

**Interpretation of Literature 08G:1/Smith**  
**Quiz: *Trifles***

Please answer the questions below (on the back or on a separate sheet)

1. Spend some time looking over the stage directions for *Trifles*. How does staging affect the way the plot points are revealed? Can you point us to moments in the text when an important action, gesture, or other visual detail is described?
2. What does the title *Trifles* refer to? What is the thematic significance of these “trifles?” How does context (for instance late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century society) factor into their significance?
3. How does Mrs. Hale react to the men’s behavior and attitudes? What lines characterize Mrs. Peters’ reactions—and where can we see her attitudes changing as the play progresses?
4. On p. 1132 Mrs. Hale gives us brief, but vivid, descriptions of both Mr. and Mrs. Wright. What do you make of these descriptions? What do they tell us about the Wright’s marriage? Can you put them into dialog with this week’s other texts about 19<sup>th</sup> century marriage?
5. Like many of our readings, *Trifles* is a story about interpretation, and we can see Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters as readers. What—and how— do they “read” or decipher? How do they “read” differently from their husbands, and reach different conclusions?