**Literary Analysis of Drama**

Assignment Guide for ENGL 1302
LSC-University Park Library

*Drama* comes from Greek, meaning action, play, or deed. This meaning carries forward to our modern usage as it bears the connotation of a story to be acted out. Dramas revolve around conflict or contrasts of character. All three of the plays that you have the option of researching, though from separate time periods, are well-known dramas rich with symbolism and often social commentary by the playwright.

### Assignment

Evaluate a significant issue or theme or literary aspect (symbolism, character, plot structure, style). Write an essay that sheds light on any ONE of the following plays and defends it (or not) as a great work of great literature:

- Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles*: Compare the play and the short story (“A Jury of Her Peers”) to demonstrate the focus and theme of each genre
- Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie*: Discuss a major issue presented in the play
- Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*: Discuss a major issue presented in the play

Your assignment instructions include some ideas for themes to research.

Length: 3-5 pages plus a title page, abstract, and works cited. Use at least 2 sources in addition to your textbook, with a minimum of 5 in-text citations. Use MLA format.

### Resources for Your Research

If you’re off-campus, log in using your ID barcode number on the back of your student ID card.
### Books & EBooks

The UP library is digital. You can request books or resources from other libraries through the catalog or download or read online eBooks.

When searching the eBook collection, include search terms relating to the literary aspect you’re researching in addition to the name of the play. Keep in mind that the plays’ titles are a SUBJECT or KEYWORD. You are looking for information about the plays, not the plays themselves.

Some possible books to look at:

![Image of books](image1.jpg)

### Databases

Library databases contain articles, newspapers, images, documents, papers, media and more. The databases selected for you here are best for critical analysis of literature.

Use the advanced search features, and be sure to limit to ‘full text’ results.

- **Literature Resource Center**
  This database offers biographies, bibliographies and critical analyses of more than 120,000 authors from every age and literary discipline. Search for your chosen play under the Works Search tab. Enter the name of the play in the top line; then choose ‘Play’ in the Type of Work list to specify the format and work.

![Literature Resource Center](image2.jpg)

- **Contemporary Literary Criticism Select**, part of the Gale Literary Database
  Related to the previous database, this will exclusively search for literary criticisms.

- **Bloom’s Literary Reference Online**
  In the advanced search, specify that you’re searching for “Analyses and Criticism” and “Topics and Themes.”

- **Academic Search Complete**
  This general index to journal articles includes full text articles you may not find elsewhere. This database also includes newspapers. If you need peer-reviewed articles, limit your search (use the advanced search).

### Internet Sites

Be careful to evaluate sites for: credibility, authority, bias, relevance, and evidence before citing them.

- **The Tennessee Williams Annual Review**
- **All about Henrik Ibsen** (National Library of Norway)
- **Ibsen Voyages**
- **American Literature Research and Analysis: Susan Glaspell**
- **Susan Glaspell Society**’s Bibliography of Secondary Sources
Citing Sources & Getting Help with Your Paper

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How to Quote Dialog (2+ characters) from a Prose Drama in Your Paper:

Indent the speakers 1” from the left margin. If their dialogue carries over to another line, indent those lines by another quarter inch. Speakers’ names should be written in all capital letters followed by a period. Include stage directions as they were written in the source, unless it disrupts your sentence: then replace them with an ellipsis (...). Cite by division (i.e. act, scene, line number) rather than page number.

Note: Glaspell’s Trifles has only one act. In this case, do use page numbers.

For example:

As Nora explains to Helmer her intentions to leave their family in order to discover herself and learn about the world, she points to that night’s incident as the deciding betrayal:

HELMER. I would gladly work night and day for you, Nora--bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man would sacrifice his honour for the one he loves.

NORA. It is a thing hundreds of thousands of women have done.

HELMER. Oh, you think and talk like a heedless child.

NORA. Maybe. But you neither think nor talk like the man I could bind myself to. (act 3)

Amanda proudly tells her children about the Sunday afternoon in her youth when she “received seventeen gentleman callers” (1.1.10-12).

How to Quote Dialog from a Single Character:

When you’re only quoting what one character has said, incorporate it into your normal paragraph.

Nora declares that Helmer does not “think nor talk like the man I could bind myself to” (act 3).