

# SALEM PRESS

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## **Salem Press Announces A New Title: *Introduction to Literary Context: Plays***

Salem Press' *Introduction to Literary Context: Plays* is the newest title in Salem's *Introduction to Literary Context* series. This new volume covers 31 plays written by authors from around the world, published between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The playwrights in this collection represent a variety of ages, lifestyles, and political beliefs, including those whose work has been banned, burned, and revered. Their work is based on personal experiences and struggles, as well as societal issues of the time.

The works analyzed in this collection reflect the evolution in scope, concept, and purpose that plays have experienced in only a few hundred years. With in-depth analyses of works by the likes of Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Henrik Ibsen, T.S. Eliot, Oscar Wilde, August Wilson, Tony Kushner, Samuel Beckett, and George Bernard Shaw, *Introduction to Literary Context: Plays* offers students the tools to grasp more firmly and dig deeper into the meanings of not only the works covered here, but the literature as it has been created around the world.

Theatre was among the very earliest forms of mass entertainment and remained at the forefront until the advent of moving pictures in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even then, many early films followed the format of plays and featured single settings and simple scenery until the full potential of motion pictures was developed. It is fitting that in today's high-tech world, where music and movies are consumed on a global scale through television and the Internet, that plays endure, and that a small audience gathered in a theater for a live performance ranks as a more intimate, more sincere form of entertainment. *Introduction to Literary Context: Plays* assists in introducing some of the Western world's most prominent dramas to students nationwide, opening their eyes to this classic art form.

The essays in *Plays* appear alphabetically by the title of the work. Each is 6-8 pages in length and includes the following sections:

- **Content Synopsis** — Summarizes the plot of the play, describing the main points and prominent characters in concise language.
- **Historical Context** — Describes the relevance to the story of the moods, attitudes, and conditions that existed during the time period that the novel took place.

- **Societal Context** — Describes the role that society played within the play, from the acceptance of traditional gender roles to dealing with mental illness.
- **Religious Context** — Explains how the religious views of the author or a group influenced the play.
- **Scientific & Technological Context** — Analyzes to what extent scientific and/or technological progress has affected the story.
- **Biographical Context** — Offers biographical details of the author’s life, which often helps students to make sense of the play.
- **Discussion Questions** — A list of 8–10 thoughtful questions that are designed to develop stimulating and productive classroom discussions.
- **Essay Ideas** — A valuable list of ideas that will encourage students to explore themes, writing techniques, and character traits.
- **Works Cited** — A detailed bibliography that references each work consulted to write every individual essay.

Additionally, *Introduction to Literary Context: Plays* begins with a Publisher’s Note that overviews the Scope, Coverage, Organization, and Format of all 31 essays included. Following this is an About This Volume article by Michael Rogers, former Senior Editor to *Library Journal*. Rogers takes readers through a comprehensive history of Western drama from the early 1600s through the early 1990s, highlighting the 31 plays discussed in this volume. Finally, following the individual play essays, a general Bibliography and subject Index are included.

The *Introduction to Literary Context* series is designed to introduce students to the world’s greatest works of literature—including novels, short fictions, novellas, plays, and poems—not only placing them in the historical, societal, scientific, and religious context of their time, but illuminating key concepts and vocabulary that students are likely to encounter. *Introduction to Literary Context: Plays* is the newest title in Salem’s *Introduction to Literary Context* series. Other titles in this series include: *American Post-Modernist Novels*, *American Short Fiction*, *English Literature*, and *World Literature*.

### Free Online with Print Purchase

Online access to *Introduction to Literature: Plays* is available at no additional cost to buyers of the print volume through Salem’s online database, <http://online.salempress.com>. A single purchase of the printed version is all it takes to gain access to this important title online.

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