

# Whole-play activities 1

## Character: Eddie

Eddie's main characteristics are given below in two lists: his good and bad qualities. (Of course, these qualities overlap but dividing them in this way helps you see the two sides of his personality.) As you explore each one by working through the exercises in this section, you will build up a clear idea of what you could write about Eddie in answer to an examination question about his character.

### Positive qualities

- powerful
- hard-working
- full of energy
- sense of responsibility towards his family
- offers advice

### Negative qualities

- forceful and dictatorial
- obsessive
- manipulative
- self-deluding

**Note:** when completing the following tables of evidence and explanation, you may enter the same information in different tables. This shows that we can see Eddie sometimes has more than one reason for saying or doing something. Sometimes he may appear to be doing something positive when his hidden motivation is negative.

### 1 Powerful

Throughout the play Eddie acts with energy and power, both verbally and physically. He always tries to dominate a situation.

Complete the table below with three examples of Eddie acting with force to control a situation.

Page	What Eddie does	What he wants to control/achieve

**2 Hard-working**

It is important for us to know that Eddie has worked hard all his life for his family.

Complete the table below with three examples of places in the play where we are told that Eddie has always worked hard.

Page	Who speaks	What they say about Eddie working hard — or what Eddie says about himself

**3 Full of energy**

Much of the drive and drama of the play is built around the energy that Eddie brings to scenes. Sometimes this is positive energy, but sometimes it is manic and potentially violent.

Imagine you are directing an actor to play Eddie. Find three places in the play where you could point out to the actor that they need to perform with special energy.

Page	What Eddie does

#### 4 Sense of responsibility towards his family

Eddie has a strong sense of being a man in charge of his family with a duty to provide for them.

Complete the table below with three examples of places in the play where Eddie shows he feels a sense of being responsible for Beatrice and Catherine.

Page	What Eddie says

#### 5 Offers advice

Eddie habitually offers advice to other people within his 'world' of the home. He assumes that Beatrice and Catherine need his advice because they are woman who stay at home and see less of the city that he does. He assumes Marco and Rodolpho need his advice because they are newcomers to New York.

Complete the table below with three examples of places in the play where Eddie offers advice to other characters.

Page	What Eddie says

#### 6 Forceful and dictatorial

Eddie is a powerful and dynamic character in both speech and action. When he is on stage he generally commands our attention.

Identify three examples of places in the play where you imagine Eddie is the centre of attention on stage, and say in each case briefly what is happening.

Page	What is happening on stage

### 7 Obsessive

Eddie shows himself to be increasingly in the grip of obsessive thoughts and ideas as the drama unfolds.

Complete the table below with three examples of places in the play where Eddie shows himself returning to ideas that are obsessing him.

Page	What Eddie has in his head

### 8 Manipulative

Throughout the play, Eddie tries to make people do what he wants by ‘subtle’ means, i.e. not by directly asking or ordering them, but by offering apparently good reasons for why they should do something. Often these reasons are not genuine because Eddie is hiding his real reasons for wanting things to happen. He is being manipulative.

Complete the table below with three examples of places in the play where Eddie tries to make people do things while hiding his true reasons for wanting them to do them.

Page	What Eddie says and to whom he speaks	What he really wants

### 9 Self-deluding

As the play unfolds, Eddie shows himself increasingly able to delude himself about the true nature of his passions and of events he is influencing or trying to influence.

Complete the table below with three examples of places in the play where Eddie does this.

Page	What Eddie is deluding himself about

### Extension activity: extended individual writing

Search the play for quotations that show all the criticisms Eddie makes of Rodolpho. Use these to write a short essay (on a separate sheet of paper) explaining and summarising Eddie's view of why he thinks Rodolpho 'ain't right'. Consider why Eddie might have the views he has. Think about the sort of man Eddie is and the life he has led, as well as the secret motivation he has for persuading other people that Rodolpho is not the kind of man to marry his niece.

# Exam practice 1

## Assessment Objective 1

Each exam board assesses *A View from the Bridge* for English Literature as follows:

- Edexcel: AO1
- WJEC: AO1 and AO2
- OCR: AO1 and AO2

**Assessment Objective 1** is the first Assessment Objective that you need to meet in order to gain a good mark in the exam. This is how it is defined:

*AO1 — Respond to texts critically and imaginatively; select and evaluate relevant textual detail to illustrate and support interpretations.*

This definition can be broken down as follows:

- **respond to texts critically:** this means you must say what you think of the play and why. You are being asked to **evaluate** it. This involves realising that the author has made choices as he has constructed the play, and giving your views on how effective these choices are. (See Activity 1 below.)
- **respond to texts imaginatively:** this means your ideas need to be interesting and exploratory. You will need to see themes, ideas and settings in the play in an imaginative manner. You will need to come up with answers that explore the play and different potential meanings. You will need to understand there may be more than one interpretation of an idea or moment in the story. (See Activity 2 below.)
- **select...relevant textual detail to illustrate and support interpretations:** this means giving short quotations from the play to support your views. You will also need to be able to reference events and identify moments in the play where the subtext or symbolism is used to convey key information. For example, on p. 33 Eddie asks Catherine to take off her high-heeled shoes: he does not say why but we see that the shoes symbolise Catherine's growing into an attractive woman and the subtext is that Eddie does not want Rodolpho seeing this or even feeling that she is wearing the shoes for his benefit. (See Activity 3 below.)
- **evaluate:** this means commenting on the quotations you have selected, relating your comments to the question you are tackling. The best candidates are able to see how events through the play develop the themes and ideas that Miller was exploring. (See Activity 4 below.)

- 
- 1 Give your critical opinion on how Alfieri is introduced to us through what he says in his speech on pp. 11–12. Think about the kind of man Miller wants us to think Alfieri is.
- 
- 
-



