



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

INHERIT THE WIND

BY JEROME LAWRENCE & ROBERT E. LEE



Copyright © 2008 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938. 1-800-932-4593. www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to use this unit for classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. This material, in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.

ISBN-13 978-1-60389-249-0

Item No. 303046

Written by Stephanie Selice

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Researching the Debate on Evolution

Objectives: Researching historical background for the play
Presenting an overview of historic events in front of an audience

Activity

Since the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species Through Natural Selection* in 1859, the debates concerning its proper place in science have moved through essentially three stages. The first stage is typified by the Oxford Debate of 1860, the second by the Scopes trial in 1925, and the third by the decision of the Federal District Court in *Tammy Kitzmiller, et al. v. Dover Area School District, et al.*, in December 2005.

The Oxford Debate of 1860:

The Oxford Debate took place at the Oxford University Museum in Oxford, England, just seven months after the publication of the *Origin of Species*. Many prominent scientists of the day took part, including Thomas Huxley, Samuel Wilberforce, Benjamin Brodie, Joseph Dalton, and Robert FitzRoy. Samuel Wilberforce was the Lord Bishop of Oxford in the Church of England. Although he is often portrayed as the representative of the religious establishment, he was also a member of the Royal Society for the Advancement of Knowledge (known as The Royal Society). Bishop Wilberforce attacked the *Origin of Species*, not on religious grounds, but on the basis that it was not good science and was not supported by the evidence.

The Oxford debate is best remembered for a heated exchange in which Bishop Wilberforce supposedly asked Huxley whether it was through his grandfather or his grandmother that Huxley claimed to be descended from a monkey. Huxley is said to have replied that he would not be ashamed to have a monkey for his ancestor, but he would be ashamed to be connected with a man such as Wilberforce who used his great gifts to obscure the truth. The story is also told that after the debate had ended, the participants, in the best tradition of academic and scientific camaraderie, all went out and enjoyed a wonderful dinner together.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I, Scene I**Finding a Good Lawyer: Bert Cates's Letter to the *Baltimore Herald***

Objectives: Writing persuasively in the voice of a character in the play
Understanding character motivation and behavior

Activity

In Act I, Scene I, Bert Cates tells Mr. Meeker the bailiff and jailer that he wrote to “that newspaper in Baltimore” and “they’re sending somebody” to be his attorney.

Pick up Bert’s pen and write a letter in his own style to the *Baltimore Herald*, asking them to hire your defense counsel for your upcoming trial in Hillsboro. Your goal is to persuade strangers running a well-known newspaper in a big city six hundred miles away from your small town to help you and to convince them that your seemingly hopeless case is somehow worth the effort.

What arguments can you think of that Bert could use to convince the publishers of the *Herald* to help him? What points would be most persuasive for the folks at the *Herald*? What would not be of interest or concern to them? What doubts would they have about hiring a lawyer for Bert, and how should he address those doubts? What should Bert expect they would ask of him in return for this assistance, if anything? Be prepared to read your letter aloud in class and to defend your arguments.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II, Scene I**Taking Notes for a Character**

Objectives: Gaining insight into a character's motivations and point of view
Writing or speaking in the voice of that character

Activity

Several of the major characters in *Inherit the Wind* make their living because they use words skillfully. Brady, Drummond, and Hornbeck are masters of language. In a time when there were no portable electronic devices that allowed people to record ideas anytime and anywhere with ease, writers and speakers were usually forced to take handwritten notes themselves.

Imagine you are one of these three noted communicators who have come to Hillsboro. Take a particular scene in which your character figures prominently. Write a notebook entry of not more than one page or 250 words in the voice of that character. You might have him react to the action in the scene, anticipate what he should do next, voice his concerns about the events in the play, or record whatever else you think would be interesting about what he's thinking. Your writing will try to reflect your character's thought processes.

Brady and Drummond might take notes to remind themselves of points to raise with a particular witness in court, with their client or co-counsel, or with one another. Hornbeck might want to remember a particularly witty or insightful observation for a newspaper article about the trial. All three would probably muse about the trial, the town, its residents, and the trial's effects on the wider world.

Whatever you decide to write about, the point is to put yourself in your character's shoes and pretend that you are recording his thoughts on paper. You are not trying to write formally, but to recreate one possible set of responses, concerns, and motivations for a character and to jot them down as spontaneously as possible.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II, Scene I

Interviewing a Character

Objectives: Understanding the purposes and format of an interview
Conducting an interview under varying circumstances

Activity

Profiling people in the news has been a staple feature of journalism for many years. For this activity, imagine that you're a journalist in the 1920s assigned to interview one of the people portrayed in *Inherit the Wind*. Take your favorite character, or one who you find particularly hard to understand or even to tolerate, and conduct an imaginary interview with that character.

First, think of how you would approach your subject for an interview. Do some research on the person you will interview and find out as much as you can about him or her. Your main source of information will be *Inherit the Wind*, of course. How would you contact your subject, keeping in mind that you have only 1920s technologies to rely on? If the person you wanted to interview refused at first to talk with you, what would you do next? What ways would you suggest to the people you work for that your publication use to promote this interview?

What format would you suggest for the interview? What questions would you be dying to ask your subject about one of the biggest trials of the century? Which ones would you avoid or phrase with extreme care? What ways would you have to record your conversation with your subject?

Write out your initial request for an interview (whether it is in a letter, or a carefully planned speech for you to deliver in person, or through some other means). Then draft a list of the questions you want to ask, including follow-up ones, easy or "softball" ones, and others meant to get a real scoop for your readers.

Now imagine that you are a reporter for a TV or web news magazine-type show in the present, and that the trial in *Inherit the Wind* took place in the present. How would you this affect your interview? How would you have to do your research, contact your potential subject, and conduct your interview differently? What parts of your job would remain the same? Be prepared to give reasons for your answers.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II, Scene II

Writing a Character Journal Entry

Objectives: Writing a journal entry in the guise of a character from the play
Understanding character motivation and perspective

Activity

Inherit the Wind has a wide range of characters with speaking parts that we get to know. In this activity, choose the character that interests you the most, and create a journal entry for your character. As you write, remember that your character's perspective on the events of the play is limited to what he or she knows or has experienced directly. There is no way your character can tell what others in the play are thinking, foresee what will happen, or know what is revealed only to the audience.

In your journal entry, discuss what happens in a scene or scenes in which your character appears, and use your imagination to fill in any gaps. Your journal entry needs to be about one page or 250 words long. The start of a sample journal entry for Rachel Brown has been written for you.

Journal Entry for Rachel Brown:

Thursday, July 20

Today was the worst day of my life, and what's even more terrible, it was the worst day of Bert's. Mr. Davenport called me to the stand and Mr. Brady asked me questions as a witness against Bert. He asked me about the death of Tommy Stebbins and what Pa preached at the boy's funeral about damnation and all. Bert couldn't stand it any more than I could, and he yelled out for me to tell about what Pa had actually said.

Next they made me tell everyone in court about what Bert had said to me in private, just the two of us, about how he thinks of God, man, and our place in the world and in heaven. My testimony made things look so bad for Bert that I fell apart, and Mr. Drummond didn't even ask me any questions in Bert's defense. Pa had to help me down from the witness stand after I was dismissed and take me home. He refused to speak to me or even meet my eye and just walked me up to our front door, looking like Jehovah himself, judging me. And then he just turned and walked off, back to the courthouse. I stopped existing for him as his daughter sometime this afternoon, I think.

Bert gave me his copy of the Darwin book to read a few weeks ago, and I got just about all the way through. I owe it to him to finish it, to at least try to understand why he made the choice he did to teach this theory in his classroom. I love Bert and I don't understand all this, but I want to. I owe it to myself to understand why this terrible trial is happening to the people I love.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act III**Character Interview**

Objective: Interviewing a character

Activity

The trial has ended, and the jury has given its verdict: Cates is guilty of teaching evolution in the school and breaking the law. The defendant is fined \$100, but Drummond wants to bring the case to the Supreme Court. Bail is fixed at \$500, which the Baltimore *Herald* pays.

Pretend that you are E.K. Hornbeck, and your editor has asked you to write about the outcome of the trial. In addition to the article, he has asked you to interview two of the trial's participants.

Chose two of the characters and, as Hornbeck, write the questions you would ask him or her. The following are characters you may choose from:

- Bert Cates
- Matthew Harrison Brady
- Charles Drummond
- Rachel Brown
- Reverend Brown
- Howard
- Meeker

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Casting Call

Objective: Choosing actors to star in a movie version of *Inherit the Wind*

Activity

Inherit the Wind was first performed on Broadway in 1955 and was filmed for release in movie theaters in 1960 and for TV in 1965, 1988, and 1999. Some of the greatest actors in American history had roles in this play. Some include Spencer Tracy, Jack Lemmon, Kirk Douglas, Gene Kelly, and Tony Randall.

Imagine that you are a casting director for a new movie production of *Inherit the Wind*. You are asked to find actors to play all the leading roles or parts. What characteristics would you look for as you choose actors for each role? What actors do you think should play Henry Drummond, Matthew Harrison Brady, E. K. Hornbeck, Reverend Brown, Bertram Cates, and Rachel Brown? What other roles have you seen this actor in? Why do you think the actors you have chosen would perform well in those roles?

Using the Casting Chart on the next page, think about the actors whom you love to watch on screen, and choose from among them for your movie cast.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Writing a Character's Obituary

Objectives: Writing an obituary for a character in the play
Understanding the historical purposes and effects of an obituary

Activity

An obituary is a notice of a person's death. It includes a short biography of the deceased, including his or her birthplace, education, and career history. Other features may include the place and date of the person's death, a list of surviving relatives and other loved ones, information about memorial ceremonies and arrangements, and ways to contribute to his or her memorial. It's not unusual to read obituaries that recount a person's life through anecdotes about how he or she helped make the world a better place.

Your task is to write the obituary of one character in *Inherit the Wind*. You can pick someone like Matthew Harrison Brady, who dies during the action of the play, or another character who could die years or even decades later. If you pick the latter option, imagine your character's life after the trial. Use your imagination to create an original portrait in words of this character who had once played a role in the infamous "Monkey Trial." Why was this person's life significant? What should we remember about him or her? What kind of headline do you think would be most effective on such an obituary? What other information would you want to include about the person?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Arranging a Soundtrack

Objective: Creating a soundtrack for a production of *Inherit the Wind*

Activity

From the very beginning, music was considered an essential part of both the theatergoing and the movie-watching experiences. A great musical score gave the audience vital emotional cues to the plot. Today, movie soundtracks or theater scores are considered a big business all by themselves, and fans can easily pick up a CD of the music to their favorite movies..

Imagine that you are the music supervisor hired to create a soundtrack for either a new movie version of the play or a new stage production of it. You must decide what kind of music to use to create the soundtrack. You can choose music from the 1920's; religious hymns, music from the twenty or twenty-first century or any combination of these.

Make a list of at least four significant dramatic sequences in *Inherit the Wind* that you will need to find music or sound effects for, and match them with songs or other sound you think will work effectively. Then write a brief statement on why you think that sound or song is appropriate.