I. Assignment Overview: Write an essay in which you explain how Willy Loman meets criteria for a modern tragic hero according to Arthur Miller, and which also explains your opinion as to the degree to which Loman is tragic.

II. Formatting and Other Basic Criteria:
* 2-3 Pages; Times New Roman size 12 font
* 2+ direct quotes (use the significant quotes handouts from the play). According to Willy, “Man is not a piece of fruit” (Death of a Salesman 82).
* When citing specific details other than quotes, be sure to explain where this takes place: In the stage directions at the beginning of Act I, we learn that Linda not only loves Willy, she also admires him.
* Include a title that goes beyond a mere statement of topic – Willy Is Not a Low Man
* DO NOT mix up plot, make spelling and/or homonym errors.
* Write an all-encompassing thesis statement as the last sentence of the introduction: Given the tragedy Death of a Salesman, Willy Loman meets Miller’s modern tragic definition mainly because he is an everyday person, yet he is not tragic for most people because of his lack of morals.
* Write topic sentences at the beginnings of your body paragraphs.
* Avoid fragment and run-on sentences.

III. The Essay:
A. Introduction & Thesis: Provide a brief overview of the play (no more than 4-5 sentences total). Be sure to mention the title and author of the play (note that titles of plays should be underlined or italicized). End your introduction with a clear thesis in which you state, generally, how Willy Loman meets Miller’s definition of the tragic hero, and in your view whether or not he is truly tragic with a main reason.
B. Body Sections:
1. Body Paragraph #1: Explain Arthur Miller’s definition of tragedy in your own words. It will be helpful in this area to read your notes on modern tragedy. Of further help will be Miller’s essay Tragedy and the Common Man, which you received earlier in this unit.
2. Body Paragraphs #2 & #3 – The Tragic Hero: Willy Loman
   Body Paragraph #2: Examine how Willy meets Miller’s definition of being a tragic hero. Let the general reason you give in the thesis be the guiding principle for this paragraph. Use multiple examples from the play, such as quotes and/or specific references. Of critical importance is that you explain how these examples demonstrate Willy’s meeting the criteria set out by Miller. A “significant quotes” sheet is included to help in this activity.
   Body Paragraph #3: Write this paragraph about how you see Willy Loman’s tragic nature or lack thereof. Is he really tragic in your view? Why or why not. Again, superior essays will use specific examples from the play as support, and the student will interpret these examples effectively in terms of the argument he or she is making.
C. Conclusion: Here, you restate your thesis (but reword it) and make concluding remarks that reemphasize your main point(s), OR you restate your thesis (but reword it) and offer a personal reaction to the play.

ROUGH DRAFT DUE: _______ for Peer Review. Print off two copies for peer review.

FINAL COPY DUE: _______ for teacher evaluation.
Tragedy Essay Outline

When one writes an outline, that person need not worry about writing complete sentences; getting the information written down in an ordered format, even in fragmented form, is what’s important. Place your supporting evidence in the blank spaces below.

I. Introduction (Brief overview of the play, author, and end introduction with a thesis that explains how Loman is tragic given Miller’s definition & whether or not he is truly tragic in your view with a main reason:)

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Thesis:

II. Theoretical Underpinnings (Explain Arthur Miller’s view of tragedy in your words):

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III. The Tragic Hero (Examine Willy as a tragic hero, according to Miller and You.)

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B.____________________________________________________________________________________

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IV. Conclusion (Restate thesis and offer your personal reaction to the play or reemphasize your main points):
Tragedy Essay: 4 Levels of Literary Analysis

Level 1: Simple, Straight-Forward—
According to Miller, we don’t relate to Kings anymore, so tragedy should involve the everyday person. Without a doubt Loman fits this criteria as he is practically unknown.

Level 2: Textual Evidence [specific examples/direct quotes] supporting the generalization—
According to Miller, we don’t relate to Kings anymore, so tragedy should involve the everyday person. Without a doubt Loman fits this criteria as he is practically unknown. Even his son Happy says concerning Willy, “He’s just a guy.”

Level 3: Analyzing In Relation to Tragic Theory—
According to Miller, today a tragedy shouldn’t involve a king or someone of a high social class because “this no longer captures the imagination of the modern audience.” Further, he states that tragedy “can best be found in the heart and spirit of the average man.” It follows, therefore, that the best tragic hero will be a man to whom we can relate, whose downfall causes us to think about our own lives.

Level 4: Interpreting/Putting It All Together—
The highest level of literary analysis is interpretation. Don’t merely “retell” the story. Don’t merely “parrot” what you have read about Miller. Do not simply repeat what he has said. Instead, take your analysis to the next level and explain what you think it means and why (avoid first person “I,” except in the conclusion).

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION:  (Thesis is UNDERLINED)
When one thinks of tragedy, he or she is often confronted with images of death and destruction. However, this doesn’t capture the true meaning of tragedy, since it actually originates from the Greek word tragōidia, or “goat-song,” because a goat was sacrificed during a tragic play as a symbol for human suffering. Tragedy, then, is a drama about human suffering, and a more recent drama Death of a Salesman involves a common American man named Willy Loman who is destroyed as a result of his own false dream. This average man is also destroyed by his own actions, and he is not a perfect person. Given the tragedy Death of a Salesman, Willy Loman meets Miller’s modern tragic definition mainly because he is an everyday person, yet he is not tragic for most people because of his lack of morals.

…As you write, use your outline to guide the development of your body paragraphs and conclusion…
Death of a Salesman – 30 Significant Quotes

The following is a selection of significant quotes. Some are significant because of their irony, while others are significant because they relate to character or theme. These are made available to you for your essay. Page numbers are listed but may vary slightly depending on the version of the play used.

1. LINDA TO WILLY [P. 15]: Well, dear, life is a casting off. It’s always that way.
2. WILLY CONCERNING BIFF [P. 16]: Not finding yourself at the age of thirty-four is a disgrace!
3. BIFF [P. 21]: Why does Dad mock me all the time?
4. HAPPY [P. 25]: See, Biff, everybody around me is so false that I’m constantly lowering my ideals...
5. BIFF [P. 25]: Hap, the trouble is we weren’t brought up to grub for money. I don’t know how to do it.
6. WILLY [P. 33]: Be liked and you will never want.
7. WILLY TO LINDA [P. 39]: I won’t have you mending stockings in this house! Now throw them out!
8. WILLY [P. 41]: The woods are burning!
9. WILLY TO CHARLEY [P. 45]: For a second there you reminded me of my brother Ben.
11. CHARLEY [P. 50]: Willy, the jails are full of fearless characters.
12. WILLY [P. 51]: …I still feel—kind of temporary about myself.
13. BIFF TO LINDA [P. 55]: Dye it again, will ya? I don’t want my pal looking old.
14. LINDA [P. 56]: Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person. You called crazy—you don’t have to be very smart to know what the trouble is. The man is exhausted...[P. 59]: ...I tell you there’s more good in him than many other people.
15. WILLY [P. 61]: Bernard does not whistle in the elevator...[P. 65]: And don’t say “Gee.” “Gee” is a boy’s word.
16. WILLY CONCERNING BIFF [P. 68]: A star like that, magnificent, can never really fade away!
   [THEN, THE SET DIRECTIONS]: The light on Willy is fading. The gas heater begins to glow through the kitchen wall, near the stairs, a blue flame beneath red coils.
17. WILLY TO HOWARD [P. 82]: You can’t eat an orange and throw the peel away—a man is not a piece of fruit!
18. WILLY TO BERNARD [P. 91]: His own tennis court. Must be fine people, I bet.
19. WILLY CONCERNING BERNARD [P. 84]: The Supreme Court! And he didn’t even mention it!
   CHARLEY’S RESPONSE: He don’t have to—he’s gonna do it.
20. CHARLEY [P. 97]: The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell. And the funny thing is that you’re a salesman, and you don’t know that.
21. BIFF [P. 104]: I was a shipping clerk.
22. WILLY TO BIFF [P. 107]: …the woods are burning...don’t give me a lecture about facts and aspects. I am not interested.
23. BIFF TO WILLY [P. 109]: Listen, will you let me out of it, will you just let me out of it!
24. BIFF TO WILLY [P. 112]: You listening? He—he talked to his partner, and he came to me...I’m going to be alright you hear?
25. BIFF CONCERNING WILLY [P. 114]: ...you’ve just seen a prince walk by. A fine, troubled prince.
26. HAPPY [P. 115]: No, that’s not my father. He’s just a guy.
27. WILLY [P. 122]: Nothing’s planted. I don’t have a thing in the ground.
28. BIFF [P. 132]: Pop! I’m a dime a dozen, and so are you. WILLY: I am not a dime a dozen!
29. BIFF [P. 138]: He had the wrong dreams. All, all, wrong.
30. HAPPY [P. 139]: ...Willy Loman did not die in vain. He had a good dream...the only dream...