

Year 12 English

All About Eve



Student Handbook

Name:

English Class:

All About Eve- Plot Synopsis and Questions

Opening Scene...

The film opens at the prestigious Sarah Siddons Award presentations as many distinguished and stellar guests sit and wait for the most important award of the night to be announced. The narrator is a rather bemused and cynical Addison De Witt, who sets the scene about Eve, that soon we will get to know all about Eve. Amongst the guests we see the famous theatre actress, Margo Channing and her lover/director Bill Sampson. They are seated next to Lloyd Richards, playwright and his wife Karen. It is clear they are not impressed about being there.

Questions:

1. What flavour does Addison De Witt's narration add to the start of the film?
2. Describe the Sarah Siddons presentation night.
3. How does Addison see himself?

Flashback One...Poor Little Eve...

Karen begins to narrate (voice over), as she begins to remember the previous October when she first met Eve. It seems that Eve had been waiting outside the theatre for all of Margo Channing's performances, so Karen went up to her one night and began speaking with her. Out of compassion and admiration, Karen brings Eve into the theatre dressing room to meet with Margo.

In the dressing room we meet the great actress Margo Channing who is taking off her makeup and changing after a performance. With her is her wry personal assistant Birdie and Lloyd Richards, Karen's husband. At first Margo is annoyed with the fan, but once Eve begins to tell her story of love and devotion to Margo, everyone is charmed. They then ask her to tell them a little of her background and Eve tells her sad and somewhat tragic life story. It seems she had worked in a brewery in Milwaukee, to make money for her family. We hear of Eve's passion for acting and the theatre and that she married someone who was sent to war the following week. He died. Eve then saw Margo in her play in San Francisco called *Remembrance*, and it was from here that she fell in love with the theatre and moved to New York. One thing leads to another and the mild mannered, humble, shy and timid Eve has everyone wanting her to stay around. She is also introduced to Bill Sampson, Margo's lover and director. Soon Eve is working for Margo and everyone else. She is efficient and organised to an alarming degree. Everyone loves her, although Birdie is still cynical.

Questions:

1. What were your first impressions of Eve?
2. Why does Birdie not fall for Eve's story?

Adorable Eve...

Margo has Eve move in with her that very night after Bill leaves on a business trip, and they get along beautifully. In the background we can see Birdie is jealous and appalled by what she sees. Eve goes along to Margo's performances and we see she has improved the dressing room and wants to be as useful as possible. After a performance she is seen crying as she watches Margo take her many bows. When no one is looking we see her prancing around in one of Margo's stunning costumes. She is embarrassed and Margo is surprised, but things move on.

Question: What do you think Eve is actually after? Discuss.

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Phone Call in the Middle of the Night...

It is the middle of the night when Bill is still away, and the phone rings as Margo answers it. She is somewhat confused when Bill thanks her for remembering his birthday, which she has not. It turns out that Eve has organised everything without telling her, including placing a call and organising a party for Bill when he returns.

Questions:

1. What has caused Margo to be so annoyed with Eve regarding her 'helpfulness'?
2. At this point is there any reason for the viewer to be wary of Eve? Discuss.

Not So Adorable Eve...

Margo asks Birdie why she does not like Eve, and she replies that Eve is studying Margo like a blueprint. She does not trust her but then Eve walks in wearing one of Margo's suits. As she is told the tasks she is to perform, she tells Margo about how she placed the call last night, sent the telegram and forgot to tell her. She has also organised a party for Bill. When she leaves, Margo and Birdie give each other a knowing look.

Questions:

1. Evaluate Anne Baxter's portrayal of Eve to this point. Is she menacing enough?
2. The look Birdie and Margo exchange suggests Eve is definitely on the 'outer' and to be viewed as suspicious. To what extent do you agree? Discuss.

The Disastrous Party...

Margo is upset when she finds out that Bill has been home for twenty minutes but has not come to her room to see her, instead spending time with Eve. Once Eve is sent off on an errand, Margo and Bill quarrel as Margo is no longer so enthusiastic about Eve, whereas Bill still thinks she is wonderful. When Eve reappears, as sweet as ever, Bill asks Margo what she would like to drink, and Eve orders the exact same thing. Guests continue to arrive including Karen and Lloyd. Karen is Margo's best friend and can sense that she is in a really foul mood, expecting an explosion any time soon. Addison De Witt turns up at the party with a young, blonde, aspiring actress – Miss Caswell. All the attention is focused on Eve because everyone loves Eve. Margo is raging with jealousy and can barely contain her anger and resentment as she continues to argue with Bill over Eve. She reminds him of her now being 40ish and how insecure she feels about this and his commitment to her. People begin to leave the party, but not before we hear what everyone feels about performing. It is here that we discover the lure performing and audience adulation has for Eve, and she asks Karen if she can help her become Margo's new understudy.

Questions:

1. How does Addison treat Miss Caswell (Marilyn Monroe)?
2. What is underlying Margo's jealousy and anger?
3. Discuss the points Margo makes about age and women.
4. List some of the quips and insults thrown about in this scene.
5. Eve lets her feelings about performance and fame slip out. What are they?

All About Eve- Plot Synopsis and Questions

Meet Your New Understudy – Eve...

Margo is late for the audition to find a new understudy, and when she arrives she is told that it has already been decided that it will be Eve. Just before being told this news, she had met Addison De Witt in the foyer, who made it clear that Eve was brilliant and one day could be as famous as Margo. On the stage, Margo is furious and everyone argues.

When Lloyd goes home to his wife Karen, he tells her about Margo's temper tantrums. Karen comes up with a 'joke' to get back at Margo. After the three spent a weekend together (without Bill), the car runs out of gas on the way home, making it impossible for Margo to be at the theatre on time for her evening's performance. Of course this means that Eve, the understudy will have to take her place. It appears that Eve was brilliant in the performance and all the media/theatre reporters just happened to all be there to catch her performance. Addison De Witt raves about the performance. Later he is standing outside the dressing room and overhears Eve trying to romance Bill, but he does not fall for her charms, which infuriates her. He reminds her he is in love with Margo. Eve flies into a rage that she has not been successful in tempting Bill.

Margo and Karen have a heart to heart about things. Margo reveals her feelings and concerns about her career and the expectations society places on women.

Questions:

1. What was the purpose of Karen's joke?
2. How has Addison De Witt contributed to Eve's success with the media?
3. Where is Margo's heart at the moment?

What the Newspapers Said...

Karen is narrating (voice over) that the newspapers had all written up magnificent reviews about Eve's performance. What is most galling is Addison's review which is critical and denigrating of Margo. Bill runs to Margo as soon as he reads the 'filth' written about his love. Meanwhile Lloyd has been informed by Eve that she was the innocent party in all this; it was all Addison De Witt's fault and doing. Karen is appalled that her husband cannot see through Eve's manipulations and her attempt to usurp Margo.

Questions:

1. Describe Addison's attack on Margo.
2. Why is Lloyd so besotted with Eve and convinced that she is telling the truth?
3. How does the viewer perceive Eve at this point of the film? Discuss.



All About Eve- Plot Synopsis and Questions

A Sumptuous Affair...

Karen and Lloyd join Margo and Bill at a sumptuous restaurant. Addison is also present on a separate table with Eve. Bill and Margo are to be married and everyone drinks to their union. A waiter brings Karen a note from Eve to meet her in the bathroom so she reluctantly goes along, as the others want to know what she wants. Whilst in the bathroom, Eve blames everything on Addison, but Karen does not believe her 'woe is me' act. However Eve is able to manipulate and blackmail Karen into asking her husband to give Eve the role of Cora in his new play (reserved for Margo). Karen is upset and silent when she returns to the table. Her dilemma is instantly resolved when Margo announces she does not want to play Cora and after marriage wants to just be a married lady. Karen is so relieved she begins to laugh hysterically.

Questions:

1. What appears to be the relationship between Addison and Eve?
2. How does Eve intend to blackmail Karen if she does not talk to her husband regarding the role she wants?
3. Discuss the irony of this scene.
4. Why do you think Margo is happy to leave acting behind to be a 'married woman'? Discuss.

Careful What You Wish For...

Bill wants nothing to do with Eve because of the sort of person she is, however Lloyd and Max convince him to let Eve play Cora. Karen steps back as she sees her husband Lloyd being drawn in more and more by Eve. One night she even has the girl next to her apartment ring Lloyd in the night to come quick because Eve is unwell and hysterical, and he falls for it. After the girl hangs up the phone, we see Eve has set it all up and she is actually fine.

Eve's play opens in New Haven and everything seems to be going her way. We learn that Max and Lloyd have paid for her suite and when Addison comes to visit her, she informs him that Lloyd will be leaving his wife for her. Addison is not impressed. Addison knows Eve does not love Lloyd and refuses to believe he would leave Karen, and he is appalled by her ruthless manipulation of innocent people. The tables turn suddenly when Addison puts Eve in her place by informing her that she will not mistreat him as she does everyone else. He will not be her fool. In a firm and menacing tone, Addison states he will not allow her to go with Lloyd and that she belongs to him. When Eve laughs, he slaps her in the face. At this point Addison informs her that he has done some background research and knows all about her and that she has been lying to everyone. We learn that Eve's real name is Gertrude; her parents are poor and have not heard from her in three years. She did work in the brewery, but her boss's wife had her followed (an affair?) and she came to New York. Addison knows she never had a husband and never went to San Francisco. Addison also knows that Eve attempted to blackmail Karen the other night and Eve realises she has nowhere else to run if she wishes to remain in the business.

Questions:

1. How will Eve survive with Addison?
2. Discuss the sort of person Eve must be now that we know the truth.
3. What is in this arrangement for Addison? Discuss.



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Full Circle...

The film now returns full circle back to the Awards Ceremony, from the start of the film. Eve is adored and adulated as she accepts her award and thanks all her friends. Of course this is ironic as she has none, but she gives a polished and humble speech. The close ups of the 'friends' faces makes it clear they all loathe her. When she returns to her apartment, Eve does not want to go to the function after the ceremony, so Addison goes without her.

Eve then notices a sleeping figure inside and asks her who she is, and what she is doing there. The girl, Phoebe, is a huge fan of Eve's and runs her fan club. She wants to just interview her idol. Meanwhile the doorbell rings and Phoebe answers it. It is Addison returning Eve's award so she can have it, and he asks Phoebe who she is and what she is doing there. Phoebe gushes that she wants to win an award just like this, so Addison tells her to ask Eve...she knows all about it. Back inside, Phoebe lies about who it was. When she goes to put the award away, Phoebe is in a mirrored dressing area and tries on a sumptuous fur coat, holding the award, fantasising she is just like Eve. The mirrors endlessly reflect her image as she regales herself in splendour and imaginary fame. And then she takes a bow. The End.

Questions: 1. What is the significance of Phoebe? 2. What do you think became of Eve?

Extra Questions - Section A

1. What is your response to the film? Discuss.
2. Were there any aspects of the film you did not understand? Discuss.
3. Create an outline/timeline for the plot.
4. What scenes were most memorable? Why?
5. Who was your favourite character? Least favourite character?
6. List three strengths and weaknesses of the film?
7. What new information or understanding did you discover from viewing this film? Discuss.
8. Were you fooled by Eve? At what point did you start to see her in a different light?
9. In your opinion, what are the themes of the film?

Section B - Decisions People Make...

- Discuss the significance of the following decisions made throughout the film
 1. Margo's brings Eve home with her;
 2. Margo asking Max Fabian to give Eve a job in his office;
 3. Karen promising Eve she will assist her in becoming Margo's new understudy;
 4. Karen's joke on Margo causing them to run out of petrol, thereby allowing Eve to go on stage in her place;
 5. Margo deciding not to star in Lloyd Richard's new play;
 6. Addison DeWitt's decision to declare his ownership of Eve and
 7. Eve decides to let Phoebe spend the night.
- For each choice/decision made, find an alternative and discuss how such a change would have impacted on the lives of the characters.

Section C

- Another film often compared to *All About Eve* and also released the same year is *Sunset Boulevard*. Watch the two films. Compare and contrast the two films on the worksheet provided below.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

All About Eve was written, filmed and released during the early stages of The Cold War (1947-1991). At its release the USSR had exploded the first of its nuclear bombs in tests, so demonstrating itself to be a nuclear power alongside the USA. While America expected the USSR to eventually become a nuclear power, it occurred several years sooner than forecast. Further, the Chinese communists, who had been fighting a Civil War in China for many years, had finally prevailed over their opposition, the Kuomintang, and declared China to be the People's Republic of China in 1949, a communist state; they then invaded Tibet in 1950. So it seemed to many in The West that communism had become a great threat to world stability, and to democracy in particular.

All About Eve is not about The Cold War, politics or international relations, as such. However, some commentators see subtle influences in the film which are the indirect results of socio-political concerns at the time. One of these concerns is the presentation in the film of heterosexuality as being the norm. This is further reinforced in the film by the men being the dominant partners in the relationships. There are also further suggestions that the natural state for a woman is to be in a heterosexual relationship (Margo and Eve). The loving relationships of Margo and Bill, and of Karen and Lloyd strongly contrast with the loveless relationships of Addison and Eve. Addison, as a character, is supremely cynical; and Eve attempts to use her femininity to take both Bill and Lloyd away from their relationships. At the time, there was concern that homosexuals could be blackmailed, especially those in positions of dealing with sensitive information. So homosexuality was linked to communism.

Further, the first Hollywood blacklist was compiled in 1947, naming ten screenwriters and directors who had refused to testify before the American Congress to name people whom they felt may have held suspect political beliefs, i.e. they may be communist sympathizers. Many of those listed were banned from their work in film and entertainment for many years.

The Motion Picture Production Code

This Code lay down rules and guidelines as to how characters should be depicted in film. While today's audiences might not immediately recognize either Addison De Witt or Eve Harrington as homosexual, audiences of the time of the film's release would have recognized the subtle signs. Depictions of homosexuality were not expressly banned by the code, as they were automatically assumed to be unacceptable, and so express mention was regarded as unnecessary.

The second part of the Code states:

And be it further resolved, that special care be exercised in the manner in which the following subjects are treated, to the end that vulgarity and suggestiveness may be eliminated and that good taste may be emphasized:

19. Man and woman in bed together;

(which is why Karen and Lloyd are in separate beds at home in 23).

21. The institution of marriage;

(which is why Bill and Margo marry, being in love; and why Margo takes the views of marriage that she does).

25. Excessive or lustful kissing, particularly when one character or the other is a 'heavy' (criminal).

(which is why such scenes are restrained – excessive kissing was regarded as a kissing scene that lasted more than 3 seconds).

Of course, the existence of such a code does not mean that film producers and directors were necessarily compliant, especially in subtle ways of trying to work around it, for example, the depiction of homosexuals.

The Sarah Siddons Award



Source: Internet

Sir Joshua Reynolds: *Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse*.
Painting at The Huntington, San Marino, California.

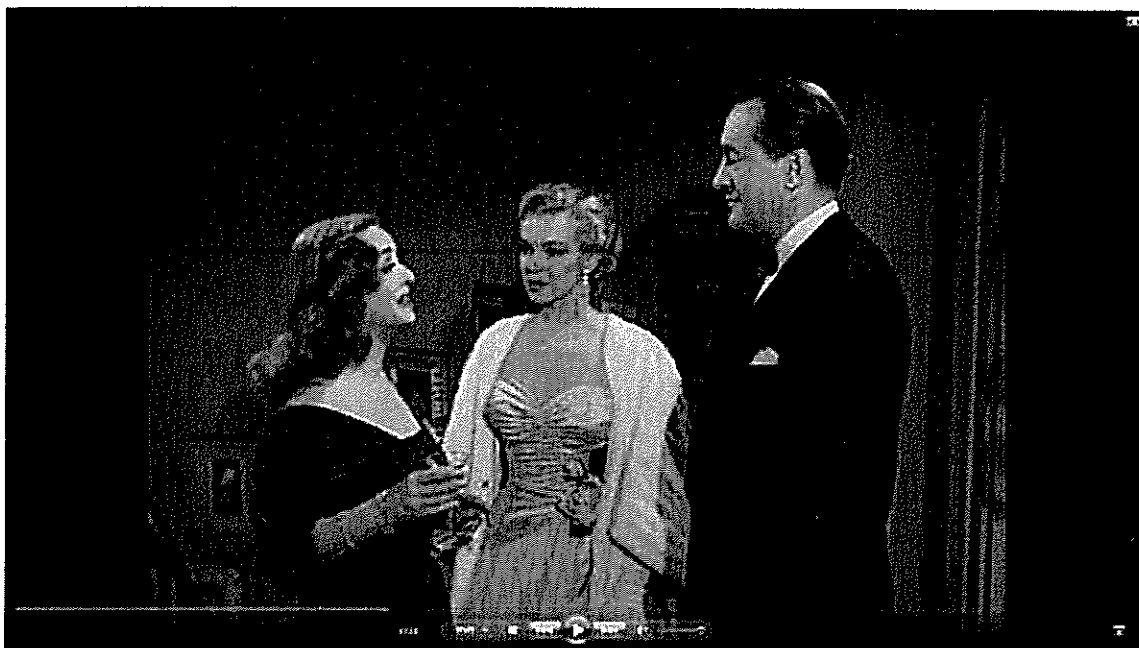
The Sarah Siddons Award in the film *All About Eve* is completely fictitious. However, in 1952 a Sarah Siddons Award for dramatic achievement in the theatre was instituted. It was named after the real Sarah Siddons. It is awarded annually by the Sarah Siddons Society in Chicago.

Sarah Siddons (1755–1831) was a Welsh actress. She was the best-known tragedienne of her time. She was particularly renowned for her portrayals of Lady Macbeth.



Source: Internet

The Sarah Siddons Award as it is in the film *All About Eve*. It is based on the painting by Reynolds.



A copy of Reynold's painting is hanging on the wall between Addison and Miss Casswell.



Source: Internet

Bette Davis dressing up as a copy of the Reynold's painting of Sarah Siddons.

Narration

As this is a film, the approach of deciding First Person or Third Person narration does not apply, as the characters think, speak and act on their own behalfs, although there are some scenes where Addison and Karen give their own personal voiceovers. So the way of seeing whose point of view the story is being told from is to see who receives most of the action. Certainly Eve, Margo and Addison receive a great deal of the action, but so also do Bill, Lloyd, Max and Birdie. The film may be regarded as having an *ensemble cast* – a large number of main characters.

STRUCTURE

This is how the film is put together, and is related to Chronology. The film is structured into 27 chapters. Each chapter is numbered but not named.

Breaking the Fourth Wall

A notable aspect of the film is that several characters break the fourth wall. The fourth wall was originally a theatre term. The four walls of the stage are the back and the sides, and also the front – which is obviously clear so that the audience can watch the play. In attempting to be as realistic as possible, actors go about the play as if it were actual reality, so completely ignoring the audience. To ‘break the fourth wall’ is to recognize the audience by addressing them directly. Addison DeWitt and Karen Richards address the audience a number of times in voiceovers, the purpose being to tell exposition (background information) to the audience so that they understand what is happening (see further, below)

The voiceovers occur in the following scenes:

Chapter 1

Opening Credits

Chapter 18

Karen

Chapter 2

Addison

Chapter 23

Karen

Chapter 10

Margo

Chapter 24

Addison

Chapter 17

Addison DeWitt

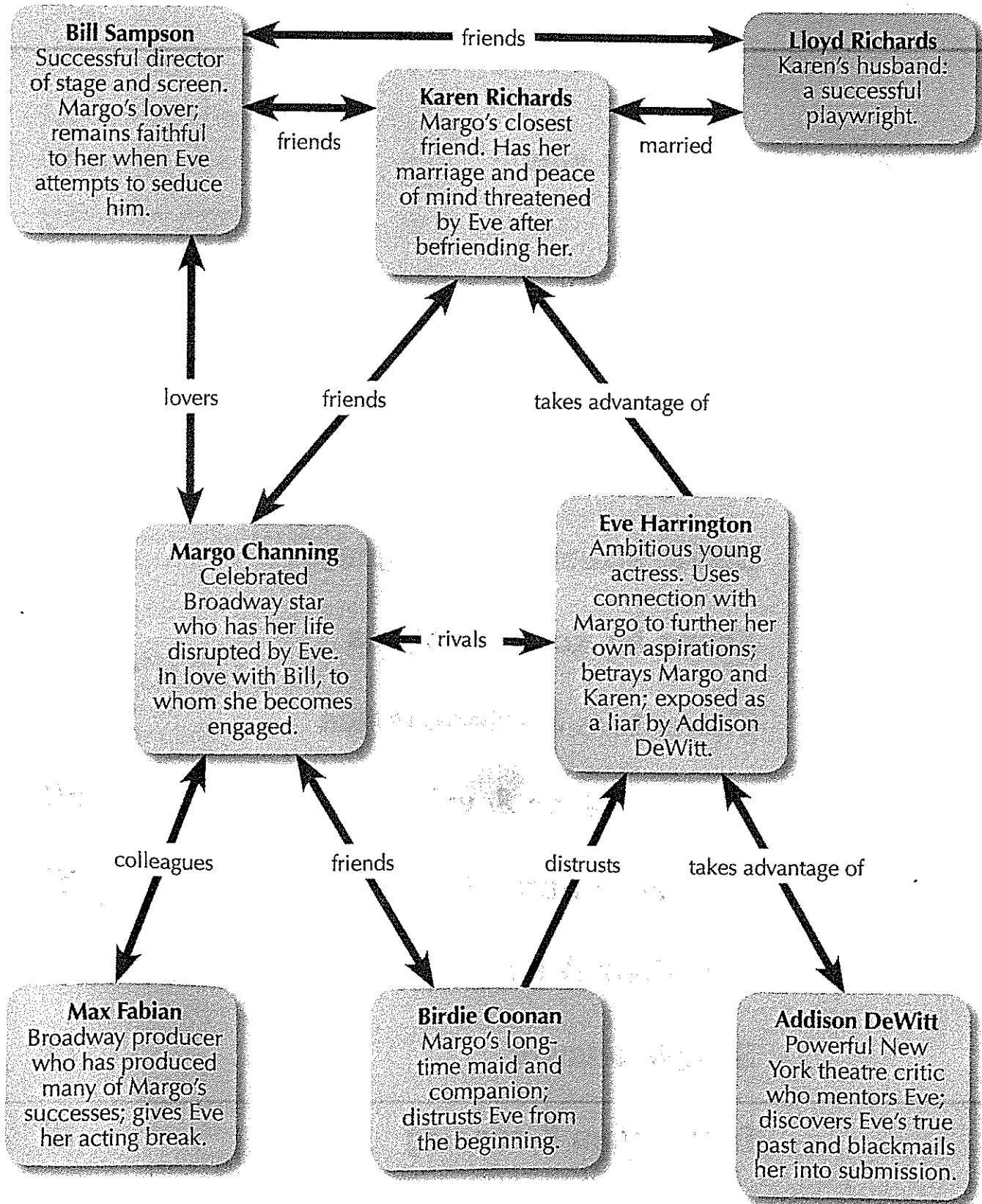
There are three ways of looking at the structure of the film:

1. The film is non-linear. We are introduced to Eve at the presentation banquet of her award. The main part of the story is then told retrospectively as a long *mise-en-scene* flashback, commencing with Eve being recognized by Karen Richards outside the theatre. It then returns towards the end of the narrative to her acceptance of the award at the ceremonial banquet and the events immediately after it.
2. The narrative is told as a *Frame Tale*. This means that the story is told within another story around it. In this case, the *Frame* is the award night and its aftermath in Eve’s hotel room. The *Tale* is the story about how those events came to be.
3. The plot is circular, returning to its starting place at the end. It began with the award night, it then returned to a previous time and moved forwards to the award night and its aftermath and concluded there.

Chronology

This is how the action of the film is arranged in respect of time. This film is basically *linear*, as it begins at a certain point in time and ends at a later point in time. The film actually begins with the presentation of the award to Eve Harrington up to the announcement of her winning. Then it moves back in time to when Eve was first noticed by Karen Richards outside the theatre where Margo Channing was playing in

CHARACTER MAP



All About Eve- Characters



Margo Channing is the famous theatrical actress at the peak of her career, but starting to age. She is witty, filled with 'fire and music' due to her famous tantrums and a strong woman. She wants love and everything else along with her career. As she is aging she is insecure in her career and knows all too well the double standards that exist regarding aging men and women. As men age they are considered dignified and still handsome, whereas women just get older and disappear from the limelight, ready to be replaced by any number of pretty, slim actresses.

In particular Margo is worried about her love life as she wants to make a commitment to Bill but is afraid for her career. She places a high value on being a married woman, which fits in with what society expected of women at the time. As Margo knows all too well no amount of fame and career success will make up for being a married woman and preferably a mother.

Having been the most famous actress of her time, Margo has let her guard down a little taking it for granted. Until Eve comes along... By the end of the film, Margo has transformed and reached a point of peace with her decision to marry and leave the theatre.

Questions:






1. Create a diagram of some sort showing how Margo changes from the start of the film to the end.
2. Choose any four scenes from the film and describe Margo's personality and behaviour.
3. Imagine what it would be like to have fame and be the centre of everyone's attention.






Addison De Witt is a cynical and sharp critic who sees himself as powerful. He has no delusions about people and is the first person to catch on to the reality about Eve. It is essential to remember that Theatre Critics in this era had great power and what they wrote carried much weight – it was easy for them to make or break plays and performers. He is a cruel man but does have a compassionate side in protecting Karen from losing her husband to Eve. He coldly informs Eve that she is his 'property' now, although there is no romance. Addison is likely gay, as is Eve. (See themes) As fitting with the time of the film he is quite sexist in his classification of women and Karen is the ideal 'good wife', Eve is the destructive 'other woman' and Miss Caswell is just a 'dumb blonde'.

Question: Profile Addison De Witt. What makes him tick?

All About Eve- Characters

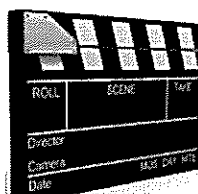
Character	Comments
	<p>Eve Harrington is a young woman who desperately wants to be famous. She is Margo Channing's 'stalker' and obsessed with her every move. As she tells everyone her sob story, people believe her and take pity on her, giving her opportunities and she quickly shows how impressive she is. At first timid and demure, it does not take long before she is seen for what she is. Eve is cunning and clever, following her own secret plan to stardom. She is devastated when her plan does not work with regards to stealing Lloyd, Karen's husband and she realises Addison has discovered who and what she really is. By the end of the film she seems ready to accept the truth that she belongs to Addison. They are both ruthless users of others.</p> <p>Questions: 1. Choose five scenes and use them to observe Eve. Write her profile. 2. Some people feel that Anne Baxter's portrayal of Eve is weak – Discuss.</p>
	<p>Karen Richards represents a good woman and is Margo's best friend. She is married to Lloyd's who writes the plays and works with Bill and Margo. We see Karen as too trusting and kind and it is no surprise that Eve uses her the most to get what she wants. She feels helpless as she watches Eve manipulate her husband and tries to lure him to leave Karen. It is thanks to Addison that Eve does not end up with Karen's husband. Karen is nobody's fool and she can admit it when she makes a mistake as she has a woman's 'intuitive wisdom'. She is a devoted wife and loves her husband.</p> <p>Questions: 1. What motivated Karen to be so kind and accepting towards Eve? 2. Create a profile on Karen Richards.</p>
	<p>Bill Sampson is the multi-talented director in both the theatre and Hollywood. He has been dating Margo for years and their careers tend to get in the way of their romantic relationship. They are famous for their fights but they are always together. Margo is resisting marriage and that is one of the key problems. At first, like the others, Bill is besotted by Eve and takes her side against what he sees as Margo's destructive behaviour and jealousy. Later he realises what Eve is all about and wants to have nothing to do with her. He also firmly rejects Eve's advances towards him as he is in love with Margo and is turned off by women who are like Eve and too forward.</p> <p>Questions: 1. Create a profile of Bill. 2. 'Bill is a strong man who really loves Margo to put up with her' Discuss.</p>
	<p>Lloyd Richards is the talented playwright who works with Margo and Bill. They work well together although at times finds it frustrating when Margo changes his words. His marriage to Karen is a loving one but Eve nearly spoils all that when she decides he would be perfect for her and her career.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highlight two key scenes that show how Eve completely manipulates Lloyd to do as she wants. 2. Do you think Lloyd would have left Karen for Eve if Addison had not stepped in? Discuss.
	<p>Birdie Coonan is a dear friend and personal assistant of Margo Channing. She is bold, upfront and no nonsense. Birdie also has a background in Vaudeville theatre which was the fashion many years ago. Unlike everyone else, she is black and white in facing Margo and does not put up with her tantrums. She likes to speak the truth to her face and was also the first person to see through Eve. Birdie is only seen in the first part of the film.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe Birdie's personality. 2. Why does she only appear at the start of the film?

All About Eve-Characters

Character	Comments
	<p>Max Fabian</p> <p>Max is a theatre producer and so works closely with Margo, Bill and Lloyd in a stressful position. He is pleasant and enjoys working, but does not cope with problems and the headaches he sometimes gets from stress. He is trusting of others and wants to keep everyone happy.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find two scenes featuring Max. How is he portrayed? 2. What is Max in charge of as a Theatre Producer?
	<p>Miss Caswell</p> <p>Miss Caswell only has a small part in the film but because it is one of Marilyn Monroe's earliest film roles, it is often noted and discussed. We see her arrive on the arms of Addison De Witt, looking stunningly radiant and acting naïve and pretty 'dumb'. She wants to land a role as an actress and is eager to find something she can audition for. Miss Caswell is honest and open about her intentions and has no desire to gain power over anyone.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would we be even discussing Miss Caswell if she was not played by Marilyn Monroe? Discuss. 2. How do people respond to Miss Caswell?
	<p>Phoebe</p> <p>At the end of the film, Eve is exhausted and shocked when she finds a young girl sleeping in her apartment. At first she is shocked but then befriends this young girl, who adores Eve and has been watching her career closely. Like Eve was to Margo at the start of the film, Phoebe makes herself useful and adoring towards Eve, so Eve lets her guard down. In the few minutes we see her, we notice that she too is a liar (about who was at the door), and she too dreams to be a big star as she parades before the mirrors in the fur coat.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was your reaction to Phoebe's scene? Discuss. 2. Why does Eve allow Phoebe to stay?

Tasks:

1. Create a mind map showing the various relationships between people in the film.
2. For each character, find a quote that best describes him/her.
3. What motivates the key characters in the film?
4. Evaluate how effective the characters were portrayed by the actors/actresses.
5. Find out some background information of the key players in the film.



CHARACTERS & RELATIONSHIPS

Eve Harrington (Anne Baxter)

Key quotes

'No brighter light has ever dazzled the eye than Eve Harrington.' (Addison)

'Princess fire and music.' (Margo)

'Imagine: to know every night that different hundreds of people love you ... They want you. You belong. Just that alone is worth anything!'

'Eve Harrington' is, of course, a carefully crafted construct. Eve deliberately misrepresents herself from the beginning. Her real name is Gertrude Slescyński, a far less marketable moniker. Having turned her back on her past – her parents haven't heard from her in three years – she has manufactured a personal history, complete with the poignant loss of a young husband, and reinvented herself with the express purpose of furthering her own single-minded ambition.

The duplicitous way in which Eve behaves towards her 'friends' reveals an utterly unscrupulous young woman for whom lying is second nature. Like all proficient liars, she uses elements of the truth to enhance the effectiveness of her lies. She *does* admire Margo Channing, and *is* genuinely in love with the theatre – or at least the idea of being centre stage – and she *has* grown up in poverty. Furthermore, in order to give the part of 'Eve Harrington' complete integrity, perhaps she has to believe in her own fabrication. Ironically, Bill comments on Eve's 'lack of pretence' and, initially, what comes across is her apparent sincerity and desire to please.

Eve is always putting on a performance and playing to an audience. She is clearly a talented young actress and the unassuming front she presents to the world is utterly convincing. Even the cynical Birdie is moved when Eve tells her story in Margo's dressing room. Eve explains

to this, her first audience, how 'acting and make-believe' filled her girlhood: 'It got so I couldn't tell the real from the unreal – except that the unreal seemed more real to me'. The lines between fantasy and reality are blurred and Eve's ability to separate the two is questionable.

Eve's youth may partially explain her tenacious drive to succeed, but her complete lack of conscience suggests a cold and manipulative personality. Eve sees people solely in terms of what they can offer her. She targets Karen Richards because the latter can introduce her to Margo Channing and Karen unsuspectingly – and ironically – likens Eve's devotion to Margo to 'something out of a book'. It is, in fact, a fiction, designed to facilitate the younger woman's obsessive climb to stardom.

Eve's ambition is toxic. She inveigles her way into Margo's household and affections with ease: 'Eve became my sister, lawyer, mother, friend, psychiatrist and cop'. However, after the 'honeymoon' period, Eve's strategy becomes clear, as does the threat she poses to Margo's career. Margo Channing has the life that Eve wants; she literally aspires to 'play' Margo. As Birdie notes, Eve is 'studying' the actress, as if she 'was a play or a book or a set of blueprints – how you walk, talk, eat, think, sleep'. Eve borrows Margo's mannerisms, wears her clothes and learns her lines. Becoming Margo's 'understudy' in the theatre echoes a process already well underway outside the theatre.

Eve's passion for the theatre is linked to her desire for personal affirmation and a sense of belonging. She equates the applause of an audience with love and has convinced herself that this is more important than anything else. When Eve bows to a fantasy audience as she holds up Margo's costume, she is imagining the 'waves of love coming over the footlights and wrapping' her up. By contrast, after a lifetime in front of audiences, Margo understands that their fickle approval is no substitute for real love.

Eve shows no loyalty to those who have helped and encouraged her but, with Machiavellian arrogance, focuses on her own agenda. She is prepared to blackmail Karen in order to get the part of Cora, saying she would 'do much more for a part that good'. Having abused Karen

and Margo's trust, she subsequently tries to sabotage their personal relationships. After Eve has destroyed the collective goodwill, Margo christens her 'Little Miss Evil' (Chapter 22).

Eve tells Karen, 'I've always considered myself a very clever girl – smart, good head on my shoulders'. This is partially true but, like all narcissists, Eve's vision is clouded and she fails to appreciate the threat posed by Addison DeWitt when she encourages him to 'take charge'. While Eve is obviously sorry that Addison has caught her out, there is no evidence of remorse on her part or any suggestion that she has learned a lesson. Presumably, her hope in relocating to Hollywood is to escape Addison's sphere of influence. There is a hint of vulnerability at the end in Eve's loneliness and alienation, but the audience is positioned to feel that she has received exactly what she deserves. The clear implication is that Phoebe will show the same ruthlessness as Eve herself, and the narrative has come full circle.

Key point

Eve's journey to success comes at considerable personal cost. Her lack of empathy blindsides her to the consequences of her choices, but ultimately she discovers the folly of building a career based on lies and manipulation.

Margo Channing (Bette Davis)

Key quotes

'Ms Channing is ageless.'

'We know you ... is it over, or is it just beginning?' (Karen)

'You're maudlin and full of self-pity. You're magnificent.' (Addison)

Margo Channing has been a star ever since her debut as a naked fairy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the age of four. She is brilliant, gifted and formidable – a grand diva of the theatre. Margo is the quintessential

professional and never misses a performance. As Karen explains, it is not so much a case of 'the show must go on', but of 'Margo must go on': 'if she can walk, crawl or roll, she plays'. Margo can be imperious, peremptory or acerbic, depending on her mood. Conversely, with close friends, she demonstrates a boisterous, even self-deprecating sense of humour and, in spite of her worldly cynicism, she can also be sentimental and soft-hearted. Margo is easily seduced by Eve's narrative of loss and hardship, and the close-up of her face as Eve tells her story is one of the earliest hints of the actress's soft centre.

From the opening scene, Margo is set up in opposition to Eve. She is, according to Addison, who is circumspect in his praise, a 'true star'. His tone implies that, as an actor, Margo has an integrity and charisma that is difficult to duplicate. Outwardly, the two women appear to have much in common. Both have rare talent and both will share stellar careers: Addison tells Margo that 'In time, she'll be what you are'. Furthermore, in claiming Margo as her 'benefactress and champion', Eve is cleverly positioning herself, by association, as Margo's natural successor. However, unlike Eve, Margo has not been prepared to sacrifice her essential humanity in the pursuit of fame. Eve (ironically) lauds her as the genuine article: 'a great actress and a great woman'.

Margo is often difficult and is famous for her histrionics; Lloyd contends that she has a genius for creating 'bar-room brawls' out of 'innocent misunderstandings'. In a frank moment, Margo confesses ruefully that 'infants behave the way I do', perhaps reflecting on her rudeness and maudlin self-pity during Bill's party. Despite the fact that she is often driven by her passions, Margo is no fool and she is one of the first to mistrust Eve's motives. The alarm bells go off after Eve places a birthday call to Bill on Margo's behalf and she starts to feel manipulated by the younger woman.

Insecurities

On face value, Margo has everything a woman could want. By general consensus, she is considered 'a great actress at the peak of her career'

and enjoys all the material trappings that come with fame and success. Furthermore, she is in a committed relationship with a man who adores her and has a circle of loyal and loving friends. Yet, happiness eludes her. Margo has just turned forty and is ambivalent about the milestone: 'I hadn't quite made up my mind to admit it'. Like many actors, she is insecure and needs constant reassurance about her talent and desirability. She is more than conscious of ageing in a profession that places a premium on youth and beauty. Furthermore, Margo's insecurity is compounded by the fact that her lover, Bill Sampson, is eight years younger, and she is painfully aware of this age difference.

Margo is frightened of being alone, but wants to be loved for herself, as opposed to the glittering public image. In fact, she queries what 'Margo Channing' means at all – aside from a name in lights and a 'temperament'. She is hesitant to commit to the relationship with Bill, not because she doesn't love him, but because she worries that he is unable to separate the real woman from the actress. She is anxious that 'if I can't tell them apart, how can he?' Margo's monologue in the car with Karen is very revealing. Her envy of Eve's youth, femininity and apparent helplessness is driven by the cultural definition of what is considered attractive in a woman. Consequently, she admits that she wants to be all of these things for Bill. Margo sees 'being a woman' as a 'career' and insists to Karen that 'sooner or later, we've got to work at it, no matter how many other careers we've had or wanted'. She believes that without love 'you're not a woman' and favourable press clippings are a poor substitute for the lack of a fulfilling relationship. Even in this moment of candid self-reflection, Margo is the consummate actress, conscious of her audience: 'Slow curtain. The end'.

Key point

At the beginning of the film, Margo is at a professional and emotional crossroads. Her twin fears of ageing and losing Bill weigh heavily on her mind. However, 'the good that Eve leaves behind' invites a new perspective. Margo learns to trust and to prioritise, and gains a fresh confidence with regard to her professional options.

Karen Richards (Celeste Holm)

Key quotes

'... just a playwright's wife – I'm the lowest form of celebrity.'
'Happy little housewife.' (Margo)

Addison observes that Karen is of the theatre 'by marriage' (to Lloyd). She is 'fanatically devoted' to her husband and fiercely defensive of his talent and reputation. Ordinarily, she attends the rehearsals of his new plays, as well as off-Broadway openings – her absence from the rehearsals and the New Haven premiere of *Footsteps on the Ceiling* is pointed. In turn, Lloyd trusts his wife's judgement and relies on her advice. Before being diverted by Eve, he reassures Karen that he will not be making any changes to the casting of his new play without her input.

Karen's sympathetic kindness and trusting nature are evident from the outset. Karen accepts Eve's story on face value and spontaneously offers her friendship to the young woman after their first meeting. Lloyd later refers to Karen's 'bitter cynicism', but, in fact, she gives Eve the benefit of the doubt for as long as she is able. However, Eve's behaviour shows Karen that the world is not as well-intentioned as she had assumed.

Karen and Margo

Karen's upbringing has been very different from Margo's – when the latter is drunk, she disparagingly alludes to Karen's family wealth. Karen values the long friendship she has shared with Margo and her gracious dignity provides an effective balance to the actress's temperament. Generally, Karen makes allowances for Margo's tantrums, but she finds it difficult to tolerate bad manners or deliberate cruelty: 'It's about time Margo realised that what's attractive on stage need not necessarily be attractive off'. Karen's 'boot in the rear' to her close friend is well-meaning, though ill-advised, as it places Margo in Eve's power. When

the prank backfires, Karen is horrified to find herself blackmailed by her erstwhile protégé.

Karen and Lloyd

Karen is rendered vulnerable by Eve's designs on her husband. Miserably, Karen senses Lloyd gravitating towards Eve and feels powerless: 'That helplessness you feel when you have no talent to offer, outside of loving your husband'. Eve's youth is presented as a threat to both Margo and Karen. Faced with a gifted and considerably more ruthless adversary, Karen despairs of competing: 'Everything Lloyd loved about me, he'd gotten used to long ago'. However, the pairing that Addison calls 'an unholy alliance' does not eventuate. At the Siddons banquet, Karen has Lloyd back by her side and has recovered her graceful composure, although she has too much pride to endorse Eve's success beyond a terse greeting at the close of the ceremony.

Addison DeWitt (George Sanders)

Key quotes

'I have lived in the theatre as a Trappist monk lives in his faith. I have no other world, no other life.'

'I'm nobody's fool – least of all yours.' (to Eve)

Addison's narration bookends the extended flashback that tells Eve's story. He introduces himself, with supreme arrogance, to those uninformed few who 'do not read, attend the theatre, listen to unsponsored radio programs or know anything of the world in which you live', explaining that he is 'essential' to the theatre, his 'natural habitat', though he admits that 'in it I toil not, neither do I spin'. His paraphrasing of Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount – referenced in the gospels of both Matthew and Luke – is revealing. Addison is implying that, like the lilies of the field and despite his apparent idleness, he rivals King Solomon 'in all his

glory'. It is also a reference to Addison's status in the theatrical world. As a New York critic and commentator, he is immensely powerful, and young hopefuls, like Eve, read his daily column as if it were the Bible.

Addison's image

Addison's urbane image disguises an underlying hostility towards the world that feeds into, and poisons, his relationships. By his own admission, he is incapable of affection or loyalty. The vindictiveness that he can display in his reviews and his contemptuous, superior manner alienate many; therefore he is generally disliked, and certainly mistrusted, by the theatrical fraternity. Lloyd labels Addison a 'venomous fishwife'; to Margo, he is simply 'Rasputin'.

Of necessity, Addison is tolerated as an unavoidable evil. When he turns up, apparently uninvited, to Margo's party, Margo and her friends are cordial but aloof. Addison's young companion, Miss Casswell, is one of his projects. Addison sees himself as a patron of the arts and a nurturer of fresh talent – but only if there is something in it for him. Addison's sexuality is ambiguous, and although he clearly has relationships with women these are superficial at best and exploitative at worst.

Addison and Eve

Addison quickly recognises Eve's potential – he calls her reading 'a revelation' – and, correctly, senses a kindred spirit. He has a strong perception of his own 'otherness', telling Eve that they are both 'improbable' people who share a 'contempt for humanity, an inability to love and be loved, insatiable ambition and talent'. Addison's vanity is such that he assumes Eve will be flattered by his attentions, as so many others have been; he concludes that 'we deserve each other'. However, he miscalculates Eve's response and reacts violently to her scorn, for once letting his controlled mask slip: 'Now remember, as long as you live, never to laugh at me. At anything or anyone else, but never at me!' In demanding Eve's submission, Addison plainly enjoys the power he wields over her.

Bill Sampson (Gary Merrill)

Key quotes

'What I go after, I want to go after. I don't want it to come after me.'

'I'll marry you if it turns out you have no blood at all.' (Margo)

Bill is self-assured and confident, a young director whose star is in the ascent. Eve calls him 'the best and most successful young director in the theatre'. Bill's flourishing career on Broadway has not led to any misplaced snobbery with regard to directing in Hollywood and he is prepared to juggle both film and stage-work. In spite of Eve's observation that 'so few come back', he does return to the Broadway stage. Bill's views on the theatre are pragmatic and down-to-earth. He admits to Addison that the theatre contains a 'screwball element', but is adamant that the theatre could not survive unless it was predominantly about expertise and unadulterated hard work.

Similarly, Bill refuses to indulge the Margo Channing mystique; in his first scene, he tells her affectionately that she is 'looking like a junkyard!' He is sometimes tolerant of Margo's moods and is more inclined to disengage than be drawn in when she is throwing a tantrum. Bill admits to her that there are 'certain characteristics for which you are famous, on stage and off. I love you for some of them and in spite of others'. He recognises that these qualities are part of Margo's armoury and acknowledges that, in the theatrical 'rat-race', she has to 'keep her teeth sharp'. However, Bill insists, 'I will not have you sharpen them on me'. He has no hesitation in standing up to the star when he considers that she is being unreasonable, and he is a strong enough character to challenge her – even walk away from her – if necessary.

Despite Margo's concerns, Bill does love Margo for herself. He attempts to diffuse her fears regarding the age difference between them, dismissing her 'age obsession' as irrelevant paranoia. He rejects Eve's clumsy attempt at seduction and when Margo is humiliated by Addison's poisonous review, Bill immediately rushes to comfort her. In turn, Margo

knows, even though he is 'conceited and thoughtless and messy', that they are lucky to have found each other.

Lloyd Richards (Hugh Marlowe)

Key quotes

'All playwrights should be dead for three hundred years.' (Margo)

'Lloyd Richards is commercially the most successful playwright in America ... and artistically, the most promising.' (Addison)

Lloyd is a contented man. He enjoys a happy marriage and is highly regarded in his profession. His plays have been effective vehicles for Margo Channing and both have done well from the partnership. Given that Lloyd is a writer, it is not surprising that he has some of the most articulate lines in the film. He can be eloquent – such as in his generous toast to Margo and Bill – or cutting, as the situation demands. In his heated exchange with Margo, the metaphors fly back and forth, with Lloyd, rather pompously, having the last word: 'It's about time the piano realised it has not written the concerto'.

Eve's entry into the Richardses' lives shatters Lloyd's complacency. Despite working in a cut-throat business like the theatre, he is curiously impressionable and is quite taken in by Eve's 'quality of quiet graciousness'. He continues to defend her, long after Karen and the others have recognised her blatant opportunism. By the time Addison's review is published, Lloyd still views Eve as a victim rather than a villain. Presumably, after summarily failing with Bill, Eve does try to seduce the more susceptible Lloyd, but to what extent she succeeds is left to the imagination of the audience. Certainly Addison dismisses her story of a proposed marriage as pure fantasy. The final affectionate exchange between Lloyd and Karen after the Siddons dinner, when he offers her his award, makes it clear that Lloyd's love and loyalty remain with his wife: 'For services rendered beyond the ... whatever-it-is of duty, darling'.

Max Fabian (Gregory Ratoff)

Key quotes

'Let the rest of the world beat their brains out for a buck.'

'Who am I to threaten? I'm a dying man.'

In accepting her award, Eve commends 'dear, sentimental, generous, courageous Max Fabian'. Unlike the others at his table, Max seems genuinely pleased at Eve's achievement. Or, perhaps, he is simply delighted that his gamble has paid off and his backers can recoup their investment. Addison indicates that Max is less interested in art for its own sake than in the profit margin of any given production. He has become a very successful Broadway producer by following his hunches. The fact that Max takes a chance on an 'unknown, untried amateur' not only shows a willingness to take risks, but also a shrewd ability to recognise talent.

At the same time, Max has a kind heart and is not averse to doing a favour for a friend. If anything, he tries to please everybody. He agrees to give Eve a job in order to satisfy Margo and, later, makes Eve Margo's understudy when Karen intervenes on her young friend's behalf. However, Max neglects to tell Margo of the new arrangement – probably because he is not confident of her response – prompting her accusation that he is a 'sly puss'.

DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL

Birdie Coonan (Thelma Ritter)

Key quotes

'I haven't got a union – I'm slave labour.'

'You want an argument or an answer?'

Birdie is Margo's long-time friend and companion. She has a theatrical background of her own, having played successfully in vaudeville, and

until Eve's arrival it is Birdie who acts as Margo's dresser, maid and general dogsbody. She is tireless and fiercely loyal to Margo.

Birdie is tough and cynical, with a wealth of common sense and shrewd, honest instincts. Listening to Eve's tale of woe in Margo's dressing room, Birdie irreverently responds, 'What a story – everything but the bloodhounds snapping at her rear end'. In other words, Eve's account is melodramatic and far-fetched. At the same time, given that the others are clearly taken in, Birdie is good-hearted enough to appreciate that she is outnumbered and apologises to Eve.

Birdie has a low tolerance for Margo's grandstanding. The two bicker without rancour and, ultimately, Margo values what Birdie has to say. Birdie is suspicious of Eve from the start, disliking how Eve has been 'studying' Margo. Birdie makes the important distinction between Eve thinking *of* Margo and thinking *about* her, implying self-interest on Eve's part. Time proves her correct.

Claudia Casswell (Marilyn Monroe)

Key quotes

'A graduate of the Copacabana school of dramatic art.' (Addison)

'She looks like she might burn down a plantation.' (Margo)

As played by Marilyn Monroe in one of her first screen roles, Claudia is the classic blonde bombshell. She arrives at Margo's party, on the arm of her mentor Addison DeWitt, in a glamorous evening gown calculated to make an impression. Addison's reference to the Copacabana, a famous New York City nightclub, implies that Claudia's theatrical experience has been confined to a chorus line. It might also be assumed that she is a graduate of the 'casting couch' school of drama. Her weary question to Addison when he points her in the direction of Max Fabian – 'Why do they always look like unhappy rabbits?' – reveals she has been down this path before.

Claudia makes an interesting contrast to Eve and the two are explicitly compared at Claudia's audition. Although Claudia has many obvious physical assets, she has little of Eve's natural aptitude for the stage and is completely overshadowed. Nevertheless, like Eve, Claudia is prepared to do whatever it takes in order to gain an entree into the business. After the abortive audition for *Aged in Wood*, Addison continues to micro-manage her career, suggesting that her next move be into television.

Phoebe (Barbara Bates)

Key quotes

'I call myself Phoebe.'

'I don't care if I never get home.'

Phoebe's brief appearance at the end of the film is designed to underline the film's moral message. Phoebe is a younger, less subtle version of Eve: she is an ambitious young woman who fantasises about stardom, and who decides that the quickest route to fame is to attach herself to her idol. She brazenly sneaks into Eve's apartment and works quickly to establish her usefulness.

Phoebe's flirtatious manner towards Addison suggests that she will cultivate any relationship that might prove useful. In turn, Addison recognises, from the reverent way in which Phoebe handles the Siddons award, that 'more than anything else in the world', she, too, would like the acclaim it represents. His advice – 'Then you must ask Miss Harrington how to get one' – neatly acknowledges both Eve's mastery and Phoebe's desire for self-aggrandisement.

All About Eve – Themes

Fame and Success

The film *All About Eve* is considered to be fifty years ahead of its time as it portrays what the future has become, with our obsessive adoration of celebrity, fame and stardom. The media has become completely overrun with what minor or major celebrities in film, music, sport etc. do, wear, eat, say and think. Industries such as magazines are filled with their stories, their fashions, their hair and so on. Celebrities are worshipped by fans and this has become even more so with social media such as Twitter and Facebook. In fact these types of sites have also allowed every day, non famous individuals to have their own profiles and lives on display as though they are celebrated celebrities. Even television programs focus around having celebrity judges in every arena as well as reality television. This obsession does not seem to be waning. It is harder nowadays because at least up until the end of the 1950s, the Hollywood Star System monitored and projected its own image of stars and it was harder to peep into the stars' scandals, affairs and so on. These days there is no protection and it is a free for all.

Nevertheless, the lure of fame and fortune is a powerful one and there may be many causes for this. It may just be the easy money; it could be compensatory for a sense of not being important enough, but certainly fame can be addictive. Many famous people fall down hard when their star is no longer the brightest and the newer stars come along. Many sacrifices are often made by people in the small chance/hope that they will become a success story. The camera is ruthless and a slim, healthy and fit body must be maintained. Youthfulness is essential, especially for women, who so often resort to Botox and cosmetic surgery. Some stars today are opting to find a surrogate mother to give birth to their children so they can continue working.

We see Eve's drive for success is so powerful that she will step over everyone and everything to get there. In the end she has to take Addison's authority and manipulation over *her*, which is a shock. Margo was also a big star and we can see she let the fame go to her head, as she often had tantrums and expected everyone to revolve around her.

The problem with striving to be a successful and famous person is that only a few are going to make it to the top and no one will stay there for long. One needs to ask if the sacrifices are worth it, especially as most people will not make it to the top, or anywhere near the top.

Decisions and Choices

There are several key turning points in the film and they occur because of the choices individuals make. Every choice and decision has repercussions, some good, some bad and but none neutral. Often we think that we can take actions and get away with any consequences, but that is not true. Every choice will also impact on others in some way, even if we are not aware of it. Eve chooses to put her drive for success as the only thing she cares about, so she has chosen to overlook the loss of trust, her own self-respect and any damage she is creating to other people. Life is a series of decisions that lead to other choices and so on, shaping the way our life pans out.

Trust

Eve's actions lead her to break the trust she has with everyone, as she manipulates others for her own selfish needs. It is very hard to win back trust once we have lost it as it is an essential aspect of friendships and relationships. Without trust there can be no honesty and without this there can be no intimacy. In the end, everyone feels angry towards Eve and the only 'friends' she made have been betrayed by her. Perhaps it means that this will make Eve's success and fame hollow or less than what she dreamed of? There does not seem to be much evidence of this as she is presented as so one-sided and driven.

All About Eve – Themes

Women and Work

Margo has worked hard to get where she is and she has struggled to balance her love life with her successful career, which involves focus, long hours and arduous performances/ rehearsals. In the field she works it is essential she spends most of her time with those she works with. They become her family and friends. She is nervous about her relationship with Bill because she does not want to fail him and herself. Of course this is an issue for women, particularly women in the 1950s.

Margo discusses with Karen about the challenges women face when they want to have a relationship and career, especially in a society where women are expected to be homemakers and mothers. These days, especially since the 1970s, women have been sold the message that ‘we can have it all...’ – motherhood, career, marriage, sex etc. This is not an issue for men but it has always been an issue for women who are often cast into an either/or situation. In fact, this is ridiculous because most women need to be both, regardless of their preferences. Even when women stay home as mothers, they often return to work before their child is ready to go to school. When a certain commercial came on pitting ‘mums who stay at home and bake’ versus ‘working mums who have a life’, it had to be taken off the air due to outrage, from women.

Margo was worried about marrying Bill at first in case he would stop her from working. In the time the film was made, married women did not choose careers over husbands and children. Furthermore, Margo does not want to be left an old spinster who looks back on her successful career as she sits home alone, pining for love. Everyone wants love and intimacy; it is a basic human need.

If some of the dialogue about the role of women seems a little forced, it is because the film had to be relevant to the expectations of society at the time. It would not have been possible for Margo not to accept Bill’s marriage proposal and be seen as having made a successful decision for her own happiness. It would not have been possible for Eve to steal Karen’s husband because that was immoral and adulterous. The fact that Addison of all (amoral) people comes to Karen’s aid because she is a virtuous woman is interesting. 1950 was only a few years after the end of World War II when many women had been asked for the first time by society to go out and do ‘men’s work’. By the time the film was made, it was expected that everything should be ‘back to normal’ and women were back to being domestics.

Sexuality

The film portrays happiness as something that is bestowed on ‘normal’ heterosexual couples such as Margo and Bill, and Karen and Lloyd. These are wholesome relationships that are condoned by society. At the time there was a great deal of paranoia and fear of homosexuality. It may be subtle to us these days, but Addison and Eve are considered homosexual characters by most critics, and they are left with a loveless, bizarre union based on ownership. In fact the homosexuals in the film are seen as sterile, cold predators. To fit in with the strict Code enforced in Hollywood from 1930 to 1960ish, a woman was only a woman if she was with a man. The two most evil characters in the film are those who do not fit this norm- Eve and Addison. Especially at the start of the film, Eve is seen by Birdie as ‘creepy’ because she is obsessed with watching Margo. At the end of the film, watch Eve’s body language as she poses languidly in front of Phoebe; it is quite suggestive. Some have even suggested that Birdie may have had strong feelings towards Margo and this is why she was so jealous about Eve’s arrival on the scene.

Addison is the confirmed bachelor – a catty queen with great taste, a love of the arts and gossip. He is the stereotypical gay man.

Symbol	Significance	As seen in the scene...
Mirrors	<p>When we see a mirror in the film, someone is learning something else about themselves or their situation. A mirror dominates Margo's dressing room emphasizing the importance of who she is and how she sees herself in the world.</p> <p>We see Eve bowing before the imaginary and adoring crowds as she parades around with Margo's dress before a mirror. She is caught in the act; we are seeing a hidden part of herself, her true self.</p> <p>At the end of the film, Phoebe is parading in front of a three-way mirror and her reflection continues infinitely. In a sense the film makes voyeurs of us all as we gaze on at the lovely dresses, stylish spaces and opulent theatres. When we gaze into a mirror, what are we looking for? Acceptance?</p>	
Gatherings	<p>There are many gatherings in the film from the Awards ceremony, to restaurants and the party. Again this is where new information is often revealed. It also emphasises the lack of privacy and how communal the theatre is.</p>	
Eve's Award	<p>Eve's Award represents everything she has strived for and is her ultimate achievement. Not all things have gone her way, but most have and we have watched her carefully plan her every move and strike. The Award also reminds us that Eve has transformed from the so called innocent victim and Margo's fan, to the most successful actress. Now she can also be spoilt and have tantrums, like Margo had in the past.</p>	
Dresses and Coats	<p>Rightly or wrongly, we do judge others based on exterior presentation. These actors and related professionals wear stunning gowns, coats and suits. Everything is about appearances, and these appearances say 'Look at me! I've arrived! I've made it'.</p> <p>Compare this to Eve's shabby coat at the start of the film; she has 'come a long way'.</p>	

Taxi Cabs	Taxis always appear to designate a character transitioning into or out of the theatre. It also denotes someone as being an insider vs. outsiders. The simple act of coming and going forces a shift in focus from inside the theatre to outside.	
Staircases	Symbolise a characters 'standing' within the company they are keeping. The stairs literally show who has higher status, and can also act as an oppressive symbol, standing under a staircase for example can symbolise someone being trapped by their status, or without desire to alter their status.	

MOTIFS

Mirrors

Mirrors are an important motif in *All About Eve*, and they can be seen in a number of scenes.

- *Back stage in Margo's dressing room (commencing Chapter 4)*

The mirror is present in many of the camera shots when Eve is introduced to Margo and the others.

(Chapter 8)

Later, during Eve's employment with Margo, Eve is arranging her hair in the mirror as she draws Margo's attention to the new curtains she has made.

- *Back stage (Chapter 8)*

Eve is bowing to an imaginary audience in the chevalier mirror while holding Margo's costume up before her.

- *Margo's bedroom (Chapter 9)*

There is a mirror in the scene while Margo and Birdie share knowing looks about Eve having sent birthday messages to Bill.

(Chapter 10)

Margo is dressing at her bedroom mirror for Bill's party and wonders to Birdie why Bill seems to be late.

(Chapter 12)

Later, Karen is arranging her hair in the same mirror while talking about fur coats and Eve's desire to become Margo's understudy.

- *Margo's dressing room (Chapter 17)*

This is the night that Eve played instead of Margo. When Bill rejects her advances she throws her wig at the mirror in anger.

- *Eve's hotel room (Chapter 26)*

Eve first sees the intruder Phoebe in the mirror while fixing herself a drink.

(Chapter 26)

Phoebe wears Eve's gown and holds her award and bows to an imaginary audience in a replication of images of herself.

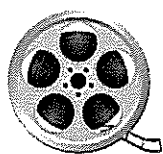
At the simplest level, the metaphor represents the movie cameras being turned on to the movie industry itself as the subject of the film.

However, the mirrors also represent the nature of theatre and cinema, that they are about looking at an image. But only at the image as it presents itself to the audience – it does not reveal anything about what is behind the image – the 40 year old actor playing much younger women, or the do-whatever-it-takes attitude of the ambitious. The mirror also does not reveal the cares and concerns of the actors, and the egos. Those who are most reflected in the mirrors are those who are most concerned with themselves and with image – Margo, Eve and Phoebe.

All About Eve – Theatrical and Cinematic Terms

- What do the following terms mean?

Term	Meaning
Playwright	
Dramaturge	
Director	
Producer	
Prima donna	
Sets	
Understudy	
Theatre Run	
Broadway	
Off Broadway	
Critic	
Stage Manager	
Props	
Auditorium	
Box Office	
Curtain Call	
Dresser	
Wings	
Vaudeville	



Film Techniques

The following table explains some of the more commonly used filmic techniques and how they might be used by the director to help 'tell' the story. Complete the table providing specific examples from *All About Eve*.

(For a visual representation of the techniques, visit the following link: <http://teacherweb.com/WA/CloverParkHighSchool/MsSelby/Basic-Cinematic-Techniques.pdf>)

SOME FILMIC TECHNIQUES				
FILM TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	USUAL EFFECT OF TECHNIQUE	EXAMPLE FROM ALL ABOUT EVE	WHAT MESSAGE OR FEELING DOES THE EXAMPLE CONVEY TO THE AUDIENCE?
CAMERA SHOTS				
Long Shot	Looking into the distance, often with something in the foreground.	Gives a sense of setting and people in the setting		
Close Up	An object fills the frame / screen.	Provides detail; facial close ups highlight emotions.		
Extreme Close Up	An object fills the frame completely, and may extend beyond the frame.	To provide great detail and focus our attention on a particular character/object.		
Point of View	When the camera is the character, so we see things from that character's point of view.	Emphasises the character and shows people and events from his/her perspective.		
Overhead / Aerial Shot	When the action is shot from above (giving a bird's eye view).	Gives a bird's eye view of the action unfolding.		
Cutaway or Jump Cut	A sudden cut between shots.	This has a jarring effect.		

CAMERA ANGLES			
Low	camera shoots the scene from below	subject seems large & powerful	
High	camera shoots the scene from above	subject seems small, powerless & insignificant	
CAMERA MOVEMENTS			
Panning	camera moves left or right	creates interest and drama	
Zooming	the camera moves in or out of a shot, usually rapidly	quick zooms have a dramatic effect. Zooming in can highlight an action or an event; zooming out can highlight the smallness of people in a big landscape	
SOME FILMIC ELEMENTS			
FILM ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE FROM ALL ABOUT EVE	WHAT MESSAGE OR FEELING DOES THE EXAMPLE CONVEY TO THE AUDIENCE?
MISE-EN-SCENE	The composition of everything in each scene, how it has been framed.		
SETTING	Where the action takes place; the location of the scenes.		
LIGHTING	Bright / high key lighting. (Dim, shadowy / light is low key lighting)	Strong, clear, light; this lighting can be daylight or artificial.	
SOFT FOCUS	the filmed image is not sharp; often used to romanticise or hide something		
SOUNDTRACK			
Music	Can be background (incidental) or used in the script.		

ALL ABOUT EVE

Quotes



MARGO CHANNING

- "Everybody has a heart- except some people." - Margo
- "There are some human experiences, Birdie, that do not take place in a vaudeville house - and that even a fifth-rate vaudevillian should understand and respect!"
- "Suddenly, I've developed a big protective feeling for her. A lamb loose in our big stone jungle."
- "Funny business, a woman's career. The things you drop on your way up the ladder so you can move faster. You forget you'll need them again when you get back to being a woman."
- "Lloyd, I am not twenty-ish. I am not thirty-ish. Three months ago, I was forty years old. Forty. Four oh - That slipped out. I hadn't quite made up my mind to admit it. Now I suddenly feel as if I've taken all my clothes off."
- "Bill's thirty-two. He looks thirty-two. He looked it five years ago, he'll look it twenty years from now. I hate men."
- *[to Bill]* "This is my house, not a theatre. In my house, you're a guest, not a director." –
- "Am I going to lose you, Bill?"
- "The only thing I ordered by mistake is the guests...They're domestic, too, and they don't care what they drink as long as it burns..."
- "In this rat race, everybody's guilty till they're proved innocent!"
- "...she won't get away with it, nor will Addison De Witt and his poison pen. If Equity or my lawyer can't or won't do anything about it, I shall personally stuff that pathetic little lost lamb down Mr De Witt's ugly throat."
- "Never have I been so happy...I'm forgiving tonight, even Eve, I forgive Eve"
- "...Do you know what I'm going to be?...A married lady...No more make believe off stage or on"
- "I don't want to play Cora...It's a great part in a fine play. But not for... a four-square, upright, downright, forthright married lady"
- "I finally got a life to live. I don't have to play parts I'm too old for, just because I've got nothing to do with my nights."
- "Nice speech, Eve. But I wouldn't worry too much about your heart. You can always put that award where your heart ought to be."

- "Bill, don't get stuck on some glamour-puss... You're a set-up for some gorgeous, wide-eyed young bait."
- (To Bill) "A girl of so many rare qualities...So you've pointed out so often. So many qualities so often. Her loyalty, efficiency, devotion, warmth, and affection, and so young. So young and so fair."
- "I'm fed up with both the young lady and her qualities. Studying me as if I were a play or a blueprint, how I walk, talk, think, act, sleep..."
- "There are particular aspects of my life to which I would like to maintain sole and exclusive rights and privileges.... For instance, you."
- "What about her teeth? What about her fangs?"
- "We haven't finished with the embalming. As a matter of fact, you're looking at it - the remains of Margo Channing, sitting up."
- You're in a beehive, pal. Didn't you know? We're all busy little bees, full of stings, making honey, day and night. *[To Eve]* Aren't we, honey?"
- (To Lloyd) "[An actress decides they're her words and thoughts she's expressing] usually at the point when she has to rewrite and rethink them to keep the audience from leaving the theatre."
- (To Bill) "You're being terribly tolerant, aren't you?... But you needn't be. I will not be tolerated and I will not be plotted against."
- "What do you all take me for - Little Nell from the country? Been my understudy for over a week without my knowing it, carefully hidden no doubt."
- "It's obvious you're not a woman."
- "I'll admit I may have seen better days, but I'm still not to be had for the price of a cocktail, like a salted peanut."
- "So many people know me. I wish I did. I wish someone would tell me about me."
- "What is ["Margo"] besides something spelled out in lightbulbs?"
- "[What is "Margo"] besides something called a temperament which consists mostly of swooping about on a broomstick and screaming at the top of my voice?"
- "Infants behave the way I do...They carry on and misbehave...get drunk if they knew how, when they can't have what they want. When they feel unwanted or insecure or unloved."
- "Bill's in love with Margo Channing. He's fought with her, worked with her, and loved her. But ten years from now, Margo Channing will have ceased to exist. And what's left will be - what?"
- "Those [eight] years stretch as the years go on. I've seen it happen too often."

- "About Eve, I've acted pretty disgracefully toward her... At best, let's say I've been oversensitive to her...to the fact that she's so young, so feminine and so helpless, too so many things I want to be for Bill."
- "There's one career all females have in common - whether we like it or not: being a woman. Sooner or later, we've got to work at it, no matter how many other careers we've had or wanted." And, in the last analysis, nothing is any good unless you can look up just before dinner or turn around in bed - and there he is. Without that, you're not a woman. You're something with a French provincial office or a - a book full of clippings, but you're not a woman. Slow curtain. The End."



EVE HARRINGTON

- "...acting and make believe began to fill up my life more and more. It got so I couldn't tell the real from the unreal. Except that the unreal seemed more real to me."
- "I think that part of Miss Channing's greatness lies in her ability to pick the best plays."
- "When you're a secretary in a brewery, it's pretty hard to make-believe you're anything else. Everything is beer."
- "And then one night, Margo Channing came to play in Remembrance and I went to see it. Well, here I am."
- "If nothing else, there's applause... like waves of love pouring over the footlights and wrapping you up."
- "I'll never forget this night as long as I live, and I'll never forget you for making it possible."
- "Lloyd loves me, I love him...I'm in love with Lloyd...Oh Addison, won't it be just perfect? Lloyd and I - there's no telling how far we can go. He'll write great plays for me, I'll make them great."
- "To know, every night, that different hundreds of people love you. They smile, and their eyes shine. You've pleased them. They want you. You belong. Just that alone is worth anything."
- "I'm afraid Mr De Witt would find me boring before too long."
- (To Bill): "[The makeup's] for you."
- "One pretty good performance by an understudy - it'll be forgotten by tomorrow."
- (to DeWitt) "You take charge."
- (To Karen) "If I play Cora, Addison will never tell what happened, in or out of print. A simple exchange of favours. I'm so happy I can do something for you at long last."
- (To Karen) "Your friendship with Margo - your deep, close friendship. What would happen to it, do you think, if she knew the cheap trick you played on her for my benefit?"

- (To Karen) "How long...before people forgot what happened and trusted you again? ...it would be so much easier for everyone concerned if I would play Cora."
- (To Karen) "I'd do much more for a part that good."
- "Isn't it strange...? I thought I'd be panic-stricken, want to run away or something. Instead, I can't wait for tonight to come, to come and go"
- "[Tomorrow]" will bring me everything I've ever wanted. The end of an old road. The beginning of a new one...paved with...stars"
- "The setting wasn't romantic, but Lloyd was...He'd left Karen."
- (To DeWitt) "Champion to champion."
- "I had to get in to meet Margo! I had to say something, be somebody, make her like me!"



ADDISON DeWITT

- "... the highest honour our theatre knows - the Sarah Siddons Award for Distinguished Achievement"
- "Minor awards are for such as the writer and director since their function is merely to construct a tower so that the world can applaud a light which flashes on top of it."
- "...no brighter light has ever dazzled the eye than Eve Harrington."
- "My native habitat is the theatre. In it, I toil not, neither do I spin. I am a critic and commentator. I am essential to the theatre."
- (About Karen Richards) "Nothing in her background or breeding should have brought her any closer to the stage than Row E, Center. However, during her senior year at Radcliffe, Lloyd Richards lectured on the drama."
- "There are in general two types of theatrical producers. One has a great many wealthier friends who will risk a tax deductible loss. This type is interested in art. The other is one to whom each production means potential ruin or fortune. This type is out to make a buck."
- "Margo Channing is a Star of the Theatre...Margo is a great Star. A true star. She never was or will be anything less or anything else."
- "Time has been good to Eve. Life goes where she goes. She's the profiled, covered, revealed, reported. What she eats and what she wears and whom she knows and where she was, and when and where she's going...You all know all about Eve."
- "Dear Margo. You were an unforgettable Peter Pan. You must play it again soon."
- "Every now and then some elder statesman of the theatre or cinema assures the public that actors and actresses are just plain folks. Ignoring the fact that their greatest attraction to the public is their complete lack of resemblance to normal human beings."

- *[Margo reading Addison's column:]* "I am once more available for dancing in the streets and shouting from the housetops. I thought *that* one went out with Wollcott. Miss Harrington had much to tell and these columns shall report her faithfully about the lamentable practice in our theatre of permitting...mature actresses to continue playing roles requiring a youth and vigour which they retain but a dim memory...about the understandable reluctance on the part of our entrenched first ladies of the stage to encourage, shall we say, younger actresses about Miss Harrington's own long and supported struggle for opportunity."
- "I have lived in the theatre as a Trappist monk lives in his faith. I have no other world; no other life"
- "...once in a great while, I experience that moment of revelation for which all true believers wait and pray. You were one. Jeanne Eagels another...there are others, three or four. Eve Harrington will be among them."
- "We all have abnormality in common. We're a breed apart from the rest of humanity, we theatre folk; we are the original displaced personalities."
- "As always with women who try to find out things, she told more than she learned."
- "That I should want you at all suddenly strikes me as the height of improbability"
- "You're an improbable person, Eve, and so am I. We have that in common. Also a contempt for humanity, an inability to love and be loved, insatiable ambition - and talent. We deserve each other"
- "...you realize and you agree how completely you belong to me?"
- (To Miss Casswell) "Do you see that man? That's Max Fabian, the producer. Now go and do yourself some good."
- "You have a point. An idiotic one, but a point."
- (To Miss Casswell) "I can see your career rising in the east like the sun."
- (To Margo) "You're maudlin and full of self-pity"
- *[about Eve]* "It wasn't a reading. It was a performance. Brilliant, vivid, something made of music and fire."
- "In time, she'll be what you are."
- (To Eve) "I think the time has come for you to shed some of your humility. It is just as false not to blow your horn at all as it is to blow it too loudly."
- "We all come into this world with our little egos, equipped with individual horns. Now if we don't blow them, who else will?"
- "It, [one pretty good performance by an understudy], needn't be [forgotten by tomorrow]"
- "I believe I will [take charge]."

- "And tomorrow morning, you will have won your beachhead on the shores of immortality."
- "You could sleep now, couldn't you?... The mark of a true killer."
- "Sleep tight, rest easy, and come out fighting"
- "There never was and there never will be another like you"
- "Is it possible, even conceivable, that you've confused me with that gang of backward children you play tricks on? That you have the same contempt for me as you have for them?"
"Look closely, Eve. It's time you did. I am Addison De Witt. I am nobody's fool. Least of all – yours"
- "It's important right now that we talk - killer to killer...with me, you're no champion. You're stepping way up in class."
- "I've come here to tell you that you will not marry Lloyd or anyone else for that matter because I will not permit it...after tonight, you will *belong* to me."
- "I don't enjoy putting it as bluntly as this, I assumed you'd take it for granted that you and I..."
- "Now remember as long as you live, never to laugh at me. At anything or anyone else, but never at me."
- "San Francisco has no Shubert Theatre. You've never been to San Francisco! That was a stupid lie, easy to expose, not worthy of you."



KAREN RICHARDS

- "Then stop being a star. And stop treating your guests as your supporting cast...It's about time Margo realized that what's attractive on stage need not necessarily be attractive off."
- *[to Eve, who is upset]* "The reason is Margo, and don't try to figure it out. Einstein couldn't."
- "That boot in the rear to Margo. Heaven knows she had one coming. From me, from Lloyd, from Eve, Bill, Max, and so on. We'd all felt those size 5's of hers often enough."
- "It would all seem perfectly legitimate. And there were only two people in the world who would know."
- "...the boot would land where it would do the most good for all concerned."
- "...it was no more than a perfectly harmless joke that Margo herself would be the first to enjoy. And no reason why she shouldn't be told about it - in time."
- "That cynicism you refer to I acquired the day I discovered I was different from little boys."

- "Lloyd never got around somehow to asking whether it was all right with me for Eve to play Cora."
- "I'd never known Bill and Lloyd to fight as bitterly and often and always over some business for Eve... I'd never known Lloyd to meddle as much with Bill's directing"
- "It seemed to me I had known always that it would happen, and here it was. I felt helpless, that helplessness you feel when you have no talent to offer - outside of loving your husband. How could I compete? Everything Lloyd loved about me, he had gotten used to long ago."
- "You're Margo, just Margo."
- "Margo, Bill is all of eight years younger than you."
- "You are not to consider giving that contemptible little worm the part of Cora."
- "Margo Channing's not been exactly a compromise all these years. Why, half the playwrights in the world would give their shirts for that particular compromise."
- "It strikes me that Eve's disloyalty and ingratitude must be contagious."



LLOYD RICHARDS

- [about Eve] "I like that girl, that quality of quiet graciousness."
- "It's Addison from start to finish. It drips with his brand of venom. Taking advantage of a kid like that, twisting her words, making her say what he wanted her to say."
- "There are very few moments in life as good as this. Let's remember it. To each of us and all of us, never have we been more close, may we never be farther apart."
- "The atmosphere is very MacBeth-ish...what has, or is about to, happen?"
- "She can play *Peck's Bad Boy* all she wants and who's to stop her? Who's to give her that boot in the rear she needs and deserves?"
- "Actresses never die; the stars never die and never change."
- "I shall never understand the weird process by which a body with a voice suddenly fancies itself as a mind. Just when exactly does an actress decide they're her words she's saying and her thoughts she's expressing?"
- (About Margo) "It's about time the piano realize it has not written the concerto!"
- "For once to write something and have it realized completely. For once not to compromise."
- "All this fuss and hysteria because an impulsive kid got carried away by excitement and the conniving of a professional manure-slinger named De Witt. She apologized, didn't she?"

- (To Karen) "That bitter cynicism of yours is something you've acquired since you left Radcliffe."



BIRDIE COONAN

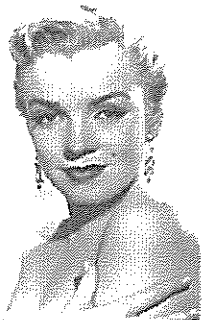
- "I haven't got a union. I'm slave labour."
- "She's studyin' you, like you was a play or a book or a set of blueprints. How you walk, talk, eat, think, sleep."
- "When she gets like this... all of a sudden she's playin' Hamlet's mother"
- "I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings, kid. It's just my way of talkin'"
- "I closed the first half for eleven years an' you know it!"
- "...next to a tenor, a wardrobe woman is the touchiest thing in show business"



BILL SAMPSON

- "What book of rules says the theatre exists only within some ugly buildings crowded into one square mile of New York City? Or London, Paris, or Vienna?"
- "A flea circus. Also opera. Also rodeos, carnivals, ballets, Indian tribal dances, Punch and Judy, a one-man band - all theatre. Wherever there's magic and make-believe and an audience - there's theatre."
- "...you don't like them all - why should you? The theatre's for everybody - you included, but not exclusively - so don't approve or disapprove. It may not be your theatre, but it's theatre for somebody, somewhere...It's just that there's so much bourgeois in this ivory green room they call the theatre."
- (To Margo) "As of this moment, you're six years old."
- (To Margo) "You know what I feel about this age obsession of yours. And now this ridiculous attempt to whip yourself up into a jealous froth because I spent ten minutes with a stage-struck kid."
- "How can you take offense at a kid trying in every way to be as much like her ideal as possible?"
- "This is my cue to take you in my arms and reassure you, but I'm not going to; I'm too mad"
- "Darling, there are certain characteristics for which you are famous onstage and off. I love you for some of them in spite of others. I haven't let those become too important. They're part of your equipment for getting along in what is laughingly called our environment. You have to keep your teeth sharp, all right. But I will not have you sharpen them on me - or on Eve."

- "Eve Harrington has never by a word, a look, or a suggestion indicated anything to me but her adoration for you and her happiness at our being in love... to intimate anything else doesn't spell jealousy to me. It spells out paranoiac insecurity that you should be ashamed of."
- "To be a good actor or actress or anything else in the theatre means wanting to be that more than anything else in the world."
- "[To be a good actor] means concentration of desire or ambition, and sacrifice such as no other profession demands"
- (About being in the theatre) "...the man or woman who accepts those terms can't be ordinary, can't be just someone. To give so much for almost always so little."
- "I am sick and tired of these paranoiac outbursts."
- "You've got to stop hurting yourself and me and the two of us by these paranoiac tantrums."
- "I love you! You're a beautiful and an intelligent woman and a great actress... at the peak of her career."
- "You have every reason for happiness. But due to some strange, uncontrollable, unconscious drive, you permit the slightest action of a kid ...like Eve to turn you into an hysterical, screaming harpy."
- "I'm in love with Margo...And I'm as curious as the next man...The only thing - what I go after, I want to go after. I don't want it to come after me."
- "The so-called art of acting is not one for which I have a particularly-high regard"



MISS CASSWELL

- "You won't bore [Mr DeWitt], honey. You won't even get a chance to talk."
- "Now there's something a girl could make sacrifices for."
- "Well, I can't yell, 'Oh, butler!' can I? Maybe somebody's name is Butler."

OLD ACTOR GIVING AWARD TO EVE

- "We know her humility, her devotion, her loyalty to her art, her love, her deep and abiding love for us, for what we are and what we do, the theatre. She has had one wish, one prayer, one dream - to belong to us. Tonight, her dream has come true. And henceforth, we shall dream the same of her. Eve. Eve the Golden Girl, the Cover Girl, the Girl Next Door, the Girl on the Moon."



»» *All About Eve* (1950) Dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz

»» Scene Summary

»» Mise-en-scene

- Take note of the costuming of characters. Are certain shades or particular styles used? What does what the characters wear suggest about their personality, status, dreams and desires?
- How do the setting and props contribute to the development of the plot? Has location filming been used? If so what effect does this have on the delivery of the story? How is the scene lit? What is the effect of the lighting? Notice the composition of the actors as a group and in the frame.
- Have any of the props or costumes been used on a symbolic level, acting as a motif or metaphor to further the narrative and enhance the development of the film's characters or themes?

»» Viewing Notes

»» Character Development

- Identify the major and minor characters that drive the narrative. What purpose do they serve?
- Encourage students to construct a profile for each character. Identify the character's style of speech, dialogue, tone of voice, actions and body language.
- How do the characters interact with others in the film?
- What are the major strengths, flaws, weaknesses of individual characters? What do they value or believe in? What are their motivations?
- Identify the major relationships between characters that drive the narrative of the film.

»» Viewing Notes

»» Cinematography and Editing

- Pay attention to the variety of camera angles used. How are camera angles used to imply authority and superiority, and at other times inferiority? What types of close-ups are used? What is their intended purpose? Take note of any other camera angles that convey meaning.
- What different camera shots are used? How does the focus of a shot affect the audience's perception of the scene? Are there mobile shots (such as panning, tracking, crane shot or dolly shot). How do these compare with static shots?
- What types of lighting are employed by the director? E.g. Low key lighting creates deep, long shadows. Has the director relied on the natural lighting of the location to replicate a realistic environment on screen?
- What decisions were made by the director in regards to connecting scenes together?
- Take note of the choice and pace of different editing techniques (ex. Cuts, dissolve, wipes, fade-in/fade out etc) How do these techniques contribute to the delivery of the narration?

»» Viewing Notes

»» Soundtrack

- What types of sounds can you identify within the scene? How do these sounds complement the imagery and contribute to character development?
- Also consider how these sounds can be used to indicate mood, time or action.
- Encourage students to isolate diegetic (part of the film's story world) and non-diegetic sounds (added in post-production to heighten emotion/add to atmosphere) within the film.
- Dialogue, like actions and gestures, contribute to character development. How do the character's tone, pitch and selection of words reveal important information about the character?
- What music do we hear at different moments or stages throughout the film? Think about how the music contributes to the pace and rhythm of the editing and the style of cinematography.

»» Viewing Notes

SCENE	CHARACTERS DEVELOPED IN THIS SCENE...	...CONNECT TO THEMES DEVELOPED IN THIS SCENE	CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES THAT SHOW HOW THE THEMES & CHARACTERS DEVELOP	HOW THE READER IS MADE TO FEEL AS A RESULT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS
OPENING AWARDS SCENE				
DRESSING ROOM				
PRE-PARTY				
PARTY SCENE				
AFTER CASSWELL'S AUDITION				
LADIES ROOM				
HOTEL ROOM				

Sample Essay Topics

Topics about characters

1. 'We do not fully sympathize with either Margo or Eve, as both are driven by enormous egos.' Discuss.
2. 'In *All About Eve* the female characters are more assertive than the male characters.' Do you agree?
3. 'The real antagonist in *All About Eve* is not Eve Harrington, but Addison DeWitt.' Discuss.
4. 'Both Margo and Eve are driven by enormous egos and the desire for success, but Margo also has a certain ordinary humanity that Eve lacks.' Discuss.
5. 'In *All About Eve* the characters do not realize Eve's deceptiveness until she has effectively achieved her goals in the theatre.' Discuss.
6. 'Margo is largely concerned only with herself. However, she also has empathy for others.' Do you agree?

Topics about structures, features and conventions

7. *All About Eve* was filmed in black and white. How does this emphasize the moral ambiguities of the film's themes?
8. 'It is necessary for Eve to disguise her ambitions, as this is what drives the suspense in the film.' Discuss.
9. *All About Eve* is considered to be a remarkably realistic depiction of life in the theatre. What gives the film its realism?

Topics about themes, ideas, views and values

10. '*All About Eve* demonstrates that people who are driven by ambition must sacrifice even their own humanity to be successful' To what extent do you agree?
11. 'All About Eve demonstrates that if we want to be successful then we need to be self-centered like Margo, ruthless like Eve, and manipulative like Addison.' Discuss.
12. '*All About Eve* shows us that ruthless ambition will triumph over hard working talent in the race to success.' Discuss.
13. 'The life of Margo Channing tells us that a woman cannot be truly happy outside of marriage.' Do you agree?

Topics about interpretations of the text

14. 'All About Eve uses a show business setting to explore the traditional themes of power and ambition, loyalty and betrayal.' Discuss.