The Constant Heart

It’s a Wonderful Life and Roman Holiday

Two Classic Film Studies
Designed by the Educational Guidance Institute
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Dedication by Onalee McGraw
Director of Educational Guidance Institute

This study guide is dedicated to my beloved husband, Bill McGraw, with whom I shared forty-eight years of married life and many viewings of these cherished classics.

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The Constant Heart
Featuring It’s a Wonderful Life and Roman Holiday

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OVERVIEW

The Constant Heart: The Universal Human Yearning for a Lasting Earthly Bond

It’s a Wonderful Life and Roman Holiday

Images of Authentic Love, Marriage, Family, and Community

It’s a Wonderful Life (1946) integrates romantic love, marriage, and family with friendship, community, and the things that matter most in life.

Roman Holiday is a tale of two lovers who teach us that duty and honor are to be valued above our own personal desires.
Introduction

Sharing the Mission to Renew our Culture Through the Film Classics

We all have very different life experiences, but we all share the same human condition. A truly great classic film shines the light of truth on our lives and illuminates the human condition. Classic films are remembered and viewed again and again because they help us discover who we are and how to live together in the human family.

The films included in the Educational Guidance Institute Study Guides and Lesson Plans have been chosen according to high standards for screenplay, direction, acting, casting, and artistic integrity. The clear and consistent moral content of these films serves to elevate the human spirit and inspire the moral imagination for the good, the true and the beautiful.

Our popular culture bombards young people with negativity and explicit sexuality. The study of classic films provides an opportunity through positive images to gain a new perspective on the existential questions of love and life. By observing the behavior of the characters in these films, students gain an awareness of their capacity to develop lasting and committed relationships, and to work for the common good in community and civil society.

The teaching philosophy underlying this film study curriculum is based on a whole person perspective of human nature that transcends the boundaries of culture, race, era or social status. Young people have the capacity to understand, appreciate and practice the moral ideals of good character. Most important of all, classic films reach the places in the heart where love can grow.
Criteria for Film Selection

Every film Educational Guidance Institute selects for study has been shaped by the following criteria:

- Is the film a true classic in that its story, character development and production values can win the attention and respect of most students in the age group for which the curriculum has been designed?

- Is the film itself an important part of film history? Has it received positive reviews and evaluations from a variety of film critics? Do film critics from different perspectives admire the values projected in the film?

- Does the story broaden the historical and cultural perspective of students and present the universal qualities of human beings, which transcend racial, ethnic and religious boundaries and divisions?

- Are the characters believable and natural? Do the main characters come across as whole and realistic persons reflecting a common sense view of human nature?
Criteria for Film Selection (Continued)

- Does the story depict relationships between women and men in a way that strengthens the institutions of marriage and the family?

- Do major characters undergo a positive growth in virtue over the course of the story?

- Do the plot of the story and the life events of its characters reflect the development of universal values, norms and virtues in a way that is clear and unambiguous?
Curriculum Learning Objectives

Understanding and Connecting Personal, Community and Universal Values to the Common Good

Personal values sometimes conflict with the values of the community in which one lives. If everyone simply acts on his or her own personal preferences and inclinations, the result will be confusion, conflict and anarchy. On the other hand, if everyone simply follows the crowd, justice and the common good may suffer. Achieving a harmony of values in a community or culture, given the limitations of human nature, is always a struggle.

The Love & Life at the Movies curriculum encourages students to:

- Know, appreciate and practice the qualities of good character necessary for success in love and life;
- Recognize the role of the family as the foundation of society and its contribution to the development of individuals;
- Internalize the value of committed love in marriage;
- Integrate qualities of good character and universal values in personal, family and social relationships — now and in the future.

Virtue Formation

In the Love and Life at the Movies curriculum, students analyze the characters in classic films. Through these timeless visual stories, students grow in awareness and appreciation of such universal virtues as wisdom, temperance (self-control), justice, honesty, tolerance, courage and compassion.

Through the example of the characters portrayed in the films, the students will:

- Examine universal ethical and moral questions;
- Learn how to turn universal values into personal virtues;
- Increase their capacity for empathy and compassion for others;
- Understand how our consciences help us to recognize right from wrong;
- Develop good habits of heart and mind;
- Apply the moral lessons of the film to their daily life situations.
Critical Thinking, Vocabulary Skills & Introduction to Film Criticism

Restoring high standards of academic excellence is a challenge. Students can develop higher personal standards for academic excellence when given an educational experience that simultaneously promotes cognitive, emotional, moral and social intelligence.

Students learn good habits of the heart and mind as whole persons by:

- Growing in appreciation of the historical, cultural, and artistic heritage of the selected films;
- Learning the key elements that make a film a classic;
- Enhancing development of vocabulary and moral literacy;
- Developing analytic skills of character and plot analysis;
- Integrating entertainment values with cultural, moral and intellectual enrichment;
- Intensifying a critical awareness of contemporary entertainment and media.

Lesson Plan Implementation

Review the Movie

For maximum effectiveness, it is strongly recommended that the film be reviewed prior to showing it to the students. In doing so, educators will become more familiar with the plot, characters, timing of film segments and discussion questions.

Introducing the Movie to the Students

Some students may have difficulty understanding the rationale for viewing classic films in class. At the very beginning the teacher must make it clear to the students that the purpose of viewing these films is primarily educational and not simply for their entertainment.

Timing

Although the lesson plan is structured for 45-minute class periods, it is adaptable to a number of different time formats. The film may be shown in its entirety or in two or more segments, with discussion occurring after each viewing, as time allows. A synopsis of each film segment is provided to assist the teacher in following the film’s events.
Discussion Questions and Themes

Class discussion periods are an important means of ensuring that the students understand the main themes of the film and are able to identify important personality traits of the characters depicted in the film. There may not be sufficient time for every discussion point that is provided for each segment, but there will always be ample content for use in helping students along in their discussion.

Teacher Resources - Activities and Learning Tools

Post Viewing Discussion Handout –
This handout is designed for maximum impact at the end of the film and covers themes like friendship, civic virtue and the common good.

Program Application –
Includes CLOSE UP activity for in-depth discussion of film themes.

Appendix A - Study Sheet Handouts

Movie Quotes, Character Traits, Key Terms, Key Terms Fill Ins - Copies of the study sheet handouts may be made for distribution to students.

- Movie Quotes Handout – The Movie Quotes Handout is designed to enrich the student’s understanding of the importance of dialogue in classic films.
With this optional activity, the significance of these quotes can be applied to the main characters in the film. For example, in It’s a Wonderful Life students explore the meaning behind the words Clarence speaks to George: “You see, George, you really did have a wonderful life.”

- The Character Traits Study Sheet provides a place for students to take notes on character traits that they identify in the main characters in the film. By taking note of the virtues and vices that they find in the personalities of the characters listed, the students will be better prepared to share ideas during the group discussion time, and will hopefully see how a person can change for the good.
• The “Key Terms” (Vocabulary Words) will help the students understand concepts which relate to the main themes of the film. Students will be expected to go beyond a simple definition of the words and consider how the terms are manifested in the film’s characters.

Appendix B - Supplementary Materials:

The Four C’s of Love and Marriage for a Lifetime
The Vital Elements of Classic Film and the Motion Picture Production Code
What Makes a Film a Classic?
Essay Questions
Famous Quote to Consider

The purpose of the supplementary materials is to provide an additional opportunity for the students to analyze the film and to express their thoughts in a written essay. The teacher may use any or all of these materials, as time allows. They include:

• The Four C’s of Love and Marriage for a Lifetime
  • The Vital Elements of Classic Film and the Motion Picture Production Code
  • What Makes a Film A Classic
  • Essay Question - gives the students an opportunity to develop their thoughts on the film’s message in writing.

• Famous Quote relevant to the movie’s overall message. This is provided as additional discussion material, if time allows.

Appendix C - Teacher Answer Keys

Answer Keys for The Movie Quotes handout as well as for the Optional Supplementary Materials are provided for the teacher’s use. The possible responses suggested are by no means exhaustive.
IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE
LESSON PLAN

Life is Worth Living
It’s a Wonderful Life

It’s a Wonderful Life, Frank Capra’s most widely-acclaimed film and an American classic, has become for many a rich Christmas tradition. Because of its amazing ability to touch our hearts with its message of warmth and hope for mankind during the Christmas season, this film has survived over the years and become a piece of American culture.

Story Line

It is the story of George Bailey, a man who struggles all his life between his responsibilities — to his family, his father’s business, and the people of his community — and his personal desires for adventure, success, and wealth. The audience grows to know and love George, as well as to identify with his day-to-day struggles through a series of extended flashback scenes depicting the major events of his life. We are introduced to all the people whom George loves and holds dear including his loving wife, Mary. When George is confronted with a traumatic and potentially scandalous crisis, he is emotionally pushed over the edge and contemplates suicide. His guardian angel, Clarence, visits him in the “nick of time” and shows George what a difference his life has made to his family and his friends. Clarence does this by showing him what the lives of others would be like had he never been born. This film is a tremendous vehicle for teaching the value of making good, conscientious decisions and how subsequent choices and actions affect other people. We can learn to put our own life in perspective when, like George Bailey, we envision how much one man can change the lives of others through his actions and decisions.

Film History

In 2005, nearly 60 years after its release, It’s a Wonderful Life appeared in the #1 place on the American Film Institute’s “100 Years 100 Cheers – America’s Most Inspiring Movies” list. Yet when It’s a Wonderful Life was released in 1946, it was not overwhelmingly successful at the box office. The director, Frank Capra, and the cast were rather disappointed. Capra especially had hoped the film would do well, since he saw it as the film he had been “waiting his whole life to make.” In his autobiography, The Name Above the Title, Capra speculated that many post-war movie-goers did not want to be confronted with some of the heavy themes presented in the film. For many years, It’s a Wonderful Life was forgotten and eventually copyrights ran out on it in the year 1974. At this time it began to air on television during the Christmas season. In the 1970’s, a new generation fell in love with the film, especially its upbeat message and nostalgic portrayal of hometown America. Within a few years, it was so popular that it had become a Christmas tradition in many homes. Today the film is a classic that will never again be allowed to sit on the shelf and collect dust. Frank Capra’s dream of touching others through this powerful story has finally come true.
The Setting for the Story

The era of American history depicted in *It’s a Wonderful Life* – the first half of the twentieth century – has been described by many who lived through it as more difficult than today in some respects, but better in others. For instance, we do not have the same financial deprivation that many people had during the Great Depression, but people then tended to be friendlier and more connected to others in the community.

During the Great Depression, most people could not afford their own housing, and many men were out of work. In the film, the atmosphere during the Great Depression is portrayed when the people of Bedford Falls make a run on the bank. Then, not long after the Depression was over, World War II broke out and many of the men who had just gained employment again had to leave their homes and families to fight in the war. We see this depicted in the film when George’s brother leaves to serve in the military during World War II.

Despite hard times, however, the life of small town America fostered healthy communities and personal involvement. Everyone in the town looked out for everyone else and newcomers were made to feel welcome. This sense of community is portrayed well by the town of Bedford Falls, where George grows up. George is well known in the town because his family has lived there long enough to be established. Everyone in the film knows that they can trust a Bailey. Although George wants to leave the “crummy town” of Bedford Falls in his youth, he realizes later on that it is better to live in a place where people know and trust him.
Film Facts for *It’s a Wonderful Life*

**Year:** 1946

**Starring:** Jimmy Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, Thomas Mitchel, Henry Travers

**Director:** Frank Capra

**Screenwriters:** Frank Capra, Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett (screenplay) and Philip Van Doren Stern (story)

**Viewing Time:** 130 minutes

**Academy Award Nominations (1947):**
- Best Actor in a Leading Role, James Stewart
- Best Director, Frank Capra
- Best Film Editing, William Hornbeck
- Best Picture, (Liberty Films).
- Best Sound & Recording, John Aalberg (RKO Radio SSD)

Movies like *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington* (1939) and *It’s a Wonderful Life* (1946) reflected Frank Capra’s desire in the late 1930’s to make films that ‘said something’. Capra in fact stated explicitly that as an artist he had decided to “serve man and the Almighty, instead of the picture business.” Frank Capra purchased the original story, which had been written as a Christmas card by author Philip Van Doren Stern. The idea captured Capra’s imagination and, as he relates in his autobiography, *The Name Above The Title*, “It was the story I had been looking for all my life.” There was only one man he knew could play George… Jimmy Stewart.
Film Facts for *It’s a Wonderful Life* (Continued)

Frank Capra tells the story of how he tried to tell Jimmy about the story, but the words seemed to fail him. He almost gave up on the whole project. In an interview, Jimmy Stewart tells his version, “Frank, if you want me to be in a picture about a guy that wants to kill himself and an angel comes down named Clarence and he can’t swim... I say, when do we start?!”

In the scene where a despairing George Bailey asks God for help in the bar, Jimmy Stewart was so emotionally moved by the moment that he broke into tears during its filming. Capra was so thrilled with the scene that he kept it in the film and even spent almost a thousand dollars trying to blow up the shot so it would be a close-up.

Jimmy Stewart, commenting on this famous scene in the bar, reflected on the film’s spiritual dimension as follows,

“As I said [the prayer in *It’s a Wonderful Life*], I felt the loneliness and hopelessness of people who had nowhere to turn, and my eyes filled with tears. I broke down sobbing. This was not planned at all, but the power of that prayer, the realization that our Father in heaven is there to help the hopeless had reduced me to tears,”
Director’s Chair

Steven Spielberg, the famous director of *E.T.*, *Jurassic Park*, and many other popular films, paid tribute to the film-making style of Frank Capra with this comment: “Frank Capra led with his heart . . . he celebrated the noblest impulse of women and men, showed all of us our dark side, and then pointed a flashlight at the way out.”

Legendary Director Frank Capra and his good friend Jimmy Stewart (George Bailey) enjoy a break during the making of *It’s a Wonderful Life*. 
Instructional Objectives for *It’s a Wonderful Life*

- Appreciate the value of individuals and families to the life of a community, and the importance of the community to individuals and families.

- Understand the importance of choosing a spouse who is a person of good character;

- Understand that everyone’s life is worth living.

Themes for *It’s a Wonderful Life* Film Segments

- Our choices in life shape our character and have lasting consequences.

- Family and community help form a deeper perspective on life.

- Everyone has an irreplaceable role in their immediate families and in the larger community.

- In the worst moments, friendship brings hope.

- Every life is worth living
**PART ONE:**  
**MEET GEORGE BAILEY**

*Film time: 30 minutes*

1. **The theme for the first segment:**

   *Our choices in life shape our character and have lasting consequences.*

   Tell the students that this theme will be apparent in the film segment and should be kept in mind while watching the film.

2. **Present the key terms:**

   - **Empathy:** the quality of understanding and sympathizing with the feelings, motives or situations of another to the point that one actually experiences their pain or sufferings with them.

   - **Greed:** an overwhelming desire for more than one needs or deserves, especially for wealth or power.

3. **Start the film.**

   *Segment One ends* as George drives away in the car and Mary watches him leave from the bushes.

**Plot Synopsis of Segment 1**

**George Bailey is discouraged.** An angel named Clarence is sent to help him because George is considering taking his own life. Clarence must first learn about George’s life. When George was a boy he saved his brother Harry from drowning but lost his hearing in one ear as a result.

**George also works at a drug store** for Mr. Gower, a druggist who receives word that his son has died. In a drunken state, Mr. Gower accidentally puts poison in some pills that George must deliver to a sick child. George reluctantly goes back to the drug store without delivering the pills. Mr. Gower yells and slaps George. After telling Mr. Gower about the mistake, George indicates that he understands why it was made and promises not to tell anyone about what has happened.
George, now a young adult, is making preparations for going abroad, something which he has always wanted to do. At home, George talks with his father. Mr. Bailey asks George if he would consider working at the Bailey Building & Loan. George honestly tells him that he could not face being cooped up in a shabby little office and that he wants to do something “big and important.”

Peter Bailey explains that the work is important and that the Building & Loan makes it possible for people to own their own homes instead of living in Mr. Potter’s slums. Nevertheless, he allows George to use his talents to follow his dream.

George goes to a party later that evening. He and Mary Hatch are immediately attracted to one another. As George walks Mary home, he expresses his dreams and hopes to her. When they throw rocks in the windows of the Old Granville house, George wishes for success away from Bedford Falls. Mary won’t tell George what she has wished for, but we suspect that it is for George to stay in Bedford Falls. Their romantic moment is interrupted when Uncle Billy and Harry arrive and say that George’s father is dying. George quickly bids farewell to Mary and takes off.

DISCUSSING SEGMENT ONE

During the segment, the students should be thinking about the significance of the Movie Quotes and taking notes on their handouts. Have them share their thoughts. Refer to the talking points just below the discussion questions to help guide and direct discussion.

QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

“You can’t begin to spend all the money you’ve got.” – Peter Bailey
“I suppose I should give it to miserable failures like you.” – Henry Potter

How do the worldviews of Peter Bailey and Mr. Potter differ? How does this affect the kind of person each becomes? (The movie quotes and discussion questions are shown on the PowerPoint presentation.)

- The men have two fundamentally different perspectives about the purpose of money. Peter Bailey sees money as a means to an end. He uses it to help others achieve happiness. He sees Potter’s accumulation of wealth as pointless because he is not using it for anything.
- Potter has chosen to hoard his money for personal gain and sees Peter Bailey as a failure because he is not producing personal wealth.
“I wanna do something big and something important.” – George Bailey
“I feel that in a small way we are doing great things.” – Peter Bailey

How is George already fulfilling his ambition to do “something big and something important” without having left home?

- George and his father both have an ambition in life to do “great things,” but George has not yet come to fully appreciate the true greatness and importance of his father’s work.
- The beginning of the movie sets the stage for a vindication of Peter Bailey’s view of life. Although George desperately wants to leave Bedford Falls, like his father, he is already accomplishing great things without having to leave (saving his brother’s life, saving his boss at the drug store, and even standing up to Mr. Potter as a boy).
- We can see that George is, consciously or not, aligning himself with his father’s worldview. It is this perspective on life, rather than his ambitions to travel the world, that will give him the strength to make the right choices in life.

PART TWO:
THE BAILEY BUILDING & LOAN

Film time: 30 minutes

1. Have the students take out their Movie Quotes, Character Traits and Key Terms handouts.

2. Present the theme for the second segment:

   *Family and community help form a deeper perspective on life.*

Remind the students that this theme will be apparent in the film segment and should be kept in mind while watching the film.

3. Present the key terms:

   *Family Loyalty:* the trait of respecting one’s family members and putting their needs and wishes before one’s own desires

   *Maturity:* the ability to deal with adult responsibilities
4. Ask the students to explain where the story line left off. *George drives away in the car, and Mary watches him leave from the bushes.*

5. Start the film.

*Segment Two ends as George is on the phone with Mary, and she asks him to “come home.”*

**Plot Synopsis of Segment 2**

**George defends the Building & Loan.** The board members of the Building & Loan meet to decide its future. Potter argues that it should be shut down and then degrades Peter Bailey. George confronts Potter and defends the goodness of his father and the value of the Building & Loan.

**The board is impressed by George.** The board, impressed with George’s defense of the Building & Loan, decides to keep it going, but only if George agrees to become executive director. George makes the tough decision to put off going to college in order to take on this important responsibility. He gives his younger brother his college money and sends him to college instead.

**Harry comes home with a wife.** George has worked for four years while Harry has been in college. Harry is now to take George’s place at the Building & Loan. However, Harry surprisingly returns home with a wife, Ruth, who tells George that Harry has a chance to work in her father’s business and have a better future. George is discouraged and frustrated because he realizes that this will keep him stuck in Bedford Falls.

**George and Mary decide to get married.** George visits Mary and they know that they love each other. At first, George tells Mary that he does not want to get married; he wants to travel and do great things. However, George realizes that deep down Mary is more important to him and therefore chooses her over his personal ambitions.

**George and Mary save the Bailey Building & Loan.** George and Mary get married, but as they leave for their honeymoon, there is a run on the bank. The Great Depression has hit, and Potter tries to take advantage of this crisis by trying to gain control of the bank. By telling the depositors to have faith in each other, and by loaning out all of their honeymoon money, George and Mary manage to convince the people not to go to Potter, thereby saving the Building & Loan.
DISCUSSING SEGMENT TWO

QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

“People were human beings to him, but to you, a warped, frustrated old man, they’re cattle. Well, in my book, he died a much richer man than you’ll ever be.” — George Bailey

What does this quote show us about the influence that a parent’s decisions and worldview have on the decisions and worldview of his/her children?

- George Bailey says this to Mr. Potter. George has made a decision about what he thinks makes life worth living, and it is this that motivates him to take over the company in his father’s place. He has adopted his father’s view of life.

- It’s important for us to realize that our view of life and our decisions in life will have a decisive effect on our children.

- At the same time, however, it’s important for us to realize that if our parents made unhealthy choices in life, we are not bound to their example. George shows that the decisions he makes are his own. He isn’t just carrying on his father’s work mindlessly but truly believes in what he is doing. He is never a victim of circumstances but always rises above them and makes the most of them.

“Nice girl, Mary. Kind that will help you find the answers.” — Ma Bailey

- Mary is self-sacrificing. She will help George carry on his father’s vision and clarify his perspective on life, even when it is called into question. Her ability to give of herself shows that she is capable of fulfilling George’s need for love.

“You’re thinking of this place all wrong... the money’s not here. Your money’s in Joe’s house... and in the Kennedy house... and a hundred others” -George

- George has the difficult task of persuading his fellow citizens to act for the common good of the town. He explains to them that the investment in their homes is really an investment in everyone else’s home as well.

- Encouraging solidarity, George and Mary give their honeymoon money.

- George says: “Now, we can get through this thing all right. We’ve got to stick together, though. We’ve got to have faith in each other.”
PART THREE:  
A CRISIS FOR THE BAILEYS

Film time: 25 minutes

1. Have the students take out their Movie Quotes, Character Traits and Key Terms handouts.

2. Present the theme for the third segment:

   Everyone has an irreplaceable role in their immediate families and in the larger community.

   Remind the students that this theme will be apparent in the film segment and should be kept in mind while watching the film.

3. Present the key terms:

   Civic Virtue: putting the good of the community above one’s own self-interests

   Common Good: the shared good of a community or society as a whole

4. Ask the students to explain where the story line left off. George is on the phone with Mary, and she asks him to “come home.”

5. Start the film.

Segment Three ends as George leaves a forlorn Uncle Billy in the house and runs out.
Plot Synopsis of Segment 3

George comes “home.” Mary has George come “home” to the old Granville house. She has set it up as a honeymoon suite for the two of them and George is touched. Despite the disasters of the day, Mary is overcome with joy and with love for her husband George.

Mr. Potter gets some bad news. Mr. Potter’s accountant tells him that because so many of his tenants are moving to Bailey Park, Mr. Potter is losing income. Potter gets angry and decides something must be done.

Bailey Park. While George and Mary are celebrating with the Martini family, Sam Wainright stops by and invites them to join him on vacation in Florida. They are not able to go, and George is frustrated with not being able to get away from his job.

Mr. Potter tempts George. Potter tries to tempt George to work for him and abandon the Building & Loan, by offering him a large salary and business trips. George is overwhelmed and at first says that he will take the job, but he soon realizes that Potter is “not selling but buying,” just as before. George turns down the opportunity in order to keep the Building & Loan afloat.

Mary and George raise a family. As time goes on, George and Mary have four children. More houses are built by the Bailey Building & Loan, and more people are helped. When World War II breaks out, George cannot fight because of his deaf ear, but Harry Bailey becomes a war hero.

Uncle Billy loses an $8,000 Building & Loan deposit. The flashback narrative of the story is brought up to the present day—Christmas Eve. Harry Bailey has just been decorated by the President, and the whole community is excitedly waiting his return. The whole Bailey family is proud of him. Uncle Billy unwittingly hands $8,000 to Potter in a newspaper while bragging about the Bailey family. Potter discovers the money and keeps it, seeing his chance to ruin George and the Building & Loan once and for all.

The crisis. As George prepares to meet with the bank examiner, a childhood friend named Violet comes in and needs money. George helps her out. Uncle Billy then arrives and tells him the terrible news of the misplaced $8,000 deposit. George and Uncle Billy retrace his steps to and from the bank.

George’s anger erupts. George finally loses control of his emotions. He violently yells at Uncle Billy and stomps out of his house, leaving Billy in tears at his desk.
DISCUSSING SEGMENT THREE

Gaining Perspective

As George shakes hands with Potter, he realizes that he is aligning himself with the man who has been so harmful to the community. It dawns on him that if he takes this job, he would be no better than Potter.

QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

“I know what I’m going to do tomorrow and the next day and next year and the year after that; I’m shaking the dust of this crummy little town off my feet and I’m going to see the world! And then I’m going to build things. I’m going to build airfields. I’m going to build skyscrapers a hundred stories high. I’m going to build a bridge a mile long . . .” — George Bailey

George is now remembering something he had said in Segment One and wondering whether he has done the right thing. He has turned down Potter’s offer in order to preserve the good of the community by keeping the Building and Loan open.

Does he make a mistake by putting the good of the community before his own personal ambitions and his desire to provide more material goods for his family?

- No, George is not making a mistake. By using his talents to build Bailey Park, to keep the Building & Loan open, and to give people a chance to own, rather than rent, their own homes, he is investing in his own long-term good – even though he does not realize it at the time.

- George is worried that his decision is going to make his family unhappy. What he forgets is that the most important decision he ever made was to marry a woman who would support and strengthen his vision to sustain Bedford Falls.

- Mary is his soul mate, willing to give up their honeymoon money to keep the Building and Loan open so that the community didn’t have to crawl to Potter. She gave up the prospect of a wealthy husband (Sam Wainwright) and a fancy house because she loved George/.
“Where’s that money you silly, stupid, old fool? Do you realize what this means? It means bankruptcy and scandal and prison, that’s what it means! One of us is going to jail. Well, it’s not going to be me!” — George Bailey

What does this quote tell the viewer about how George feels about life in general at this point in the film?

- In this quote, George is yelling at Uncle Billy for having lost the $8,000. We can see that George is really beginning to feel that all of his decisions, perhaps even his very life, were mistakes.

PART FOUR: GEORGE DESPAIRS

Film time: 27 minutes

1. Have the students take out their Movie Quotes, Character Traits and Key Terms handouts.

2. Present the theme for the fourth segment:

   In the worst moments, friendship brings hope.

Remind the students that this theme will be apparent in the film segment and should be kept in mind while watching the film.

3. Present the key terms (despair and perspective) for this segment.

   Despair: to lose all hope of attaining one’s goals; to think that one’s problems are insoluble

   Perspective: the way in which one views particular events and experiences as they relate to the whole of life

4. Ask the students to explain where the story line left off. George leaves a forlorn Uncle Billy in the house and runs out.

5. Start the film.

Segment Four ends as George and Clarence separate and Clarence tells St. Joseph that he hasn’t had a drink.
Plot Synopsis of Segment 4

George returns home. When he returns to his house, Mary sees that something is very wrong. When George becomes greatly upset with the children, Mary confronts him and he leaves.

George begs Potter for help and goes to a bar. George goes to Potter and begs him for help. Potter is surprised that George is taking responsibility for losing the money, but nevertheless he decides to destroy him and the Building & Loan. George goes to Martini’s bar and starts drinking. There, in desperation, he prays to God for help.

George’s guardian angel appears. George drives to the outskirts of Bedford Falls, hits a tree, and then goes out on a bridge and contemplates suicide. As George contemplates suicide, his guardian angel, Clarence, appears. Clarence jumps in the water himself, trusting that George’s habit of helping others will lead him to save a drowning person.

Clarence discourages George from suicide. Clarence explains how he stopped George from committing suicide. Clarence reveals that he is George’s guardian angel and convinces George that killing himself would not make anyone happier. George then claims that it would have been better if he had never been born at all.

George is granted his wish; he was never born. Clarence realizes that this remark made by George may be the key to helping him gain a true perspective on the meaning of his life. Clarence declares that George has his wish; he has never been born. In this fantasy sequence, everything is changed. No one knows George. Mr. Gower, who has spent 20 years in prison for poisoning a child, does not even recognize him. Nick the bartender gets upset with George and Clarence for their strange behavior and kicks them out.

George goes to find his family. After George and Clarence are kicked out of the bar, George begins to notice how different things are. He tells Clarence it is all a dream and that he is going home where things are normal. He separates from Clarence and heads for home.
DISCUSSING SEGMENT FOUR

Character Concept

A mother’s devotion to her family

Mary is a devoted wife and mother. While defending the children against George’s angry outburst, she tries to understand what her husband is going through in order to keep the family together.

QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

“You’re worth more dead than alive! Why don’t you go to the riffraff you love so much and ask them to let you have eight thousand? You know why? Because they’d run you out of town on a rail.” —Henry Potter

Mr. Potter confirms George’s sense of failure and isolation. George does not go to anyone else except his enemy, Potter, for help, presumably because he doesn’t think that anyone else will be able to help him. Who else should George have gone to, or what might he have done to get help?

- George could have talked to his wife, to see if she had any ideas to help him get out of the predicament with the missing money.
- He could have talked to his mother, or to his friends in the community. Instead, he has bought into Potter’s assumption that everyone in the community is as heartless and miserly as Potter.
- Note to Teacher: to help the students understand the desperate nature of George’s situation, explain that a moderate size house in the 1940’s might cost around $5,000. Even if he had sold his house to try to come up with the missing $8,000 it would not have been enough. Ask for ideas about what someone today might do in a similar situation.

“If it hadn’t been for me everybody would be a lot better off: my wife, my kids and my friends . . . I suppose it would have been better if I’d never been born at all.” —George Bailey

Loneliness and a sense of isolation are often behind depression, despair and suicidal thoughts. It is important for people to reach out to others for help. What mistake did George make when he decided to commit suicide?

- In this quote, George, speaking to Clarence, is convinced that his whole life has been a waste and a burden to those that he loves; he feels worthless. Had he not been born, he would not now be going to jail, he would not be in the mess he’s in, and everyone would have been a lot better off.
• George does not see how his life could possibly be worth anything; as far as he is concerned, George Bailey has never done anything “big” or great in the world.

• Loneliness is often brought on by difficult circumstances that are outside our control. However, when a person feels completely cut off from other people, it is important that the individual be the first one to reach out to others and seek support.

• It was outside of George’s control that Uncle Billy lost the $8,000 and that the Building and Loan now faces bankruptcy. However, he is not just a “victim” of his circumstances. He made a decision not to reach out to loved ones, such as his wife, for help.

PART FIVE:  
A MIRACLE

Film time: 19 minutes

1. Have the students take out their Movie Quotes, Character Traits and Key Terms handouts.

2. Present the theme for the fifth segment:

   Every life is worth living

Remind the students that this theme will be apparent in the film segment and should be kept in mind while watching the film.

3. Present the key terms:

   Wisdom: the knowledge gained by experience and developed character

   Gratitude: the virtue of being thankful for what one has

4. Ask the students to explain where the story line left off.  George and Clarence separate and Clarence tells St. Joseph that he hasn’t had a drink.

5. Start the film.  The film concludes with this segment.
Plot Synopsis of Segment 5

George sees “Pottersville.” As George walks down the main street of town on his way home, the town he knew is completely changed in character, full of bars and clubs. No one knows George. George gets into a taxi driven by his friend Ernie, who also does not know George and thinks that he is crazy. George finds his home deserted and in ruins. Burt the cop tries to arrest George, but he escapes and goes to his mother’s house.

George sees his mother. George’s own mother does not even know him. Clarence appears and accompanies George as he looks for Bailey Park. When George instead finds a graveyard and his brother Harry’s tombstone, Clarence reminds George that he was not there to prevent certain things from happening. George, still seeking to find his life as he remembers it, forces Clarence to tell him where Mary is right at that moment. He leaves Clarence to go find Mary closing the library.

George sees Mary as an old maid. George finds Mary leaving the library. She has become an old maid and does not recognize George, screaming and running away from him when he tries to touch her. As the townspeople restrain George from following Mary, George calls out for Clarence.

George prays to live again and is given his life back. George, looking for Clarence, runs back to the bridge. He prays to live again and is granted his wish. Burt approaches George and calls him by name. George is overjoyed to be alive again no matter what consequences he must face. George ecstatically runs through the town wishing everyone a Merry Christmas. He now appreciates the little town of Bedford Falls and all that is within it.

George is reunited with his family. George runs into his house and suddenly loves all the things that he despised earlier in the evening: the drafty house, the loose knob on the stairway banister, the warrant for his arrest, the bank deficit. He greets Mary and the children with overwhelming joy.

Mary’s plan works. Mary is not only happy to see George, but she is anxiously awaiting the results of a “miracle” that has taken place. After George had left the house, she found out what was wrong. By remaining calm, she was able to devise a plan to save George and the Building & Loan.
The Community comes through for the Baileys. Mary had gone all over town, explaining the situation and asking their friends for help. The community is aware of all that George has done for the town and for each of them individually and is therefore more than willing to help the Baileys in their time of need. As the Baileys look on with gratitude, the members of the community come streaming in, giving from their own modest means to make up for the shortfall.

The End. Clarence gives George a Christmas present — a copy of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. George has finally learned that friendship and love are the “greatest gifts” which put material things such as wealth, power and success in their true perspective.
DISCUSSING SEGMENT FIVE

QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

“Strange isn’t it? Each man’s life affects so many other lives, and when he isn’t around he leaves an awful hole, doesn’t he?”—Clarence

Discuss this remark by Clarence and consider some of the things he shows George that help him see why his life was truly worth living.

- Clarence is reminding George how every single life is unique and unrepeatable.
  - “You see George, you weren’t there to stop Gower from putting the poison in those capsules.”
  - “Every man on that transport died . . . Harry wasn’t there to save them because you weren’t there to save Harry.”
  - “There is no Bailey Park; you weren’t there to build it.”
  - “I live in a shack in Potter’s Field and my wife ran away three years ago and took the kid . . . and I ain’t never seen you before in my life.”
  - Ma Bailey has to run a boarding house to support herself because George and Harry aren’t there to take care of her in her old age.
  - “He’s [Uncle Billy’s] been in the insane asylum ever since he lost his business.”
  - “She [Mary] is an old maid. She never married.”

- George — not some ‘more successful man,’ but George — touched many lives by the choices he made every day. It is important to recognize that every single person has a gift to give to others. Their absence leaves a hole in the fabric of society and the world would never be the same without them.
Post Viewing Discussion
Radical Choices for a *Wonderful Life*

In the fantasy sequence, we see what life would be like in Bedford Falls without George. Clarence tells George, *you see George, you really had a wonderful life. Can’t you see what a mistake it would be to throw it away?*

Discuss the events in George’s life that Clarence uses to teach him that he has been given a wonderful life. With these examples, Clarence is reminding George how every single life is unique and unrepeatable.

- You see George, you weren’t there to stop Gower from putting the poison in those capsules.
- Every man on that transport died . . . Harry wasn’t there to save them because you weren’t there to save Harry.
- There is no Bailey Park; you weren’t there to build it.
- I live in a shack in Potter’s Field and my wife ran away three years ago and took the kid . . . and I ain’t never seen you before in my life.
- Ma Bailey has to run a boarding house to support herself because George and Harry aren’t there to take care of her in her old age.
Post Viewing Discussion (Continued)

➢ She [Mary] is an old maid. She never married.

On the bridge where he is going to commit suicide George cries out, “Get me back to my wife and kids. Help me, Clarence, please. Please! I want to live again! I want to live again. Please, God, let me live again!”

It is George’s realization that he has lost Mary that brings him to the bridge, begging God to give him his life back.

In all these events, everyone can recognize that every single person has a gift to give to others. Their absence leaves a hole in the fabric of society and the world would never be the same without them.
PART 6: PROGRAM APPLICATION

Instructional objectives for *It’s a Wonderful Life*

- Appreciate the value of individuals and families to the life of a community, and the importance of the community to individuals and families;
- Understand the importance of choosing a spouse who is a person of good character;
- Understand that everyone’s life is worth living.

**Objective #1:** Appreciate the value of individuals and families to the life of a community, and the importance of the community to individuals and families.

**Explain the significance of the following quote:** “Mary did it, George, Mary did it! She told a few people that you were in trouble, and they scattered all over town collecting money. They didn’t ask any questions.”

- In this quote, Uncle Billy happily explains to George how the entire town has come together to lift him out of trouble. It is the very “riffraff,” whom Potter (and George) were convinced would do nothing, that rescue George from bankruptcy and prison.
- Although George had lacked faith in the people of Bedford Falls, Mary did not. She immediately began to alert everyone in town of George’s trouble, confident that they would do all they could to assist the man who had given them so much.

**Would George have been happy even if he had not gotten the money in the end? What did Clarence mean when he said, “No man is a failure who has friends”? What is real success?**

- After George has realized not only how important his life has been to others, but also how truly happy his family and friends have made his life, he sees that life is wonderful – apart from material success. The most important thing to him is not what other people are able to do for him, but that there are other people in his life who are willing to stand by him, regardless of whether they can solve his financial problems.
- All his life, George has wanted to succeed. However, he was measuring success the wrong way. He was successful without even realizing it because of his deep commitment to his family and friends. This is what his brother Harry means when he says, “To my brother George, the richest man in town,” and what Clarence means when he says, “No man is a failure who has friends.”
• George is then able to realize that life is a gift in itself, not to be thrown away, and that whatever hardships one might face, life is always worth living. He sees that the gift of life is itself so precious that one should not feel that he is also owed an easy life, a lot of wealth, etc.

• Even if George had not been given the money in the end, we know that he would have been happy simply to be alive and back with his family and friends, since he has finally realized what is most important in life.

Objective #2: Understand the importance of choosing a spouse who is a person of good character.

At the end of the movie, George has come to appreciate the value of what he has been given in life. Of all the things that he “loses” because of his wish, what is clearly of foremost importance to him?

• His family (most fundamentally of all, his wife) is most important to him. It is seeing Mary as an old maid that finally makes George realize that he wants everything back, no matter how difficult it might be. Even if he goes to prison, his loving family would still exist.

George’s marriage and family are not merely gifts handed to him by chance, but the fruits of the good decisions he has made. For example, he pursues a relationship with Mary, rather than with Violet Bick. How are George and Mary a model of a healthy, self-giving relationship both before and after marriage? What relevance do their values still have today?

- Mary is focused on George alone, whereas Violet is simply looking for a man. (She says to the men flirting with her when she sees George, “I think I’ve got a date. But stick around fellows, just in case.”)

- Because Mary respects George as a person, she is able to command the same kind of respect in return. Violet, on the other hand, does not mind attracting attention to herself as a sexual person rather than as a whole person. She attracts this attention not so much by dressing in a “revealing” way, but by her whole demeanor: the way she walks, talks, and relates to men. Even though Violet’s dress in Segment One is modest in and of itself, she is still a problem for the men who are trying to keep their minds where they need to be, especially the married policeman. Conversely, even when Mary has to wrap up in a robe, or takes refuge in the hydrangea bushes, she is still more modest than Violet because she is not trying to draw attention to her body. Rather, she helps George by her modest demeanor to look at her as a whole person, not as a sexual person.

- As a result of these decisions regarding men, Mary finds a stable, loving home where she feels fulfilled and respected, whereas Violet is restless and fleeing from her past.
• As George and Mary are getting to know each other before marriage, both focus on the other as whole persons and recognize the importance of self-sacrifice in establishing a healthy, lasting relationship. Although George teases Mary about not giving her back the robe, at no time does he try to “peek” at her, and by the end of the scene it is very clear that he was fully intending to return the robe to her.

• Even though George is very much in love with Mary and is certainly physically attracted to her (he is stunned by her beauty at the dance), he focuses on getting to know what her expectations are for a family and what it is that she wants in life (“What did you wish for, Mary?”) and does not have sex with her before marriage. He wants her, not just her body. Because of this, Mary feels loved and cherished and George feels respected; both are focused on the other’s happiness and creating a stable home, rather than on their own personal gratification.

• George and Mary put things in the right order for a successful marriage: first a stable, committed relationship, then a home, and lastly sex.

• Because George and Mary have waited until marriage to come together sexually, their wedding night is one of true joy. Mary is happily awaiting George’s return from the Building and Loan, with dinner ready and the bedroom all decked out. George does a double take when he sees the bed through the open door. Furthermore, because they have waited until marriage to have sex, it doesn’t matter to them that they didn’t get to go on their big honeymoon; it’s not about seeing exotic places—it’s about finally being able to come together as husband and wife. It doesn’t matter that they are in a drafty, leaky old house—they’re focused on joyfully consummating their marriage.

• The decisions that George and Mary made were not a mindless following of cultural expectations. George and Mary’s path was a conscious choice to separate themselves from the “socially acceptable” path taken by Violet and her many male admirers. The conflicts and difficulties that they faced are as relevant today as they were when the movie was made, and thus, so are the choices that they made.

• It’s because George had a healthy, abstinent relationship with Mary before marriage that he will be able to love her as a whole person throughout their married life. It is because of his ability to see others, and especially Mary, as whole persons that their suffering makes such a deep impact on him.
Objective #3: Understand that everyone’s life is worth living.

- It is important for the students to realize that everyone’s life is worth living, regardless of the circumstances that they have been put in, or even the choices they have made. Everyone has an opportunity to impact those around them for good, and to lead a happy life due to their choices.
CLOSE UP: Bedford Falls vs Pottersville

Family, Community and the Common Good in a Free Society

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 -10

Community is a vital part of human life which we need because we are social beings. *It’s a Wonderful Life* shows what makes a community strong, real, and vibrant.

This insight is valuable today because so many have not had the benefit of growing up in a close-knit community. The people who live in Bedford Falls are a part of something greater than themselves, and any community that is going to survive must have enough people living there that know this is the case.

“When I saw Jimmy Stewart on the screen in that performance, he made me laugh, he made me cry and he made me wish for a country that perhaps we have not seen for a while.” -Dustin Hoffman

Strong communities do not just happen. Capra’s vision is that for the good in a community to be realized, sacrifices have to be made, personal time must be invested, and effort put into forming friendships.

When the hard times come, we have to be able to rely on people we can trust and they must be able to rely on us. This assumes that we must know one another well enough for trust to be possible.

Frank Capra and Jimmy Stewart have combined their talents to teach the meaning of a life well lived.

The Constant Heart: *It’s a Wonderful Life* and *Roman Holiday*
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Originally Copyrighted as *Love & Life at the Movies: Growing in Love with the Film Classics*
CLOSE UP: Bedford Falls vs Pottersville (Continued)

Family, Community and the Common Good in a Free Society

Capra’s concept of the vital role of friendship and commitment to the common good of a community is depicted in the sequences surrounding the marriage of George and Mary. On the way out of town to their honeymoon, George and Mary witness a run on the bank.

George has the difficult task of persuading his fellow citizens to act for the common good of the town. He explains to them that the investment in their homes is really an investment in everyone else’s home as well.

Encouraging the solidarity they must maintain, George and Mary give their honeymoon money for the cause. He says, “Now, we can get through this thing all right. We've got to stick together, though. We've got to have faith in each other.”

We only see glimpses of life in Pottersville, but what we do see is that people are not happy. People are just looking out for themselves.

George’s friend, Ernie is an unfriendly, unhappy and divorced man; Nick is no longer a kind bartender but a bully; Violet is being arrested as a town bad girl; Christmas Eve on Main Street in Pottersville is a glaring confusion of neon lights and noise.

Clarence brings the lesson home: "Strange, isn't it? Each man's life touches so many other lives, and when he isn't around he leaves an awful hole, doesn't he?"
It’s a Wonderful Life
Appendices

(Suggested Practice for Appendices A and B: Copy and distribute to students.)

Appendix A - Handouts: Movie Quotes, Character Traits, Key Terms, Key Terms Fill-Ins.

Appendix B – Supplementary Materials – The Four C’s of Love and Marriage for a Lifetime, The Vital Elements of Classic Film and the Motion Picture Production Code, What Makes A Film A Classic, Famous Quote to Consider, Essay Questions

Appendix C – Answer Keys
It’s A Wonderful Life
Movie Quotes

Listen for the following quotes as you watch the film, and take notes on what is happening in the movie at the time.

SEGMENT 1

“You can’t begin to spend all the money you’ve got.” – Peter Bailey
“I suppose I should give it to miserable failures like you.” – Henry Potter

“I wanna do something big and something important.” – George Bailey
“I feel that in a small way we are doing great things.” – Peter Bailey

SEGMENT 2

“People were human beings to him, but to you, a warped, frustrated old man, they’re cattle. Well, in my book, he died a much richer man than you’ll ever be.” – George Bailey

“Nice girl, Mary. Kind that will help you find the answers.” – Ma Bailey
It’s A Wonderful Life
Movie Quotes (Continued)

SEGMENT 3

“I know what I’m going to do tomorrow and the next day and next year and the year after that: I’m shaking the dust of this crummy little town off my feet and I’m going to see the world! And then I’m going to build things. I’m going to build air fields. I’m going to build skyscrapers a hundred stories high, I’m going to build a bridge a mile long . . .” – George Bailey

“Where’s that money you silly, stupid, old fool? Do you realize what this means? It means bankruptcy and scandal and prison, that’s what it means! One of us is going to jail. Well, it’s not going to be me!” – George Bailey

SEGMENT 4

“You’re worth more dead than alive! Why don’t you go to the riffraff you love so much and ask them to let you have eight thousand dollars?” – Henry Potter

“If it hadn’t been for me everybody would be a lot better off: my wife, my kids and my friends . . . I suppose it would have been better if I’d never been born at all.” – George Bailey

SEGMENT 5

“Strange isn’t it? Each man’s life affects so many other lives and when he isn’t around he leaves an awful hole, doesn’t he?” – Clarence
It’s a Wonderful Life

CHARACTER TRAITS

Please use this page to take notes on the positive and negative character traits of the following film characters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Bailey</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Mary Bailey</td>
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<td>Peter Bailey</td>
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<td>Mr. Potter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncle Billy</td>
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It’s a Wonderful Life

Key Terms

1. EMPATHY  The quality of understanding and sympathizing with the feelings, motives or situations of another to the point that one actually experiences their pain or sufferings with them.

2. GREED  An overwhelming desire for more than one needs or deserves, especially for wealth or power.

3. FAMILY LOYALTY  The trait of respecting one’s family members, and putting their needs and wishes before one’s own desires.

4. MATURITY  The ability to deal with adult responsibilities.

5. CIVIC VIRTUE  Putting the good of the community above one’s own self-interests.

6. COMMON GOOD  The shared good of a community or society as a whole.

7. DESPAIR  To lose all hope of attaining one’s goals; to think that one’s problems are insoluble.

8. PERSPECTIVE  The way in which one views particular events and experiences as they relate to the whole of life.

9. WISDOM  The knowledge gained by experience and developed character.

10. GRATITUDE  The virtue of being thankful for what one has.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Terms Fill-Ins</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mr. Potter’s _______________ leads him to want to own all of the businesses and homes in Bedford Falls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. George displays ___________________ when, out of respect for his father’s memory, he takes over the Bailey Building &amp; Loan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. When Potter suggests to George that he is worth more dead than alive, George loses all faith in his life decisions and falls into _____________.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Following his experience of life in Bedford Falls had he never been born, George has a new-found ___________ for his wife and family and a greater appreciation of life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Clarence tries to help George gain a better ________________ on life by showing him what it would have been like had he never been born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Because of his long life and experience in helping others, Peter Bailey possessed great _____________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Out of his ________________ for Mr. Gower’s confused state, George doesn’t tell anyone about the poisoned pills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. George realizes his duty to serve the ______________ of the community and turns down Mr. Potter’s job offer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. George and Mary both possess an abundance of ________________ and are always looking for ways to help the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. George’s ________________ is evident when he sacrifices his own dreams so that his brother Harry can go to college.</td>
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Empathy  
Greed  
Family  
Loyalty  
Maturity  
Civic Virtue  
Common Good  
Despair  
Perspective  
Wisdom  
Gratitude
The Four C’s of Love and Marriage for a Lifetime: Character, Commitment, Complementarity, Common Vision

Introduction

The story of It’s a Wonderful Life, Frank Capra’s most widely acclaimed film and an America classic, includes the courtship and marriage of George Bailey and Mary Hatch. The couple possesses four traits which are vital to any lasting marriage: Character, Commitment, Common Vision and Complementarity. We will analyze these “Four C’s” in the relationship of George and Mary Bailey, and consider how these traits are exemplified in a marriage that will last for a lifetime.

Objective:

Understanding the importance of the Four C’s in the relationship of George and Mary Bailey and in any lasting marriage.

Understanding the Four C’s:

A couple possesses the “Four C’s” when they share:

- **Character** – the couple exercises the virtues needed to deepen their friendship and love over the course of a lifetime.
- **Commitment** – the couple uses their free will to sustain the relationship during both good and bad times (they persevere when times get tough).
- **Complementarity** – the couple’s unique similarities and differences serve to unify and better one another.
- **Common Vision** – the couple sees life in a similar way; core values are substantially the same.

Applying the Four C’s to George and Mary Bailey’s Marriage:

- **Character** – What are examples of the virtues George and Mary possess that will help them in their marriage?

  George exemplifies self-sacrifice when he turns down his ambitions to travel in order to get married, when he turns down Potter’s job offer for the sake of the community, as well as when he jumps into the water to save Clarence.

  Mary exemplifies the virtue of gratitude when she doesn’t mope over their lost honeymoon, but rather takes what she can (the old Granville house) and makes the best of it.
The Four C’s of Love and Marriage for a Lifetime (Continued)

- Commitment – At what times during the film do George and Mary prove their commitment to one another?

George proves his commitment to Mary when he decides to spend the rest of his life with her, giving up his dreams of traveling the world. Though it was hard for him to make this decision, he sacrifices his ambitions for the sake of being with her.

Mary proves her commitment to George when times get rough with the Bailey Building & Loan. She refuses to give up on George when he comes home angry, and instead seeks a way of remedying the problem.

- Complementarity – Do George and Mary’s similarities and differences seem to better one another?

When George is upset, Mary remains calm and devises a plan to help save the Building & Loan. Her difference in attitude toward the situation allows her to compensate for George’s weakness.

In addition, their similar self-sacrificial natures seem to play off one another. When Mary wants to sacrifice the honeymoon money, it makes George want to make that sacrifice as well.

- Common Vision – When is it evident that George and Mary have the same core values?

One good example is when Mary offers their honeymoon money to the people of the town. George immediately sees what she is doing and wants to sacrifice the money as well. Both George and Mary value the good of the town over their personal desires.

Conclusion

George and Mary’s marriage, though hard at times, will be life-long. The reason for this is that they possess character, are committed to one another, have a common vision, and complement one another. These traits are necessary for any relationship to sustain itself well. Though these traits sometimes require hard work and practice, they are worth all the effort. We find George and Mary very happy at the end of the movie because of their dedication to attaining these “Four C’s” in their marriage.
The Vital Elements of Classic Film and the Motion Picture Production Code

Classic films as an indisputable “cultural commodity of great price.”

Thomas Doherty, in his scholarly treatment of Pre-Code Hollywood (Columbia University Press, 1999), gives a critical assessment of the influence of the Motion Picture Production Code Administration (MPPCA) over the making of studio films in the period known as the “Golden Age” of Hollywood. In 1934, the studio heads unanimously agreed to make the Code they had adopted in 1930 operational. They created the MCCPA and gave it the power to issue a Code Seal on every film they made. The question of whether this power was ultimately negative or positive is a matter of extensive debate among film critics and historians, but on the subject of the greatness of the films produced under the Code there is little argument.

Discussing the great body of cinematic art produced in this era, Doherty describes it as a cultural commodity of great price, and makes his case regarding the influence of the Code on the cinematic quality of classic films:

The Code gave Hollywood the framework to thrive economically and ripen artistically and Hollywood in turn gave the Code provenance over a cultural commodity of great price . . . what makes Hollywood’s classic age ‘classical’ is not just the film style or the studio system but the moral stakes.

Thomas Doherty also authored the biography of Joseph Breen, Hollywood’s Censor (Columbia University Press, 2007). Joseph Breen was the head of the Motion Picture Production Code Administration from 1934 to 1954. In both of his accounts of Hollywood history, Doherty describes the era of the “Golden Age” and the period of Motion Picture Production Code Administration influence as closely aligned with this statement:

Hollywood’s vaunted “golden age” began with the Code and ended with its demise. An artistic flowering of incalculable cultural impact, Hollywood under the Code bequeathed the great generative legacy for screens large and small.
Background on Classic Films and the Motion Picture Production Code

The Motion Picture Production Code (also known as the Hays Code) was adopted on March 31, 1930 and began to be enforced by the Production Code Administration on July 1, 1934, after which time all films were required to obtain a certificate of approval known as the “Code Seal” before being released. While the Code was not enforced by federal, state or city governments, all of the major Hollywood studio producers and executives agreed to abide by the Code. The Code contained a set of general moral principles to guide film-makers in making decisions related to their craft. These film-makers committed themselves to self-censorship as outlined in the Code.

The Motion Picture Production Code was replaced in 1967 by the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) ratings system, which helps viewers determine a movie’s content before watching the film but does not place limits on film-makers as to what may be shown on the screen.

What the Code Said: General Principles

1. No picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence, the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.

2. Correct standards of life . . . shall be presented.

3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

What the Code Said: Sexuality

The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

1. Adultery, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively.

2. Scenes of Passion
   a. They should not be introduced when not essential to the plot.
   b. Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown.

What Makes a Film a Classic?

When we use the term classic films, we are not merely talking about old films, or just films made under the Code. This distinction is important, because not all old movies are classics. A movie may be considered a classic when it fulfills certain criteria as follows:

- Depicts universal truths in a way that is edifying to the viewer
- Shows positive growth in virtue on the part of the major characters
- Transcends racial, ethnic and religious boundaries and divisions.
- Production values are generally recognized as being of a high caliber and the characters portrayed are realistic and believable.
Relating the Motion Picture Production Code Principles to *It’s A Wonderful Life*

Classic films as a general rule portrayed love and romance through dialogue, facial expressions, gestures, and acts of kindness and not by graphic intimate sexual contact.

In *It’s a Wonderful Life*, while George finds Violet Bick physically attractive, it is in Mary Hatch that he finds his ideal spouse. George is physically attracted to Mary as well, but it is her inner beauty that captures his heart.

Director Frank Capra’s love relationships progress step-by-step: George teases Mary when she is in the hydrangea bushes, George and Mary talk together on the phone, and George comes to the old house on their wedding night – friendship blossoms into romance, romance blossoms into love.

George and Mary have had time to get to know each other and cherish each other as whole persons, which provides them with the solid foundation that will get them through the crisis in George’s life that has the potential of destroying both George and his marriage.

It is no surprise that at the thought of losing Mary – when Clarence shows George that she doesn’t recognize him because George has never been born – that George comes to the realization that he has “a wonderful life.”
It’s a Wonderful Life
What Makes a Film a Classic?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Some old films can be considered “classic” and some contemporary films will likely endure as classics. Based on the criteria mentioned as to what constitutes a classic film, which recent films would you call classics? Why?

A classic film…

- depicts universal truths in a way that is edifying to the viewer;
- shows positive growth in virtue on the part of the major characters;
- transcends racial, ethnic and religious boundaries and divisions;
- has production values that are generally recognized as being of a high caliber;
- has characters that are realistic and believable.
It’s a Wonderful Life
Essay Questions

When writing an essay . . .

1) Write your essay in a logical order. Begin with answering the question very briefly in the introduction, give arguments for your answer in the following paragraphs, and conclude with a summary.

2) Use proper grammar and punctuation.

3) Check your spelling.

4) Answer the question clearly and concisely. Make sure everything you say relates to the question.

5) Finally, be creative and have fun!

Question #1
At the end of the movie, George has come to appreciate the value of what he has been given in life. Of all the things that he “loses” because of his wish, what is clearly of foremost importance to him? Why?

Question #2
George’s marriage and family are not merely gifts handed to him by chance, but the fruits of the good decisions he has made. How are George and Mary a model of a healthy, self-giving relationship both before and after marriage? What relevance do their values still have today?

Question #3
George is frustrated throughout much of his adult life because he is never able to leave Bedford Falls. Describe two events in the film in which George gives up what he really wants for the sake of someone else. What does seeing what life would be like in Bedford Falls had he never been born do for George?
A FAMOUS QUOTE TO CONSIDER

“Life can only be understood backwards but it must be lived forwards.”
– Soren Kierkegaard

Discuss this quote of Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Danish philosopher and theologian, as it relates to the story portrayed in It’s a Wonderful Life. How does this quote reflect the idea that while we cannot see into the future, the choices we make in the present will affect the way things turn out in the future? How does George’s discovery that he has a wonderful life help the viewer gain perspective on what is important in life?

Possible discussion points include:

All through his life, George has put the welfare of his family and friends ahead of his own personal interests and desires. At the same time, George has a hard time not resenting the lack of opportunity to do what he has always wanted to do: to go to college, to travel, to have an exciting career, to live his dream. He easily slips into focusing on lost opportunities instead of all the blessings he has received. When his Uncle Billy misplaces the $8,000, the pent-up disillusionment with his situation erupts into bitterness and anger.

Clarence makes it possible for George to “understand his life backwards” and in so doing, enables George to begin to see his life with “new eyes.” He discovers that he truly does have a “wonderful life” and begins to appreciate his family, his home and his friends in a way he had never done before. The viewer is in turn challenged to see his/her own life “backwards” as well and look for all the good that has made life wonderful and worth living.
Listen for the following quotes as you watch the film, and take notes on what is happening in the movie at the time.

**SEGMENT 1**

“*You can’t begin to spend all the money you’ve got.*” – Peter Bailey

“I suppose I should give it to miserable failures like you.” – Henry Potter

George comes to see his father at the bank. His father and Henry Potter are having a meeting and arguing about the way Potter uses money.

“I wanna do something big and something important.” – George Bailey

“I feel that in a small way we are doing great things.” – Peter Bailey

George is sitting with his father at dinner. His father asks him if he might want to work for the Building and Loan after he returns from college.

**SEGMENT 2**

“*People were human beings to him, but to you, a warped, frustrated old man, they’re cattle. Well, in my book, he died a much richer man than you’ll ever be.*” – George Bailey

In a meeting to appoint a new chairman for the Bailey Building and Loan, Mr. Potter makes derogatory statements about George Bailey, and wants to dissolve the Building and Loan entirely. George Bailey defends his father, and makes this statement to Potter. The board wants to appoint someone new as chairman, rather than dissolve the business.

“*Nice girl, Mary. Kind that will help you find the answers.*” – Ma Bailey

During a party, George’s mother comes outside and encourages George to date Mary.
“I know what I’m going to do tomorrow and the next day and next year and the year after that: I’m shaking the dust of this crummy little town off my feet and I’m going to see the world! And then I’m going to build things. I’m going to build air fields. I’m going to build skyscrapers a hundred stories high, I’m going to build a bridge a mile long . . .” – George Bailey

George had thrown a rock at the old Granville house after he and Mary had come back from the dance, singing, in Segment One. Mary is now asking him what he wished for when he threw the rock. This quote is a flashback to what he was thinking at the time. He also now remembers how he had promised to “lasso the moon” for Mary. In turning down Potter’s offer, George has sacrificed the chance to both fulfill his ambitions and provide more material goods for his family, thereby putting the good of the community above that of his own family. He is wondering whether he has made the right choice.

“Where’s that money you silly, stupid, old fool? Do you realize what this means? It means bankruptcy and scandal and prison, that’s what it means! One of us is going to jail. Well, it’s not going to be me!” – George Bailey

In this quote, George is yelling at Uncle Billy for having lost the $8,000 he was supposed to deposit at the bank.

“You’re worth more dead than alive! Why don’t you go to the riffraff you love so much and ask them to let you have eight thousand dollars?” – Henry Potter

George Bailey goes to Henry Potter to ask for a loan of $8,000, which Potter refuses.

“If it hadn’t been for me everybody would be a lot better off: my wife, my kids and my friends . . . I suppose it would have been better if I’d never been born at all.” – George Bailey

Clarence has just saved George from committing suicide. Clarence tells George that he is an angel and is trying to figure out a way to help him. This statement by George gives Clarence an opportunity to show him what it would be like if George had never been born.

“The strange isn’t it? Each man’s life affects so many other lives and when he isn’t around he leaves an awful hole, doesn’t he?” – Clarence

George has just gone to see his mother, who turns him away, thinking him a crazy stranger. As George begins to realize that no one recognizes him because he has never been born, Clarence reminds George that every single life is unique and unrepeatable.
It’s a Wonderful Life
Key Terms Fill-Ins Answer Key

1. Mr. Potter’s **GREED** leads him to want to own all of the businesses and homes in Bedford Falls.

2. George displays **FAMILY LOYALTY** when, out of respect for his father’s memory, he takes over the Bailey Building & Loan.

3. When Potter suggests to George that he is worth more dead than alive, George loses all faith in his life decisions and falls into **DESPAIR**.

4. Following his experience of life in Bedford Falls had he never been born, George has a new-found **GRATITUDE** for his wife and family and a greater appreciation of life.

5. Clarence tries to help George gain a better **PERSPECTIVE** on life by showing him what it would have been like had he never been born.

6. Because of his long life and experience in helping others, Peter Bailey possessed great **WISDOM**.

7. Out of his **EMPATHY** for Mr. Gower’s confused state, George doesn’t tell anyone about the poisoned pills.

8. George realizes his duty to serve the **COMMON GOOD** of the community and turns down Mr. Potter’s job offer.

9. George and Mary both possess an abundance of **CIVIC VIRTUE** and are always looking for ways to help the community.

10. George’s **MATURITY** is evident when he sacrifices his own dreams so that his brother Harry can go to college.

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It’s a Wonderful Life
Essay Questions Answer Key

Write a well-developed essay on one of the following questions. Check to make sure you have a clear thesis statement which is supported in your body paragraphs, clear organization, and well-focused main points. Pay close attention to sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, word-choice and spelling.

Question #1
At the end of the movie, George has come to appreciate the value of what he has been given in life. Of all the things that he “loses” because of his wish, what is clearly of foremost importance to him? Why?

The following points, which were included in the lesson plan for possible class discussion, may be mentioned in the students’ essays but they are by no means exhaustive.

- His family, and most fundamentally of all, his wife. It is seeing Mary as an old maid that finally makes George realize that he wants everything back, no matter how difficult it might be. Even if he goes to prison, that loving family still exists.

Question #2
George’s marriage and family are not merely gifts handed to him by chance, but the fruits of the good decisions he has made. How are George and Mary a model of a healthy, self-giving relationship both before and after marriage? What relevance do their values still have today?

- Mary is focused on George alone and loves him for who he is. She is not interested in Sam Wainwright, who is more successful financially than George. Because Mary respects George as a person, she is able to command that kind of respect in return. Her modesty is such that, even when she has to wrap up in a robe, or takes refuge in the hydrangea bushes, it is clear that she is not trying to draw attention to her body. She helps George to look at her as a whole person, not as a sexual person.

- As George and Mary are getting to know each other before marriage, both focus on the other as whole persons and recognize the importance of self-sacrifice in establishing a healthy, lasting relationship. Although George teases Mary about not giving her back the robe, at no time does he try and “peek” at her and by the end of the scene it is very clear that he was fully intending to return the robe to her.
Question #2 (Continued)

- Even though George is very much in love with Mary and is certainly physically attracted to her (he is stunned by her beauty at the dance), he focuses on getting to know what her expectations are for a family and what it is that she wants in life (“What did you wish for, Mary?”) and does not have sex with her before marriage. He wants her, not just her body. Because of this, Mary feels loved and cherished and George feels respected; both are focused on the other’s happiness and creating a stable home, rather than on their own personal gratification.

- George and Mary put things in the right order for a successful marriage: stable, committed relationship, home, etc., before sex. Because they wait until marriage to be sexually active, George and Mary are able to enjoy their honeymoon to the fullest. Mary is happily awaiting George’s return from the Building & Loan, dinner ready and the bedroom all decked out and George does a double take when he sees the bed through the open door. Because they have waited, their honeymoon is so much more special than if they had been having sex all along. Furthermore, because they have waited until marriage to have sex, it doesn’t matter to them that they didn’t get to go on their big honeymoon; it’s not about the exotic places—it’s about finally being able to come together as husband and wife. It doesn’t matter that they are in a drafty, leaky old house—they’re focused on joyfully consummating their marriage.

- The decisions that George and Mary made were not a mindless following of cultural expectations. George and Mary’s path was a conscious choice to separate themselves from the socially acceptable path taken by Violet and her many male admirers. The conflicts and difficulties that they faced are as relevant today as they were when the movie was made, and thus, so are the choices that they made.

- It’s because George had a healthy, abstinent relationship with Mary before marriage that he is able to love her as a whole person after marriage. It is because of his ability to see others, and especially Mary, as whole persons that their suffering makes such a deep impact on him.

Question #3

George is frustrated throughout much of his adult life because he is never able to leave Bedford Falls. Describe two events in the film in which George gives up what he really wants for the sake of someone else. What does seeing what life would be like in Bedford Falls had he never been born do for George?

After his father dies, George must choose between his long-awaited trip to Europe and staying in Bedford Falls to help straighten out affairs of the Bailey Building & Loan.

- George decides to sacrifice his trip for the good of the family and in order to carry on the high ideals of his father.
- George feels obligated to stand up for the less fortunate in his dealings with Mr. Potter.
Question #3 (Continued)

The Board of Directors of the Building & Loan votes to keep the business going only if George takes his father’s place. George must decide between going to college and keeping the Building & Loan in business.

- George decides to accept the position as head of his father’s business so that people in town will have a place to go without “crawling to Potter.”
- He gives his college money to his brother Harry.

Upon Harry’s return from college, George learns that Harry has an opportunity to go into his father-in-law’s business. George must either insist on Harry taking his place at the Building & Loan as previously agreed, or give up his own dreams of leaving Bedford Falls.

- George gives up his plans of adventure and decides to let Harry pursue a career opportunity that will help him and Ruth. He realizes that it is important to Harry’s future that he let him go.

George realizes that he is in love with Mary, but marrying her would tie him down to Bedford Falls and prevent him from traveling around the world.

- George realizes that Mary truly loves him and will be happy with him. He knows that he loves her as well and is willing to make the sacrifice for their greater happiness. He knows that Mary is worth giving up his plans for.

In the Great Depression, there is a run on the bank and the Building & Loan almost goes out of business.

- George and Mary give up their honeymoon money to save the community during a crisis.

George’s Awakening:

- George sees that had he never been born, the lives of those around him would have been much worse. The difficult decisions he made in life, which caused some grief for him, helped so many others live better lives. George realizes that his decisions were right and his life is worthwhile. He learns that no man is poor who has friends.

THIS CONCLUDES IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE
Love & Life at the Movies:
Growing in Love with the Film Classics

ROMAN HOLIDAY
LESSON PLAN

Love and Responsibility
Roman Holiday

The story for Roman Holiday was completely original and written just for the film. Several films had been produced in the 1940s and 1950s dealing with the subject of a member of royalty falling in love with a commoner. What set Roman Holiday apart, however, was its theme of responsibility, which adds depth to the story without taking away from its romantic quality. Roman Holiday portrays a woman who gives up the man she loves out of duty to her country, and although this situation may be somewhat rare today, we can still glean from it lessons of love and sacrifice.

Story Line

Roman Holiday is the bittersweet yet delightful tale of two lovers who teach us that duty and honor are to be valued above our own personal desires. The story centers around young Princess Ann (Audrey Hepburn), who is unhappy with the stressful and overly structured life of a princess. While on a state visit to Rome, she runs away and is discovered on the streets by an enterprising newspaperman, Joe Bradley (Gregory Peck). Bradley discovers the princess’s true identity and pretends not to recognize her. The two spend a happy, fun-filled day in Rome as the princess gets a taste for life outside the palace walls. Bradley meanwhile plans his sensational story on the princess, until they begin to fall in love. As the princess realizes she must make the difficult choice between her duty and a possible romantic relationship with Bradley, Bradley wrestles between publishing the story and suppressing it out of love for Ann. The theme of the simultaneous joys and difficulties of young love runs throughout the film and contributes to the overall theme of balancing romance with responsibility.

Film History

Roman Holiday was nominated for seven Academy Awards (Oscars), one Directors Guild of America award, and a Golden Globe award in 1953. It won Oscars for Best Actress in a Leading Role (Audrey Hepburn), Best Costume Design – Black and White (Edith Head), and Best Writing – Motion Picture Story (Dalton Trumbo), as well as the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture Actress (Audrey Hepburn).

It was the screen debut for Hepburn, a Belgian-born dancer and model who was cast for the role of Ann in Roman Holiday at the age of twenty-four. Gregory Peck, her co-star, said of her, “It was my good luck to be her first screen fellow, to hold out my hand and help her keep her balance while she made everybody in the world fall in love with her.”
The Setting for the Story

*Roman Holiday* takes place in the city of Rome during the Post-World War II period. Many of the places that Princess Ann and Joe visit during the film, such as the Spanish Steps, the Mouth of Truth and the Coliseum, remain tourist attractions today. The Wall of Wishes still stands, but the plaques visible in the scene from the movie are no longer there.

Film Facts

- Starring: Audrey Hepburn & Gregory Peck
- Directed by William Wyler
- 1953 Black & White; Total Viewing Time: 118 minutes
- The entire movie was filmed on location in Rome.
- At the Mouth of Truth, there was nothing written into the script about Joe pretending to get his hand attacked. Gregory Peck did this of his own accord. Audrey’s reaction to his improvisation was so good that they kept the clip in the final cut.

Director’s Chair

The Director of *Roman Holiday*, William Wyler, is also the director of *The Best Years of Our Lives, Friendly Persuasion*, and *Ben Hur*. Wyler directed more Academy Award-winning performances than any other director. Audrey Hepburn credited him with teaching her the basic techniques of acting that helped her throughout her career.
Roman Holiday: Authentic Love in Black and White

In romantic comedies we usually see the couple’s chemistry and the idea of love but seldom do we see a romantic comedy that shows mutual self-giving, sacrificial choices made for what the protagonists consider a higher good, and the level of trust which exists between a man and a woman only when they know they love each other.

A 16-year-old boy from Houston who viewed the film in an EGI presentation wrote:
“This program has changed the way I feel about girls. I now have respect for them. I learned also what it means to be a real man from watching Joe Bradley and how I should act in any situation.”
Instructional Objective for Roman Holiday

The objective of this lesson plan is that the students will understand that true love requires sacrifice.

Themes for Roman Holiday Film Segments

➤ A life of wealth and fame is not enough to bring lasting happiness.

➤ True friendship requires mutual trust.

➤ Honesty is an essential element of true friendship.

➤ True love requires doing one’s duty and acting responsibly, which usually involves making sacrifices.
PART ONE:
THE PRINCESS ESCAPES

Film time: 29 minutes

1. The theme for the first segment:
   A life of wealth and fame is not enough to bring lasting happiness

Tell the students that this theme will be apparent in the film segment and should be kept in mind while watching the film.

2. Present the key terms
   Gracious: showing courtesy, charm and kindness to others, regardless of their rank or social standing
   Vulnerable: unprotected and without defenses to abuse or attack
   Overwhelmed: made helpless by the burden of one’s status, office or duties

3. Start the film.
   Segment One ends at the end of the palace scene when the ambassador says, “we must notify their majesties. . .”

Plot Synopsis of Segment 1

Princess Ann visits Rome. While in Rome, Princess Ann has a full schedule. She must meet with dignitaries and attend various events. At the end of her first day there she is emotionally exhausted from her duties.

Ann develops hysteria. As a result of her grueling schedule, Ann finds herself overwhelmed with the duties of state and becomes hysterical. The countess who attends her is oblivious to the reasons for Ann’s breakdown and calls the doctor, who gives her a sedative.

Ann escapes. Before the effects of the drug take effect, the princess — looking at the world outside the embassy palace — longs to take part in the life of everyday people. She sneaks out of the palace and jumps into the back of a truck which takes her into the heart of Rome. Meanwhile, several men are sitting in a small room playing poker that night. Joe Bradley, an American reporter, is the first to leave because he is low on cash.
Joe finds Ann on a street bench. After leaving the poker game, Joe passes the princess who is asleep on a street bench, her slumber induced by the sedative. After a few moments of garbled conversation with Ann he sees that she is a well-educated, well-dressed young woman who shouldn’t be sleeping on the street at night.

Joe takes Ann home out of pity. Joe calls a cab and starts to leave, but out of compassion stops and brings Ann along with him, hoping she will tell him where she lives so he can take her home. Ann is unable in her drugged state to give any address and after trying to push her off on the cab driver, Joe takes her to his apartment as a last resort. At the apartment Ann comically prepares for bed. Joe does not take advantage of her languid state and leaves while she gets dressed, but does rather selfishly make her sleep on the uncomfortable couch. Meanwhile, at the palace the princess’s absence has been discovered and the ambassador decides to keep it top secret information.

DISCUSSING SEGMENT ONE

During the segment, the students should be thinking about the significance of the Movie Quotes and taking notes on their handouts. Have them share their thoughts. Refer to the talking points just below the discussion questions to help guide and direct discussion.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Princess Ann is obviously a wealthy celebrity. Name some of the things she has.

- Money
- Status
- Connections
- Good Looks
- Nice clothes
- The admiration of many
- People serving her
- Power

Why is Ann unhappy even though she has all of these things?

- Even though Ann has great material wealth, she feels stifled because she has little freedom as an individual. Every minute is devoted to the duties of royalty, and she has not yet come to see the value of fulfilling these duties. Her lady-in-waiting only cares about Ann being healthy enough to meet her royal obligations and ignores the fact that Ann has emotional and social needs as well.

- One of Ann’s social needs is the companionship of people her own age and the freedom to go out and have a good time. She obviously feels confined by her demanding schedule on her state visit to Rome and wants to be able to enjoy the city as any young girl might want to do.
“Is this the elevator?” – Ann

“It's my room.” – Joe Bradley

What is significant in the scene in which Joe takes Ann to his apartment for the night?

- Ann displays her drugged state by asking Joe if his room is the elevator. She is clearly in a position for Joe to take advantage of her but he is respectful of her dignity as a person.

- Joe thinks that Ann is drunk, when in fact she has been sedated. Rather than seeing her vulnerability as an opportunity to use her, he sees it as an opportunity to help a young woman in need. This is a lesson to men who may one day be in a situation where a woman has had too much to drink and a temptation arises to take advantage of her; Joe Bradley provides an example of the proper way to act in such a situation.

PART TWO:
JOE BRADLEY FINDS A STORY

Film time: 32 minutes

1. Have the students take out their Movie Quotes, Character Traits and Key Terms handouts.

2. Present the theme for the second segment:

   True friendship requires mutual trust

   Remind the students that this theme will be apparent in the film segment and should be kept in mind while watching the film.

3. Present the key terms.

   Modesty: the quality of dressing and behaving so that character and inner beauty shine.

   Opportunist: a person who takes advantage of an opportunity to achieve his or her own personal goals without care or consideration for how this might hurt others.
4. Ask the students to explain where the story line left off. Joe has just left the apartment to let Ann get ready for bed in privacy. A stir has been created at the palace because of her absence.

5. Start the film.

Segment Two ends as Ann leaves the barber shop.

Plot Synopsis of Segment 2

Joe returns to the apartment. He finds Ann asleep on the bed and moves her to the couch. The next morning Joe wakes up to find he has slept in and is too late to attend the press conference with Princess Ann. He rushes off to the office where he acts as if he has already attended the press meeting. His boss plays along for a while and then tells him the princess’s engagements were canceled because of an “illness.” He shows Joe a news article on the princess.

Joe decides to make a deal. When he sees the picture of the princess, Joe realizes the true identity of his house guest. He calls his landlord to make sure that the princess doesn’t leave his room and then goes back to his boss’s office. He makes a deal with the boss to produce an exclusive interview with pictures of the princess in exchange for $5,000.

Ann’s true identity is confirmed. He arrives back at the apartment to find that Ann is still asleep on the couch. When Ann responds to “your highness,” Joe is certain that she is the princess. Ann awakens confused, and Joe tells her what happened the night before while introducing himself. Ann is startled at first, but when she realizes that Joe did not take advantage of her drugged state to sleep with her, she is relieved.

Joe calls his friend. Downstairs, he telephones a photographer friend of his and convinces him to help him with the headline story. Meanwhile, the Italian maid comes to clean Joe’s apartment and finds Ann in the bathroom. She assumes that Ann and Joe are having an affair and scolds Ann in Italian.

Joe returns to the apartment and he and Ann part on good terms. As Ann walks through the streets of Rome, Joe follows her. She eventually walks into a barber shop and decides to cut her long hair. The barber gives Ann a stylish haircut and befriends her. As she leaves the shop he asks her to go dancing with him. Ann politely refuses but tells him she wishes she could.
DISCUSSING SEGMENT TWO

Character Concept

Ann is alarmed, as any girl would be, to find herself in a strange man’s apartment after having spent the night there. Ann realizes, however, that she can trust Joe since he took her off the street and gave her a place to stay without taking advantage of a situation where he might have compromised her honor. Because Joe exercised self-control with her, Ann knows that she can trust him not to hurt her. She introduces herself as “Anya” and Joe graciously offers to draw her bath water, then leaves the apartment while Ann gets dressed.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

How is Joe Bradley a complex character? What virtues and flaws do we see in him?

- Joe is complex because he has basically good character and intentions but has fallen into selfish habits. We see his good character when he takes Ann to his apartment and takes care of her. On the other hand, he dumps her on the couch so that he can sleep in the comfortable bed.

- Joe’s selfishness can be seen when he decides to take advantage of discovering the princess and use her to write a story which will make him thousands of dollars. Although he is kind and gentle towards Ann and treats her with respect (opens doors for her, leaves when she gets dressed, doesn’t take advantage of her), he still has some habits of selfishness which make him a basically good but flawed character.

“Have I been here all night . . . alone?” – Ann

“If you don’t count me, yes.” – Joe

“So I've spent the night here – with you.” – Ann

“Oh, well, now, I – I don’t know if I'd use those words exactly, but from a certain angle, yes.” – Joe

Why does Ann feel she can trust Joe Bradley?

- Ann realizes that she can trust Joe because he has taken care of her as a gentleman would. She was alone and vulnerable on the streets at night. She knows she was drugged and probably acted strangely, yet this man did not take advantage of her. This exercise of self-control makes Ann feel as though she can trust him as a friend.
1. Have the students take out their Movie Quotes, Character Traits and Key Terms handouts.

2. Present the theme for the third segment:

   *Honesty is an essential element of true friendship.*

Remind the students that this theme will be apparent in the film segment and should be kept in mind while watching the film.

3. Present the key terms.

   *Collaborator:* one who cooperates with another in a joint effort (often in a shady deal or treachery)

   *Deceitful:* intending to trick or mislead someone

4. Ask the students to explain where the story line left off. *Princess Ann has taken leave of Joe, who has been following her, and has just finished getting her hair cut short at the barber’s.*

5. Start the film.

   *Segment Three ends* after Joe and Ann kiss and walk off together towards the car.

**Plot Synopsis of Segment 3**

Joe purposefully meets up with Ann and offers to show her around Rome. After having her hair cut, Ann buys a *gelati* and eats it on the Spanish Steps. Joe pretends to meet her accidentally. She tells him that she has run away from school and has to return but would love to spend just one day doing as she pleases. Joe offers to show her around Rome.
First wish, a Sidewalk Café. First Joe takes Ann to a sidewalk café which he has chosen because he knows that Irving, his photographer friend, is going to show up there. When Irving arrives, Joe does all he can to prevent Irving from divulging their true line of work. (Joe has told Ann he is a fertilizer salesman.) Finally Joe is able to take Irving aside and tell him who Ann really is. The two cut a deal that if Irving will take photographs of their day in Rome, he will get a percentage of the profits for the story.

Fun in Rome. Meanwhile, a team of special agents is flown in by the embassy to search for the missing princess. Joe, Ann, and Irving spend a fun-filled day in Rome. At one point, Ann accidentally loses control of a motor scooter and crashes through the marketplace. At the police station, Joe fabricates a story to get them out of trouble. The entire day, Irving secretly takes pictures with his “cigarette lighter” camera.

The Mouth of Truth. After they leave the police station, Ann puts her hand in the famous Roman “Mouth of Truth,” somewhat timidly. Joe follows suit, also a bit timidly, and then acts as though his hand is being attacked.

Joe and Ann fall in love. In the evening Joe and Ann go to an outdoor dance at the barge. They dance together closely and Ann, beginning to fall in love, thanks Joe for all he has done for her. The Secret Service men are at the dance and watch Ann closely. After she dances with the barber, the Secret Service men attempt to take Ann away. A fight ensues. After a wild brawl, Ann and Joe “escape” by jumping into the river and swimming away. On the shore they pause to catch their breath and, in a romantic moment, realize that they have fallen in love with one another.

DISCUSSING SEGMENT THREE

Character Concept

At the Mouth of Truth, we begin to realize that Joe and Ann are testing each other. Although their friendship is growing, things are a bit unsettled because Joe knows that Ann has lied about being a schoolgirl and Ann is beginning to suspect that Joe is not a fertilizer salesman. Although they are suspicious of one another’s identity, at the Mouth of Truth they are testing the authenticity of their friendship.
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

“You spent the whole day doing things I've always wanted to. Why?” – Ann

“I don't know... seemed the thing to do.” – Joe

“I never heard of anybody so kind.” – Ann

Why does Ann fall in love with Joe?

- Ann begins to fall in love with Joe for several reasons. First of all, he has been kind to her and has shown her all around Rome for what she thinks are completely selfless reasons. She says to Joe at the dance, “You’re so completely unselfish.” She sees Joe as sacrificing his time and money to make sure she enjoys herself.

- Secondly, Ann begins to fall in love with Joe because she has developed a friendship with him. She feels that he understands her, and they enjoy one another’s company. Ann finds Joe a friendly partner with whom to spend her time and begins to realize that she would like to be able to spend time with him long-term.

When does Joe begin to realize that his character is lacking in some respects? Why does he feel bad about this?

- When Ann says to Joe that he is “so completely unselfish,” we can see a bit of sadness in his face. He feels ashamed of his selfish motives for spending time with Ann, a girl whom he is beginning to look at as more than just a story.

- Joe wants to live up to Ann’s ideal of him as the kind of man who puts others’ needs before his own. He realizes that up until now he has not always been that sort of person.

- Joe feels bad about this because he is falling in love with Ann and true love is unselfish and honest.

PART FOUR: A BITTERSWEET PARTING

Film time: 26 minutes

1. Have the students take out their Movie Quotes, Character Traits and Key Terms handouts.
2. **Present the theme for the fourth segment:**

   *True love requires doing one’s duty and acting responsibly, which usually involves making sacrifices.*

   Remind the students that this theme will be apparent in the film segment and should be kept in mind while watching the film.

3. **Present the key terms.**

   *Sacrifice*: giving up someone or something that is dear to us for the sake of someone or something that is of greater value

   *Responsibility*: trustworthiness; faithfulness to one’s duties

4. **Ask the students to explain where the story line left off.** *Ann and Joe have just kissed for the first time by the banks of the river, following the brawl at the barge dance. They are leaving to go back to Joe’s apartment to dry off.*

5. **Start the film. The film concludes with this segment.**
Plot Synopsis of Segment 4

Joe and Ann return to Joe’s apartment to dry their clothes. They have some wistful talk of the possibility of a future together, but both of them know the bitter truth; their time together is coming to a close, probably forever.

Neither of them talks about who they really are, although by this point, they pretty much suspect the truth. On the radio the announcer mentions the anxiety in the princess’ nation over her “poor health.” Ann is touched and realizes she must return.

Joe drives Ann back to the embassy palace. He drops her off and the two lovers have a sad parting. Inside the palace, Ann is confronted by the ambassador and the countess, and tells them she has returned only because she was mindful of her duties to others.

Joe’s boss arrives at the apartment the next morning, expecting a big story. Out of love for Ann and the desire not to involve her in a scandal, Joe tells his boss that there is no story. Irving arrives with the photos from the previous day and Joe pretends they are something else until the boss leaves. Joe tells Irving that he can sell the pictures if he wants to, but there is no story. Irving tries to convince Joe otherwise but is unsuccessful.

Joe and Irving attend the delayed press conference with the princess. They stand in the front row. When Ann sees them among the press she is shocked, but manages to maintain her composure. Ann and Joe talk enigmatically to each other, their ambiguous meaning being quite obvious to the viewer. Her trust in Joe is confirmed, and she decides to come and meet the press.

She shakes hands with all of the members of the press, and when she gets to Irving, he hands her the photos of the previous day. Joe and Ann shake hands and look in one another’s eyes, mindful that they have made the right choice but sad that this may be the last time they meet.

Ann’s facial expression shows that she has known great love but can bear the sorrow that will follow for the sake of that love. The princess leaves and the members of the press file out of the embassy.
DISCUSSING SEGMENT FOUR
QUOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

How does Joe’s decision to let Ann go back to the palace reflect his love for her?

- When we love someone, we do what is best for that person, even if it means making a sacrifice. Joe knows that Ann needs to go back to the palace and therefore sacrifices a relationship with her.

- Joe loves Ann and could have probably persuaded her to stay with him, but because he realizes that she has a duty to fulfill, he lets her go. This is a sign of how greatly he loves her. The sacrificial nature of his love tells us that it is genuine.

“And what, in the opinion of Your Highness, is the outlook for friendship among nations?” – Reporter

“I have every faith in it . . . as I have faith in relations between people.”
– Princess Ann

“May I say, speaking for my own . . . press service: we believe Your Highness’s faith will not be unjustified.” – Joe Bradley

What do these quotes say about the trust Ann has in Joe and also about the love Joe has for Ann?

- When Ann says, “I have every faith in it… as I have faith in relations between people,” she is making a statement for the benefit of the reporters in the room, but it has special meaning for Joe. It is an expression of her trust in Joe to not print the story about her day of adventure in Rome.

- Although Joe has lost Ann, and will now additionally lose the $5,000 by not printing the story, we see that his love for her must be very strong. His desire for what is best for Ann surpasses any self-interest.
Post Viewing Discussion on Authentic Love

Love, Responsibility, and Respect for the Human Person

Before we can experience love, we must be able to act with responsibility and responsibility builds on fundamental respect for the human person.

The Beauty of Authentic Love

With its compelling theme of self-sacrificing romantic love, we get a chance to see two people who witness to us the beauty of authentic love.

We see them as whole persons going through an interior struggle. We can relate to them as we go through our own struggles for self-discovery, integrity, and wholeness.
Communicating authentic love

A reporter asks Ann, “What, in the opinion of Your Highness, is the outlook for friendship among nations? “I have every faith in it . . . as I have faith in relations between people.”
– Princess Ann

“May I say, speaking for my own . . . press service: we believe Your Highness’s faith will not be unjustified.”
– Joe Bradley

“So happy, Mr. Bradley.”
PART FIVE: PROGRAM APPLICATION

TRUE LOVE REQUIRES SACRIFICE

At the end of the movie, we see Joe give up Ann (and forfeit his opportunity to make $5,000 by not printing the story) so that she can do her duty. Discuss how these sacrifices are a reflection of his true love for Ann, and why these sacrifices will allow them both to be happy.

Talking Points

- Joe knows that it is best if Ann goes back to the palace. Since true love seeks what is best for the other, his willingness to let her leave is a reflection of that true love.

- Joe does not act in a possessive or selfish way with Ann. He does not put pressure on her to stay with him because he knows that, in the end, she would not be happy if she failed her people by abdicating her responsibility as a princess.

- When the reporter asks Ann what she loved the most about her tour of Europe in her official capacity as princess, she responds, “By all means, Rome.” This shows the viewer that Rome will be a happy memory for her, even though her romantic interest in Joe Bradley will not continue into a further relationship. Ann and Joe are not together, but they are both happy because they have done the right thing.

- Ann and Joe are both likely to meet other people and eventually get married. The sacrifices they have made by doing the right thing will strengthen them for these future relationships.
CLOSE-UP: Love and Responsibility in *Roman Holiday*

A Unique Balance of Reality and Fantasy

The pairing of the princess and the reporter is sheer fantasy, but the choices the two must make and the way they act on these choices are very real and completely believable to the audience of any era. The love that grows between these two is a study in reason and emotions flowing in the same direction.

At Joe’s apartment Ann and Joe confront the reality that they must part. Joe says, “Life isn’t always what one wants, is it?” Ann says simply, “No, it isn’t.”

The relentless passage of time hangs over their conversation as an announcement about the princess interrupts the romantic music on the radio. They express their love in an embrace that is mysteriously seen by us as symbolic of authentic love.

In the final scene at the press conference, Ann and Joe again give us the language of authentic love. In front of strangers at a press conference she tells him of her love in a special language for them alone. “I will cherish my visit here in memory as long as I live.”
Roman Holiday

Love and Responsibility

Appendices

(Suggested Practice for Appendices A and B: Copy and distribute to students.)

Appendix A - Handouts: Movie Quotes, Character Traits, Key Terms, Key Terms Fill-Ins.

Appendix B – Supplementary Materials – The Four Cardinal Virtues and Roman Holiday, The Vital Elements of Classic Film and the Motion Picture Production Code, What Makes A Film A Classic, Famous Quote to Consider, Essay Questions

Appendix C – Answer Keys
Roman Holiday
Movie Quotes

Listen for the following quotes as you watch the film, and take notes on what is happening in the movie at the time.

SEGMENT 1

“Is this the elevator?” – Princess Ann
“IT's my room.” – Joe Bradley

SEGMENT 2

“Have I been here all night . . . alone?” – Ann
“If you don't count me, yes.” – Joe
“So I've spent the night here - with you.” – Ann
“Oh, well, now, I - I don't know if I'd use those words exactly, but... from a certain angle, yes.” – Joe

SEGMENT 3

“You spent the whole day doing things I've always wanted to. Why?” – Ann
“I don't know. Seemed the thing to do.” – Joe
“I never heard of anybody so kind.” – Ann

SEGMENT 4

“And what, in the opinion of Your Highness, is the outlook for friendship among nations?” – Reporter
“I have every faith in it . . . as I have faith in relations between people.” – Princess Ann
“May I say, speaking for my own . . . press service: we believe Your Highness's faith will not be unjustified.” – Joe Bradley
Roman Holiday
Character Traits

Please use this page to take notes on the positive and negative character traits of the following film characters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Princess Ann</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joe Bradley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Irving Radovich</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Roman Holiday

#### Key Terms

1. **GRACIOUS**
   - Showing courtesy, charm, and kindness to others, regardless of their rank or social standing.

2. **VULNERABLE**
   - Unprotected and without defenses to abuse or attack.

3. **OVERWHELMED**
   - Made helpless by the burden of one’s status, office, or duties.

4. **SELF-CONTROL**
   - The ability to control one’s actions and desires by one’s reason rather than emotions.

5. **MODESTY**
   - The quality of dressing and behaving so that character and inner beauty shine.

6. **OPPORTUNIST**
   - A person who takes advantage of an opportunity to achieve his or her own personal goals without care or consideration for how this might hurt others.

7. **COLLABORATOR**
   - One who cooperates with another in a joint effort (often in a shady deal or treachery).

8. **DECEITFUL**
   - Intending to trick or mislead someone.

9. **SACRIFICE**
   - Giving up someone or something that is dear to us for the sake of someone or something that is of greater value.

10. **RESPONSIBILITY**
    - Trustworthiness; faithfulness to one’s duties.
The Four Cardinal Virtues and *Roman Holiday*

**Introduction**

The Ancient Greek philosophers taught that out of all the virtues, there are four predominant ones – *Courage, Justice, Temperance and Prudence*. These four are like hinges upon which the rest of the virtues hang.

**Objective:**

The objective for this supplementary study unit is that the students will become acquainted with the Four Cardinal Virtues and understand how they can be applied to real life situations.

**Understanding the Four Cardinal Virtues:**

Courage – Persevering in doing what is right even when afraid or under pressure.

Justice – Treating others fairly, as one would like to be treated.

Temperance – Using one’s reason to control one’s emotions and desires; self-control.

Prudence – Using one’s reason and will to choose the best the course of action.

**Applying the Four Cardinal Virtues to Ann and Joe:**

*Ask the students to give examples of each virtue in the film.*

**Courage:**

- When Irving pressures Joe to go ahead and do the story, Joe refuses.

**Justice:**

- Joe and Irving decide not to use the pictures and story, since it would likely diminish respect for Ann.
- When Joe finds Ann sleeping on the bench, he takes her home and protects her.

**Temperance:**

- Joe restrains himself from taking advantage of Ann when he has the opportunity to do so.

**Prudence:**

- Joe leaves the apartment while Ann is changing clothes, so that he will not be tempted to take advantage of her.
- Ann fulfills her duties to her country by returning to the palace even though she would like to stay with Joe.
The Vital Elements of Classic Film and the Motion Picture Production Code

Classic films as an indisputable “cultural commodity of great price.”

Thomas Doherty, in his scholarly treatment of Pre-Code Hollywood (Columbia University Press, 1999), gives a critical assessment of the influence of the Motion Picture Production Code Administration (MPPCA) over the making of studio films in the period known as the “Golden Age” of Hollywood. In 1934, the studio heads unanimously agreed to make the Code they had adopted in 1930 operational. They created the MCCPA and gave it the power to issue a Code Seal on every film they made. The question of whether this power was ultimately negative or positive is a matter of extensive debate among film critics and historians, but on the subject of the greatness of the films produced under the Code there is little argument.

Discussing the great body of cinematic art produced in this era, Doherty describes it as a cultural commodity of great price, and makes his case regarding the influence of the Code on the cinematic quality of classic films:

The Code gave Hollywood the framework to thrive economically and ripen artistically and Hollywood in turn gave the Code provenance over a cultural commodity of great price . . . what makes Hollywood’s classic age ‘classical’ is not just the film style or the studio system but the moral stakes.

Thomas Doherty also authored the biography of Joseph Breen, Hollywood’s Censor (Columbia University Press, 2007). Joseph Breen was the head of the Motion Picture Production Code Administration from 1934 to 1954. In both of his accounts of Hollywood history, Doherty describes the era of the “Golden Age” and the period of Motion Picture Production Code Administration influence as closely aligned with this statement:

Hollywood’s vaunted “golden age” began with the Code and ended with its demise. An artistic flowering of incalculable cultural impact, Hollywood under the Code bequeathed the great generative legacy for screens large and small.
Background on Classic Films and the Motion Picture Production Code

The Motion Picture Production Code (also known as the Hays Code) was adopted on March 31, 1930 and began to be enforced by the Production Code Administration on July 1, 1934, after which time all films were required to obtain a certificate of approval known as the “Code Seal” before being released. While the Code was not enforced by federal, state or city governments, all of the major Hollywood studio producers and executives agreed to abide by the Code. The Code contained a set of general moral principles to guide film-makers in making decisions related to their craft. These film-makers committed themselves to self-censorship as outlined in the Code.

The Motion Picture Production Code was replaced in 1967 by the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) ratings system, which helps viewers determine a movie’s content before watching the film but does not place limits on film-makers as to what may be shown on the screen.

What the Code Said: General Principles

4. No picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence, the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.

5. Correct standards of life . . . shall be presented.

6. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

What the Code Said: Sexuality

The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

3. Adultery, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively.

4. Scenes of Passion
   a. They should not be introduced when not essential to the plot.
   b. Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown.

What Makes a Film a Classic?

When we use the term classic films, we are not merely talking about old films, or just films made under the Code. This distinction is important, because not all old movies are classics. A movie may be considered a classic when it fulfills certain criteria as follows:

- Depicts universal truths in a way that is edifying to the viewer
- Shows positive growth in virtue on the part of the major characters
- Transcends racial, ethnic and religious boundaries and divisions.
- Production values are generally recognized as being of a high caliber and the characters portrayed are realistic and believable
Relating the Motion Picture Production Code Principles to *Roman Holiday*

When we use the term *classic* films, we are not merely talking about *old* films, as some might suppose. This distinction is important, because not all old movies are classics. A movie may be considered a classic when it fulfills certain criteria, namely, that: it depicts universal truths in a way that is edifying to the viewer; shows positive growth in virtue on the part of the major characters; and transcends racial, ethnic and religious boundaries and divisions. In addition, its production values are generally recognized as being of a high caliber and the characters portrayed are realistic and believable.

Classic films present what could be called *whole person romance*. By whole person romance is meant that the romantic element issues from an attraction to the whole person, which includes the physical, emotional, moral, intellectual and social dimensions of that person. Physical attraction is often mistaken for love, but is not sufficient to generate *real romance* in a relationship.

Classic films have an absence of graphic sexual activity, because in a whole person context, the private nature of the sex act is recognized. Love and romance are portrayed through dialogue, facial expressions, gestures, and acts of kindness and not by graphic intimate sexual contact.

*Roman Holiday* depicts love and romance in the context of sacrifice and responsibility. It is evident that Joe and Ann have fallen in love, but they are still able to make mature decisions regarding their feelings for one another. They are able to do this because they both possess a level of virtue that prompts them to sacrifice their desire for a romantic relationship for the sake of Ann’s duty to her country.
This kind of love allows them to act as whole persons and not simply as physical and emotional beings that are physically attracted to one another and emotionally involved. Ann’s decision to return to the palace and Joe’s decision not to pressure her to stay reflects their inherent recognition of the social, intellectual and moral realms of their whole personhood. If any one area of their personal wholeness were to be compromised, neither person would have lasting peace or happiness.

Roman Holiday depicts a wholesome perspective on sexuality by portraying a man whose virtue prevents him from taking advantage of a young woman who is sedated and vulnerable. Young female viewers are thus provided with a glimpse of gentlemanly conduct while young male viewers are provided with a role model worthy of emulation.

At a high school in Northern Virginia, teens who viewed Roman Holiday were at first disappointed that the movie ends with two people who were in love saying goodbye to one another, probably never to meet again. However, when the teacher asked whether the teens thought that Ann and Joe would find true love again, marry and be happy, they all responded that they believed they would.

One teen said that because the friendship that Ann and Joe formed was so good and so strong, the experience of their romantic involvement would enable them to move on to other healthy friendships and eventually marriage.

There is reason for optimism when the love lost has not involved a sexual relationship; the love is fondly remembered because one’s whole person has not been harmed. The memories are happy ones. As Ann states when asked by the reporter which city she enjoyed the most in her tour of Europe, she responds, “By all means, Rome.” Ann’s final words to Joe in the last scene of the film are, “So happy, Mr. Bradley.”
Roman Holiday - What Makes a Film a Classic?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Some old films can be considered “classic” and some contemporary films will likely endure as classics. Based on the criteria mentioned as to what constitutes a classic film, which recent films would you call classics? Why?

A classic film…

- depicts universal truths in a way that is edifying to the viewer;
- shows positive growth in virtue on the part of the major characters;
- transcends racial, ethnic and religious boundaries and divisions;
- has production values that are generally recognized as being of a high caliber;
- has characters that are realistic and believable.
Roman Holiday
Key Terms Fill-ins

1. Joe and Irving concoct a ________________ plot in order to get a story on Princess Ann.

2. Ann shows that she understands the nature of ________________ when she says, “If I were not completely aware of my duty to my family and my country, I would not have come back tonight or indeed ever again.”

3. Ann’s nervous breakdown in the palace is a sign that she is ________________ by her duties and grueling schedule.

4. Joe, always the ________________, rushes back to the apartment to confirm that he has stumbled upon the princess herself and the chance to make some money.

5. Ann asks Joe to undress her when she is drugged, but the next morning, fully awake, she covers herself in front of Joe out of ________________.

6. In the end, both Ann and Joe must make the difficult ________________ of not being together.

7. Joe picks Ann up off the street, seeing that as a pretty young girl alone at night she is in a ________________ situation.

8. Joe convinces Irving to be a ________________ in making the headline story about the princess with him.

9. At the beginning of the story we see that Ann is a ________________ hostess and greets all her guests, speaking to them in their own language and dancing with everyone who asks her to dance.

10. Joe shows great ________________ by leaving the apartment while Ann gets undressed.

Gracious
Vulnerable
Overwhelmed
Self-Control
 Opportunist
Collaborator
Deceitful
Sacrifice
Modesty
Responsibility
Roman Holiday
Essay Questions

When writing an essay . . .

1) Write your essay in a **logical order**. Begin with answering the question very briefly in the introduction, give arguments for your answer in the following paragraphs, and conclude with a summary.

2) Use **proper grammar** and **punctuation**.

3) Check your **spelling**.

4) Answer the question **clearly and concisely**. Make sure everything you say relates to the question.

5) Finally, **be creative** and have fun!

**Question #1**
A. In at least one paragraph, describe how Ann’s experiences in Rome with Joe change her and help her cope with the pressures of palace life. How does she change after her return to the palace?

B. Application for Today: How do you cope with the stresses of everyday life? Write down a character quality that helps you to do your duties. Reflect on ways in which you could better deal with the pressures you sometimes feel.

**Question #2**
A. In at least one paragraph, identify how Ann helps Joe to realize the importance of duty and responsibility. How does he change after he learns this, and how does his love for Ann reflect this?

B. Application for Today: What are some positions that people are in now that require them to sacrifice much of their time and effort for something greater, such as the protection of people or the education of youth? Why do these people stay in these jobs even though they are so demanding?
A FAMOUS QUOTE TO CONSIDER

Reflections on Celebrity

Contrast Princess Ann in *Roman Holiday* with celebrities we see today. What are some significant differences?

“Royalty consists not in vain pomp, but in great virtues.”
– Agesilaus

Consider this quote of Agesilaus (444-360 B.C.), the king of Sparta. Why would Princess Ann be a true example of royalty, according to Agesilaus?

Possible discussion points include:

- Princess Ann’s character - the idea of duty and personal responsibility

Princess Ann does not return to the palace for any reason other than that it is her duty. She says,

“We are not entirely aware of my duty to my family and my country, I would not have come back tonight, nor indeed ever again.”

She does not return to fulfill her job as princess to be admired by the world; rather, she sacrifices what she truly desires in order to serve her people. This sacrifice for the sake of others shows her great virtue, and thus her portrayal of true royalty, according to Agesilaus’s definition.

- Contrast Princes Ann’s attitude toward material goods and wealth?
Roman Holiday
Movie Quotes Answer Key

Listen for the following quotes as you watch the film, and take notes on what is happening in the movie at the time.

SEGMENT 1

“Is this the elevator?” – Princess Ann
“It's my room.” – Joe Bradley

Jo Bradley has brought Ann, who is drugged but appears to be drunk, to his apartment so that she will not be left to sleep on the street.

SEGMENT 2

“Have I been here all night – alone?” – Ann
“If you don't count me, yes.” – Joe
“So I've spent the night here – with you.” – Ann
“Oh, well, now, I – I don't know if I'd use those words exactly, but er, from a certain angle, yes.” – Joe

When Ann wakes up and finds that she has been alone all night in Joe’s apartment, she is afraid something may have happened. When she realizes that Joe has been respectful of her in her vulnerable state, she immediately trusts him.
SEGMENT 3

“You spent the whole day doing things I've always wanted to. Why?”
– Ann

“I don't know. Seemed the thing to do.” – Joe

“I never heard of anybody so kind.” – Ann

Ann asks this question at the dance on the waterfront. She believes that Joe has been taking her around the city simply out of kindness (although he is in fact trying to get a story). When she expresses her thoughts on this, Joe begins to rethink his motives regarding his friendship with Ann.

SEGMENT 4

“And what, in the opinion of Your Highness, is the outlook for friendship among nations?”
– Reporter

“I have every faith in it . . . as I have faith in relations between people.” – Princess Ann

“May I say, speaking for my own . . . press service: we believe Your Highness’s faith will not be unjustified.” – Joe Bradley

Joe and Irving attend Princess Ann’s press conference. Joe’s response to Ann is an assurance that he will not print the story he has acquired. Even though it would earn him a great deal of money, his friendship with her is more important than money. This statement expresses his decision to sacrifice certain wealth for the sake of Ann’s dignity.
Roman Holiday
Key Terms Fill-Ins Answer Key

1. Joe and Irving concoct a **DECEITFUL** plot in order to get a story on Princess Ann.

2. Ann shows that she understands the nature of **RESPONSIBILITY** when she says, “If I were not completely aware of my duty to my family and my country, I would not have come back tonight or indeed ever again.”

3. Ann’s nervous breakdown in the palace is a sign that she is **OVERWHELMED** by her duties and grueling schedule.

4. Joe, always the **OPPORTUNIST**, rushes back to the apartment to confirm that he has stumbled upon the princess herself and the chance to make some money.

5. Ann asks Joe to undress her when she is drugged, but the next morning, fully awake, she covers herself in front of Joe out of **MODESTY**.

6. In the end, both Ann and Joe must make the difficult **SACRIFICE** of not being together.

7. Joe picks Ann up off the street, seeing that as a pretty young girl alone at night she is in a **VULNERABLE** situation.

8. Joe convinces Irving to be a **COLLABORATOR** in making the headline story about the princess with him.

9. At the beginning of the story we see that Ann is a **GRACIOUS** hostess and greets all her guests, speaking to them in their own language and dancing with everyone who asks her to dance.

10. Joe shows great **SELF-CONTROL** by leaving the apartment while Ann gets undressed.
Roman Holiday

Essay Questions Answer Key

Question #1

A. In at least one paragraph, describe how Ann’s experiences in Rome with Joe change her and help her cope with the pressures of palace life. How does she change after her return to the palace?

B. Application for Today: How do you cope with the stresses of everyday life? Write down a character quality that helps you to do your duties. Reflect on ways in which you could better deal with the pressures you sometimes feel.

For question A, the following points may be mentioned in the students’ essays, but they are by no means exhaustive.

For question B, answers will vary.

- Before Ann’s adventures in Rome she is overwhelmed with her duties as a princess and suffers a temporary nervous breakdown, unable to handle the duties of state.
- After she meets Joe and falls in love with him, she is faced with a tremendous choice. She could stay away and marry Joe or return to the palace and fulfill her duties. Joe helps Ann grow up; when she returns to the palace she has a new composure and an assertive Ann. She now takes charge of affairs, even insisting on meeting the press members at the conference personally.
- After Ann’s return she no longer needs the milk and crackers at bedtime. She does not need to be babied like a child because she is now a woman. She has grown into womanhood by experiencing great love and making great sacrifices.
- Because Ann has come to know the common people better, she now understands life in its complex varieties more fully. This makes her a better-equipped and wiser ruler.
Essay Questions Answer Key (Continued)

Question #2

A. In at least one paragraph, identify how Ann helps Joe to realize the importance of duty and responsibility. How does he change after he learns this and how does his love for Ann reflect this?

B. Application for Today: What are some positions that people are in now that require them to sacrifice much of their time and effort for something greater, such as the protection of people or the education of the youth? Why do these people stay in these jobs even though they are so demanding?

- At the beginning of the story Joe is an opportunist and only looks out for himself. When he realizes that he has stumbled upon an escaped princess, he decides to use her as a story to make him thousands of dollars. He has no respect for her feelings.
- Ann sets an example to Joe of what it means to obey one’s moral duty. As a princess and daughter, she owes her family and country her love and service. Even though she loves Joe, she returns to them.
- Joe sees this and realizes how unloving and deceptive it would be to turn in the story on Ann in order to make money. He realizes that it is his duty not to turn in the story, and sacrifices the money to do the right thing. All this is the result of Ann’s love for him.
For questions regarding the implementation of the *Love & Life at the Movies* curriculum or to inquire about the availability of other lesson plans, please contact:

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We welcome your feedback in our continuing efforts to improve this program. Please share your thoughts with us!