



English I: Reading: Module 3: Practice 5: Section 3

Literary Terminology

Excerpt from *Our Town*

Instructions: Read the passage below from *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder.

From *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder, Act I

Joe Crowell, Jr., delivering Mr. Webb's Sentinel

Stage Manager: . . . And there comes Joe Crowell, Jr., delivering Mr. Webb's Sentinel.

Dr. Gibbs has been coming along Main Street from the left. At the point where he would turn to approach his house, he stops, sets down his— imaginary —black bag, takes off his hat, and rubs his face with fatigue, using an enormous handkerchief.

Mrs. Webb, a thin, serious, crisp woman, has entered her kitchen, left, tying on an apron. She goes through the motions of putting wood into a stove, lighting it, and preparing breakfast.

Suddenly, Joe Crowell, Jr., eleven, starts down Main Street from the right, hurling imaginary newspapers into doorways.

Joe Crowell, Jr.: Morning, Doc Gibbs.

Dr. Gibbs: Morning, Joe.

Joe Crowell, Jr.: Somebody been sick, Doc?

Dr. Gibbs: No. Just some twins born over in Polish Town.

Joe Crowell, Jr.: Do you want your paper now?

Dr. Gibbs: Yes, I'll take it. -- Anything serious goin' on in the world since Wednesday?

Joe Crowell, Jr.: Yessir. My schoolteacher, Miss Foster 's getting married to a fella over in Concord.

Dr. Gibbs: I declare. -- How do you boys feel about that?

Joe Crowell, Jr.: Well, of course, it's none of my business -- but I think if a person starts out to be a teacher, she ought to stay one.

Dr. Gibbs: How's your knee, Joe?

Joe Crowell, Jr.: Fine, Doc, I never think about it at all. Only like you said, it always tells me when it's going to rain.

Dr. Gibbs: What's it telling you today? Goin' to rain?

Joe Crowell, Jr.: No, sir.

Dr. Gibbs: Sure?

Joe Crowell, Jr.: Yessir.

Dr. Gibbs: Knee ever make a mistake?



Joe Crowell, Jr.: No, sir.

Joe goes off. Dr. Gibbs stands reading his paper.

Stage Manager: Want to tell you something about that boy Joe Crowell there. Joe was awful bright—graduated from high school here, head of his class. So he got a scholarship to Massachusetts Tech. Graduated head of his class there, too. It was all wrote up in the Boston paper at the time. Goin' to be a great engineer, Joe was. But the war broke out and he died in France. —All that education for nothing.

Howie Newsome: (Off left.) Giddap, Bessie! What's the matter with you today?

Stage Manager: Here comes Howie Newsome, deliverin' the milk.