

Summer Reading

for students entering Drama

During the second half of the summer, acquire and read a copy of Thornton Wilder's 1938 play Our Town. If you prefer, you may watch a DVD of the 1977 production, starring Hal Holbrook, the 1989 version, starring Spalding Grey, or the 2003 version, starring Paul Newman. Then, complete the writing assignment that follows. This assignment will count as an essay grade for the first marking period.

After you have finished reading the play or viewing a production of it, compose a short essay (approximately two to three pages typed and double spaced) in which you respond to the prompt below. Be sure to organize your ideas into distinct paragraphs, with specific attention to the development of your thesis. Include relevant textual details (such as quotations, plot details, and symbols) in your essay, and cite the page on which they appear using the MLA format.

How relevant is Thornton Wilder's portrayal of the American family and small town life in Our Town to contemporary audiences? Which aspects of the play seem most truthful to you as a modern reader? Why? Which elements of the play seem out of date or less truthful? Why?

The essay will be graded using the English Department writing rubric, which has been attached to this overview.

Should you have any questions about this assignment, please do not hesitate to contact me at rderham@hvrhs.org

Enjoy your reading and writing!