***A Streetcar Named Desire* - Essay Prompts**

You will write a formal paper addressing the play, Streetcar Named Desire. Your essay should be 2-4 pages in length, MLA format. Your paper will be due Thursday, February 11.

Choose one of the following prompts for your essay.

1. Write an essay explaining how Tennessee Williams incorporates a symbol or unified group of symbols into the meaning of his play. Make sure you clearly state each symbol represents in your thesis. Potential symbols are listed below. You may combine any that you see fit.

Light / Shadow

Color

Clothes

Flowers

Sound effects

Bathtub/water

Music

The Chinese lantern

The Streetcar

Food and Drink (especially liquor)

1. In many works of literature, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present actions, attitudes, or values of a character. Write an essay showing how a character’s relationship with the past contributes to the meaning of *Streetcar Named Desire* as a whole.
2. One definition of madness is “mental delusion or eccentric behavior rising from it.” However, Emily Dickinson wrote that “[m]uch madness is divinest sense – to a discerning eye.” Explain how a character’s apparent madness or irrational behavior might be judged reasonable, and explain the significance of the madness to *A Streetcar Named Desire* as a whole.
3. Scenes of weddings, funerals, parties and other social occasions often reveal the values of characters or of the society in which they live. Choose such a scene from *A Streetcar Named Desire* and discuss the contributions of that scene to the meaning of the work as a whole.
4. Choose a school of literary criticism and write an essay discussing how such a critic might construct meaning from *A* *Streetcar Named Desire.* You might choose a Feminist, Marxist, Pscyhoanalytical, Historicist or Biographical reading of the text. For the three former, you would not need to do any further research, but if you choose Historicist of Biographical, you will need to look up the time period or Tennessee Williams’ life.

Adapted from:

<http://www.arrowheadschools.org/faculty/freeburg/Streetcar%20Named%20Desire%20Writing%20Prompts.pdf>