

Humanities (History & English) 11th-Grade Summer Assignment

Buried Child by Sam Shepard

Buried Child, Sam Shepard (Dramatists Play Service), ISBN: 978-0822215110

https://www.amazon.com/Buried-Child-Acting-Sam-Shepard/dp/082221511X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1494807621&sr=8-1&keywords=buried+child

Part I: Questions

Answer each of these questions thoughtfully and completely. Make sure to **provide textual evidence and to cite it using correct MLA-format for in-text citations and “Works Cited.”** In-text citations for plays are done somewhat differently: because this is not a verse play (like Shakespeare), give the page number, followed by a semi-colon and the act. For example: (57; act 2).

Your answers should be **typed**, using either **Google Docs or Word**.

Due Date = first day of classes: You will be expected to share your completed assignment with John Goulding at johng@idyllwildarts.org or Karin Obermeier at karino@idyllwildarts.org

1) Characterization: Choose one of the characters and trace how s/he experiences some kind of transformation (or not) over the course of Sam Shepard’s play. In your analysis, consider not only external traits (physical characteristics, voice, gestures, related objects), but also the character’s motivations, values and beliefs, and how s/he “lives” as part of the family. Characterize his/her relationships and how other characters influence his/her actions. What might this character represent?

2) *Buried Child* as American Play: Find examples throughout the play that suggest its “American-ness.” Consider the following:

- Setting: How important is geography? When does the play take place? What was going on in American society at that time? (In class, we will also talk about the play’s relevancy in 2017.)
- Is there anything about the characters that make them particularly American?
- Is there a worldview or ideology expressed that can be seen as American (*American Dream*? Protestant work ethic? Ideas of masculinity and femininity? Attitudes towards “outsiders” or “foreigners”?)

List your examples, giving the correct in-text citation. For each example, you should also write a brief explanation as to how/why it shows its “American-ness.”

3) Conflict(s) and Heroes:

Describe the conflict(s) in *Buried Child*. Certainly, this is a drama about family and secrets. What are the secrets being kept? Who benefits from those secrets? Does the

family and its secrets represent anything bigger than its own conflicts? What is being contested here?

Is there a **clear hero** in the play? In this kind of contemporary play, anti-heroes can play a significant role. Consider which character(s) questions the status quo, which character(s) comes and goes. Is there a character who is consistent throughout the play?

4) Formulating Questions: There are **different types of questions:** factual (“right there” with answers found in the text); inductive (require synthesizing or analyzing answers from the text); analytical (go beyond the text for some “big” or essential question)

Examples:

- **Factual** *How do Dodge and Tilden respond to Vince in Act Two?*
- **Inductive** *Describe Halie and Dodge’s relationship?*
- **Analytical** *What responsibilities do we have to our family?*

Formulate one question for each type, which will help us in our discussion of the play’s specifics, as well as some of the themes in *Buried Child*.

Write down answers to your own questions, citing textual evidence.

Part II: Short Writing

Respond to the following prompt with at least 250 typewritten words, **using one particular character or one detailed passage from the play** and, of course, formatted according to MLA style requirements (see above)

Based on your reading of Sam Shepard’s *Buried Child*, what is the individual’s responsibility to one’s family, community, country, or school?