lorraine Hansberry (1930—1965) was born in Chicago, Illinois. She was the youngest of four children in a respected and successful black family. Her parents were activists who challenged laws that discriminated against African Americans. Important black leaders such as Paul Robeson, W.E.B. DuBois, and Langston Hughes were guests in the Hansberry home during Lorraine’s childhood.

When Hansberry was a young girl her family attempted to move to a white neighborhood. They were determined to live there despite threats from angry, rock-throwing neighbors. Witnessing such experiences so early in her life influenced Hansberry to become an activist, committed to equality and human rights.

After college, Hansberry moved to New York City to try writing. In 1953 she married fellow writer and activist Robert Nemiroff, who encouraged her writing ambitions. Her initial playwriting effort, *A Raisin in the Sun*, was the first written play by a black woman to be produced on Broadway. When it was awarded the New York Drama Critics Circle Award in 1959, Hansberry became the youngest writer and the first African American to receive this award. At 29, she was the youngest American, the fifth woman, and the first black playwright to win the Best Play of the Year Award of the New York Drama Critics. Later, Hansberry wrote the screenplay for the movie *A Raisin in the Sun*, for which she won a special award at France’s Cannes Film Festival and a Screen Writers Guild nomination in 1961. In *Raisin*, wrote James Baldwin, “Never before in the entire history of the American theater had so much of the truth of black people’s lives been seen on the stage.”

Published and produced worldwide in over thirty languages and in thousands of productions nationally, the play “changed American theater forever” according to *The New York Times* and became an American classic. In the 1980’s, a major resurgence began with revivals at a dozen regional theaters, and was available to a much wider audience in 1989 when the American Playhouse production, the complete version of the play, was presented on television by PBS and became available on video. Since then, it continues to be included in the repertoire of
American theaters, including a Broadway revival in 2004 and a subsequent 2008 TV adaptation of this production. Moreover, it is included in literature anthologies and in the English/Language Arts curriculum of high schools and universities throughout the United States.

Although Hansberry continued to write dramas, none of her works could measure up to the success of *A Raisin in the Sun*. Her second play, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein’s Window*, did not fare as well with the critics. It was received with mixed reviews and closed the night Hansberry died of cancer at the young age of 34.

After her death, Nemiroff, her former husband, published a collection of Hansberry’s writings in the book *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*. He also edited and published three of her unfinished plays, *Les Blancs*, *The Drinking Gourd*, and *What Use Are Flowers? To be Young, Gifted and Black* was also made into a play that was produced off-Broadway in 1969.

Nemiroff said of Hansberry, “She was proud of her black culture, the black experience and struggle . . . But she was also in love with all cultures, and she related to the struggles of other people . . . She was tremendously affected by the struggles of ordinary people—the heroism of ordinary people and the ability of people to laugh and transcend.”

**Sources for sections 3 and 4 (background about play and playwright):**

- Nemiroff, Robert. Introduction to *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry


- ONLINE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA “*A Raisin in the Sun*”  en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Raisin_in_the_Sun
4. **Comprehension Questions & Discussion Topics**

*A Raisin in the Sun*

ACT I, Scene One (pp. 23-53)

**Comprehension Questions**

**Multiple Choice: Circle the correct answer**

1. The first person in the Younger household to get up in the morning is
   a. Walter
   b. Ruth
   c. Travis
   d. Beneatha

2. The main reason that Walter gives Travis an extra fifty cents is because he
   a. believes Travis should have cash available for emergencies
   b. got a raise and wants to share his good fortune with his family
   c. has decided to raise Travis’s allowance
   d. wants to annoy Ruth about her needless stinginess

3. Mama enters the living room
   a. before Walter gets up
   b. after Walter quarrels with Beneatha
   c. before Beneatha gets up in the morning
   d. just before Travis leaves for school

4. A topic that comes up in all the conversations during the morning is
   a. money
   b. medical school
   c. lack of adequate room to live
   d. Walter’s business plans

5. The prop that is not specified in the stage directions for this scene is
   a. a worn couch
   b. a small potted plant
   c. an out-of-tune piano
   d. an ironing board
6. When Walter questions Beneatha’s need “to be a doctor,” both he and Beneatha say the words in unison. The fact that Beneatha guesses what Walter is about to say suggests that she
   a. can read people’s minds
   b. has heard Walter say this many times before
   c. is very close to Walter
   d. has been questioning her own plans to be a doctor

7. If Mama decides not to give Walter the money he needs, he probably will
   a. understand and respect her decision
   b. be angry and frustrated with his mother
   c. abandon his wife and child to pursue his dream
   d. sell the furnishings in the Younger home to get the money

8. Walter probably would agree with the idea that
   a. a man’s most important responsibility is to follow his dreams
   b. having someone to love is more important than having money
   c. money can solve any kind of problem
   d. the love of money is the root of all evil

9. The way Walter and Ruth treat one another suggests that they
   a. are too different to ever get along
   b. would never argue if they had enough money
   c. argue often but still love each other
   d. do not respect one another at all

10. The word that best describes the mood of this excerpt is
    a. edgy
    b. optimistic
    c. energetic
    d. frightening
Answer Key to Multiple Choice Comprehension Questions

**ANSWER  (Reading Skill Practiced)**

1. **b**  Recalling facts
2. **d**  Identifying cause and effect
3. **b**  Identifying sequence
4. **a**  Understanding main ideas
5. **c**  Recognizing elements of a play (Setting)
6. **b**  Making inferences
7. **b**  Predicting outcomes
8. **a**  Making generalizations
9. **c**  Analyzing
10. **a**  Understanding literary elements (Mood)
1. It is Saturday morning, and at the beginning of the scene Mama and Beneatha are cleaning the house, but Ruth is not home.

   - Where did she go?

   - What do we learn about Ruth when she returns?

   - How does Mama feel about the news?

   - How does Beneatha feel about it?

   - How does Ruth feel about it?
2. Beneatha receives a visit from a young man named Asagai.
   • Where is he from, and how did she meet him?
   • Why was she interested in meeting him?
   • Why did he come to visit her? What does he bring?
   • How does she seem to feel about him? How does he seem to feel about her?
   • How does Mama seem to feel about him?

3. Asagai has a special nickname for Beneatha—Alaiyo, which comes from his native language, Yoruba (his native tribe in Nigeria). How does he translate this name into English, and why do you think Beneatha says “Thank you” when he tells her the meaning of these words? (p. 65)

4. When the doorbell rings suddenly, meaning the mailman has arrived, Mama, Ruth and Travis are all “stunned—serious and silent. Why do they react in this way?

5. When Travis runs downstairs to get the envelope with the check they have all been
waiting for, and then places it in his grandmother’s hands, she merely holds it and looks
at it. When she finally opens it, her face sobers into a mask of unhappiness, and she
says, “I spec if it wasn’t for you all . . . I would just put that money away or give it to the
church or something.” Why do you think she responds in this way to the $10,000 check
they have all been waiting for?

6. How does Walter react to the arrival of the check? What does he want to do with it?
How important is this check to him?

7. How does Mama feel about Walter’s plans for the check? Will she support him? Why
or why not?
1. When Walter walks in, he is surprised to see Beneatha draped in a beautiful Nigerian robe and headwrap, listening to African music, and dancing. It is clear that he has been drinking, and soon he gets caught up in the music as well and dancing as well. How does Walter feel when he begins dancing, and what is the significance of the imaginary African dance to Walter?

2. When Beneatha takes off her head wrap, everyone is surprised to see that she has cut her hair. How did she wear her hair before, and how is she wearing it now? Why did she make this change? How did Ruth react to her hair cut? How did Walter react? What did George, the wealthy young man whom she is dating, think about her new haircut?

3. Beneatha and George have a discussion about “assimilation.” Explain what “assimilation” means and how Beneatha feels about it.
4. How does George feel about his African roots?

5. While Beneatha is changing and getting ready to go with George to the theater, Ruth and George are waiting for her in the living room. What do they talk about? How does Ruth appear to feel during this conversation? What do we learn about George?

6. How does George, the wealthy young black man who Beneatha is dating, react to Walter? How does Walter react to George? How do they feel about each other?

7. When George and Beneatha leave for the theater, George says to Walter: “Good night, Prometheus!” Why does he say this, and what does he mean?
8. After Beneatha and George leave, Walter and Ruth are alone and they have a serious discussion about their relationship (pp. 85-89). What do we learn about their marriage and about how they really feel about each other?

9. Mama returns, and we learn that she has done something important. Where did she go? What did she do? How does Ruth react to this news? How does Walter react?

10. What is the problem with the purchase that Mama made? What difficulties can they foresee?
At the beginning of the scene, Beneatha and George have just returned from a date and are sitting on the living room couch and are talking. What do we learn about their relationship in this scene? (pp, 96-98)

What is George looking for in a woman? How does Beneatha feel about this? How does she feel about George?

After George leaves, Beneatha has a brief but important discussion about him with Mama, and she thanks her “For understanding me this time.” (p. 99) Explain what she means.
4. Mama has a visit from their neighbor down the hall, Mrs. Johnson. (pp. 99-104).
   - Describe Mrs. Johnson, and how she feels about the Younger family.
   - How do they feel about her?
   - Why does Mrs. Johnson say she dropped by, and why do you think she really came?
   - What news do they learn from her?

5. Ruth and Mama learn that Walter has not been to work for three days when they receive a phone call from his employer’s wife asking where he has been, and threatening to fire him.
   - Where has Walter been, and what has he been doing these past three days?
   - How does he feel about his job?
   - How does he feel about his life?
6. Mama tells Walter: “Listen to me, now. I say I been wrong, son. That I been doing to you what the rest of the world been doing to you.” (p. 106)

   - What does she mean by this, and what does she do to try to make up for the mistake she feels she has made?
   - How does Walter react to what Mama does?

7. The scene between Walter and his son Travis (pp. 107-109) is the one scene that sadly is not included in the film due to time constraints, but which is a very important scene in the play. Describe what this father/son scene is about.

   - What dreams does Travis have for himself at this point in time?
   - What dreams does Walter have for himself, his wife, and his son?
   - How would you describe Walter’s mood in this scene?
A Raisin in the Sun
ACT II, Scene Three  (pp. 110-130)
Comprehension Questions for Discussion & Writing

1. This scene begins one week later, on the day they are to move into their new house. What is the overall mood of the family members at the beginning of this scene?

2. How has Walter changed over this week? How has the relationship between Walter and Ruth changed over this week?

3. While they are in the midst of packing, they receive a surprise visit from a middle-aged white man, Mr. Karl Lindner.

   • Who is Mr. Lindner, who does he represent, and who has he come to speak with?

   • What is the purpose for Mr. Lindner’s visit? What is he asking them to do?
• When they realize why Mr. Lindner has come, how do Walter, Ruth, and Beneatha respond? What does Walter do and say?

4. When George, Ruth and Beneatha tell Mama about the visit from Mr. Lindner, what kind of mood are they in? How does Mama react?

5. What present did Ruth and Walter prepare for Mama? What present did Travis give her and what did Ruth, Walter, and Beneatha think of it? How did Mama react to both presents?
6. When the doorbell rang a second time, it was Walter’s friend Bobo.

   • Why did Bobo come, and what news did he tell Walter?

   • How did Walter react to the news?

   • How did Ruth, Beneatha, and Mama react to the news?
1. What made Beneatha decide to be a doctor? Explain.

2. In her discussion with Asagai, Beneath explains that her attitude toward being a doctor changed in this act. How has it changed, and why?

3. In the same discussion between Beneath and Asagai (referred to in question 2), Asagai says to Beneath: “Children see things very well sometimes, and idealists even better.” (p. 133). Explain what you think he meant.
4. Beneatha tells Asagai that she sees life as a circle. Asagai says that she is wrong, that life is a long line (p. 134). 
**Explain** what each of them meant. **Who do you personally agree with?**

5. What is Asagai’s dream? How does Beneatha feel about it?

6. **Explain** what Asagi is referring to when he says to Beneatha: 
   “Three hundred years later the African Prince rose up out of the seas and swept the maiden back across the middle passage over which her ancestors had come—’ Ah—so this is what the New World hath finally wrought . . .” (p. 137)
7. At the beginning of Act III, we learn that both Mama and Walter have changed their minds about moving into the new house, but for different reasons.

- **Why** has Mama come to this decision? **How** does Ruth feel about it?

- **Why** has Walter come to this decision? **How** do the other members of the family feel about it?
8.  When Mama learns that Walter has asked Mr. Lindner to return, she says:
   “Son—I come from five generations of people who was slaves and sharecroppers—but
   ain’t nobody in my family never let nobody pay ‘em money that was a way of telling us
   we wasn’t fit to walk the earth.  We ain’t never seen that poor.  We ain’t never been that
dead inside.”  (p. 143).
   **Explain** what she meant.

9.  Even though Mama is very upset about what Walter has done, and even more upset about
what he is about to do, she gets extremely angry when Beneatha says to her:  “He’s no
brother of mine. . . There is nothing left to love.”  (p. 145).  Beneatha then pleads to
Mama:  “Be on my side for once!”  Mama responds:  “There is *always* something left to
love.”  **Why do you think** Mama seems to take “Walter’s side” and still support him, in
spite of all he has done?  Do you agree with Mama or Beneatha?  **Explain.**
A Raisin in the Sun
Overall Themes of the Play

Questions for Discussion and/or Writing
Leading to an Understanding of Theme

1. Compare the relationship of the family members with each other at the beginning of the play to their relationship at the end.

2. Compare the mood or tone of the play at the beginning to the mood or tone at the end.

3. Explain what Mama meant at the very end of the play when she told Ruth: “He [Walter] finally come into his manhood today, didn’t he? Kind of like a rainbow after the rain. (p. 151).

4. In question # 3, you discussed how Walter changed during the course of the play. Did the other characters change as well? (Mama? Beneatha? Ruth?) Explain.

5. As we discussed, the title of the play comes from the poem by Langston Hughes entitled “Dream Deferred.” Now that we have seen the entire play, A Raisin in the Sun, read this poem again, and discuss why you think Hansberry selected this line from the poem as the title of this play.

Teacher’s note: Topics # 1, 3, and 4 above are excellent essay topics. Having students discuss them first in groups and/or as a class can generate ideas and prepare them for writing these essays. (See Section 5 on Writing Assignments for the full description of the assignments for these essays.)
5. **Writing Activities**

*A Raisin in the Sun*

Act I

Descriptions of the Characters and their Relationships

Describe each of the following characters and his or her relationship with the other members of the family, as outlined below.

Make general statements or observations about each of them, and support your statements with evidence from the play (what they say, what they do, how they relate to others, etc.)

Be as thorough as possible, describing what you know about them based upon what you read and what you saw in the movie in Act I.

For each character, write one paragraph describing him or her, and a second paragraph discussing his or her relationship with the other family members(s) identified below. Be prepared to discuss your answers in groups and to present them to the class.

1. **Ruth and Walter**
   A. Describe Ruth  
   B. Describe Walter  
   C. Discuss their relationship as a married couple

2. **Mama**
   A. Describe Mama  
   B. Discuss her relationship with Ruth  
   C. Discuss her relationship with Walter

3. **Beneatha**
   A. Describe Beneatha  
   B. Discuss her relationship with Walter  
   C. Discuss her relationship with Ruth  
   D. Discuss her relationship with Mama
Writing Assignment

*A Raisin in the Sun*  
Act I  

**Narrative Summary of the Plot**

Write a narrative summary explaining the situation about the check—what it is, when it will come, and the conflicts or problems it is causing among the members of the Younger family (1 – 2 pages)
Writing Assignment

A Raisin in the Sun
Act I, Scene Two

Letter of Advice
From One Character to Another

CHOOSE ONE:

1. LETTER FROM MAMA TO RUTH

Take the role of Mama, and try to convince Ruth why she must cancel the abortion and keep the baby. Mama has just learned that Ruth is planning to have an abortion, and now, based on Walter’s reaction to learning of Ruth’s pregnancy, and his leaving the house, Mama is all the more convinced that this is what Ruth is going to do. Walter has just left, and Ruth has gone into her room. Ruth doesn’t want to talk about it any more, so Mama sits down and writes a letter to Ruth trying her very best to convince Ruth why she must not have an abortion, why she must have her baby.

2. LETTER FROM WALTER TO MAMA

Take the role of Walter, and try to convince your mother to give you the money for the liquor store. Explain why buying the liquor store would be the best thing both for him and the whole family. He has just left the house in anger and frustration, after trying his best to convince Mama to help him, but with no success. So he goes to a bar, has a few drinks, feels a little more relaxed, and sits down and writes a letter to Mama trying to persuade her to give him the money for this purpose.
3. LETTER FROM WALTER TO RUTH

Take the role of Walter and apologize to Ruth for leaving. Tell her how much you love her, and try to convince her to cancel the abortion and keep the baby. It is a few hours later. Walter has done a lot of thinking since he walked out of the apartment. He now realizes how wrong he was in leaving when he did and in not telling Ruth how much he loves her. He feels so bad that he did not tell her he is happy that she is pregnant and that he looks forward to having another child. He knows how upset she is with him, so he thinks if he writes all these thoughts in a letter, she will read it and listen to him.

When you select from the three the characters and situations described above, write your letter in regular letter format. For example:

Date
Dear Ruth,

Love,
Mama
At the very end of the play, the family leaves the only home they have known since Mamma and Big Walter (her late husband) got married. Each of them is glad to leave the old apartment and to move into their very own home, but they have mixed emotions about the new home they will be moving into, and they each have their own special dreams for the future.

Imagine that it is the next evening, and the family members have moved into their new home. Take the role of ONE of the family members (Mama, Walter, Ruth, or Beneatha), and write in your diary how you are feeling right now about moving into the new home, and about your hopes and dreams for the future for yourself and your family. Remember that this is a diary entry, so write in first person (“I”), and express your innermost thoughts and feelings openly and honestly.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERS:

1) Lena Younger (Mama)
2) Walter Lee Younger
3) Ruth Younger
4) Beneatha Younger

LENGTH: 1 - 2 pages

Practice reading your diary entry out loud for presentation in class. Use a loud and clear voice, but also think about expressing in your voice the feelings and emotions of the character as you read the diary or journal entry out loud.
Writing Assignment

*A Raisin in the Sun*
Act III—End of Play

Personal Response Writing:
Journal Entries

Select from among the following topics to express your personal response to the play.

1. Do any of the characters in the play remind you of yourself or someone you know? (In their personalities? Their goals and dreams? Their outlooks on life? In any other ways?) Explain.

2. Do you relate in particular to any of the characters in the play—to their situations in life and/or to their dreams? Explain.

3. Are the relationships between the characters in the play similar to the relationship you have with any of your family members?

4. Are any of the situations in the play similar to a situation you or someone you know has experienced?

5. How were you affected by the end of the play? How were you affected by the play overall?

6. What is your overall opinion about the play? Would you recommend it to your friends? Why or why not?
**Writing Assignment**

* A *Raisin in the Sun*  
* Essay Topics for Overall Play*

**COMPARISON/CONTRAST:**

- Compare the relationship of the family members with each other at the beginning of the play to their relationship at the end.  
  (In addressing this topic, discuss the relationship of the individual members to each other (Mama, Walter, Ruth, and Beneatha), and the overall relationship of the family as a whole.)

- Compare the overall mood or tone of the play at the beginning to the mood or tone at the end.

**CAUSE AND EFFECT**

- It is clear that Mama (Lena Younger) had a very significant impact on her family—on her son Walter, her daughter Beneatha, her daughter-in-law Ruth, and her grandson Travis. **Explain the impact that Mama had on the lives of each member of the Younger family individually, and on the family as a whole.**
ANALYSIS

• Explain what Mama meant at the very end of the play when she told Ruth: “He [Walter] finally come into his manhood today, didn’t he? Kind of like a rainbow after the rain. (p. 151).

(In addressing this topic, discuss how Walter demonstrates that he has finally grown up and learned to accept his responsibilities as a man as a husband, a father, a son, and a human being)?

• As we discussed, the title of the play *A Raisin in the Sun* comes from the poem “Dream Deferred” by Langston Hughes. Now that we have read and seen the entire play, read this poem again, and **discuss how the major theme of this play is expressed in this poem.**

• Some people are more fortunate than others in life, but even for those who are more fortunate, life is not easy. Everyone experiences hardship, pain, loss, and suffering at some point in life. However, as hard to get through as these difficulties are at the time we experience them, getting through hardships often has positive effects on families and/or individuals. **Discuss how the hardships that the Younger family went through in this play helped make them stronger as individuals, and closer knit as a family.**

• **Explain how the play *A Raisin is in the Sun* is universal in terms of the character, plot, and/or theme.** (See next page for a complete description of this essay topic).
Writing Assignment

*A Raisin in the Sun--Overall Play*

**Essay Assignment:**
Universality of *A Raisin in the Sun*

On the back cover of *A Raisin in the Sun* (the Vintage Books paperback edition we are using for this class), the universal issues and themes of this play are identified:

“In her portrait of an embattled Chicago family, Hansberry anticipated issues that range from generational clashes to the civil rights and women’s movements. She also posed the essential questions—about identity, justice, and moral responsibility—at the heart of these great struggles. The result is an American classic.”

Another quote on the back cover from the *Chicago Tribune* also points out the universal appeal and relevance of the play: “A play rooted in its own time that speaks through the years to our own.” And in his Introduction to the play in our text (Vintage Books edition) Robert Nemiroff explains why it is not surprising that this play, though first performed in 1959, still remains so contemporary:

“For at the deepest level it is not a specific situation, but the human condition, human aspiration, and human relationships—the persistence of dreams. Of the bonds and conflicts between men and women, parents and children, old ways and new, and the endless struggle against human oppression, whatever the forms it may take, and for individual fulfillment, recognition, and liberation—that are at the heart of such plays. It is not surprising therefore that in each generation we recognize ourselves in them anew (p. 14).

*A Raisin in the Sun* is a classic American play. It paints a vivid picture of the difficult life of an African American family living in a small tenement apartment in the South Side of Chicago in the 1950s— coping with 3 generations living together in cramped living conditions, dead-end jobs with no possibility of advancement, prejudice and racial discrimination.
However, although the setting is specific in terms of time and place, and the characters specifically portrayed in terms of race and background, the work is also universal and timeless in its relevance and appeal. That is, what it shows or reveals about human beings and their relationships, about life in general, is true of people everywhere.

**ESSAY TOPIC:**

Explain how the play *A Raisin in the Sun* is universal in terms of character, plot, and/or theme.

(*Suggestion:* In discussing how this play is universal, think in terms of the characters -- what they are like, the problems they face, and their relationships with one another; think of the plot—the situations they face and go through, and think about the themes. What aspects about any or all of these are universal?)
6. \textbf{Dramatic Activities}

There are 3 types of dramatic activities that can add immensely to study of the play: \textit{Dramatization, Role-play Interviews, and Improvisations}. They can be used together, building on each other based upon one scene, or they can be done as independent activities. They can be performed in front of the class, or all the students can do them simultaneously in pairs at their seats. Each of these activities is explained below, with suggested directions to the students. At the end of this section on dramatic activities, a sample lesson plan is presented to illustrate each of these activities and to show how they can all be developed around a key scene from \textit{A Raisin in the Sun}.

\textbf{Dramatization}

The dramatization of scenes as presented in this module does not require memorization of the scene or a great deal of practice, nor does it require any acting background. Students merely need to understand the scene very well in terms of plot and characters, and be able to put themselves into the roles of their characters as they speak. Dramatization here is basically a dramatic oral reading—script in hand, not memorized, but performed with appropriate facial expressions, body language, movements, and most important, eye contact with their partners. In the roles of their characters, they should be communicating with each other. They may refer to the script as much as they need to, but should look up and \textit{say} the lines to each other, with meaning and feeling. If their scene will be performed in front of the class, they also need to decide if they will be sitting or standing, and if they can bring in any props that can make the scene more fun.

There is much flexibility in how to incorporate the dramatization of scenes into the module. One possibility is to select just one key scene (such as the one illustrated in the sample lesson plan that ends this section), which all the students can practice at their seats, but which is performed in front of the class by just a few volunteers. (Every class has students who will gladly volunteer to do this.) A second possibility is to divide this one key scene into shorter sections, each section to be assigned to different students for performance. To involve even more students
in performances, each section of the scene can be assigned to several pairs of students, and there can be multiple performances of the scenes. A third possibility is to select a number of key scenes for dramatization, and each scene can be performed by different students. That way, throughout study of the play, many if not all of the students can have the chance to perform a scene in front of the class.

However many students are involved in the performance of a scene, when the scene comes up in the reading of the play, the entire class can read it aloud and discuss it. The instructor reads the scene aloud, line by line, and has students repeat after him or her. This provides excellent practice in pronunciation—in intonation, rhythm, stress, and expression as well as the correct pronunciation of individual words. At the same time, the instructor can talk the scene through, explaining vocabulary, idioms, cultural references, etc. After this, the students will then be prepared to practice the scene with their partner(s) at their seats, and the instructor can circulate around the class to help out with pronunciation and clarify any other questions that might arise. In this way, all the students will experience the scene firsthand, whether or not they will perform it, by taking the role of a character and practicing it with a partner.

Those students who will be performing the scene for the class should devote some additional time outside of class, if possible, practicing it with their partner and discussing the actual performance—whether they will sit or stand, whether they can bring in or use from the classroom any objects, props, or specific articles of clothing (mentioned in the script) to make the performance more realistic and fun, etc.

The performances should be presented at the next class. During the actual performances, the student actors may have the script in hand and refer to it as needed (as described above), but the rest of the class should put the scripts away and just watch the “actors.” This provides excellent listening practice. If the scene is divided into shorter scenes, the students perform their scenes in the order the scenes appear in the play, with each scene introduced by the instructor. Each dramatization can then be followed by role-play interview questions from the audience (the rest of the class), in which they interview the “characters” about the scene they have just performed. The role-play interview, in turn, can be followed by an improvisation if there is time. (See explanation below for role-play interview and improvisation.)
Directions to students for DRAMATIZATIONS

Now that you understand the scene and are familiar with the characters and the dialogue, the action can finally begin. You are now ready to take the roles of the characters in this scene, and to practice the scene with a partner.

Practicing the Scene

The first thing you should know is that **you do not need to memorize the scene**. You may have the script in front of you at all times. But you do need to practice it again and again so that after quickly glancing at the lines to refresh your memory, you can look up at your partner and **say** your lines to him or her with meaning and feeling. Whether all the students in your class or only a few will actually be performing the scene in front of the class, everyone should practice the scene with his or her partner at least three times, as follows:

**The First Time:**

As you read the scene aloud with your partner, pay special attention to pronunciation (words and phrases, rhythm and intonation). Help each other with this and ask the teacher for assistance with any words or phrases that you are not sure how to pronounce.

**The Second Time:**

Now, add expression to your words, trying to convey or show through your voice the feeling, attitudes, and moods of the speaker. Really put yourself into the role of your character. For example, if your character is upset, frustrated, or happy, you need to **sound** that way to be convincing. Don't be afraid to exaggerate.
The Third Time:

Now, think about how you will perform the scene, adding facial expressions and body language to make it more realistic, dramatic, and interesting. Also, agree upon any props you wish to use (chairs, a table, a glass of water, etc.) and any actions you wish to take. Refer to the stage directions for ideas and select any actions that you think are significant to the scene and that would add to the dramatization. Finally, think about costume to make your performance more realistic and interesting. Just one item of clothing such as an interesting hat, a colorful scarf, or a large piece of costume jewelry—anything that reflects your character's personality, can really add to the performance. Be creative, use your imagination, and have fun!

Performing the Scene

Last Minute Advice to the Performers:

Take a deep breath, relax, and enjoy yourselves. Don't worry about what your instructor or the other students will think. Everyone will enjoy your performance.

Advice to the Audience:

Sit back and enjoy the performance, and PUT AWAY THOSE SCRIPTS.

You already know the dialogue very well, so give your complete attention to the performance.
Role-Play Interviews

When the dramatization is over, the students who have just performed the scene remain in front of the class, staying in the roles of their characters, and the interview begins.

Directions to students for ROLE-PLAY INTERVIEWS

To the Audience:
Now is your opportunity to interview each of the characters, to ask them about anything you are curious about. You may wish to ask them why they said what they did to each other, and how they feel about it. You may be curious about why they acted as they did, what their relationship was like before, what they think or hope is going to happen next, etc. Think in terms of Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why. Use your curiosity and imagination and make the questions as specific and interesting as possible. When you ask the questions, remember to address your classmates as the characters they are portraying.

To the Performers:
Imagine that you are still the characters you have just portrayed in the scene, and answer these questions the way you think that they would answer them, expressing their opinions, attitudes, and feelings. Use your imagination whenever necessary to fill in information not presented in the scene. Speak in first person ("I") in the role of your character.
**Improvisation**

An improvisation is a dramatization without a script. It performs like a scene, with an identifiable beginning and end, but is spontaneous. Each improvisation has a specific situation upon which it is based, and is designed to enhance the students’ understanding of the characters, plot, theme, and/or cultural attitudes expressed in the play. But one similarity that all the improvisations for this activity should have, that really makes them “work” as a class activity, is that they should center on some kind of conflict.

Conflict is at the heart of these improvisations as it gives each character a specific purpose or goal to accomplish, and these purposes or goals are at odds with each other in some way. This guarantees that the students will have something specific to achieve in the improvisation so that what to discuss or what to say never becomes a problem. On the contrary, they become so involved in the issue at hand and so determined to win the conflict from their character’s point of view that language flows. Moreover, basing the improvisation on a conflict helps establish a framework for the improvisation. It begins when the characters state their goals and ends when the conflict is resolved in some way.

Improvisations can be performed by just a few students in front of the entire class as a follow-up to dramatization of a scene, or the entire class can improvise the situation in pairs at their seats, as follows:

1) **Improvisation performed by the students who dramatized the scene**

The same students who performed the scene and answered the interview questions now enact the improvisation. They remain in front of the class and the situation is explained to them. Address them as those characters, and explain the situation in front of the class so that everyone can hear. Then give them the option to just begin the improvisation spontaneously then and there, or to step out of the room for a few minutes to discuss it with each other first. Then they return and perform the scene.
2) **Entire class improvises the situation**

The improvisational situation is explained to the class, and ALL the students perform the improvisation at their seats. As a follow-up, one or two pairs can perform their improvisations in front of the class. Alternatively, the instructor can ask each pair to tell the class how their improvisation ended, how the conflict was resolved. The students will be curious to know the results of everyone else’s improvisations, and this activity enables everyone to speak up and share their outcome with the class.

Presented on the following pages is a sample lesson plan developed around a key scene from the play (from Act I, Scene 2). If there is time to dramatize only one scene in this play, this would be the one. It is a very significant and dramatic discussion between three of the main characters (Mama, Ruth, and Walter), focusing on the key conflict and issues of the play. All the information that is needed to identify and review for the scene is included below: page numbers of the scene along with beginning and ending lines, a brief description of the characters, and a brief plot summary of what has happened so far to put the scene in context. The dramatic activities for this scene (dramatization, role-play interviews, and improvisations) have already been explained. What is included here are sample role-play interview questions for each of the characters for this specific scene, and four improvisational situations based upon this scene that can be follow-up individual performances and/or presented in small groups.
Directions to students for IMPROVISATIONS

To improvise means to act out a scene, just like you did in the dramatization, but this time without a script.

*If the improvisation is done as a follow-up to dramatization of scene:* You and your partner will take the roles of the same characters and improvise the situation that I will describe which is related to the scene that was just dramatized, but with a significant twist in the plot. Like the scene, this situation also centers on a conflict between the characters. But the situation is now somewhat different.

*If the improvisation is done as an independent activity (not as a follow-up to dramatization):* Put yourself into the role of _____ or _____ and listen to me read the situation aloud. Imagine how your character would feel and what he or she would say and do in this situation, and then just begin talking and improvising the situation with your partner. Try your best to make things work out well for your character, and see where it goes from there!

* * * * *
SAMPLE DRAMATIC ACTIBITIES
for a scene from
*A Raisin in the Sun*

From Act I, Scene 2 (pp. 69 – 75)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning line</th>
<th>Ruth: You’ve gone and got yourself upset.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ending line:</td>
<td>Mama: You... you are a disgrace to your father’s memory. Somebody get me my hat!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Characters in this scene:

Lena Younger (Mama):
In her early 60’s, still a healthy, strong woman who carries herself with dignity and inner serenity; conscientious, concerned, pious, quiet, forceful, and somewhat domineering.

Walter Younger:
Mama’s son, in his middle 30’s. He works as a chauffeur, but is dissatisfied with his job and hopes to start his own business—a liquor store. High-strung, deeply frustrated, and furious about his poverty and empty future, he daydreams about great financial triumphs.

Ruth Younger:
Walter’s wife, bone tired and discouraged. She works as a housekeeper all day, and takes care of her family the rest of the time. She is unhappy with their difficult life, and with not having a home of their own with space enough for her son to have a room of his own.
The Setting:
The setting of this scene is the same as for the whole play—the South Side of Chicago in
the 1950’s. The Youngers share a crowded, shabby flat. Walter and Ruth have one small
bedroom. Mama and Beneatha (her 20-year-old daughter and Walter’s younger sister),
share another. Ruth and Walter’s 10-year-old son, Travis, sleeps on a couch in the
living/dining room. The kitchen is little more than an alcove. One small window
provides a little daylight, but no sun.

The Situation leading up to this scene:
It is Friday morning, and the daily routine begins with the usual shouting and bad
temper. Everyone is particularly excited by the thought of a check expected the next
day, the late Papa’s ten-thousand-dollar life insurance payment. Walter is eager to invest
in a liquor store. His wife is cool to the idea because she distrusts the men who would be
his partners, and she discounts his ability to manage a business. His sister also scorns
his plans, and they quarrel bitterly when he belittles her desire to become a doctor.
Mama, who will not allow liquor in her home, is also opposed to Walter’s scheme.
Her own dream is of a little house with a garden that they can all live in together.

The next morning, Ruth returns from the doctor with the news that she is pregnant. She is
depressed by the thought of adding another person to these overcrowded rooms, and lets
slip the fact to Mama that she has already seen an abortionist and made a down payment
for a future operation.

The scene begins just as the check arrives, and Walter comes rushing home soon
afterward, more eager than ever to use the money for the liquor store.
Sample Interview Questions

To Ruth:

1. Do you really want to have an abortion? If not, why did you arrange to have one?
2. If Walter tells you that he wants to keep the baby, will you cancel the abortion?
3. Do you support your husband’s dream to start his own business with several partners—a liquor store?
4. How do you think the $10,000 insurance money should be used?
5. How did you feel when Walter would not talk with you, and left the house?

To Mama:

1. How to you feel about Ruth getting an abortion? Are you going to do anything about it?
2. Why are you so against your son investing in a liquor store? Would you feel differently if he wanted to invest in some other kind of business?
3. You told Walter: “Something has changed. You something new, boy. . . You my children, but how different we done become.” In what ways are Walter and Beneatha different from you?
4. What did you mean when you said, “You are a disgrace to your father’s memory.”
5. It looks like you will be leaving home as well when you said, “Somebody get me my hat.” Where are you planning to go?
To Walter:

1. Why does it mean so much to you to invest in this liquor store?

2. Why did you feel you needed to leave the house when your mother said that she would not allow any of the insurance money to be invested in the liquor store you want to open with two friends?

3. Why are you so dissatisfied with your job as a chauffeur?

4. You told your mother, “I want so many things that they are driving me kind of crazy.” Explain what you mean.

5. When your mother asked you how come you talk so much about money, you said, “Because it is life, Mama!” Explain what you meant.

6. How did you feel when you found out that Ruth is pregnant, and she is planning to have an abortion? Why did you leave the house instead of talking to her about it?
Improvisations

There are four possible situations described below for improvisations based upon this scene. They are presented as directions to the students who are still in the role of the character, having just performed the scene for the class, or practiced the scene at their seats in groups of 3.

As already explained, these improvisations can be performed by just a few students in front of the entire class as a follow-up to dramatization of the scene, or the entire class can improvise the situation in pairs at their seats. (See complete explanation of Improvisations in section 6-C, p. 50-51 for details).

1. **Mama and Ruth:**
   Continue the scene. Walter has just left the house in anger. Mama will have to talk with him later when he returns. But for now, Mama needs to talk with Ruth and convince her that she must cancel the abortion and keep the baby. Ruth feels she needs to have an abortion for the reasons she already explained to Mama, and now, based on Walter’s reaction to learning of her pregnancy, she is all the more convinced that this is what she must do.

2. **Walter and Mama**
   It is a few hours later. Walter comes home and tries once again to convince Mama to give him the money for the liquor store. He did a lot of thinking, and he has decided to try once again to persuade her why it would be the best thing to do, both for him and for the whole family.
3. **Walter and Ruth**

   It is a few hours later. Walter did a lot of thinking while he was gone and realizes how wrong he was in leaving the house so angrily and not telling Ruth how much he loves her. He realizes especially how wrong he was in not telling her that he is happy that they will be having another child together. So in this scene, he returns and apologizes to Ruth, and tries to convince her to cancel the abortion and keep the baby.

4. **Walter and Ruth**

   The situation is somewhat different than in the play. Rather than Mama telling Walter about Ruth being pregnant, it is Ruth who gives him the news. When she says that she needs to speak to him (as she does in the play), he says OK, and Mama leaves the room. Then she begins.
7. Video-related activities

Showing the film version of the play

*How to coordinate viewing the film with reading the text and language learning activities*

Because this is a literature class that focuses on both literature and language, the entire play is read, and the entire film shown along with reading of the play, act by act. That is, students first read and discuss Act I, then view the Act I (or the act can be broken down into smaller chunks, a few scenes at a time both for reading and viewing.). The comprehension questions can be assigned as part of the reading assignment before the video is shown, or alternatively, after students have both read and viewed that portion of the play. However, students should both read and view the video of Act I before doing the dramatizations and writing activities for it. The same is true for Acts II and III. For the comprehension questions and writing activities about the overall play, students should have both read and seen the video of the entire play.

Thus class study consists of reading the play and showing the film, little by little (a few scenes at a time, or act by act). It involves discussing each portion of the play as it is read and shown, checking for comprehension and eliciting the students’ reactions. Incorporated into study of the play are a variety of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities, which include pre-reading questions, comprehension questions for discussion and writing, oral reading and dramatization of selected scenes, and a variety of writing assignments (all of which are presented in this module). The writing assignments range from short writings focusing on literary comprehension to full-length essays. They include creative writing assignments as well (like letters to the characters) that students write at home and share aloud in class.

For this advanced “Language Through Literature” class that meets 2 hours twice a week, spending 10 sessions, or 5 weeks, on this play would allow ample time to view, discuss, and write about the play, and to have students participate in a variety of dramatic activities based upon it. It is certainly possible to devote fewer classes to this play, or alternatively to spend even more classes, depending on how much time is spent on reading, dramatization, class discussion,
and reading aloud of the homework assignments. The actual film is 171 minutes. The instructor has a great deal of flexibility in selecting from the array of activities in order to have the module fit into the overall syllabus of the course.

Availability of film to students and instructors

One copy of the film being used for this module (the 1989 American Playhouse version starring Danny Glover) is on reserve for viewing in the IVC library (under ESL 390, Susan Stern’s class). Students who wish to watch part or all of the play may do so in the library. It may not be checked out.

For those who wish to purchase A Raisin in the Sun for home use, several film versions are available. The 1961 movie version starring Sidney Poitier (Columbia Classics), and the 2008 made-for-television version based on the 2004 Broadway revival, can both be ordered from Barnes & Noble (www.bn.com) and Amazon. (See complete references for both films under “Resources” at beginning of module.) Students should be able to rent these versions from some video stores as well, or borrow them from a public library. The 1989 American Playhouse, version which is the one being used for this module, is not as easily acquired as it no longer appears to be in print, although used copies are available on line through Amazon.com. However there is a copy of this version of the film in Susan Stern’s office available to instructors for use with their classes.
Videotaping the students

Videotaping the dramatic activities that students perform in the classroom is an exciting and enjoyable activity for the students, one which is highly motivating and which helps develop self-confidence in speaking English. When they see their performances, they are usually pleased and surprised at how fluent they appear to be—much better than they had given themselves credit for. Students can view their performances together as a class as a follow-up to their performances, or optionally outside of class in the IVC Library, where it can be put on reserve. It will be a delight to play this back for the students so they can see themselves as the characters from *A Raisin in the Sun*, with their own unique interpretation of it.

In terms of language learning, being able to view the students’ performance several times allows the instructor to analyze the students’ pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar problems that appear. He or she can then go over these errors with the students on an individual basis during office hours.

#     #     #
INTEGRATING PLAYS AND POETRY
INTO THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

BAREFOOT IN THE PARK
A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By Neil Simon

Prepared for ESL 382: Advanced Conversation

Susan L. Stern, Ph.D.
Professor of ESL
Irvine Valley College

Sabbatical Project, Fall Semester, 2010
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources: Edition of play and movie used for module</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pre-Reading Questions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cultural Setting and Background</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Brief Biography of Author</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Comprehension Questions and Discussion Topics</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Act I: pp. 11 – 21</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Act I: pp. 21 – 30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Act I: pp. 31 – 36</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Act I: Overall Act - The characters and their relationship</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Act II, Scene 1: pp. 37 – 54</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Restaurant scene from movie</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Act II, Scene 2: pp. 54 – 70</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Act III: pp. 71 – 85</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. The Overall Play: Relating it to your life and culture, and expressing your point of view</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Writing Activities</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Letter of Advice</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Additional writing activities from which to choose</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Description of character (Paragraph)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Comparison between characters (Essay)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Diary Entry</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Script Writing</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Journal Writing</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. **Dramatic Activities** ................................................................. 36
   a. Oral Reading ................................................................. 36
   b. Dramatization .............................................................. 38
   c. Role-Play Interview ...................................................... 42
   d. Improvisation .............................................................. 45

7. **Video-related activities** ...................................................... 49
   a. Structuring the module around the movie ......................... 49
   b. Identifying the scenes of the movie ................................. 52
      (Division of movie into 18 scenes for viewing and discussion)
   c. Videotaping the students performing the scenes ............... 54
   d. DVD movie version of play available in library ................. 54

8. **Alternative to teaching the full play:**
   **One-Scene Unit for *Barefoot in the Park*** ......................... 55
      a. Sneak Preview—Issues to Think About Before You Begin .......... 57
      b. About the Playwright (Brief biography of Neil Simon) ......... 58
      c. Context of the Scene .................................................. 60
      d. The Scene (First big argument between newlyweds, Corie and Paul) .... 61
      e. Understanding the Scene (Comprehension questions) .......... 69
      f. Oral Reading of Scene ............................................... 73
      g. Dramatization of Scene .............................................. 74
      h. Role-play Interview ................................................... 76
      i. Improvisation .......................................................... 78
      j. Expressing Your Point of View (Topics for Discussion) ........ 80
      k. Working with Words (Vocabulary Building Exercises) .......... 82
      l. Writing Activities ..................................................... 89
      m. Video-Related Activities
         (Viewing the DVD, and videotaping the students) ............. 94
Resources: Edition of play and movie used for module

Recommended textbook:

Samuel French Acting Edition of the play:
ISBN 0 573 60585 8  www.samuelfrench.com

Entire play may also be found in:

DVD:

Barefoot in the Park  (with Robert Redford, Jane Fonda, Charles Boyer, and Mildred Natwick)
Available from Barnes & Noble on-line (www.bn.com)

One copy of DVD in library on reserve for ESL 382: Advanced Conversation (Susan Stern)
1. **Pre-Reading Questions**

SNEAK PREVIEW

Issues To Think About Before You Begin

*Before you begin to read this scene, think about the following issues and share your opinions about them with your classmates.*

1. What do you think the first year of marriage is like for most newlyweds?

2. In choosing a marriage partner, is it enough for two people to be in love with each other, or are there other things they need to consider as well before they decide to get married?

3. Is it important for a husband and wife to have the same kind of personality, and to share similar interests, hobbies, values, etc., for their marriage to be a success? Explain.
2. **Cultural Setting and Background**

*Barefoot in the Park* is a romantic comedy by Neil Simon which focuses on newlyweds and that first difficult, yet wonderful, period of marriage once the honeymoon is over. The original Broadway production opened in 1963 and starred Robert Redford and Elizabeth Ashley as the newlyweds, Paul and Corie. The play was nominated for three 1964 Tony Awards, and Mike Nichols won the trophy for Best Director (Dramatic). The show ran for 1,530 performances, making it Neil Simon’s longest running hit, and the tenth longest-running non-musical play in Broadway history. The 1967 motion picture version of *Barefoot in the Park*, which is at the core of this module, was directed by Gene Saks from a screenplay by Neil Simon. It stars Robert Redford as Paul, Jane Fonda as Corie, Charles Boyer as Victor, Mildred Natwick as Mrs. Banks, Herb Edelman as Harry, and James Stone as the Delivery man. The movie also won several awards and nominations. Since then, the play has been produced continuously on stage as a staple in the repertoire of main stages, community and college theaters, and in 2006 a major New York revival production ran for 109 performances.

The continuous popularity of the play throughout the years may be attributed to its universal appeal. Although the play is a period piece in that it takes place in New York City in the 1960s, because of its universal subject matter and themes, it is just as relevant and appealing today to modern audiences of all ages and backgrounds. In spite of the setting being very “New York,” the characters, plot, and theme are universal, and typical of the relationship between young newlyweds everywhere. Most everyone can identify with the young couple, Corie and Paul as they begin married life in their newly acquired tiny 5th floor walk-up apartment in
Manhattan. After a glorious six-day honeymoon, their real life begins—and they discover that adjusting to married life isn’t so easy!

Besides experiencing the usual difficulties in adjusting to living with a new person, Paul and Corie first realize how very different their personalities are. Paul is an uptight, strait-laced lawyer, and Corie, a spontaneous free spirit. They must learn how to compromise – each giving up a part of themselves to make room for the relationship. At the same time, they must learn to deal with Corie’s mother (the mother-in-law) and her strong need to be involved in her daughter’s life. The plot takes another turn when Corie realizes that her widowed mother is lonely, and that she, too needs love and romance in her life. So Corie sets up her mother with a rather eccentric, yet intelligent and kind, gentleman who lives in the same building. Thus the play is about love, romance, and relationships at various stages of life, broadening even more in appeal. The ending of the play, predictably, is happy, yet not predictable, as the plot takes some interesting twists and turns. Overall this entertaining play is satisfying, heartwarming, and insightful, striking a chord with the audience with its wit and wisdom.
3. **Brief Biography of Author**

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Neil Simon is one of America's most popular writers of comedies, and the contemporary American theater's most commercially successful playwright. His plays deal with family relationships and portray the joys and heartaches of contemporary middle class life in the United States. They focus on such universal concerns as love and marriage, growing up and family relationships, friendship, loneliness, and aging. Their tone is usually humorous, but there is also a great deal of humanity in these plays, a dark edge to the humor, and an affection for the characters and their situations.

Simon was born in 1927 in the Bronx, a borough of New York City. He started out writing comedy sketches for radio and television comedy stars, but soon turned to writing for the theater, and began his Broadway career as a playwright in the late 1950s. *Come Blow Your Horn* (1961), which was his first play, ran for two years on Broadway and was made into a film. This play was followed by a succession of Broadway hits, many of which were also made into films, including *Barefoot in the Park* (1963); *The Odd Couple* (1965, later adapted into a long-running television series); *Sweet Charity* (1966); *Promises, Promises* (1968); *Plaza Suite* (1968); *The Sunshine Boys* (1972); and *Chapter Two* (1977). Simon has also written original film scripts for more than twenty films, including *The Goodbye Girl* (1977), and has received four Best Screenplay Academy Award nominations.

Simon admitted that he often used personal experiences or those of his friends for material. *Come Blow Your Horn* was about two brothers who moved away from home and
shared an apartment (just as Simon and his brother had). *Barefoot in the Park* was the story of newlyweds adjusting to married life (similar to his own marriage); and of *The Odd Couple* Simon once commented, “[The story] happened to two guys I know—I couldn’t write a play about Welsh miners.” *The Odd Couple* had a two-year run on Broadway, won Simon his first Tony award, and was adapted to television and film several times.

Simon took his mixing of honesty and humor to new levels in the 1980s in his trilogy of semi-autobiographical plays: *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (1983), *Biloxi Blues* (1985, Tony Award), and *Broadway Bound* (1987), which were praised for their compassion and deeper character development. *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, the first play in this trilogy, tells the story of a middle-class Jewish American teenager growing up in a troubled family. *Biloxi Blues* deals with the boy’s coming of age and facing anti-Semitism while in the army. *Broadway Bound* takes audiences into the boy’s young adulthood, as he struggles to establish his career and sees the problems in his parents’ relationship more clearly. Simon claimed that writing the play helped him address the problems he had with his own mother. When Simon’s third marriage broke up, he wrote *Jake’s Women*, in which he introduces “ghosts”—good and bad experiences of two marriages and their effect on the third. He began the 1990s with *Lost in Yonkers*, a painfully funny story about the effect an abusive mother has on her grown children. The play was a success, and in 1991 it earned both a Tony Award and the Pulitzer Prize in drama.

In addition to awards for specific plays and films, Simon received a number of honors for his overall contribution as a playwright. He received Kennedy Center honors in 1995 from President Bill Clinton for his contribution to the arts and to popular culture in the twentieth
century. In 1999 Simon was honored by ringing the bell to open trading at the New York Stock Exchange as part of the Exchange’s Bridging the Millennium program, which honored leaders of the twentieth century whose achievements continue to enrich humanity. In 2001, he was presented with the first Sarah Applebaum Nederlander Award for Excellence in Theatre at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. As President Clinton remarked of Simon when presenting him with the Kennedy Center honors, “He challenges us and himself never to take ourselves too seriously. Thank you for the wit and the wisdom.”
4. **Comprehension Questions & Discussion Topics**

---

**Act I**
( p.11 – 21)

1. Does Paul feel as romantic toward Corie as she does toward him? How do you know?

2. What wonderful thing has happened to Paul at work? How does he feel about it? How does Corie feel about it?

3. What has Corie brought for tonight? What are her plans for tonight?
4. What does Paul promise Corie? How does she react to this?

5. What piece of furniture are they still missing? When is it supposed to arrive?

6. What things upset Paul about the apartment? List them and be specific.

7. Why is Corie upset when the doorbell rings and she realizes that it is her mother?

8. What does Corie want Paul to lie about to her mother? Why?
1. Why did Corie’s mother drop by? How did she get to the apartment and how does she feel when she arrives?

2. What does Corie’s mother tell Corie and Paul that she thinks about the apartment? Do you think that this is how she really feels about it? Explain.

3. What does Corie ask Paul to go out and get for her mother?
4. Why does the mother worry a lot about Corie and Paul? Is the mother more like Corie or more like Paul? In what ways?

5. Who does Corie’s mother live with now that Corie has gone? Is she happy about this?

6. What does Corie think that her mother should do for herself? What does she think that her mother needs?

7. What does Corie’s mother want for herself?
1. Who is Mr. Velasco, and what do you think of him?

2. What is Corie planning with Mr. Velasco? Give all the details.

3. Do you think what Corie is planning is a good idea? Why or why not?
4. What do you think will happen at Friday night’s dinner? 
   Will Corie’s mother like Mr. Velasco? 
   Will he like her? 
   Will they hit it off? 
   
   EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWERS.
1. Describe Corie. Give your overall impression of what she is like.

2. Describe Paul. Give your overall impression of what he is like.

3. Now fill in the chart on the following page about Corie and Paul. Make a list of adjectives that describe each of them under their names. Be ready to tell why you chose these words, using evidence from the text (what the characters say and do) to explain your choices.
You can use the list below the chart for ideas, using as many adjectives from it as you think apply, and/or come up with your own words. If you think that some of the words describe both Corie and Paul, put them on both lists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORIE</th>
<th>PAUL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adventurous</td>
<td>immature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>childish</td>
<td>logical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conservative</td>
<td>mature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dignified</td>
<td>practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>proper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal</td>
<td>prudish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some suggestions:
4. Describe Corie and Paul's relationship as newlyweds.
   Do you think they have a good relationship? Is it a strong one?
   Do they seem to love and care about each other?
   Do they seem to understand each other?
   Explain your answers.
1. What is Paul’s mood when he returns home from work? Does Corie understand or sympathize with his feelings?

2. How does Corie feel about the “blind date” that Corie has arranged for her mother with Mr. Velasco? How does Paul feel about it?

3. Who did Corie’s mother think would be joining them for dinner? Do you think she would have come if she knew that Corie had arranged for Mr. Velasco to be her date for the evening?

4. What does Corie want to say about her mother when she introduces her to Mr. Velasco? Does Paul agree? Do you?
5. What does Corie’s mother think about the way Corie has decorated the apartment?

6. Describe Mr. Velasco’s cocktail party and the unusual dish that he prepares.

7. The original plan for the evening was for Corie to prepare a special dinner. How did the plan change, and why?
**Act II**
Restaurant scene from movie
(referred to at end of Scene 1 and beginning of Scene 2, but not in written script)

1. How did Corie like the restaurant? How do you know? *(What did she say and/or do that shows you how she felt about it?)*

2. How did Paul like the restaurant? How do you know?

3. How did Corie’s mother like the restaurant? How do you know?

4. Would YOU like to go to this restaurant? Why or why not?
1. How are Corie and Mr. Velasco when they return from the restaurant?

2. How are Paul and Corie’s mother when they return from the restaurant?

3. What does Corie think about letting Mr. Velasco escort her mother home?

4. What does Paul think about letting Mr. Velasco escort Corie’s mother home?
5. What do YOU think about it?

6. At the end of the Act II, what advice would you give Corie?

7. At the end of the Act II, what advice would you give Paul?

8. How do you think the play will end? How would you like it to end? Explain in detail.
Act III (pp. 71-85)
Discussion Questions about the Overall Play

1. How does Corie change by the end of the play?

2. How does Paul change by the end of the play?

3. How does the mother change by the end of the play?
4. What advice would you give Corie and Paul to avoid future problems in their marriage?

5. Are any of the characters similar to you or to anyone you know? Explain.

6. What is your personal opinion of the play? What did you like and/or not like about it? Be specific.
The overall play: Relating it to your life and culture, and expressing your point of view

Topics for Discussion

1. Corie and Paul have only been married for one week, but already they are quarreling and having a big argument. Do you think that this is a serious argument? Do they really want to get a divorce? Next year, will they be celebrating their first anniversary together? Why or why not?

7. There is an expression in English: "Opposites attract." This usually refers to romantic relationships and means that people with totally different or opposite personalities, interests, backgrounds, etc., are attracted to each other. We see many examples of this in books, movies, and real life, for it makes for interesting and romantic stories. But does such a relationship make a good solid marriage? As we see with Corie and Paul, being completely different from your partner can sometimes cause problems. Opposites attract, but do they stay together? What do you think? Use Corie and Paul along with examples from real life to illustrate your point of view.
8. Corie criticizes Paul for being too proper and dignified, too sensible and logical. She is insulting him when she tells him: "You're always dressed right, you always look right, you always say the right things. You're very close to being perfect." Paul, on the other hand, thinks that Corie acts like a child. He says she is immature and lacking in common sense because she does some pretty crazy things, like walking barefoot in the park in the middle of winter, just because she thinks they are fun. *Are you more like Paul or Corie? Explain your answer and give examples.*

9. Are Corie and Paul typical of newlyweds in your native country? *If so, how are they similar? If not, how are they different?*

10. How do Corie and Paul's living arrangements compare to that of newlyweds in your native country? In the United States, it is typical for newlyweds to start out in a small apartment, especially if they are young, just beginning their careers, and don't have much money saved up. The goal is generally to move into something bigger and nicer as soon as they are able to afford it—ideally their own home. *How does this compare to your native country? Where do newlyweds generally live?*
5. Writing Activities

For my ESL 382 Advanced Conversation class, all of the writing assignments that I give in relation to the play are connected with speaking, either preparing students for group work and class discussion, and/or as a follow-up to it. I always collect the writing and make comments on the content. I usually correct the grammar and vocabulary as well, although the grade is based only on the content. For this class, I usually assign the following types of writing:

1) COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS: Students write out answers to some or all of the Comprehension Questions presented in this module. This is followed up by pair and/or group work, and class discussion.

2) INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Students write interview questions and answers to each of the characters for several of the scenes that we dramatize (see Section 6C, pp. 42-44: Dramatic activities), to prepare them for the oral interviews of the characters. The questions are addressed directly to the main characters of the play: Corie, Paul, the Mother, and Victor Velasco, asking each how he or she thinks or feels about a specific situation from the scene, or why he or she said something in the role of that character, taking into account that character’s personality and point of view, and answering in writing, in first person, in the role of that character. This activity demonstrates the students’ understanding of the situations and characters in the play, and prepares them for the oral interviews to follow.
3) **LETTER OF ADVICE:** Students write a letter of advice to one of the characters (see handout, page 31—next page). I give this assignment at the end of Act II, when the two main characters, the newlywed couple Corie and Paul, had their first big argument, and Corie kicked Paul out of the apartment. Students write a letter to Corie or Paul in which they give advice on how to get through the argument, and have a successful marriage. These letters of advice are written as homework, and students are told to practice reading them aloud at home. The follow up activity is that students read their letters out loud in groups and select the best ones. These are read aloud to the class. When I use this play along with an idioms textbook in this conversation class, I have the students include some of the idioms in their letters. (SEE HANDOUT—next page).

4) **ORIGINAL ENDING** to the story: I give this assignment at the end of Act II. Before knowing what the actual ending is, students write their own endings to the play, the way they would like to see it end, or how they think that it will end. It is written in the form of a summary paragraph. As a follow-up, students read their endings out loud in class, either individually to the entire class, or in groups.
**LETTER OF ADVICE**

**CHOOSE ONE**

1. **Letter to Corie from her best friend, or letter to Paul from his best friend:**

   Imagine that you are the best friend of Corie or Paul, and you have heard about the big argument they had and the difficulties that they are having in their marriage. You know how much they love each other, and feel strongly that they will have a wonderful marriage. Write a letter in which you give him or her advice about the best way to save their marriage.

2. **Letter to Corie from her sister:**

   The morning after her big argument with Paul, Corie wrote a long letter to her older sister, Ann, asking her for advice about what to do. Even though Ann now lives far away in California, Corie and Ann are still very close. Corie has always gone to her older sister for advice, and she is sure that Ann can help her now too. Ann has been happily married to Bill for eight years and they have two lovely children, so she knows what it takes to make a good marriage.

3. **Write a letter to Paul from his brother.**

   The day after his big argument with Corie, Paul wrote a long letter to his older brother, Steve, asking him for advice about how to get over this argument and have a good marriage. Even though Steve now lives far away in Texas, Paul and Steve are still very close. Paul has always gone to his older brother for advice, and he is sure that Steve can help him out now too. Steve has been happily married for nine years to his wonderful wife, Jennifer, and they have three lovely children, so he knows what it takes to have a good marriage.

**Directions:**

1. Please write in ink (or by computer), double space, and use your imagination. Pretend that you are the best friend/sister/or brother, and that you really care about him or her. You want to give the best advice that you can.
2. (If we are using an IDIOM textbook in the course, students must include in their original letters at least 8 of the new idioms they learned, and underline them.)
3. When you have written your letter, practice reading it aloud. You will be presenting it in groups (or to the class) on ___(date)______.
ADDITIONAL WRITING ACTIVITIES FROM WHICH TO CHOOSE:

These additional activities focus on WRITING more than listening and speaking, although they may be integrated with oral activities as well—an added bonus. They would work well in a high-intermediate or advanced multi-skills or writing class, in which the main focus of reading and viewing the play is to serve as the subject matter and inspiration for writing.

For the paragraph and essay writing assignments below (#1 – Description of Character; and # 2—Comparison of Characters), students will need to understand the characters, and be able to express these observations in a clear and well-developed paragraph or essay. For the rest of these writing activities (#3 – 5: Diary Entry, Script Writing, Journal Writing) students will also need to thoroughly understand the characters and their relationship, but must add their imagination to their observations in order to go one step beyond what is presented in the scene. All of these writing assignments demand literary analysis and critical thinking.

1) **DESCRIPTION OF CORIE OR PAUL (Paragraph)**

Write a detailed PARAGRAPH describing either Corie or Paul. You may wish to look back at the chart of adjectives that you prepared for Act I (Understanding the Scene) for ideas. Be specific, give plenty of details, and be sure to support your observations with evidence from the text (what Corie and Paul say and do).

2) **COMPARISON BETWEEN CORIE AND PAUL (Essay)**

Write a well developed ESSAY comparing Corie and Paul. You may wish to look back at the chart of adjectives that you prepared for Act I (Understanding the characters and their relationship) for ideas. Be specific, give plenty of details, and be sure to support your observations with evidence from the text.
3) **DIARY ENTRY: CORIE OR PAUL** (Choose ONE)

*Imagine that it is the next day. After Corie ended the conversation and went into the bedroom the night before, Paul decided to stop arguing for the time being so that he could get at least a few hours of sleep. By the time Corie got up at 8:00 a.m., Paul had already left for his office.*

**Corie's Diary Entry**

Imagine that you are Corie. It is 9:00 a.m. and you are sitting at the kitchen table drinking a cup of coffee. You are feeling miserable because of the big argument you had with Paul. You are very upset by all the hurtful things you said to each other. So you take out your diary and begin to write. It always makes you feel better to get your feelings down on paper, and it also helps you figure out what to do when you have a problem. So in your diary entry, tell how you feel about the argument the two of you had last night, and what you are going to do about it.

**Paul's Diary Entry**

Imagine that you are Paul. It is 4:00 p.m. and you are sitting in your office. Your big day in court is finally over. You have been so busy the whole day that you haven't had any time to think about the argument until this moment. Now it is all coming back to you, all the terrible things you said to each other, and you feel miserable thinking about it. So you take out your diary and begin to write. Putting your thoughts down on paper makes you feel better, and helps you see things more clearly so that you can figure out what to do. So in your diary entry, tell how you feel about the argument the two of you had last night, and what you are going to do about it.
4) SCRIPT WRITING

Now it is your turn to be a playwright. Using your imagination, continue the script for this scene. It is the next day, and the situation is as follows:

CORIE is waiting for Paul to return home from work. She hasn't spoken with him since she went into their bedroom and closed the door on him last night. He slept in the living room, and by the time she woke up this morning, he was already at work. Now she feels really badly about the argument she started, and regrets all the things she said to Paul. She is still upset about the things he said too, but mostly she is sorry that she said she wanted a divorce. She doesn't really want a divorce. She loves him and wants their marriage to last forever. She knows that it can! So she has prepared a wonderful, romantic, candlelight dinner for him, and will tell him all this and make everything right again as soon as he gets home.

PAUL, on the other hand, is not in such a forgiving mood. He had a terrible headache all day long, and even worse, he didn't perform well in court and so he lost his case. He blames his headache and his poor court performance on Corie, because she was the one who insisted they stay out so late on a week night, and then when they finally got home she started an argument. So he got very little sleep.

The scene begins just as Paul returns home from work and walks in the door.
In writing the script, indicate who is speaking, what they say, and include any stage directions that you think would be helpful. Use the same format as the scene from the play, as illustrated below:

PAUL: (Stage directions in parentheses)
CORIE:
PAUL:

etc. . . .

Make two copies of your script to bring to class so that you can practice it with a partner. After practicing both, select the one you like best to perform for the class.

5) JOURNAL WRITING

a) Personal Response

Respond to the scene by writing your reaction to anything about it, or by relating it to your own life. For example, how do you personally feel about Corie or Paul? About the quarrel they are having? Is their relationship as newlyweds similar to your own if you are married, or similar to someone you know? You might want to comment on the play itself. Did you enjoy reading this scene? Why or why not? What did you especially like or dislike about it?

b) Discussion Topics

You may wish to select one of the discussion topics on page 27: “About the Overall Play: Relating it to your life and culture and expressing your point of view,” as the subject for your journal entry.
11. **Dramatic Activities**

A. **ORAL READING**

Taking Selected Scenes Line-by-Line

*Notes to the instructor:*

Although there will not be time to read the entire play aloud in class, there is great value in doing some oral reading aloud together with the students for selected scenes, especially for scenes that the students will be practicing on their own in pairs and performing for the class. Even though students have read the scenes or Act on their own and answered the comprehension questions, they will most likely still have questions about the scene, particularly in terms of vocabulary (especially idioms) and cultural references. Even if they think they have understood all the dialogue, there may be connotative meanings, cultural references, implications and inferences that they don't even realize they have missed or misunderstood. Moreover, dialogue from a play represents spoken English and is intended to be heard. Therefore, hearing the dialogue read aloud with appropriate inflections can in itself clarify many of the questions students might have about the meaning of words, and about the intent and attitude of the characters. Thus, a line-by-line reading of selected scenes, clarifying any questions the students may have and any items you predict they might have misunderstood, is beneficial for everyone.

The procedure is to read the scene line-by-line, explaining vocabulary and cultural items, and clarifying meaning as you go along. Make this as interactive an activity as possible, eliciting definitions and explanations from students. As you explain the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary and idioms, have students repeat them for pronunciation practice.

Stop and repeat as necessary, isolating individual words and phrases as needed. You will be working on all aspects of pronunciation as you go through the dialogue: discrete sounds,
words and phrases, rhythm and intonation patterns. If you are using these scenes in a pronunciation class, you will find that they provide ideal material for putting into practice everything you have been working on, and you can point this out as you go along. If you are using them in an advanced conversation or in any other kind of class, they provide ideal material for integrating some pronunciation work into the curriculum. You will cover a lot of sounds and patterns, particularly at the discourse level. Pronunciation approached in this way is meaningful and fun for the students, and they will be highly motivated to get it right.

As you model the lines for the students, read as though you really were the character, saying each line with meaning and feeling. If the character is nervous, angry, or sarcastic, let your voice express it. If he or she is excited, sympathetic, or thrilled, sound convincing. Exaggerate. Ham it up. The students will love it and really get enthusiastic about the activity, and you will be setting the tone for the dramatic activities that will follow.

Directions to students:

Now you are ready to hear the dialogue read aloud, to clarify any questions you have about it, and to practice saying it yourself.

1. Listen as your instructor reads through the scene line-by-line and be sure to ask about anything that you don't understand as the lines are read.

2. Now listen as your instructor reads the lines again, this time as a model for you to repeat. As you listen and repeat the lines, pay special attention to pronouncing the words and phrases correctly and to using the same rhythm and intonation as your instructor.

3. Practice reading the scene aloud at home.
B. DRAMATIZATION

Students do not dramatize the entire play, but rather, one key scene from Act II, Scene 2, pp. 61 – 70, which is the first big argument between the newlyweds, Corie and Paul. On the DVD, scenes 12 and 13 together correspond to these pages and make up this scene, which is the climax of the play. I have divided this scene into 5 parts to accommodate a large class of up to 36 students. With two students enacting each scene (one taking the role of Corie, the other taking the role of Paul), each of these 5 scenes can be assigned to 3 couples for a class of 36, to two couples for a class of 24, etc. I have indicated below the pages on which each of these 5 parts is found in the textbook (the acting version of the play *Barefoot in the Park*, published by Samuel French, Inc.). I have also indicated the beginning and ending lines of each scene so that they can be easily located in the text. As a follow up to dramatization of the scenes, improvisations are suggested below (in section 6-D, “Improvisation,” pp. 45 - 48)

**THE BIG ARGUMENT SCENE**

from Act II, Scene 2 (pp. 61—68)

(Divided into 5 Short Scenes for Class Dramatization)

Pages for each short scene with the beginning and ending lines:

**Scene 1: pp. 61—62**

*Beginning lines:*

Paul: I don’t understand how you can be so unconcerned about this.

*Ending lines:*

Corie: Alright, Paul.
Scene 2: pp. 62—63

Beginning lines:
Paul: When else? When else was I proper and dignified?

Ending lines:
Paul: You have the fight. When you are through, turn off the lights.

Scene 3: pp. 63—65

Beginning lines:
Corie: Ooh, that gets me insane.

Ending lines:
Corie: All right . . . Why don’t you get it passed in the Supreme Court? Only those couples bearing a letter from their psychiatrists proving they’re well adjusted will be permitted to get married.

Scene 4: pp. 65—66

Beginning lines:
Paul: You’re impossible.

Ending lines:
Corie: I can’t talk with you when you’re hysterical. Good night.

Scene 5: pp. 66—68

Beginning lines:
Paul: Will you come here . . . ?

Ending lines:
Paul: Yes, . . . Yes . . .
**Directions to students for DRAMATIZATION of SHORT SCENE:**

Now that you understand the scene and are familiar with the characters and the dialogue, the action can finally begin. You are now ready to take the roles of the characters in this scene, and to practice the scene with a partner.

**Practicing the Scene**

The first thing you should know is that you do not need to memorize the scene. You may have the script in front of you at all times. But you do need to practice it again and again so that after quickly glancing at the lines to refresh your memory, you can look up at your partner and say your lines to him or her with meaning and feeling. Whether all the students in your class or only a few will actually be performing the scene in front of the class, everyone should practice the scene with his or her partner at least three times, as follows:

**The First Time:**

As you read the scene aloud with your partner, pay special attention to pronunciation (words and phrases, rhythm and intonation), just as you did during the oral reading. Help each other with this and ask the teacher for assistance with any words or phrases that you are not sure how to pronounce.

**The Second Time:**

Now, add expression to your words, trying to convey or show through your voice the feelings, attitudes, and moods of the speaker. Really put yourself into the role of your character. For example, if your character is upset, frustrated, or happy, you need to sound that way to be convincing. Don't be afraid to exaggerate.
**The Third Time:**

Now, think about how you will perform the scene, adding facial expressions and body language to make it more realistic, dramatic, and interesting. Also, agree upon any props you wish to use (chairs, a table, a glass of water, etc.) and any actions you wish to take. Refer to the stage directions for ideas and select any actions that you think are significant to the scene and that would add to the dramatization. Finally, think about costume to make your performance more realistic and interesting. Just one item of clothing such as an interesting hat, a colorful scarf, or a large piece of costume jewelry—anything that reflects your character's personality (such as a tie for Paul), can really add to the performance. Be creative, use your imagination, and have fun!

**Performing the Scene**

*Last Minute Advice to the Performers:*

Take a deep breath, relax, and enjoy yourselves. Don't worry about what your instructor or the other students will think. Everyone will enjoy your performance. Just do your best to imagine that you really are Paul or Corie, and the performance will take care of itself.

*Advice to the Audience:*

Sit back and enjoy the performance, and PUT AWAY THOSE SCRIPTS. You already know the dialogue very well, so give your complete attention to the performance.
C. ROLE-PLAY INTERVIEW

When the dramatization is over, the students who have just performed the scene remain in front of the class, staying in the roles of Corie and Paul, and the interview begins.

To the Audience:

Now is your opportunity to interview each of the characters, to ask them about anything you are curious about—why they said what they did to each other and how they feel about it, why they acted as they did, what their relationship was like before, what they think or hope is going to happen next, etc. Think in terms of Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why. Use your curiosity and imagination and make the questions as specific and interesting as possible. You can use the space below to write down at least two good questions for each character. When you ask the questions, remember to address your classmates as the characters they are portraying.

To the Performers:

Imagine that you are still the characters you have just portrayed in the scene, and answer these questions the way you think that they would answer them, expressing their opinions, attitudes, and feelings. Use your imagination whenever necessary to fill in information not presented in the scene. Speak in first person ("I") in the role of your character.

Example questions for Corie

- Why did you marry Paul since the two of you have nothing in common?
- Do you really want to divorce Paul? If not, why did you tell him you did?

Example questions for Paul:

- What is wrong with being very nearly perfect?
- Do you think that Corie really wants to divorce you? Do you want to divorce her?

Coordinated Writing Activity and Group Work:

The Oral Interview questions may be spontaneous, and/or students can prepare for these scenes by writing 2 or 3 interview questions in advance to each of the characters, and writing answers to the questions (in 1st person, from the point of view of the characters). After they use these interview questions in the follow-up below, I collect this written assignment and correct the grammar and vocabulary. See next page (page 43) for suggested form.
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

For CORIE

1. Question:
   Answer:

2. Question:
   Answer:

For PAUL

1. Question:
   Answer:

2. Question:
   Answer:
In addition to using the Oral Interviews to the “Argument Scene” dramatizations which are performed by ALL the students, (as described in Section 6-B “Dramatizations”, pp. 38-41), there are several variations to how they may be used with additional selected scenes from the play which are not dramatized by the entire class:

1) **Performance (dramatic oral reading) of scene in front of class by a few students:**
   Instructor does Oral Reading of a selected scene with the students, focusing on meaning, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students practice the scene at home. When students come to the next class, they meet in pairs and read the scene aloud with a partner. Then I invite a pair of students to come to the front of the class to perform the scene that everyone has just practiced. Everyone listens (scripts put away). This is followed by a role-play interview from the rest of the class. Sometimes I divide the scene into 2 – 4 shorter sections, and divide the class into that many sections of pairs. In each section the pairs of students have their shorter scene to practice. This is followed up by my inviting 2 – 4 pairs of students to present these 2-4 scenes in front of the class, followed by a role-play interview from the entire class.

2) **Group performances and interviews:**
   When students come to class, they meet in pairs and read the scene aloud, after having practiced it at home. Then each pair meets with another pair. One pair maintains the roles of their characters and the second pair asks them their interview questions. Then they reverse and the second pair interviews the first. This can also be done with 3 pairs of students. One pair is interviewed by the other two pairs, and then they rotate so each pair has the opportunity to both be interviewed, and to ask their questions and to interview the others.
D. IMPROVISATION

An improvisation is a dramatization without a script. It performs like a scene, with an identifiable beginning and end, but is spontaneous. Each improvisation has a specific situation upon which it is based, and is designed to enhance the students’ understanding of the characters, plot, theme, and/or cultural attitudes expressed in the play. But one similarity that all of the improvisations which are presented below share is that they center around some kind of conflict.

Conflict is at the heart of these improvisations in that each character is given a specific purpose or goal to accomplish, and these purposes or goals are at odds with each other in some way. This guarantees that the students will have something specific to achieve in the improvisations so that what to discuss or what to say never becomes a problem. On the contrary, they become so involved in the issue at hand and so determined to win the conflict from their character’s point of view that language flows. Moreover, basing the improvisation on a conflict helps establish a framework for the improvisation. It begins as the characters state their goals and ends when the conflict is resolved in some way.

Improvisations can be performed by just a few students in front of the entire class as a follow-up to dramatization of a scene, or the entire class can improvise the situation in pairs at their seats, as follows:

1) Improvisation performed by the students who dramatized the scene

The same students who performed the scene and answered the interview questions now enact the improvisation. They remain in front of the class and the situation is explained to them. Address them as those characters, and explain the situation in front of the class so that everyone can hear. Then give them the option to just begin the improvisation spontaneously then and there, or to step out of the room for a few minutes to discuss it with each other first. Then they return and perform the scene.
2) **Entire class improvises the situation**

The improvisational situation is explained to the class, and ALL the students perform the improvisation at their seats. As a follow-up, one or two pairs can perform their improvisations in front of the class. Alternatively, the instructor can ask each pair to tell the class how their improvisation ended, how the conflict was resolved. The students will be curious to know the results of everyone else’s improvisations, and this activity enables everyone to speak up and share their outcome with the class.

* * * * * * *

**Directions to students:**

To improvise means to act out a scene just as you did in the dramatization, but this time without a script.

* **If the improvisation is done as a follow-up to dramatization of scene:** You and your partner will take the roles of the same characters and improvise the situation that I will describe which is related to the scene that was just dramatized, but with a significant twist in the plot. Like the scene, this situation also centers around a conflict between the characters. But the situation is now somewhat different.

* **If the improvisation is done as an independent activity (not as a follow-up to dramatization):** Put yourself into the role of Corie or Paul and listen to me read the situation aloud. Imagine how he or she would feel and what he or she would say and do in this situation, and then just begin talking and improvising the situation with your partner. Try your best to make things work out well for your character, and see where it goes from there!
IMPROVISATION TOPIC:
Improvisation to follow the argument scene between Corie and Paul:

Congratulations are in order for Corie and Paul. In spite of the big argument they had last year at this time, they made up and had a wonderful first year of marriage. Today is their first wedding anniversary, but things have changed.

**Paul** is now more experienced as an attorney and sure of himself, and he has become very successful in his work. Although he works just as hard as he did before, he has changed. He really listened to what Corie said when they had that argument last year, and realized that she was right about a lot of things. So he made the effort to become less serious and to try to enjoy life more, and he has succeeded. He is no longer a stuffed shirt, no longer so proper and dignified. Now he is adventurous and he knows how to enjoy himself. As a matter of fact, he is very much like Corie was last year at this time.

**Corie** has changed too. She saw how much Paul enjoys being an attorney, and whenever he discussed his cases with her, she found his work to be extremely interesting and stimulating. So she has decided to become a lawyer just like Paul, and now she is in law school. She is working very hard at her studies, so she no longer has time to do all the fun things she used to do, like running barefoot in the park or dining in exotic restaurants. Her personality has changed as well. She has become very serious and forgotten how to relax and enjoy herself because she is always studying so hard and worrying about tests. As a matter of fact, she is very much like Paul was last year at this time.
**Explain to Paul:**

Today is your first anniversary, and you want to surprise Corie by celebrating it in a very special way. You have made reservations to take her to the same exotic restaurant that you went to last year. You want to show her how you have changed. This time you plan to eat the interesting food and dance and have a wonderful time. So as soon as you get home from work, wish Corie a happy anniversary and tell her about your wonderful surprise. She has to get ready right away, because it is 6:30 and you have 7:30 reservations.

**Explain to Corie:**

Today is Wednesday and you are studying for a big test that you will take tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. It is going to be a very difficult test, so you need to spend the whole evening studying. Then you want to go to bed early and get a good night's sleep so that you will be wide awake and full of energy for the test in the morning.

*The scene begins just as Paul arrives home from work. Corie is at the kitchen table studying.*
7. Video-related activities

A. STRUCTURING THE MODULE AROUND THE MOVIE

How to use the DVD of play (movie version) in conjunction with the text and language learning activities

Because this is a conversation class and the focus is on listening and speaking, the movie version of the play (DVD) is the focus and anchor of study of this play, and the text (Samuel French, Inc. complete script) is used along with it. I include it as a required text for the course, and order it through the IVC Bookstore along with the other texts. (It costs about $6.00) The story line and characters are the same in both the movie and the script, and most of the dialogue is the same as well. However, there are two additional scenes in the movie that are not in the play (the opening scene and the restaurant scene). The opening scene begins when the newlyweds, Corie and Paul, arrive at the Plaza Suite Hotel to begin their honeymoon, and briefly takes us through their honeymoon at the hotel. This is referred to in the script but is not in the written play. The dialogue in the written script (Act I, Scene 1) begins when the honeymoon is over and Corie arrives at their new apartment (the second scene of the movie). The restaurant scene is also referred to in the script in Act II, at the end of Scene 1 and the beginning of Scene 2, but is not in the play version. However, the movie version has added this scene. Another difference between the written script and the movie version is that some of the scenes from the play are shortened in the movie. However, overall, the movie follows the written script very closely, so it is easy to coordinate the written script and the movie for class study.

As explained above, because the focus of the course is on developing listening and speaking skills, class study of the play centers on viewing and responding to the movie version of this play. This works beautifully, as the movie is delightful, and it is easy to integrate the reading of scenes from the text with study of the play (as many scenes as the instructor chooses).
Class study consists of showing the movie little by little and discussing each segment as it is shown, incorporating listening and speaking activities along with reading and writing activities (e.g., pre-reading questions, comprehension questions for discussion and writing, personal opinion topics, reading and dramatization of selected scenes).

As a written script, the play is divided, as is traditional, into three Acts, and Act II is additionally divided into two scenes. However, the DVD of the movie has been divided into 18 sections or “scenes” for easy access, and given each a “title”. This is a great convenience for showing the film, as it makes it easy for the instructor to locate a specific scene for class viewing. So the division of the movie into 18 segments or “scenes” is very helpful to the instructor in coordinating it with reading and discussion of the play. A chart of these 18 scenes with their titles may be found at the end of this section (p. 52 - 53). In addition, I have identified and referenced each of these scenes in terms of length, how many minutes and seconds into the film that it starts, and the pages that correspond to the scene in the text.

In presenting the movie to the class, I play a few scenes at a time to integrate it with reading and discussion of the play. We discuss the scenes as we go along for comprehension and the students’ reactions. Some of the text that corresponds to the scenes, we read and discuss together in class. We focus in particular on the big argument scene in Act II, Scene 2 (pp. 61-70), which is identified on the DVD as Scenes 12 and 13, and which I have developed in the module as the major scene for dramatizations, role-play interviews, and improvisations. The students read this scene at home, we go over it class, and we practice the entire scene together. I have divided this scene into 5 parts, about 1 ½ pages each, each of which I assign to pairs of students for dramatization (See Section 6B “Dramatization” pp. 38 – 39). In addition, there are creative writing assignments (e.g., letters to the characters) that students write at home and share aloud in class (See Section 5 “Writing”).
For this advanced conversation class that meets 1 ½ hours twice a week, it would be ideal to spend 8 – 10 sessions on this play. It is certainly possible to spend fewer classes on this play, or to spend more, depending on how much time is spent on reading, dramatization, class discussion, and reading aloud of the homework assignments. The actual movie is only 1 hour and 50 minutes. The instructor has a great deal of flexibility in selecting from the array of activities in order to have the module fit into the overall syllabus of his or her specific course.

I highly recommend ordering the acting version of the text (*Barefoot in the Park* by Neil Simon; Samuel French, Inc.—See page 4 for complete reference). It is convenient to use in class and inexpensive as well ($6.00 new). Although I only have students read specific scenes from the text, it is well worth it for them to purchase the play. They will need it for dramatizing the scene I have designated in the module, and for reading aloud in class any other scenes the instructor selects. Having the text will also give them the option to read scenes before they are played in class to help them understand the scene better when they view it. Alternatively, they can read the scene after viewing it to focus on language. For this reason I have designated the pages in the text that correspond to each scene in the chart I prepared (See next 2 pages) for the 18 scenes the movie version of the play is divided into.
B. IDENTIFYING THE SCENES OF THE MOVIE

Division of movie into scenes for viewing and discussion
(with corresponding pages in acting version of textbook)

Note: The play is divided into acts, not scenes. The DVD has divided the movie version into 18 scenes for easy access, and given each a title. This makes it easy to find a specific scene, which is ideal for classroom use. The asterisked scenes in bold face correspond to the 2 scenes which together, make up the selected scene for dramatization, role-play interviews, and improvisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCENE #</th>
<th>TITLE OF SCENE</th>
<th>DVD REFERENCE</th>
<th>PAGES IN TEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**ACT I**

Scene 1  Just Married  0:00 - 4:20  Not in text
Scene 2  Let’s Start the Marriage  4:20 - 7:26  Not in text
Scene 3  Top Floor  7:27 - 15:52  pp. 6 - 11
Scene 4  “For a kiss, I’m some good lawyer.”  15:52 - 24:40  pp. 11 – 16
Scene 5  Trying to Stay Warm  25:40 - 26:45  pp. 17 - 21
Scene 6  A Visit from Mother  26:45 - 37:19  pp. 21 - 30
Scene 7  Neighbors  37:19 - 44:48  pp. 30 - 36
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCENE #</th>
<th>TITLE OF SCENE</th>
<th>DVD REFERENCE</th>
<th>PAGES IN TEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACT II</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 8</td>
<td>A Fiasco in the Making</td>
<td>44:48 - 52:09</td>
<td>pp. 37 - 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 9</td>
<td>Mr. Velasco’s Apartment</td>
<td>52:09 - 1:03:30</td>
<td>pp. 48 – 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 10</td>
<td>Dinner at the Four Winds</td>
<td>57:00 - 1:01</td>
<td>Not in text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 11</td>
<td>Ethel and Victor</td>
<td>1:03:30 - 1:09</td>
<td>pp. 54 - 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Scene 12</td>
<td>Proper and Dignified</td>
<td>1:09 - 1:14</td>
<td>pp. 61 – 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Scene 13</td>
<td>“I Want a Divorce”</td>
<td>1:14 - 1:18:45</td>
<td>pp. 64 – 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACT III</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 14</td>
<td>“Goodbye Six Flights”</td>
<td>1:18:45 - 1:26</td>
<td>pp. 71 - 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 15</td>
<td>“What happened last night?”</td>
<td>1:26:50 - 1:32:34</td>
<td>pp. 80 - 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 16</td>
<td>Barefoot in the Park</td>
<td>1:32:34 - 1:39:30</td>
<td>pp. 86 - 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 17</td>
<td>On the Roof</td>
<td>1:39:30 - 1:45:20</td>
<td>pp. 88 - 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 18</td>
<td>End Credits</td>
<td>1:45:20 - 1:45:50</td>
<td>p. 93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. VIDEO TAPING STUDENTS PERFORMING THE SCENES

If the time is available, videotaping students performing some of the dramatizations, role-play interviews, and/or improvisations can be a very exciting and rewarding experience for them. Generally it boosts their confidence, as they come away recognizing how fluent in English they are becoming. You can show the video back to the entire class, or have them view just their own scenes with you in pairs. To give them feedback on their pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, you can take the time to view the video outside of class and make notes on any errors. Then you can go over the errors with the students individually.

D. DVD MOVIE VERSION OF PLAY AVAILABLE AT RESERVE DESK IN IVC LIBRARY

One copy of the movie version of the play is on reserve in the IVC library (under ESL 382, Susan Stern’s class). Students who wish to see part or all of the play may do so in the library. They have 2 hours to do so. The DVD may not be removed from the library. For those who wish to purchase the movie version of the play, as explained at the beginning of the module, it can be ordered from Barnes & Noble (www.bn.com). It is also available to rent from DVD rentals (NETFLIX, Blockbuster, etc.), and from time to time it is on television.

There is also a copy of the movie in Susan Stern’s office for the instructors to view.
5. Alternative to Teaching the Full Play

ONE SCENE UNIT for Barefoot in the Park

As an alternative to teaching the entire play, I have prepared the following unit based upon just one scene from Barefoot in the Park for instructors who wish to include some drama in their class, but do not have time in their curriculum to devote to including an entire play. This unit or “mini-module” is based upon the big argument scene in Act II, Scene 2 upon which the dramatizations for the complete module are based. It is the first major argument between the newlyweds Corie and Paul, and lends itself beautifully to a short unit that is complete in itself, independent of the entire play. Enough background information is provided in “Context of Scene” for this short scene to stand on its own as a “mini-drama.”

Less time is needed for this shorter unit. Depending upon how many of the accompanying activities are used, the unit could take from 2 to 6 classes to complete (as opposed to the 8 – 10 classes recommended for teaching the entire play). This shorter unit includes the following activities, some of which are the same as described above for the entire play, but which are presented again here in order to see the complete unit as a whole:

1. Sneak Preview—Issues to Think About Before you Begin (Pre-reading questions)
2. About the Playwright (Brief biography of Neil Simon)
3. Context of the Scene (Enough background information about the characters and plot to understand the scene without having read or seen the entire play)
4. **The Scene**: Script with stage directions, with an added glossary (at the bottom of each page) explaining some vocabulary and cultural terms which might not be familiar to the students, and which are important for a complete understanding of the scene.


   It appears in the 1967 movie version of the play (on DVD) starring Robert Redford and Jane Fonda, and co-starring Charles Boyer and Mildred Natwick. The scene in the movie is approximately 10 minutes long. It begins 1 hour and 9 minutes into the movie, and lasts a little less than 10 minutes. It corresponds with Scenes 12 and 13 in the division of the DVD into scenes.

5. **Understanding the Scene** (Comprehension questions about the characters and plot)

6. **Oral Reading** (Explanation and Directions)

7. **Dramatization** (Explanation and Directions)

8. **Role-Play Interview** (Explanation and Directions)

9. **Improvisation** (Explanation and suggested improvisation for scene)

10. **Expressing Your Point of View** (Topics for Discussion)

11. **Working with Words** (Vocabulary Building Exercises)

12. **Writing Activities** (A variety of writing activities from which to choose)

13. **Video-Related Activities** (Viewing scene on DVD; Videotaping the students)

In describing and explaining each of these activities on the following pages, I have addressed the students directly in order to illustrate how these activities can be explained to them.
A. SNEAK PREVIEW
Issues to think about before you begin

Before you begin to read this scene, think about the following issues and share your opinions about them with your classmates.


2. In choosing a marriage partner, is it enough for two people to be in love with each other, or are there other things they need to consider as well before they decide to get married?

3. Is it important for a husband and wife to have the same kind of personality, and to share similar interests, hobbies, values, etc., for their marriage to be a success? Explain.
B. ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Neil Simon is one of America's most popular writers of comedies, and the contemporary American theater's most commercially successful playwright. His plays deal with family relationships and portray the joys and heartaches of contemporary middle class life in the United States. They focus on such universal concerns as love and marriage, growing up and family relationships, friendship, loneliness, and aging. Their tone is usually humorous, but there is also a great deal of humanity in these plays, a dark edge to the humor, and an affection for the characters and their situations.

Simon was born in the Bronx, a borough of New York City, in 1927. He started out writing comedy sketches for radio and television comedy stars, but soon turned to writing for the theater, and began his Broadway career as a playwright in the late 1950s. His first play, *Come Blow Your Horn* (1961), ran for two years on Broadway and was made into a film. This play was followed by a succession of Broadway hits, many of which were also made into films, including *Barefoot in the Park* (1963); *The Odd Couple*, (1965, later adapted into a long-running television series); *Plaza Suite* (1968); *The Sunshine Boys* (1972); and *Chapter Two* (1977). Simon has also written original film scripts such as *The Goodbye Girl* (1977). He later turned to his own life in writing the semi-autobiographical trilogy *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (1983), *Biloxi Blues* (1985, Tony Award), and *Broadway Bound* (1987), which were praised for their compassion and deeper character development. In 1991, *Lost in Yonkers* won both a Tony Award and the Pulitzer Prize in drama.
The scene which you are about to read, the quarrel scene between newlyweds from *Barefoot in the Park*, echoes a real-life argument Simon and his wife had shortly after they were married. This argument ended with her picking up a frozen veal chop and hurling it at him, striking him just above the right eye. Simon writes: "I was so stunned I could barely react; stunned not by the blow or the intent, but by the absurdity that I, a grown man, had just been hit in the head with a frozen veal chop. I could not contain myself, and a faint flicker of a smile crossed my face. Suddenly the anger and hostility drained from me . . ." A smile crosses the faces of audiences as well, as they see the humor in and sympathize with the difficulties a pair of newlyweds have adjusting to each other once the honeymoon is over.
C. CONTEXT OF THE SCENE

From Barefoot in the Park

The Setting:
A large one-room walk-up (no elevator) apartment on the top floor of an old brownstone in New York City. The living room is in one section, the kitchen in another, and a small dressing room is being used as a bedroom.

The Characters:
Corie and Paul:
Corie and Paul are newlyweds who have only been married for a week. Paul is 26 years old and a beginning attorney. Corie is a lovely young woman in her early twenties. Corie loves their apartment, but Paul hates it. She thinks it is charming, romantic, and full of possibilities. But to him it is too small, too old, and very inconvenient. There is nothing charming or romantic to him about having to walk up or down five flights of stairs every time he wants to enter or leave the apartment.

The Situation:
Corie and Paul have just returned from an evening on the town at a very exotic Albanian restaurant. An interesting elderly gentleman who lives in their apartment building had suggested that they all go there. Paul had not wanted to go, but Corie had insisted, and so they did. But Paul was upset about being there the whole evening, and he didn't enjoy the food, the dancing, or anything. Corie is very upset at him about this, and she accuses him of not being able to have a good time, of not being able to relax and enjoy himself. This begins their first lovers' quarrel. It is very poor timing for a fight, however, because it is now 2:00 a.m. and Paul has to appear in court tomorrow morning to present an important case.
D. THE SCENE
(From Barefoot in the Park, Act II, Scene 2—pp. 61-66)

CORIE: I'm beginning to wonder if you're capable of having a good time.

PAUL: Why? Because I like to wear my gloves in the winter?

CORIE: No. Because there isn't the least bit of adventure in you. Do you know what you are? You're a Watcher. There are Watchers in this world and there are Do-ers. And the Watchers sit around\(^1\) watching the Do-ers do. Well, tonight you watched and I did.

PAUL: Yeah . . . Well, it was harder to watch what you did than it was for you to do what I was watching.

CORIE: You won't let your hair down\(^2\) for a minute? You couldn't even relax for one night. Boy, Paul, sometimes you at like a . . . a . . .

PAUL: What . . . ? A stuffed shirt?\(^3\)

CORIE: I didn't say that.

PAUL: That's what you're implying.\(^4\)

CORIE: That's what you're anticipating. I didn't say you're a stuffed shirt. But you are extremely proper and dignified.

PAUL: I'm proper\(^5\) and dignified?\(^6\) When . . . ? When was I proper and dignified?

---

\(^1\)\textit{sit around}: do nothing, especially while others are acting

\(^2\)\textit{let your hair down}: relax

\(^3\)\textit{stuffed shirt}: an overly formal or pompous person

\(^4\)\textit{implying}: expressing or suggesting indirectly

\(^5\)\textit{proper}: having correct behavior, good manners

\(^6\)\textit{dignified}: formal, calm, and serious
CORIE: All right. The other night. At Delfino's . . You were drunk, right?

PAUL: Right. I was smashed.  

CORIE: There you are. I didn't know it until you told me in the morning. You're a funny kind of drunk. You just sat there looking unhappy and watching your coat.

PAUL: I was watching my coat because I saw someone else watching my coat . . . Look, if you want, I'll get drunk for you sometime. I'll show you a slob, make your hair stand on end.

CORIE: It isn't necessary.

PAUL: Do you know . . . Do you know, in P.J. Clarke's last New Year's Eve, I punched an old woman . . Don't tell me about drunks.

CORIE: All right, Paul.

PAUL: When else? When else was I proper and dignified?

CORIE: Always. You're always dressed right, you always look right, you always say the right things. You're very close to being perfect.

PAUL: *(Hurt to the quick)* That's . . . that's a rotten thing to say.

CORIE: I have never seen you without a jacket. I always feel like such a slob compared to you. Before we were married I was sure you slept with a tie.

PAUL: No, no. Just for very formal sleeps.

---

`smashed`: drunk  
`a funny kind of ____`: odd, strange  
`a slob`: a messy, carelessly dressed person  
`make your hair stand on end`: shock or frighten  
`punched`: struck or hit with the fist  
`Don't tell me about ______`: You certainly don't need to tell me about ______ because I already know all about it/them.  
`hurt to the quick`: to be deeply hurt emotionally  
`rotten`: mean, cruel, hurtful
CORIE: You can't even walk into a candy store and ask the lady for a Tootsie Roll.¹⁵ You've got to walk up to the counter and point at it and say, "I'll have that thing in the brown and white wrapper."

PAUL: That's ridiculous.

CORIE: And you're not. That's just the trouble. Like Thursday night. You wouldn't walk barefoot with me in Washington Square Park. Why not?

PAUL: Very simple answer. It was 17 degrees.

CORIE: Exactly. That's very sensible and logical. Except it isn't any fun.

PAUL: You know maybe I am too proper and dignified for you. Maybe you would have been happier with someone a little more colorful and flamboyant¹⁶ . . . like the Geek!¹⁷

CORIE: Well, he'd be a lot more laughs than a stuffed shirt.

PAUL: Oh, oh . . . I thought you said I wasn't.

CORIE: Well, you are now.

PAUL: (Reflectively) I'm not going to listen to this . . . I'm not going to listen . . . (He starts for the bedroom) I've got a case in court in the morning.

CORIE: Where are you going?

PAUL: To sleep.

---

¹⁵**A Tootsie Roll** is a chewy chocolate-flavored candy sold in markets and candy stores. By itself, however, the word "tootsie" means a sexy looking woman, and is usually used in a forward or presumptuous way by a man to address a woman whom he doesn't know in order to get her attention—like whistling at a woman on the street. Corie is exaggerating here in order to make the point that Paul is so prudish and conservative that he can't even say the word "tootsie," even when he is only using it to buy a piece of candy.

¹⁶**flamboyant**: showy, colorful, bold, noticeable, especially in one's dress or personality

¹⁷**a geek**: an unattractive, weird, socially contemptible person. Paul is referring to their neighbor who lives upstairs, Mr. Velasco, who took them to the restaurant that evening. He is a flamboyant dresser, a gourmet cook, and a world traveler, and Corie thinks he is fascinating. Paul, however, doesn't like him at all and thinks that Corie is implying that he is so boring compared to Mr. Velasco. So Paul refers to their neighbor as "The Geek" to show how much he dislikes him.
CORIE: Now? How can you sleep now?

PAUL: (Steps on the bed and turns back, leaning on the door jamb) I'm going to close my eyes and count knichis.\(^{18}\) Good night!

CORIE: You can't go to sleep now. We're having a fight.

PAUL: You have the fight. When you're through, turn off the lights.

(He turns back into the bedroom)

CORIE: Ooh, that gets me insane. You can even control your emotions.

PAUL: (Storms to the head of the stairs) Look, I'm just as upset as you are. . . (He controls himself) But when I get hungry, I eat. And when I get tired, I sleep. You eat and sleep, too. Don't deny it, I've seen you . . .

CORIE: Not in the middle of a crisis.\(^{19}\)

PAUL: What crisis? We're just yelling a little.

CORIE: You don't consider this a crisis? Our whole marriage hangs in the balance.\(^{20}\)

PAUL: It does? When did that happen?

CORIE: Just now. It's suddenly very clear that you and I have absolutely nothing in common.

PAUL: Why? Because I won't walk barefoot in the park in winter? You haven't got a case,\(^{21}\) Corie. Adultery,\(^{22}\) yes. Cold feet, no.

\(^{18}\)knichis: an exotic hors d'oeuvres (appetizer) made out of eel that Mr. Velasco made for Corie and Paul before they went to the restaurant that evening. Paul didn't want to try it, but Corie insisted that he have the experience. So he tried it and he hated it. In this passage, Paul purposely substitutes the word "knichis" for "sheep." When people have difficulty falling asleep, they close their eyes and count sheep, and this is supposed to help them go to sleep. But Paul is being sarcastic here, letting Corie know just how angry he is about the whole evening.

\(^{19}\)a crisis: an emergency, a time of great difficulty or danger

\(^{20}\)hangs in the balance: in a very delicate, vulnerable, fragile position, and in danger of falling apart or being destroyed

\(^{21}\)You haven't got a case: You have no legal reason or evidence to support your position.

\(^{22}\)adultery: sexual relations between a married person and someone outside the marriage.
CORIE: (Seething)23 Don't oversimplify this. I'm angry. Can't you see that?

PAUL: (Brings his hands to his eyes, peers at her through imaginary binoculars, and then looks at his watch). Corie, it's 2:15 a.m. If I can fall asleep in about half an hour I can get about five hours' sleep. I'll call you from court tomorrow and we can fight over the phone.

(He gets up and moves to the bedroom)

CORIE: You will not go to sleep. You will stay here and fight to save our marriage.

PAUL: (In the doorway) If our marriage hinges on breathing fish balls and poofla-poo pie, it's not worth saving24 . . . I am now going to crawl into our tiny, little, single bed. If you care to join me, we will be sleeping from left to right tonight.

(He goes into the bedroom and slams the door)

CORIE: You won't discuss it . . . You're afraid to discuss it . . . I married a coward!!! . . .

(She takes a shoe from the couch and throws it at the bedroom door)

PAUL: (Opens the door) Corie, would you bring in a pail? The closet's dripping.

CORIE: Ohh, I hate you! I hate you! I really, really, hate you!

PAUL: (Storms25 to the head of the stairs) Corie, there is one thing I learned in court. Be careful when you're tired and angry. You might say something you will soon regret. I-am-now-tired-and-angry.

---

Here Paul means that Corie has no legal reason to divorce him. The court will give a divorce to someone whose husband or wife commits adultery, but it won't give Corie a divorce just because he won't walk barefoot in the park with her in the middle of winter. 

\*seething: extremely angry, trembling with rage

\*"If our marriage hinges . . . it's not worth saving." Paul is referring to the dinner they had that evening at the Albanian restaurant. He is mispronouncing the name of one of the dishes they ordered. (Hinges: depends on.)

\*storms: moves or walks in an angry way
CORIE: And a coward.

PAUL: *(Comes down the stairs to her at right of the couch)*

And I will now say something I will soon regret . . . Okay, Corie, maybe you're right. Maybe we have nothing in common. Maybe we rushed into this marriage a little too fast. Maybe Love isn't enough. Maybe two people should have to take more than a blood test. Maybe they should be checked for common sense, understanding, and emotional maturity.

CORIE: *(That hurt)* All right . . . Why don't you have it passed in the Supreme Court?26 Only those couples bearing a letter from their psychiatrists proving they're well-adjusted27 will be permitted to be married.

PAUL: You're impossible.

CORIE: You're unbearable.28

PAUL: You belong in a nursery school.

CORIE: It's a lot more fun than the Home for the Fuddy Duddies.29

PAUL: *(Reaches out his hand to her)* All right, Corie, let's not get . . .

CORIE: Don't you touch me . . . Don't you touch me . . .

*(PAUL very deliberately reaches out and touches her. CORIE screams hysterically and runs across the room, away from him. Hysterically30)*

I don't want you near me. Ever again.

PAUL: *(Moves toward her)* Now wait a minute, Corie—

CORIE: No *(She turns away from him)* I can't look at you. I can't even be in the same room with you now.

---

*a the Supreme Court*: the highest court in the American system of justice

*a well-adjusted*: getting along well in life—socially, at school or work, etc.

*a unbearable*: intolerable, impossible to be with

*a a fuddy duddy*: a dull boring person with old-fashioned ideas. A "home for the aged" is a home for old people. By substituting "fuddy daddies" for "aged," Corie is implying that Paul acts like an old man.

*a hysterically*: emotionally out of control
PAUL:  Why?
CORIE:  I just can't, that's all. Not when you feel this way.
PAUL:  When I feel what way?
CORIE:  The way you feel about me.
PAUL:  Corie, you're hysterical.
CORIE:  (Even more hysterically) I am not hysterical. I know exactly what I am saying. It's no good between us, Paul. It never will be again.
PAUL:  (Throwing up his hands and sinking to the couch) Holy cow.
CORIE:  I'm sorry, I— (She fights back tears) I don't want to cry.
PAUL:  Oh, for pete's sakes, cry. Go ahead and cry.
CORIE:  (At the height of fury) Don't you tell me when to cry. I'll cry when I want to cry. And I'm not going to have my cry until you're out of this apartment.
PAUL:  What do you mean, "out of this apartment?"
CORIE:  Well, you certainly don't think we're going to live here together, do you? After tonight?
PAUL:  Are you serious?
CORIE:  Of course I'm serious. I want a divorce.
PAUL:  (Shocked, he jumps up) A divorce? What?
CORIE:  (Pulls herself together, and with great calm, begins to go up the stairs) I'm sorry, Paul, I can't discuss it any more. Good night.
PAUL:  Where are you going?
CORIE:  To bed. (She turns back to Paul)

---

*It's no good between us:* Our relationship isn't going well (usually refers to romantic relationships)
*Holy cow:* An interjection expressing surprise, wonder, or irritation.
*For pete's sakes:* an interjection expressing annoyance or frustration
PAUL: You can't. Not now.

CORIE: You did before.

PAUL: That was in the middle of a fight. This is in the middle of a divorce.

CORIE: I can't talk to you when you're hysterical. Good night.

*(She goes into the bedroom)*

*   *   *   *   *


E. UNDERSTANDING THE SCENE

The Characters and Their Relationship

1. Describe Corie. Give your overall impression of what she is like.

2. Describe Paul. Give your overall impression of what he is like.

3. Now fill in the chart on the next page about Corie and Paul. Make a list of adjectives that describe each of them under their names. Be ready to tell why you chose these words, using evidence from the text (what the characters say and do) to explain your choices.

You can use the list below the chart for ideas, using as many adjectives from it as you think apply an/or come up with your own words. If you think that some of the words describe both Corie and Paul, put them on both lists.
3. Describe Corie and Paul's relationship as newlyweds.

Do you think they have a good relationship? Is it a strong one?

Do they seem to love and care about each other?

Do they seem to understand each other?

Explain your answers.
The Plot

Following the Action

Put the events below in the chronological order in which they take place.
When you finish doing this, you will have a good summary outline of the scene.

1. _____ a. Paul tells Corie he is going to go to sleep because he has a case in court in the morning.
2. _____ b. Corie calls Paul a coward.
3. _____ c. Paul implies that Corie doesn't have common sense, understanding, and emotional maturity.
4. _____ d. Corie tells Paul that he is very close to being perfect.
5. _____ e. Paul is shocked about what Corie said.
6. _____ f. Corie accuses Paul of being unadventurous, of being a Watcher instead of a Do-er.
7. _____ g. Corie feels very hurt.
8. _____ h. Paul goes into the bedroom and slams the door.
9. _____ i. Corie tells Paul she wants him out of the apartment.
10. _____ j. Corie tells Paul that she wants a divorce.
11. _____ k. Corie tells Paul that the two of them have absolutely nothing in common.
12. _____ l. Corie says goodnight and goes into the bedroom.
13. _____ m. Corie tells Paul that their argument has suddenly turned into a crisis.
14. _____ n. Corie tells Paul that she really hates him.
15. _____ o. Corie tells Paul not to touch her.
17. _____ q. Paul is hurt to the quick.
Identifying the Conflict

In this scene, Corie and Paul have a major fight, and they argue about a lot of things: the way Paul acted at the restaurant that night and at P.J. Clark's last Christmas Eve, the other night at Delfino's, walking barefoot in the park, buying Tootsie Rolls at a drugstore, the way Paul dresses, etc.

But basically, what are they really arguing about? What is the major source or cause of the conflict they are having with each other?

Perceiving the Moods

What are the moods of the characters in this scene? How do they feel? (happy, angry, upset, jealous, romantic, etc.) Do their moods change during the scene? If so, why?

To help you answer these questions, think about the following:

a. Who is upset at the beginning of the scene? Corie Paul Both

b. Who is in control of his or her emotions at the beginning of the scene? Corie Paul Both

c. Who becomes more and more furious as the scene progresses? Corie Paul Both

CORIE:

PAUL:
F. ORAL READING
Taking the Scene Line-by-Line

Now you are ready to hear the dialogue read aloud, to clarify any questions you have about it, and to practice saying it yourself.

1. Listen as your instructor reads through the scene line-by-line and be sure to ask about anything that you don't understand as the lines are read.

2. Now listen as your instructor reads the lines again, this time as a model for you to repeat. As you listen and repeat the lines. Pay special attention to pronouncing the words and phrases correctly and to using the same rhythm and intonation as your instructor.

3. Practice reading the scene aloud at home.
G. DRAMATIZATION

Now that you understand the scene and are familiar with the characters and the dialogue, the action can finally begin. You are now ready to take the role of Corie or Paul, and to practice the scene with a partner.

Practicing the Scene

The first thing you should know is that you do not need to memorize the scene. You may have the script in front of you at all times. But you do need to practice it again and again so that after quickly glancing at the lines to refresh your memory, you can look up at your partner and say your lines to him or her with meaning and feeling. Whether all the students in your class or only a few will actually be performing the scene in front of the class, everyone should practice the scene together with his or her partner at least three times, as follows:

**The First Time:**

As you read the scene aloud with your partner, pay special attention to pronunciation (words and phrases, rhythm and intonation), just as you did during the oral reading. Help each other with this, and ask the teacher for assistance with any words or phrases that you are not sure how to pronounce.

**The Second Time:**

Now add expression to your words, trying to convey or show through your voice the feelings, attitudes, and moods of the speaker. (Look back at your answers to Section I, "Perceiving the Moods"). Really put yourself into the role of your character. For example, if your character is angry, hurt, shocked, or hysterical, you need to sound that way to be convincing. Don't be afraid to exaggerate.
The Third Time:

Now think about how you will perform the scene, adding facial expressions and body language to make it more realistic, dramatic, and interesting. Also agree upon any props you wish to use (chairs, a table, a coffee cup, etc.) and any actions you wish to take. Refer to the stage directions for ideas and select those actions that you think are most significant to the scene and that would really add to the dramatization. (In this scene, for example, Corie "... takes a shoe from the couch and throws it at the bedroom door." Now that seems important!) Finally, think about a costume to make your performance more realistic and interesting. Just one item of clothing such as an interesting hat, a colorful scarf, or a large piece of costume jewelry—anything that reflects your character's personality—can really add to the performance. (Hint: Think about Paul's personality and how he would dress.) Be creative, use your imagination, and have fun!

Performing the Scene

Last Minute Advice to the Performers:

Take a deep breath, relax, and just begin. Don't worry about what your instructor or the other students will think. Everyone will enjoy your performance. Just do your best to imagine that you really are Corie or Paul, think about how upset you are for all the reasons that have been have discussed, and enjoy the fight! The performance will take care of itself.

Advice to the Audience:

Sit back and enjoy the performance, and PUT AWAY THOSE SCRIPTS. You already know the dialogue very well, so give your complete attention to the performance.
H. ROLE-PLAY INTERVIEW

When the dramatization is over, the students who have just performed the scene remain in front of the class, staying in the roles of Corie and Paul, and the interview begins.

To the Audience:

Now is your opportunity to interview Corie and Paul, to ask them about anything you are curious about—why they said what they did to each other and how they feel about it, why they acted as they did, what their relationship was like before and what they think or hope is going to happen next, etc. Think in terms of Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why. Use your curiosity and imagination and make the questions as specific and interesting as possible. You can use the space below to write down at least two good questions for each character. When you ask the questions, remember to address your two classmates as Corie and Paul.

To the Performers:

Imagine that you are still Corie and Paul, and answer these questions the way you think that they would answer them, expressing their opinions, attitudes, and feelings. Use your imagination whenever necessary to fill in information not presented in the scene. Speak in first person ("I") in the role of your character.
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Barefoot in the Park

QUESTIONS FOR CORIE:
Example: Why did you marry Paul since the two of you have nothing in common?

1. ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

QUESTIONS FOR PAUL:
Example: When Corie said that you are very close to being perfect, you were hurt to the quick. What is wrong with being very nearly perfect?

1. ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
I. IMPROVISATION

To improvise means to act out a scene, just as you did in the dramatization, but this time without a script. You and your partner will take the roles of Corie and Paul and improvise the situation described below which is related to the scene that was just dramatized, but with a significant twist in the plot. Like the scene, this situation also centers around a conflict between Corie and Paul. But the situation is now quite different.

Put yourself back into the role of Corie or Paul and listen to your instructor read the situation aloud. Imagine how he or she would feel and what he or she would say and do in this situation, and then just begin talking and improvising the situation with your partner. Try your best to make things work out well for your character, and see where it goes from there!

The Situation

Congratulations are in order for Corie and Paul. In spite of the big argument they had last year at this time, they made up and had a wonderful first year of marriage. Today is their first wedding anniversary, but things have changed.

Paul is now more experienced as an attorney and sure of himself, and he has become very successful in his work. Although he works just as hard as he did before, he has changed. He really listened to what Corie said when they had that argument last year, and realized that she was right about a lot of things. So he made the effort to become less serious and to try to enjoy life more, and he has succeeded. He is no longer a stuffed shirt, no longer so proper and dignified. Now he is adventurous and he knows how to enjoy himself. As a matter of fact, he is very much like Corie was last year at this time.

Corie has changed too. She saw how much Paul enjoys being an attorney, and whenever he discussed his cases with her, she found his work to be extremely interesting and stimulating. So she has decided to become a lawyer just like Paul, and now she is in...
law school. She is working very hard at her studies, so she no longer has time to do all the fun things she used to do, like running barefoot in the park or dining in exotic restaurants. Her personality has changed as well. She has become very serious and forgotten how to relax and enjoy herself because she is always studying so hard and worrying about tests. As a matter of fact, she is very much like Paul was last year at this time.

**To Paul:**

Today is your first anniversary, and you want to surprise Corie by celebrating it in a very special way. You have made reservations to take her to the same exotic restaurant that you went to last year. You want to show her how you have changed. This time you plan to eat the interesting food and dance and have a wonderful time. So as soon as you get home from work, wish Corie a happy anniversary and tell her about your wonderful surprise. She has to get ready right away, because it is 6:30 and you have 7:30 reservations.

**To Corie:**

Today is Wednesday and you are studying for a big test that you will take tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. It is going to be a very difficult test, so you need to spend the whole evening studying. Then you want to go to bed early and get a good night's sleep so that you will be wide awake and full of energy for the test in the morning.

*The scene begins just as Paul arrives home from work. Corie is at the kitchen table studying.*
J. EXPRESSING YOUR POINT OF VIEW

Topics for Discussion

1. Corie and Paul have only been married for one week but already they are quarreling and having a big argument. Do you think that this is a serious argument? Do they really want to get a divorce? Next year, will they be celebrating their first anniversary together? Why or why not?

2. There is an expression in English: "Opposites attract." This usually refers to romantic relationships and means that people with totally different or opposite personalities, interests, backgrounds, etc., are attracted to each other. We see many examples of this in books, in movies, and in real life, for it makes for interesting and romantic stories.

But does such a relationship make for a good solid marriage? As we see with Corie and Paul, being completely different from your partner can sometimes cause problems. Opposites attract, but do they stay together? What do you think? Use Corie and Paul along with examples from real life to illustrate your point of view.

3. Corie criticizes Paul for being too proper and dignified, too sensible and logical. She is insulting him when she tells him: "You're always dressed right, you always look right, you always say the right things. You're very close to being perfect."

Paul, on the other hand, thinks that Corie acts like a child. He says she is immature and lacking in common sense because she does some pretty crazy things, like walking barefoot in the park in the middle of winter, just because she thinks they are fun.

Are you more like Paul or Corie? Explain your answer and give examples.
4. Are Corie and Paul typical of newlyweds in your native country? If so, how are they similar? If not, how are they different?

5. How do Corie and Paul's living arrangements compare to that of newlyweds in your native country?

In the United States, it is typical for newlyweds to start out in a small apartment, especially if they are young, just beginning their careers, and don't have much money saved up. The goal is generally to move into something bigger and nicer as soon as they are able to afford it—ideally their own home.

How does this compare to your native country? Where do newlyweds generally live?
K. WORKING WITH WORDS
Vocabulary-Building Exercises

A. DEFINING THE VOCABULARY
Can you remember the meanings of these words and idioms from the scene? Match the words with their definitions.

___ 1. make your hair stand on end a. suggest indirectly
___ 2. let your hair down b. get married too soon
___ 3. storm (verb) c. do nothing
d. be in a delicate or precarious position; in danger of being destroyed or falling apart
___ 4. imply

___ 5. rush into marriage e. relax
___ 6. regret (verb) f. make something sound less complicated than it is
___ 7. have nothing in common g. feel guilty or sorry about doing something
___ 8. hang in the balance h. shock, frighten
___ 9. sit around i. not share any of the same interests
___ 10. oversimplify j. walk in an angry manner
B. UNDERSTANDING THE VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Demonstrate your understanding of each of the words or idioms in bold face below by circling the letter of the answer that completes the statement about the scene.

1. When Corie calls Paul a funny kind of drunk, she means:
   a. he looks very funny when he is drunk.
   b. he has fun when he is drunk.
   c. he is fun to be with when he is drunk.
   d. he acts like other people do when he is drunk.
   e. he doesn't act like other people do when they are drunk.

2. When Paul says to Corie, "Don't tell me about drunks," he means:
   a. he doesn't want to hear about drunks because it is an unpleasant subject.
   b. he doesn't want to hear about drunks because it is a boring subject.
   c. she doesn't need to tell him about drunks because he already knows all about the subject.
   d. she doesn't need to tell him about drunks because he isn't interested.
   e. he doesn't want to get into a conversation with her about drunks.

3. When Corie tells Paul that he is very close to being perfect, he is hurt to the quick, this means:
   a. his feelings are a little hurt by what she said.
   b. his feelings are very hurt by what she said.
   c. his feelings are hurt right away by what she said.
   d. his feelings aren't hurt by what she said.
   e. he wants to hurt her feelings because of what she said.
4. Corie likes to walk barefoot in Washington Square Park when it is only 17 degrees, but Paul won't do this with her. What does this tell us about Paul?

   a. He is sensible and logical.
   b. He is a coward.
   c. He is a stuffed shirt.
   d. He is flamboyant.
   e. He is well adjusted.

5. Corie calls Paul a stuffed shirt because:

   a. he always tucks in his shirt.
   b. she likes the way he dresses.
   c. she doesn't like the way he dresses.
   d. she thinks he is too proper and dignified.
   e. she thinks he is immature.

6. Paul and Corie's neighbor, "the Geek," is a flamboyant dresser. This means that his clothes are:

   a. expensive
   b. inexpensive
   c. colorful and interesting
   d. dull and boring
   e. old-fashioned

7. Corie was seething when she told Paul that she was angry. This means that:

   a. she was frowning.
   b. she was crying.
   c. she was shouting.
   d. she was violently angry and upset.
   e. she was very sad.
8. Corie and Paul talk about the need for a couple to be **well adjusted** if they are going to get married. Paul doesn't think that Corie is well adjusted because:

   a. she is immature.
   b. she is too emotional.
   c. she is lacking in common sense.
   d. she is lacking in understanding.
   e. all of the above.

9. When Paul says that maybe their marriage **is not worth saving**, he means that their marriage:

   a. is not really a very good one.
   b. used to be a good one, but isn't good anymore.
   c. is not financially secure.
   d. cannot be saved.
   e. should be saved.

10. Corie thinks that their neighbor, "the Geek," would be **a lot more laughs than** Paul. This means that:

   a. he is fun to be with.
   b. he is strange.
   c. he laughs a lot.
   d. people laugh at him.
   e. he is a comedian.
C. USING THE VOCABULARY IN ANOTHER CONTEXT

Read the following story and fill in the blanks with the appropriate word or idiom from the list below. There are more words and idioms to choose from than there are spaces to fill in, so not all of the choices will be used. When the choice is a verb, be careful to use correct tense and agreement.

- anticipate
- regret
- a crisis
- seethe
- flamboyant
- sensible
- hang in the balance
- sit around
- hysterical
- a slob
- imply
- storm
- intolerable
- well adjusted
- make your hair stand on end

The family who lives next door is having __________ at their house. It's about their 14-year-old daughter. The parents are upset with her because her room is always a mess—unmade bed, dirty clothes everywhere, candy wrappers and dirty dishes scattered all over the place. They have no idea how she has become such __________ at home. They ___________ that by the time she was a teenager, she would care about her room and be neat like them. But it didn't happen. It is surprising to them, because she pays so much attention to her appearance. She is a _____________ dresser, always wearing colorful and interesting clothes. She always looks great and everyone notices her wherever she goes. But at home her room is so messy that if you walk into it, it will ___________ ____________.

Besides keeping a messy room, she never does her homework anymore. She just _____________ watching TV and talking on the phone with her friends. Her parents really _____________ giving their daughter her own telephone as a birthday
present. They are so angry and upset about these things that they
_________________________ about the situation.

My neighbors have tried to talk to their daughter about these problems many
times, but whenever they do, she loses control of her emotions, cries, yells at them, and
becomes _______________. Then she turns her back on them and ___________ out of
the room. They love her very much, but because of these problems living with their
daughter has become ________________.

So the parents have found a good family therapist, and they are all meeting with
her once a week together as a family in order to work out these problems. They hope
these sessions with the therapist will help her become
_____________________________
at home and at school. I hope it will help all three of them, because they are very nice
people, and the peace of their family _____________________________.


**D. VOCABULARY LOG**

Select 5–10 vocabulary items (words and/or idioms) from the scene that are new to you and that you think would be useful for you to know. For each of these items, write down the following:

1. **THE CONTEXT**
   
The page number and complete sentence or line of dialogue from the scene in which the word or idiom appears. Be sure to underline the word or idiom.

2. **DEFINITION**
   
Even if the word is defined in the glossary, use a dictionary to find and write down a more complete definition.

3. **ORIGINAL SENTENCE**
   
Now use the word or idiom in your own original sentence and underline it. Try to demonstrate in your sentence that you really understand the word.

For example, in the sentence, "The young man was embarrassed," there is not enough context to show that you understand the meaning of the word "embarrassed" even though you used it correctly. But if you write, "The young man was embarrassed because he forgot about the date he had made with his girlfriend," this shows that you really understand how to use the word.
L. WRITING ACTIVITIES

Writing About the Scene

For these activities you will need to understand the characters, and be able to express these observations in a clear and well developed paragraph or essay.

1. Description of Corie or Paul
   Write a detailed paragraph describing either Corie or Paul. You may wish to look back at the chart of adjectives that you prepared in Exercise I (Understanding the Scene) for ideas. Be specific, give plenty of details, and be sure to support your observations with evidence from the text (what Corie and Paul say and do).

2. Comparison between Corie and Paul
   Write a short essay comparing Corie and Paul. You may wish to look back at the chart of adjectives that you prepared for Act I (Understanding the characters and their relationship) for ideas. Be specific, give plenty of details, and be sure to support your observations with evidence from the text.
Going *Beyond the Scene*

For these writing activities, you will also need to thoroughly understand the characters and their relationship, but here you must add your imagination to your observations in order to go one step beyond what is presented in the scene.

1. **DIARY ENTRY: CORIE OR PAUL** (Choose ONE)

Imagine that it is the next day. After Corie ended the conversation and went into the bedroom the night before, Paul decided to stop arguing for the time being so that he could get at least a few hours of sleep. By the time Corie got up at 8:00 a.m., Paul had already left for his office.

**a) Corie's Diary Entry**

Imagine that you are Corie. It is 9:00 a.m. and you are sitting at the kitchen table drinking a cup of coffee. You are feeling miserable because of the big argument you had with Paul. You are very upset by all the hurtful things you said to each other. So you take out your diary and begin to write. It always makes you feel better to get your feelings down on paper, and it also helps you figure out what to do when you have a problem. So in your diary entry, tell how you feel about the argument the two of you had last night, and what you are going to do about it.

**b) Paul's Diary Entry**

Imagine that you are Paul. It is 4:00 p.m. and you are sitting in your office. Your big day in court is finally over. You have been so busy the whole day that you haven't had any time to think about the argument until this moment. Now it is all coming back to you, all the terrible things you said to each other, and you feel miserable thinking about it. So you take out your diary and begin to write. Putting your thoughts down on paper makes you feel better, and helps you see things more clearly so that you can figure out what to do. So in your diary entry,
tell how you feel about the argument the two of you had last night, and what you are going to do about it.

2. LETTER OF ADVICE TO CORIE OR PAUL  (Choose ONE)

a) Letter to Corie from her sister

Write a letter to Corie from her older sister, Ann, giving her advice about what she can do to save her marriage.

The morning after her big argument with Paul, Corie wrote a long letter to her older sister, Ann, asking her for advice about what to do. Even though Ann now lives far away in California, Corie and Ann are still very close. Corie has always gone to her older sister for advice, and she is sure that Ann can help her now too. Ann has been happily married to Bill for eight years and they have two lovely children, so she knows what it takes to make a good marriage.

b) Letter to Paul from his brother

Write a letter to Paul from his older brother, Steve, giving him advice about what he can do to save his marriage.

The day after his big argument with Corie, Paul wrote a long letter to his older brother, Steve, asking him for advice about how to get over this argument and have a good marriage. Even though Steve now lives far away in Texas, Paul and Steve are still very close. Paul has always gone to his older brother for advice, and he is sure that Steve can help him out now too. Steve has been happily married for nine years to his wonderful wife, Jennifer, and they have three lovely children, so he knows what it takes to have a good marriage.
3. **SCRIPT WRITING**

Now it is your turn to be a playwright. Using your imagination, continue the script for this scene. It is the next day, and the situation is as follows:

**Corie** is waiting for Paul to return home from work. She hasn't spoken with him since she went into their bedroom and closed the door on him last night. He slept in the living room, and by the time she woke up this morning, he was already at work. Now she feels really badly about the argument she started, and regrets all the things she said to Paul. She is still upset about the things he said too, but mostly she is sorry that she said she wanted a divorce. She doesn't really want a divorce. She loves him and wants their marriage to last forever. She knows that it can! So she has prepared a wonderful, romantic, candlelight dinner for him, and will tell him all this and make everything right again as soon as he gets home.

**Paul**, on the other hand, is not in such a forgiving mood. He had a terrible headache all day long, and even worse, he didn't perform well in court and so he lost his case. He blames his headache and his poor court performance on Corie, because she was the one who insisted they stay out so late on a week night, and then when they finally got home she started an argument. So he got very little sleep.

*The scene begins just as Paul returns home from work and walks in the door.*

In writing the script, indicate who is speaking, what they say, and any stage directions that you think would be helpful. Use the same format as the scene from the play, as illustrated below:
PAUL: (Stage directions in parentheses)
   
   CORIE:
   
   PAUL:

   etc. . . . .

Make two copies of your script to bring to class so that you can practice it with a partner.

4. Journal Writing
   
   a) Personal Response

   Respond to the scene by writing your reaction to anything about it, or by relating it to your own life. For example, how do you personally feel about Corie or Paul? About the quarrel they are having? Is their relationship as newlyweds similar to your own if you are married, or similar to someone you know? You might want to comment on the play itself. Did you enjoy reading this scene? Why or why not? What did you especially like or dislike about it?

   b) Discussion Topics

   You may wish to select one of the discussion topics from “Expressing Your Point of View” (page 80) as the subject for your journal entry.
M. VIEWING THE PLAY ON DVD

Are you curious about what happens before and after this scene from *Barefoot in the Park?* Do you want to know how Corie and Paul's relationship works out? The popular and entertaining 1967 movie version of this play, featuring Jane Fonda as Corie and Robert Redford as Paul, is available on DVD.