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Eddie

WHO IS EDDIE?

Eddie Carbone is a longshoreman whose job it is to load and unload boats in the shipyards of Brooklyn.



WHAT DOES EDDIE DO IN THE PLAY?

- Eddie is protective towards Catherine. Soon this protectiveness becomes obsessive and unnatural.
- Even though he can be warm and generous, there are few moments in the play when he is not in conflict with the other **characters**.
- Eddie's jealousy of Rodolfo shows how emotionally unstable he is.
- He breaks his code of honour by betraying Rodolfo and Marco when it seems his relationship with Catherine is threatened.
- He loses the respect of all who know him and therefore has no option but to face Marco in mortal combat.
- In the end he gains some dignity in the manner of his death.

HOW IS EDDIE'S CHARACTER REVEALED?

Quotation	Means?
'I don't understand you; she's seventeen years old, you gonna keep her in the house all her life?' (p. 11)	This comment from Beatrice to Eddie tells the audience that he is too protective, too possessive of Catherine and he should be able to see that she is old enough to look after herself.
'I take the blankets off my bed for him, and he takes and puts his filthy hands on her like a goddam thief!' (p. 35)	Eddie's reaction to Rodolfo demonstrates how emotionally unstable and irrational he is. He cannot see the young man's qualities. Instead he is blinded by his fear that Rodolfo will take Catherine away from him.
'He was good to me, Rodolfo. You don't know him; he was always the sweetest guy to me.' (p. 45)	Catherine sees the positive side of Eddie. He is obviously capable of much warmth and generosity and she really appreciates this – at least for now. But she is also speaking in the past tense almost as if he was a different person then.
'Give me the number of the Immigration Bureau. I want to report something. Illegal immigrants.' (p. 50)	Self-interest is one of Eddie's great motivating factors. He is deeply aware of the horrific nature of betraying an immigrant to the authorities and yet, when his own comfortable relationship with Catherine comes under threat, he is quite prepared to break this code of honour.

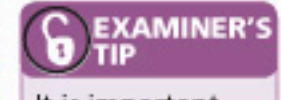
EXAMINER'S TIP: WRITING ABOUT EDDIE



Think about the way Miller creates the character of Eddie. At the beginning he seems to be a strong family man with a sense of humour. We also see him as a protective uncle who looks out for his niece, Catherine.

You could then move on to write about the way his character changes when Rodolfo arrives. Show how his protective nature shifts to obsession. Miller, at the beginning of Act Two, shows how unpleasant Eddie can be when he is angry. Try discussing the reasons for Eddie's actions when he breaks the community code that demands that illegal immigrants are protected from the law. Finally analyse the tragic consequences of Eddie's betrayal and discuss whether he deliberately engineers his own death because of his shame.

You should consider the gradual disintegration of the character until, in the end, all Eddie's positive qualities have disappeared and he is a shell of the man we saw at the beginning of the play. Don't forget to quote at appropriate intervals to support your comments.



It is important that you explain what the characters say, what they don't say, what they do and what they don't do. You should also analyse the situation each character finds himself or herself in. All this will help you to understand the dramatic overall purpose.



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When thinking about Eddie find a new quotation for each of the following characteristics:
 1) forceful;
 2) obsessive;
 3) warm;
 4) protective;
 5) irrational.
 Now write what you think each quotation really means.

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Read all the comments made by Alfieri and Beatrice about Eddie. Write all the positive and negative remarks made by both characters and then write a few sentences saying what each observation tells the audience about Eddie and the characters' attitude to him at that time.

PART SIX: GRADE BOOSTER

Understanding the question

Questions in examinations or controlled conditions often need 'decoding'. Decoding the question helps to ensure that your answer will be relevant and refers to what you have been asked.

 **UNDERSTAND EXAM LANGUAGE**

Get used to exam and essay style language by looking at specimen questions and the words they use. For example:

Exam speak!	Means?	Example
'convey ideas'	'get across a point to the reader': usually you have to say 'how' this is done.	Miller conveys the idea that justice is a key element behind human behaviour.
'methods, techniques, ways'	The 'things' the writer does: for example, a powerful description, introducing a shocking event, how someone speaks, etc.	Miller uses many of the techniques of classical tragedy , for example building towards the powerful climax when Marco and Eddie clash near the end of the drama.
'present, represent'	1) present: 'the way things are told to us' 2) represent: 'what those things might mean underneath'.	Alfieri is <i>presented</i> as a wise figure who <i>represents</i> a form of Chorus , commenting on the play's action.

 **'BREAK DOWN' THE QUESTION**

Pick out the **key words** or phrases. For example:

Question: Explore the way Arthur Miller writes about justice in the play. Write about the characters' search for justice, and their feeling that the law is sometimes inadequate.

The focus is on:

- characters and their search for justice as they see it.
- the terrible consequences of their uncompromising attitudes.

What does this tell you?

- **Focus** on Alfieri's comments at the beginning and the end; Eddie's attempts to find a just solution to his problems; his unwillingness to listen to anyone else; Marco's search for revenge; Alfieri's unsuccessful attempts to get both men to listen to reason.

 **KNOW YOUR LITERARY LANGUAGE!**

When studying texts you will come across words such as '**theme**', 'symbol', '**imagery**' and 'metaphor'. Some of these words could come up in the question you are asked. Make sure you know what they mean before you use them!



Planning your answer

It is vital that you **plan** your response to longer exam questions carefully, and that you then follow your plan, if you are to gain the higher grades.

 **DO THE RESEARCH!**

When revising for the exam, collect **evidence** (for example, quotations) that will support what you have to say. For example, if preparing to answer a question on *A View from the Bridge*, you might list ideas as follows:

Key point	Evidence/quotation	Act/scene/line, etc.
Alfieri sees that compromise and unselfishness is what makes society work.	Alfieri points out that it is better to ' settle for half ' because chaos can result if we don't – in this case, Eddie's search for total justice results in his death.	pp. 63 and 64

 **PLAN FOR PARAGRAPHS**

Use paragraphs to plan your answer. For example:

- 1 The first paragraph should **introduce** the **argument** you wish to make.
- 2 Then, **develop** this argument with further paragraphs. Include **details**, **examples** and other possible **points of view**. Each paragraph is likely to deal with one point at a time.
- 3 **Sum up** your argument in the last paragraph.

For example, for the following task:

Question: How does Miller present the character of Rodolfo?

Simple plan:

- Paragraph 1: *Introduction*
- Paragraph 2: *First point*, e.g. Rodolfo's lively, engaging character when he enters.
- Paragraph 3: *Second point*, e.g. Catherine's responses to him.
- Paragraph 4: *Third point*, e.g. The gentle way he treats Catherine at the beginning of Act Two.
- Paragraph 5: *Fourth point*, e.g. His responsible attitude at the end (pages 61–3) when he attempts to prevent the tragedy.
- Paragraph 6: *Conclusion*, e.g. Sum up the points made in the last paragraph, and how this is reflective of Rodolfo's character throughout.

