

Evidence Chart: Socratic Seminar Act I

Question	Text Title / Page Number	Evidence (quotation or paraphrase)	How does this evidence support your ideas?
<p>How does Wilder’s unconventional style impact the way audiences or readers understand the community of Grover’s Corners?</p>		<p>STAGE MANAGER: Doc Gibbs died in 1930. The new hospital's named after him. Mrs. Gibbs died first long time ago, in fact. She went out to visit her daughter, Rebecca, who married an insurance man in Canton, Ohio, and died there pneumonia but her body was brought back here.</p> <p>STAGE MANAGER: Now we're going to skip a few hours. But first we want a little more information about the town, kind of a scientific account, you might say. So I've asked Professor Willard of our State University to sketch in a few details of our past history here. Is Professor Willard here?</p> <p>BELLIGERENT MAN: Is there no one in town aware of social injustice and industrial inequality?</p> <p>MR. WEBB: Oh, yes, everybody is somethin' terrible. Seems like they spend most of their time talking about who's rich and who's poor. BELLIGERENT MAN: Then why don't they do something about it? He withdraws without waiting for an answer.</p> <p>MR. WEBB retires. Now, we'll go back to the town. It's early afternoon. All 2,642 have had</p>	<p>The stage manager has an omniscient point of view that can share information about the town and its residents from the past, present, and future. This allows Wilder to use the stage manager to help focus our attention on certain ideas, themes, or details. For example, the stage manager seems to have an interest in sharing what happens to people in the town in the future - including their deaths - even though we only see them in the present. This helps the audience/readers get a broader and deeper view of the characters and the ways in which their lives will unfold.</p> <p>The stage manager also has the ability to fast-forward and rewind as needed to show specific information or different scenes that allow the audience to build a clearer picture of the town and the people in it. For example, he allows readers to see into both the Gibbs and the Webb household, and can decide when to start/stop what we see so that we get the picture/information that he wants us to have to help us build a perspective about Grover’s Corners.</p> <p>The stage manager can also bring people to the stage to share information that we would not get directly from seeing the characters interact. For example, he brings the professor to share the kind of information we might find if we look Grover’s Corners up in the encyclopedia. This allows the audience to connect and compare Grover’s Corners to similar towns they may know in terms of size or type of community.</p> <p>Wilder also creates opportunities for the “audience” to interact by planting characters in the audience who ask questions of the stage manager. This creates a feeling among the audience as though</p>

		<p>their dinners and all the dishes have been washed.</p> <p>STAGE MANAGER: Thank you. Thank you! That'll do. We'll have to interrupt again here. Thank you, Mrs. Webb; thank you, Emily.</p>	<p>they are being invited to hear and learn more about the town (as though the play is customized for them), and also to bring information into the play that may otherwise be tangential or difficult to address. For example, the belligerent man asks about social injustice, which demonstrates the author's recognition that Grover-s Corners had its share of injustice (like other American towns) despite presenting as a pleasant, tight-knit community.</p> <p>The stage manager interacts with the characters and the audience in a way that makes us feel as though the characters are real people going about their daily lives.</p>
<p>Consider Putnam's argument in <i>Bowling Alone</i> and the description of Grover's Corners in <i>Our Town</i>. Does this type of town still exist? Why or why not?</p>		<p>Evidence that this type of town does not still exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MRS. GIBBS: Bacon'll be ready in a minute. Set down and drink your coffee. You can catch a couple hours' sleep this morning, can't you? 2. STAGE MANAGER: We've got a factory in our town too hear it? Makes blankets* Cartwrights own it and it brung 'em a fortune. 3. MRS, WEBB: Well, I still get that tickling feeling in my throat. I told Charles I didn't know as I'd go to choir practice tonight. Wouldn't be any use. 4. MRS. GIBBS: Now, Myrtle. I've got to tell you something, because if I don't tell somebody I'll burst. 5. You can hear choir practice going on in die Congregational Church. The children are at home doing their 	<p><u>Evidence that this type of town does not still exist:</u></p> <p>Details from <i>Act I</i> portray the women of Grover's Corners as stay-at-home moms whose priorities include caring for their children, cooking, cleaning, and tending to the household needs. The women that are most heavily featured - Mrs. Webb and Mrs. Gibbs - do not seem to have a concern about financial stability despite being stay-at-home moms. However, Putnam's research demonstrated that women have increasingly sought work outside the home due to financial necessity. The majority of women in America do not spend their days shelling beans and gossiping with their neighbors like the women of <i>Grover's Corners</i>.</p> <p>Similarly, <i>Bowling Alone</i> stressed that communities are becoming less engaged. Individuals have less time to spend with their neighbors in casual conversation like Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Webb do. They also are less engaged in organized activities, like church or religious activities. Data from <i>Bowling Alone</i> demonstrated that church membership/attendance has steadily declined. However, in <i>Our Town</i>, Wilder portrays choir rehearsal as an integral part of the community life for the women in the community. The women attend rehearsal regularly and then gossip about the choir director (and we can imagine other town events or people) as they return</p>

		<p>schoolwork. The day's running down like a tired clock.</p> <p>6. DR. GIBBS: Well, George, while I was in my office today I heard a funny sound . . . and what do you think it was? It was your mother chopping wood. There you see your mother getting up early; cooking meals all day long; washing and ironing; and still she has to go out in the back yard and chop wood. I suppose she just got tired of asking you. She just gave up and decided it was easier to do it herself. And you eat her meals, and put on the clothes she keeps nice for you, and you run off and play baseball, like she's some hired girl we keep around the house but that we don't like very much. Well, I knew all I had to do was call your attention to it. Here's a handkerchief, son. George, I've decided to raise your spending money twenty-five cents a week.</p> <p>7. MRS, SOAMES: But, Julia! To have the organist of a church drink and dnmk year after year. You know he was drunk tonight. MRS. GIBBS: Now, Louella! We all know about Mr. Stimson, and we all know about the troubles he's been through, and Dr. Ferguson knows too, and if Dr. Ferguson keeps him</p>	<p>from choir practice. This organized activity and the relationships that flow from it are things that <i>Putnam</i> stresses are on the decline in his text.</p> <p>The conversation between Dr. Gibbs and George reflects a heavily patriarchal society where men were expected to be the breadwinners and the decision makers of their family. This is exemplified by the details of what Dr. Gibbs shares (he references George's mother getting up early, cooking meals all day long, washing and ironing) and the tone that he uses when sharing. He also decides to give George and increase in his allowance during this same conversation, which suggests that Dr. Gibbs is the person who controls the finances in his household. One can see how this may make sense given he is the sole earner. However, Putnam shows in <i>Bowling Alone</i> that more and more women work outside the house due to financial necessity, and thus likely would have a stronger interest in deciding financial matters within their households.</p> <p><i>Accept other relevant evidence and explanations.</i></p> <p><u>Evidence that demonstrates this type of town does exist:</u> The data from Putnam's research shows that while more women work outside the home know due to financial necessity, there are still women who work as homemakers or stay at home moms. Given this, it's possible that there are communities where there are more concentrated numbers of homemakers who have time to engage in the types of relationships and activities that Mrs. Webb and Mrs. Gibbs engage in (though they may be more modernized activities).</p> <p>Conversations between the mothers and the children reflect similar conversations that mothers have with children today; for</p>
--	--	--	--

on there in his job the only thing the rest of us can do is just not to notice it.

8. DR. GIBBS: And you stopping at the corner to gossip with a lot of hens.
MRS. GIBBS: Now, Frank, don't be grouchy. Come out and smell the heliotrope in the moonlight.

Evidence that this type of town does exist:

1. MRS. WEBB: Children! Now I won't have it. Breakfast is just as good as any other meal and I won't have you gobbling like wolves. It'll stunt your growth, that's a fact. Put away your book, Wally.
2. MRS. WEBB: Walk fast, but you don't have to run. Wally, poll up your pants at the knee. Stand up straight, Emily.
3. GEORGE: You made a fine speech in class.
4. MRS. WEBB: Emily, come and help me string these beans for the winter. George Gibbs let himself have a real conversation, didn't he? Why, he's growing up. How old would George be? EMILY: I don't know. MRS. WEBB: Let's see. He must be almost sixteen.
5. EMILY: Oh, Mama, that's not what I mean, What I mean is; am I pretty?

example, mothers are prompting children to behave, get ready for school, mind manners, etc. While the gender roles may be different, mothers and parents in families in towns today are still engaging in the same types of daily actions/conversations to raise their children.

Conversations between George and Emily reflect the way in which teenagers seek connections and start forming romantic relationships at their age. While their conversation and courting may appear more formal, in towns across the United States today we know there are boys giving girls compliments and trying to find ways to spend more time with them, and vice versa.

Accept other relevant evidence and explanations.

