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## **EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL**

### **“PROOF”**

**by David Auburn**

*Proof is a Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winning family drama that explores the relationship between brilliance and madness. It centers on the character of Catherine, a young woman who has spent years caring for her father, a once-great mathematician now stricken with mental illness. The play opens on the eve of his funeral, as Catherine begins her struggles with issues of responsibility, trust, and the possible inheritance of her father’s brilliance and madness.*

*This is one of the best and funniest plays that I have read. I hope that you enjoy studying it and that you’ll come in to see the play. I would like to thank Birgitte for writing this material.*

*Ian Burns - Artistic director.*

## ***Contents:***

***1: Pre-reading activities for students. Page 3:***

***2: Reading:***

***Act I Scene I – (Page 4)***

***Act I Scene II – (Page 7)***

***Act I Scene III – (Page 10)***

***Act I Scene IV – (Page 12)***

***Act II Scene I – (Page 13)***

***Act II Scene II – (Page 14)***

***Act II Scene III – (Page 15)***

***Act II Scene IV – (Page 16)***

***Act II Scene V – (Page 17)***

***3: Post reading and writing. (Page 20)***

***4: Points for further discussion. (Page 30)***

***5: Quiz yourself. (Page 36)***

***6: Post-reading & writing. Non-fiction articles. (Page 37)***

***7: Having seen the play by That Theatre in Krudttønden. (Page 38)***

***8: Writing activities for students. (Page 39)***

***9: Grammar and translation activities. (Page 42)***

## **1. Study "Proof", Pre-reading activities for students**

**Task 1:** Search the Internet and find out facts about the author of the play.

**Task 2:** The title of the play is called "Proof". What definitions does the Oxford English Dictionary give of the word "proof. Compare and contrast the definition of "proof" - with the definition of a mathematical "proof".

**Task 4:** Reading reviews. Search the Internet, and in groups read a couple of the reviews of the play, "Proof". Next, tell one of your classmates: What do you learn about the play, from reading one of the many reviews?

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/mar/21/proof-review>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/22/nyregion/a-review-of-proof-at-the-mccarter-theater-center.html>

<http://www.ams.org/notices/200009/rev-bayer.pdf>

**Task 5:** Prediction. From the title of the play. What do you think the play is about? Write down a few lines and compare and contrast with one of your classmates.

**Task 6:** Historical context. "Proof" is set in the present, but the setting invokes the history of the city of Chicago, Illinois, and the University of Chicago with which the characters in the play have well-developed relationships. For oral presentation in class: Search the internet and find facts about the city of Chicago, the University of Chicago, the people of Chicago, etc.

## **2. Study, “Proof”, Reading, Act 1, Scene 1:**

### **Students work in Pairs with Act 1, Scene 1**

**Task 1:** Comment on the time and setting of the scene

**Task 2:** The very first scene of “Proof” shows Catherine having a conversation with her father, Robert. What do they talk about? When does the reader learn that the entire conversation actually takes place in Catherine’s imagination? Why is that an important piece of information for the further action of the play?

**Task 3:** Why does Catherine call the Police at the end of the scene? Do you think she does the right thing when calling the Police – why/why not? Comment on Catherine’s reaction and the tone of voice in the following lines. What is it that Hal is trying to tell Catherine? How is Catherine’s mental state of mind? :

*Catherine: I’m calling the police (She picks up the phone and dials)*

*Hal: Don’t. Look, I borrowed the book, all right? I’m sorry, I just picked it up before I came downstairs and though I’d ...*

*Catherine: (On phone) Hello?*

*Hal: I did it for a reason*

*Catherine: Hello, police? – Yes, I’d like to report a robbery in progress*

*Hal: I noticed something - something your father wrote. All right? Not math, something he wrote. Here, let me show you*

*Catherine: A robbery*

*Hal: Will you put the fucking phone down and listen to me?*

*Catherine: (on phone) Yes, I'm at 5724 South –*

*Hal: It's about you. See? You. It was written about you. Here's your name Cathy. See?*

**Task 4:** Focus on Catherine talking to her father, Robert. From the following lines said by Catherine and her father, write down your first hand impression of Catherine? What kind of woman is she? How would you characterize her? Try and include some adjectives in your description of Catherine.

*-“She is not my friend, she's my sister, And she's in New York. And I don't like her”, (Catherine)*

*“I haven't been lazy, I've been taking care of you” (Catherine)*

*“You see? Even your depression is mathematical. Stop moping and get to work. The kind of potential you have”, (Robert)*

**Task 5:** Focus on, Catherine talking to her father's ex-student, Hal. From the following lines said by Catherine, write down your first-hand impression of Catherine's relationship to her father? How would you describe their relationship? Would you call it a typical father-daughter relationship – why/why not?

*“ I spent my life with him. I fed him. Talked to him. Tried to listen to him when he talked. Talked to people who weren't there ... Watched him shuffling around like a ghost. A very smelly ghost. He was filthy. I had to make sure he bathed. My own father”, (Catherine)*

*“After my mother died it was just me here. I tried to keep happy no matter what idiotic project he was doing. He used to read all day. He kept demanding more and more books. I took them out of the library by the carload..”, (Catherine)*

*“ I ordered him a case of notebooks and he used every one. I dropped out of school. I’m glad he’s dead”, (Catherine)*

**Task 6:** From the following lines said by Hal, (a student of Robert), write down the student’s impression of Robert, Catherine’s father. How would you characterize the student-teacher relationship? :

*- “I don’t have time to do this, but I’m going to. If you’ll let me. (Beat). I loved your dad. I don’t believe a mind like his can just shut down. He had lucid moments. He had a lucid year, a whole year four years ago”*

*- “I met your dad and he put me on the right track with my research. I owe him”.*

*- “When your dad was younger than both of us, he made major contributions to three fields: game theory, algebraic geometry, and nonlinear operator theory. Most of us never get our heads around one. He basically invented the mathematical techniques for studying rational behavior, which economists have been milking for \* Nobel’s ever since, and he gave the astrophysicists plenty to work over too. Okay?”*

(\* Nobel Peace Prize)

**Task 7:** From the following lines said by Hal, write down his impression of Catherine’s mathematical skills. Does Hal look down on Catherine’s skills? If yes – what does this tell us about Hal, and maybe about the foreshadowing of the conflict of the play?

*Catherine: He’s my father, I’ll do it*

*Hal: You can’t.*

*Catherine: Why not?*

*Hal: You don't have the math. It's all just squiggles on a page. You wouldn't know the good stuff from the junk.*

*Catherine: It's all junk.*

*Hal: If it's not we can't afford to miss any through carelessness.*

*Catherine: I know mathematics.*

*Hal: If there was anything up there it would be pretty high-order. It would take a professional to recognize it.*

*Catherine: I think I could recognize it.*

*Hal: (Patient) Cathy ..*

*Catherine: What?*

*Hal: I know your dad taught you some basic stuff, but come on*

*Catherine: You don't think I could do it.*

### **Study, "Proof", Reading, Act 1, Scene II:**

### **Students work in Pairs with Act 1, Scene II**

**Task 1:** Comment on the time and the setting of the scene

**Task 2:** From the following lines said by Claire herself, write down your first-hand impression of Claire, and the relationship between the two sisters (Claire and Catherine). In class: Compare and contrast the two sisters- any similarities/ any differences?

- *“Have a little milk (She pours). Want a banana? It’s a good thing I brought food: there was nothing in the house”, (Claire)*
- *“If you want to dry your hair I have a hair dryer”, (Claire)*
- *“Did you use that conditioner I brought you?”, (Claire)*
- *“If the dress doesn’t fit we can go downtown and exchange it”, (Claire)*
- *“How are you feeling about his death are you ok?, (Claire)*
- *“I think New York would be a really fun and .... safe ... place for you to – (Claire)*
- *“You looked tired. I think you could use some downtime”, (Claire)*

**Task 3:** The episode with the Police. From the following dialogue between Claire and Catherine, what can you deduct about the relationship between the two sisters? Which words and phrases seem to indicate that Claire is not on Catherine’s side? Comment on the language used by the two sisters, especially the language used by Catherine.

*Claire: The police said you were abusive (Catherine doesn’t say anything). They said you’re lucky they didn’t haul you in*

*Catherine: These guys were assholes, Claire. They wouldn’t go away. They wanted me to fill out a report ...*

*Claire: Were you abusive?*

*Catherine: This one cop kept spitting on me when he talked. It was disgusting.*

*Claire: Did you use the word dickhead?*

*Catherine: Oh, I don’t remember*

*Claire. Did you tell one cop ... to go fuck the other cop’s mother?*

*Catherine: No*



*Claire: That's what they said.*

*Catherine: Not with that phrasing*

*Claire: Did you strike one of them?*

*Catherine: They were trying to come in the house!*

*Claire: They said you were either drunk or disturbed*

*Catherine: They wanted to come in here and search my house –*

*Claire: You called them*

*Catherine: Yes, but I didn't actually want them to come. But they did come and then they started acting like they owned the place, pushing me around, calling me "girly", smirking at me, laughing: they were assholes*

*Claire: These guys seemed perfectly nice. They were off-duty and they took the trouble to come back here at the end of their shift to check up on you. They were very polite.*

*Catherine: Well, people are nicer to you*

**Task 4:** Comment on the ending of this scene, and the development of the relationship between the characters.

## Study, “Proof”, Reading, Act 1, Scene III

### Students work in Pairs with Act 1, Scene III

**Task 1:** Comment on the time and the setting of the scene

**Task 2:** Examine the intertextual reference to Sophie German in Act 1, Scene II

*Hal: There’s a woman at Stanford, I can’t remember her name*

*Catherine: Sophie German?*

*Hal: Yeah? I’ve probably seen her at meetings, I just don’t think I’ve met her.*

*Catherine: She was born in Paris in 1776 (Beat)*

*Hal: So, I’ve definitely never met her.*

*Catherine: She was trapped in her house. The French Revolution was going on, the Terror. She had to stay inside for safety and she passed the time reading in her father’s study. The Greeks .. Later she tried to get a real education but the schools didn’t allow women. So, she wrote letters. She wrote to Gauss. She used a man’s name. Uh- Antoine-August Le Blanc. She sent him some proofs involving a certain kind of prime number, important work. He was delighted to correspond with such a brilliant young man. Dad gave me a book about her.*

- Why do Hal and Catherine talk about her?
- Who was Sophie German?
- Why was Sophie German a famous person?
- Why did she have to write under another name?

- Discuss in pairs: In what way may Sophie German's story predict a minor story within the major action of "Proof"?

**Task 3:** Relationship between Catherine and Hal – development. Trace the relationship between Catherine and Hal. Take notes and characterize the relationship in Act 1, Scene I and Scene II, and then move on to Scene III. Take your starting point in the following dialogue. What do they talk about in the dialogue? And how is the tone in this scene?

*Hal: Sorry, I'm a little drunk*

*Catherine: It's okay (Uncomfortable beat). I'm sorry about yesterday. I wasn't helpful. About the work you're doing. Take as long as you need upstairs.*

*Hal: You were fine. I was pushy.*

*Catherine: I was awful.*

*Hal: No, my timing was terrible, Anyway, you're probably right.*

*Catherine: What?*

*Hal: About it being junk.*

**Task 4:** How does the scene end? Is there any evidence in the text that Hal has always liked Catherine and the other way around? Is it possible to predict how the relationship between Hal and Catherine will evolve? Remember to state references to the text when writing down your answer.

## Study, ‘Proof’ Reading, Act 1, Scene IV

### Students work in pairs with Act 1, Scene IV

**Task 1:** Comment on the time and the setting of the scene

**Task 2:** Comment on Catherine’s reaction when she hears that her sister, Claire, wants to sell the house. Always remember to state references to the text. Discuss in pairs: Is Catherine’s reaction understandable – why/why not? Comment on the words chosen by Catherine, and her mood as well.

**Task 3:** Trace the power struggle in scene IV between Catherine and Claire. Use the following words and phrases to tell one of your classmates what goes on between the two sisters. Next, pretend you are Catherine giving a little speech to her sister, Claire: *Yes, I am your bughouse little sister – Yes, I lived with him alone – five years ago – he would have been worse in a hospital – you weren’t helping – you’re too late!! – just think you can fly in for the weekend- suddenly you decide to sell the house – do you really mean well? – I am tired and confused – cannot figure things out – great offer for me to live with our father – how dare you just to kick me out – it is my house too etc.*

Next: Put yourself in Claire’s shoes, and now pretend you are talking to Catherine. Before you start make your own list of words that may help you when speaking to Catherine. Focus your argumentation on the fact that you are a little bit angry at Catherine, she ought to be a little bit nicer to you, because it is actually you, who have made it possible for Catherine and her father to live together in the house!

**Task 4:** Comment on the ending of the scene. Take your starting point in the following quote, the direct reference to the title of the play, said by Hal: *Oh, uh, it’s a result. A proof. I mean it looks like a proof. I mean it is a proof, a very long proof, I haven’t read it all of course, or checked it, I*

*don't even know if I could check it, but if it is a proof or what I think it's a proof of, it's .... A very ... important .... proof.* What kind of character is Hal - and what does this statement by Hal add to your impression of him as a character? Next, try and apply this statement to the central conflict of the play. In pairs: Discuss – what might be an actor's challenge when trying to act out Hal's reaction in this scene on stage?

**Task 5:** How is Catherine's mood in Act 1, scene IV? Remember to state references to the text. In pairs: Discuss – what might be an actor's challenge when trying to act out the character of Catherine and her very changing mood and inner struggles on stage?

### **Study, "Proof", Reading, Act II, Scene 1**

### **Students work in pairs with Act II, Scene 1**

**Task 1:** Comment on the time and the setting of the scene

**Task 2:** Back in time. When answering the questions remember to state references to the text, and to write down a few notes:

- What impression do we get of Robert as a teacher?
- What impression do we get of Hal, as a student?
- What impression do we get of the relationship between Robert, the father, and Catherine, the daughter?

**Task 3:** Take the ending of this scene into consideration: Discuss in pairs: How do you think the play will progress?

**Task 4:** Act-it-out in class: Find important places in this scene, and try to act out their dialogue in class. Remember to think about your voice, mood and intonation when acting out the lines said by the characters.

### **Study, “Proof”, Reading, Act II, Scene II**

#### **Students work in pairs with Act II, Scene II**

**Task 1:** Comment on the time and setting of the scene

**Task 2:** Present time again. Takes up the ending of Act 1.

- Comment on Catherine’s reaction when Hal tells her that he does not believe she has written the “proof”.
- Comment on the connection between the title of the play and the content of the play?
- Discuss in pairs: Why would it be a real disaster for Hal if it turns out that Catherine really has written the “proof”? What does this add to the picture of Hal that you have already created from the previous scenes? Take your starting point in the following dialogue:

*Catherine: Just because you and the rest of the geeks worshipped him doesn’t mean he wrote this proof, Hal!*

*Hal: He was the best. My generation hasn’t produced anything like him. He revolutionized the field twice before he was twenty-two. I’m sorry Catherine, but you took some classes at Northwestern for a few months.*

*Catherine: My education wasn’t at Northwestern. It was living in this house for twenty-five years.*

*Hal: Even so, it doesn’t matter, this is too advanced. I don’t even understand most of it.*

*Catherine. You think it's too advanced for you.*

*Hal. You could not have done this work.*

*Catherine: But what if I did?*

*Hal: Well, what if?*

**Task 3:** Comment on the ending of this scene.

### **Study, "Proof", Reading, Act II, Scene III**

#### **Students work in pairs with Act II, Scene III**

**Task 1:** Comment on the time and the setting of the scene

**Task 2.** Why does Claire accuse Hal of having taken advantage of her sister, Catherine? Discuss in pairs: Do you think Hal has taken advantage of her? (please argue for our against your point of view). Does Claire understand what is going on between her sister and Hal – why/why not? What does this understanding/lack of understanding tell us about Claire's relationship to her sister?

**Task 3:** What words and phrases does Claire use, when she seems to blame Hal for Catherine's present situation. Remember to state references to the text (the script).

**Task 4:** Comment on the development in the relationship between Hal and Catherine. Discuss in pairs: Do you understand Catherine's reaction towards Hal – why/why not? Do you understand Hal's reaction towards Catherine – why/why not? Do you think they are really in love with one another – or is it more some sort of fatal attraction? Remember to argue for your point of view – on one hand --- on the other hand I believe that ..

### **Study, “Proof”, Reading, Act II, Scene IV**

#### **Students work in pairs with Act II, Scene IV**

**Task 1:** Comment on the time and the setting of the scene

**Task 2:** Back in time again (about three and a half years earlier). Comment on the father – daughter relationship as we get to know it in scene IV. How is it shown in this scene that Robert really loves his daughter, and is proud of what she is doing? What words and phrases does Robert use when talking about Catherine. Remember to state references to the text. Discuss in pairs: Is this a typical father-daughter relationship – why/why not?

**Task 3:** Discuss in pairs: What impact does it have on Catherine's life that she always has to think more of her father than her own life and her own well-being? Why does it seem as if Robert is dragging Catherine away from her own world and more into his? Take for instance your starting point in the following quote, said by Robert: *”I know that you have got your own work. I don't want you to neglect that. You can't neglect it. But I could probably use some help. Work with me. If you want to, if you can*



*work it out with your class schedule and everything else, I could help you with that, make some calls, talk to your teachers ....”.*

**Task 4:** Robert as a teacher. How would you characterize Robert – what kind of man/ teacher is he? Is he a typical University professor – why/why not? It seems as if Robert has his ups- and downs when it comes to his job. Why do you think he has these ups- and downs? Do you think he is mentally ill? What kind of language does Robert use when he talks about his job, and his newly discovered “*divine inspiration*”? Remember to give examples from the text.

**Task 5:** Why does Robert tell Catherine that he “*was starting to imagine he was finished. Really finished. Don’t get me wrong, I was grateful I could go to my office, have a life, but secretly I was terrified I’d never work again. Did you know that?*”. What does this quote tell us about Robert’s life as a mathematician?

### **Study, Proof, Reading, Act 2, Scene V**

#### **Students work in Paris with Act 2, Scene V**

**Task 1:** Comment on the time and the setting of the scene

**Task 2:** Back in the present (a week after the events in scene III). The first half of the last scene is a dialogue between Catherine and Clare. In Pairs: Practice reading the dialogue aloud in class. While reading pay special attention to the tone (sad, happy, ironic, etc.), and words that you would like to stress while practicing reading the dialogue.

**Task 3:** How is Claire trying to convince Catherine that she is doing the right thing by going with her to New York? Remember to give references to the text. Why is it so important for Claire that Catherine move with her to New York? Discuss in pairs: Is Claire doing the right thing when she tries to persuade Catherine to move with her to New York? Is Claire a very dominant rich sister, or simply a sister who wants the best for Catherine?

**Task 4:** How does Catherine feel about going to New York with Catherine? Do you think that Catherine is so mentally unstable that she cannot take care of herself – why/why not? Is there anything at all that seems to indicate that Claire is behaving in a way that gives the reader/the audience a hint that she might not be that well. Remember to state references to the text.

**Task 5:** In pairs: Take notes (draw a curve) and trace the development that the relationship between the two sisters has undergone from Act I, scene 1, until the very last scene of the play.

**Task 6:** In pairs: Take notes (draw a curve) and trace the development that the relationship between Hal and Catherine has undergone from Act 1, scene 1, until the very last scene of the play.

**Task 7:** From the following quotes, what kind of impression do we get of Hal in the very last scene:

*“I don’t think your father wrote it”*

*“I was hoping to discuss some of this with you before you left. Purely professional. I don’t expect anything else”*

*“Come on Catherine. I’m trying to correct things”*

*“But he was nuts”*

*“So, Claire sold the house?”*

*“Talk me through it” Whatever’s bothering you. Maybe, you’ll improve it.*

**Task 8:** Take your starting point in the following quote and discuss Catherine’s mental state of mind at the end of the play. Do you think that Catherine is right when she says that she is like her father- why/why not?

*“Hal: There is nothing wrong with you*

*Catherine: I think I’m like my dad*

*Hal: I think you are too.*

*Catherine: I’m ... afraid I’m like my dad*

*Hal: You are not like him*

*Catherine: Maybe I will be*

*Hal: Maybe. Maybe you’ll be better.*

**Task 9:** Comment on the ending of the play. Did it come as a big surprise to you –why/why not? Discuss in pairs: How will the future be for Catherine? For Hal? For Claire? Will Catherine be able to move on with her life after her father’s death, or will she end up just like her father? Will Catherine and Hal be seeing each other? Will they marry? What do you think? Write down your answer and give a little speech to one of your classmates about the future life of the characters.

**Task 10:** Continuation of the play: Work in pairs and write down your own continuation of the play (one or two scenes). Act out your scene in class.

### 3. Study, “Proof”, Post-reading and writing:

**Task 1:** Trace the development of the plot – the composition of “Proof”. How do the flashbacks seem to illustrate Catherine’s personality, as well as the personalities of the other characters in “Proof”? Discuss in pairs: Do the flashbacks interrupt the flow of the story or add to the characterization of Robert, Catherine, Claire and Hall? What does it do to you, as readers of the play that the play is not chronological told, but jumps back and forth in time and place? Would you rather have had it chronological told – why/why not? How would you as a director deal with these flashbacks if it was you who had to turn the play into a film? Next, in class: Watch the film!

**Task 2:** Having read the play write down your characterization of the characters in the play. Take your starting point in the following lines, and then continue yourself. Next, read aloud your characterization to one or two of your classmates:

Robert is: *Catherine and Claire’s father. He dies before the play even begins of a heart attack. He is a very famous mathematician. In his later years he got a mental illness that slowly deteriorated his sanity. (Dementia?) He eventually had to be taken care of by ....*

Claire is: *Catherine’s sister and Robert’s other daughter. She flies in from New York to take care of Catherine after Robert died. She is not as clever as Catherine is and it seems as if they have never gotten along. Claire wants to bring Catherine back to ...*

*Catherine is: A 25-year-old girl who is living alone in her house. She left college to look for her father who had a mental illness. She has not had much social interaction in the past nine years. She fears that she might have the same mental illness as ...*

*Hal is: A previous student of Robert. Though not a very great mathematician himself. Hal idolizes Robert's work and wants to know more about it. It seems as if he uses Catherine when she is most vulnerable to get to ....*

**Task 3:** Evaluating Hal. Throughout the play Hal says a lot to Catherine about himself, his family background, his relationship to the world of mathematics etc. Go through the scenes and find the most important lines said by Hal. Focus especially on what he says in: Act 1, scene 1, Act 1 scene 3, and Act 1 scene 4.

**Task 4:** Style and language. Comment on the language and the style of the play. Remember to give references. Take your starting point in the way that the characters speak to each other – what words do they use – high style/ low style – formal/ or informal? , etc. Try and rewrite some of the scenes into more proper English!

**Task 5:** Language and use of imagery. Find examples in the play that Auburn's use of imagery is quite effective throughout the play. Find for instance the place in the text where Catherine describes her father, and also the place where Hal describes a picture of mathematics that non-mathematicians may find surprising. Discuss in pairs: The effect of using figurative language in a play. Next, in pairs: Choose one of the scenes, and then add/ insert lines that makes the dialogue between the characters even more vivid and descriptive by using more figurative language.

**Task 6:** The language used in “Proof”. Auburn’s dialogue is written in the form of a natural, witty, sarcastic, informal conversation, allowing a quick give and take between characters. Comment on the sentence structure (syntax/length) of the dialogue. What effect does that kind of syntax have on you, as readers of the play? What choices of words tell us that the level of formality overall is very low throughout the play? In pairs: Make your own list of all the informal words and expressions used in “Proof”. Next, turn these informal words and expressions into more formal words and expressions. Next, in pairs: Discuss what does this do to the script – i.e. if you go from informal to more formal diction?

**Task 7:** Language and characters in “Proof”. How would you characterize Hal’s language at the beginning of the play? And how would you characterize Hal’s language as the play progresses? Hal’s language becomes more informal when he becomes more comfortable with his surroundings. Try and find examples of this in the text. How does Robert speak when he speaks to Hal, compared to when he speaks to his daughters? Remember to give examples from the text.

**Task 8:** Talking about themes and message. There are many themes in the play “Proof”. Some major themes could for instance be: *The world of mathematics as a man’s profession - death and grief – genius and madness, love, empathy, family life, jealousy, ambition*. Discuss in pairs: What other major and minor themes can you add to the above list? What is the message of “Proof”, and in what ways do the characters convey Auburn’s themes in the play? Give references to the text.

**Task 9:** Compare and contrast. David Auburn wrote Claire and Catherine to be two contrasting characters. Which of the following list of words “suits” Catherine and which of the following lists of words “suits” Claire?:

*kind – brilliant – disconnected from society/reality – polished – educated – holds strong to her opinions – feels she is living the American dream in New York City – powerful in her career.* How can the director’s choice of costumes help to understand the characters, and their different personalities? Discuss in pairs: What kind of costumes do you think can help strengthen the personality of Catherine and of Claire? Would you prefer to play Catherine – or would you rather play Claire – argue for your choice. Next, think about how would you prepare yourself for playing the role of Catherine or Claire?

**Task 10:** Trace the development of the sister-power-relationship between Claire and Catherine. How does it start, and how does it develop. Do you see any turning point in their relationship as the play progresses? If yes, when does this take place?

**Task 11:** Trace the development of the power-relationship between Catherine and Hal. What is the first impression that the reader gets of Catherine when she is near Hal? (Remember to refer to the text). Is it possible to say that their relationship, at a certain point, changes into one of a more romantic nature? When and why does this happen? When and how does Hal break Catherine’s trust? How does Hal act in the final scene of the play? How would you describe their relationship at the end of the play?

**Task 12:** Tension and action in “Proof”. One of the ways that physical action can be examined in a play is by identifying entrances and exits. Entrances occur often in “Proof”. Many scenes begin with one character, usually Catherine, sitting alone while some other characters enter. Find examples of this in the text. However, exits are relatively rare throughout “Proof”; most scenes end with a blackout. When exits do occur, however, they are often designed to create tension. In pairs: Find evidence in the text

that many of the exits in “Proof” come after a major argument, leaving the conflict unresolved.

**Task 13:** Composition/ climax of the play. The climax of the play “Proof” is not easily recognizable. In order to determine the moment of climax, we, as readers and as an audience, must try to identify the central conflict in the play. What do you think is the central focus of the play? Very often the climax in a play deals with a resolution regarding a relationship. In pairs, discuss: When does the climax in “Proof” occur? Is it even possible to say that in “Proof” we find a “climax” within each scene? Try to establish this “climax” within each scenes of the play.

**Task 14:** Talking about dramatic time. Dramatic time can be defined as: “the total time that passes during the on-stage action plus the time during intervals between acts and scenes”. It is, however, necessary to investigate the script very closely to determine the total dramatic time of the play. In pairs, discuss: Can the total dramatic time of “Proof” be established as four years and one week – as three years and two weeks – or as one year and one week? Or what do you think, remember to argue for your point.

**Task 15:** Understanding dialogue. Much of the dialogue throughout “Proof” is emotionally charged, and very often it has a hidden “subtext” (things unsaid – things said between the lines). Read the following dialogue between Catherine and Claire, and while reading try to fill in the gaps (the empty spaces) in the dialogue. Next, discuss in pairs what is it that makes the dialogue so intense and emotional. What may be Claire’s subtext throughout the text? Next, try to act out the scene in class - and depending on your interpretation, tone of voice, gestures, etc. there may be an even deeper subtext to the dialogue between the two sisters?!. Think about what that subtext might be?

*Catherine: He didn't belong in the nuthouse*



*Claire: He might have been better off*

*Catherine: How can you say that?*

*Claire: This is where I'm meant to feel guilty, right?*

*Catherien: Sure, go for it.*

*Claire: I'm heartless. My own father.*

*Catherine: He needed to be here. In his own house, near the University, near his students, near everything that made him happy.*

*Claire: Maybe. Or maybe some real, professional care would have done him more good than rattling around in a filthy house with YOU looking after him. I'm sorry, Catherine, it's not your fault. It's my fault for letting you do it.*

*Catherine: I was right to keep him here.*

*Claire: No.*

*Catherine: What about his remission? Four years ago. He was healthy for almost a year.*

*Claire: And then he went right downhill again.*

*Catherine: He might have been worse in hospital.*

*Claire: And he MIGHT have been BETTER. Did he ever work again?*

*Catherine: No*

*Claire: No.*

**Task 16:** Dealing with the term called “mood”. How is the mood in “Proof” quickly established in the first scene? Does Catherine’s mood remain the same throughout the play, or does it change? (Give reference to the text). How would you characterize the overall mood of the play? If any, when do the moments of humor and lightheartedness occur? Remember to state references to the text.

**Task 17:** Conflicts in “Proof”. Find examples of the many conflicts in “Proof”. Hal for instance seems to have had no conflicts with Robert, Catherine’s father, but he does have several conflicts with Claire, Catherine’s sister. Find evidence in the text of these conflicts. What kind of conflict do they have in the following dialogue: What seems to be Hal’s strength in the dialogue?

*Hal: Catherine? (Claire enters). I thought you were leaving*

*Claire: I had to delay my flight (beat)*

*Hal: Is Catherine here?*

*Claire: I don’t think this is a good time, Hal.*

*Hal: could I see her?*

*Claire: Not now.*

*Hal: What’s the matter?*

*Claire: she’s sleeping*

*Hal: can I wait here until she gets up?*

*Claire: She’s been sleeping since yesterday. She won’t get up. She won’t eat, won’t talk to me. I couldn’t go home. I’m going to wait until she seems okay to travel.*

*Hal: Jesus, I’m sorry*

*Clarie: Yes*

*Hal: I’d like to talk to her*

*Claire: I don’t think that’s a good idea.*

**Task 18:** In a play we very often find soliloquies (monologues). However, there is only one in “Proof” and it is the one delivered by Robert. Read the monologue carefully. Next in pairs: What does Robert talk about? What is

it that he enjoys? How would you characterize his mood throughout the speech (optimistic, pessimistic, or maybe that of defeat)? How would you characterize his language – syntax, choice of words, use of rhetorical devices, level of formality, themes, etc.?

*Hal: Oh, what are you working on?*

*Robert: Nothing (Beat) Nothing at the moment. Which I'm glad of really. This is the time of year when you don't want to be tied down to anything. You want to be outside. I love Chicago in September. Perfect skies. Sailboats on the water. Cubs losing. Warm, the sun still hot ... with the occasional blast of Artic wind to keep you on your toes, remind you of winter. Students coming back, bookstores full, everything busy. I was in a bookstore yesterday. Completely full, students buying books .... Browsing ... Students do a hell of a lot of browsing, don't they? Just browsing. You see them shuffling around with their backpacks, goofing off, taking up space. You'd call it loitering except every once in a while they pick up a book and flip the pages: "browsing". I admire it. It is an honest way to kill an afternoon. In the back of a used bookstore, or going through a crate of somebody's old record albums – not looking for anything, just looking, what the hell, touching the old book jackets, seeing what somebody threw out, seeing what they underlines .... Maybe you find something great, like an old thriller with a painted cover from the forties, or a textbook one of your professors used when he was a student – his name is written in it carefully .... Yeah, I like it. I like watching the students. Wondering what they are gonna buy, what they're gonna read. What kind of ideas they'll come up with when they settle down and get to work ... I'm not doing much right now. It does get harder. It's a stereotype that happens to be true, unfortunately for me – unfortunately for you, for all of us.*

**Task 19:** Character study Hal. Why is Hal shocked when Catherine accuses him of wanting to claim her father's work as his own? What does this tell us about Hal as a character? Moreover, what can the rather witty

exchange that takes place between Claire and Hal, add to your understanding of Hal as a rather complex character:

*Claire: Don't worry, I understand. It's very sweet that you want to see Catherine, but of course you want the notebook too.*

*Hal: (Huffy) It's - No, it's my responsibility – as a professional I can't turn my back on the necessity of the –*

*Claire: Relax. I don't care. Take it. What would I do with it?*

*Hal: You sure?*

*Claire: Yes, of course.*

*Hal: You trust me with this?*

*Claire: Yes*

*Hal: You said I don't know what I'm doing*

*Claire: I think you're a little bit of an idiot but you're not dishonest.*

**Task 20:** Trace the relationship between Hal and Catherine. Their relationship is by far the most complex of the three. Discuss in pairs: What is at the heart of this complexity? How does their romance begin? Why is it that Hal (in the morning scene after) wants Catherine to feel good about what has happened between them? What makes Catherine go into a week-long depression in which she sleeps continuously and refuses to speak – is she really mentally unstable? Why does Catherine (in the final scene) accept Hal's apology? How has Hal's view on Catherine changed throughout the play?

**Task 21:** The ending of the play. Discuss in pairs. Would you say that Catherine's and Hal's "conflict" is resolved at the play's ending – why/why not? What about the "conflict" between the two sisters, Catherine and Claire, can it be said to be resolved with the play's ending –

why/why not? How will you characterize Claire's way of talking to Catherine in the very last scene? And how will you characterize Catherine's mental state of mind? Take your starting point in the following dialogue:

*Claire: Honey, there's no hurry*

*Catherine. I know*

*Claire: If you want to hang out, be alone for a while –*

*Catherine. No. it's no big deal.*

*Claire: We don't have to leave for twenty minutes or so.*

*Catherine: I know. Thanks, Claire*

*Claire: You are all packed.*

*Catherine: Yes*

*Claire: If you missed anything it doesn't really matter. The movers will send us everything next month (Catherine doesn't move. Beat). I know this is hard.*

*Catherine: It's fine*

*Claire: This is the right decision*

*Catherine: I know*

*Claire: I want to do everything I can to make this a smooth transition for you. So does Mitch.*

*Catherine. Good.*

*Claire: The actual departure is the hardest part. Once we get there we can relax. Enjoy ourselves.*

*Catherine: I know*

*Claire. You'll love New York*

*Catherine: I can't wait*

*Claire: You'll love it. It's the most exciting city*

*Catherine. I know.*

**Task 22:** Facts about the author's own life and works: Search the internet and find out what might be the author's motivation for having written a play that deals with for instance the issue of women and math – the relationship between a father and his daughter, etc.

#### **4. Study, "Proof", Points for further discussion in class:**

**Task 1:** What is your opinion of Robert's mental state of mind. Do you think that Robert is mentally ill? Why/why not? Give references to the text.

**Task 2:** What is your opinion of Catherine's state of mind. Do you think that Catherine is mentally ill? Why/why not? Give references to the text.

**Task 3:** The two sisters fight about equality and fairness within the family: Catherine says: *"He's dead. Now that he's dead you fly in for the weekend and decide you want to help? You are late. Where have you been"* .. Catherine later replies, *"I paid every bill here. I paid off the mortgage on this three-bedroom house while I was living in a studio in Brooklyn"*. Take your point of turn in the above quotes and discuss in pairs the fairness of Catherine stopping her life to take care of her father vs. Claire having to pay off the house. How is this fight about equality and fairness shown on

stage at Krudtønden? Compare this with the way it is portrayed in the film?

**Task 4:** Critics have argued that some of the “weak” points of “Proof” are for instance: Catherine’s inability to convince Hal and her sister that she actually invented the “proof” in her father’s notebook - and that Hal’s character is a little “unstable”, because sometimes he is so nerdy, sometimes romantic, sometimes charming. Discuss in pairs: Do you agree or disagree with the “weak” points of “Proof”, why/why not? Can you come up with other “weak” or “strong” points of “Proof”, maybe even make your own list

**Task 5:** A question of trust. How do we know who, what or whom to trust? Through its characters, “Proof” explores some of the different approaches that can be taken in response to this question. Discuss in class is Catherine to be trusted? Is Hal? Is Claire? Is Robert? Why/why not?

**Task 6:** Discuss in class: How much evidence it is reasonable to demand before we trust something or somebody? Claire for instance requires such a high standard of “proof” that it is impossible for Catherine to satisfy her sister. At one point Claire even suggests that Catherine tells them the proof, saying, “*That would show that it was yours*”. Catherine agrees and takes the note -book, but Claire insists that she has to do it from memory. This is a hugely unfair demand, as Catherine points out: “*I didn’t memorize it, it’s not a muffin recipe! It’s 40 pages long*”. Later, Claire asks her, “*Is it possible that you just wanted it so badly, that you imagined you wrote it?*”. Next, in pairs discuss Hal and Catherine: What approach do they take to truth-claims? Some critics claim that Catherine’s approach to truth-claims is the most fragile of all the characters. Do you agree – disagree with the critics of “Proof” – why/why not?

**Task 7:** Compare and contrast Auburn’s play (script) – and film text: Auburn’s play, “Proof” was adopted to a movie in 2005. It had the same title and it starred famous actors Gwyneth Paltrow, Anthony Hopkins and Jake Gyllenhall. Watch the movie in class – afterwards compare and contrast the movie with the play that you have just read. Any similarities and differences in plot, structure, characters, etc. Next: Follow the link and read a review of the film:

<http://www.maa.org/proof-three-reviews>

**Task 8:** Are creativity and mental illness linked? Catherine is in doubt how much of her father’s mental illness she has inherited - and if she has inherited any of his talent as well? Discuss in class – what is mental illness and do you think Catherine is mentally ill? Find arguments for and against Catherine’s situation. Can mental illness, as well as talent be inherited? If Catherine is really mentally ill – how can she be cured? What “kind” of mental illness does Catherine seem to suffer from?

**Task 9:** The line between creative genius and mental illness. John Nash, for instance, featured in the film, “A Beautiful mind”, is a brilliant mathematician who has contributed significantly to the so-called game theory. However, he was also a paranoid schizophrenic. Search the internet. Do you happen to know other famous geniuses throughout history that are reputed to have suffered from mental illness? What about for instance, Vincent Van Gogh, Ludwig van Beethoven, Edgar Allan Poe, Ernest Hemingway, or Sir Isaac Newton, etc. In pairs: Search the internet and find out what they “suffered” from?!

**Task 10:** Comment on and discuss the following statement said by Auburn, the author of “Proof”: *“I’ve often been surprised at the responses Proof has generated. At a New York University conference on the play, a panel of mathematicians used it to discuss questions of sexism and bias in*



*their professions. After a performance on Broadway I got a note from an audience member backstage : “My daughter is just like Catherine”, it said, “I can’t communicate with her. Can you help me?. In Chicago, a woman confronted me after a book signing. She told me her father had been a mathematician who’d lost his mind and she’d spent her whole life caring for him. “This is the story of my life”, she said. “How did you know?.*

**Task 11:** Although Robert’s mental illness is never specified clearly in the play, the symptoms he shows may suggest maybe schizophrenia or some kind of paranoia or depression. Catherine’s fear for her own sanity surfaces when Hal seems to suggest that she is paranoid. Pretend that you are an actor, and that you are going to play the role of Catherine. Discuss in pairs: How would you prepare yourself for this role? If insane, how would you, being an actor, let that shine through Catherine’s character on stage? Write an email to the actors at Krudttønden,(pr@that-theatre.com) and ask them how they prepared themselves for the different characters?

**Task 12:** Critics seem to disagree about the effectiveness of the mathematical context of Auburn’s “Proof”: Some critics believe that it is an important aspect of the play, not a bad approximation, worth taking into consideration – whereas other critics claim that the mentioning of higher mathematics and the references to famous mathematical, are inadequate and only take away the real focus of the plot. *“The premise of Proof requires some suspension of disbelief on the part of mathematicians. Not being a mathematician, Auburn, has created a plot centered on a world he doesn’t know. The result is elements of plot and dialog that are little off, ( Sara Robinson, Mathematical institute in Berkeley).* Discuss in pairs: The importance of “the mathematical” context and the intertextual references in “Proof” to the world of mathematics. Does this context add to the understanding of the play – or is this context really not that important – discuss in pairs, what do you think?

**Task 13:** The film, “A Beautiful mind”. A much discussed aspect of “Proof” has been made interesting when comparing it with the film, “A Beautiful Mind” - based, quite loosely on the biography of John Forbes Nash by Sylvia Nasar. In pairs, discuss and contrast: The connection between insanity and mathematics as portrayed in the film and on stage? Is it really true that it is often a “special” kind of person who is drawn to the world of mathematics? Auburn, himself, has said he is fascinated by “*the romantic quality of mathematical work*” - *the solitary worker in an attic somewhere, working on a problem and coming up with something entirely original*. He has also said that *mathematicians have rather edgy personalities, and that they make leaps of the mind that most people just cannot make*. Do you think the author of “Proof” is right when he seems to think there may be some kind of relationship between being a brilliant mathematician and possibly suffering from a mental breakdown?!

**Task 14:** Talking about relationships. Discuss in pairs: The relationship between Claire and her father. Compare and contrast with that of Catherine and her father. You may take your starting point in the following lines said by the director of “Proof”, Vickie Rozell, in an interview: “*One of the most striking things about the play “Proof” is the way it addresses the parent-child relationship. Between the two sisters, we are shown two very different approaches to both how their relationship is built, and what happens as the parent ages. It’s something we all go through and something that most of us address with varying amounts of success. Who hasn’t griped about something they inherited from their parents, be it physical, intellectual, or psychological? And how many of us have tried to reject such an inheritance in the same way we sometimes reject lessons that we aren’t yet ready to learn?*”. Why is it that it seems as if Claire is not that affected by the death of her father? Can you find evidence in the text that Claire’s relationship to her father seems to be very superficial? Or maybe the other way around? Can you find evidence in the text that Robert

and Catherine has a very special father-daughter bond to each other? How is it for instance shown in the text that Robert is very proud of Catherine?

**Task 15.** The impact of the word “beat” in the script and on the stage.

In the script, the playwright uses the word “beat” a lot. Find example of some of the places where the word is used in the script? Discuss in pairs: What does the word simply indicate in these places. Does it for instance indicate a pause in the dialogue, a moment of silence, a moment of confusion, a moment of awkwardness or maybe even a change of mood in the characters? What do you think? Would it be possible to leave this word out of the script? Does the word have an effect on the play and the readers understanding of the characters? (Reference: Harold Pinter and his use of the word “pause”)

**Task 16:** Discuss in pairs: How can Catherine say to illustrate the gender issue in the field of mathematics? In the script, “Proof”, there is an intertextual reference to a woman who had to reveal her mathematics discoveries through letters and under a male pseudonym in order for her thoughts to be taken seriously, and finally recognized as a contribution to the field of mathematics. Find the intertextual reference in the play? Comment on the situation of Catherine and the link to the intertextual reference. Moreover, comment on the role of Hal in this connection. Take your point of departure in the dialogue between Hal and Catherine (the very last scene). Why is it that Hal ought to have trusted Claire, and why didn't he do it to begin with?

*Hal: Come on, Catherine, I'm trying to correct things.*

*Catherine: You can't. Do you hear me? You think you have figured something out? You run over here so pleased with yourself because you changed your mind. Now you're certain. You're so sloppy. You don't know anything. The book, the math, the dates, the writing, all that stuff you*

*decided with your buddies, it's just evidence. It doesn't finish the job. It doesn't prove anything.*

*Hal: Okay what would?*

*Catherine: Nothing. You should have trusted me.*

**5. Study, "Proof", having read the play how much do you remember? Quiz yourself- how much do you remember from the play you have just read?**

1. How is the day on which the play begins significant to Catherine?
2. What does Robert have for Catherine?
3. What is Robert's advice for Catherine?
4. How old was Robert when he got sick?
5. What did Robert die of?
6. What was Hal doing in Catherine's house in the middle of the night?
7. Where does Hal invite Catherine?
8. How does Hal feel about Catherine's father?
9. What does Catherine suspect Hal of doing?
10. How does Catherine describe her father during her insanity?
11. What was Hal going to do with the notebook that Catherine finds in his coat?
12. Why does Claire refuse to believe Catherine about Hal?
13. What do Catherine and Hal say about the funeral?
14. Who is Catherine's role model?
15. What does Claire reveal she is doing with the house and why?
16. What does Hal find in Robert's desk (using Catherine's key)?
17. In Catherine's flashback, what does Robert say he enjoys at this time of the year?
18. What does Catherine attempt to do at the end of her argument with Hal and Claire?

19. In her flashback, what does Catherine see in Robert's notebook when she visits him?
20. How does Catherine treat Claire when she talks about Catherine's life in New York?
21. What does Claire believe Catherine can't do?
22. What does Catherine say writing the "proof" was like?

## 6. Study, "Proof", Post-reading and writing, non-fiction, articles:

**Task 1:** Reading an article. "Proof" among other things deals with both Catherine's and her father's strong passion for math. Dr. Eugenia Cheng who has written an article about math and gender, is herself a teacher of math. She is on a mission to make maths accessible to all people no matter gender and age.

In pairs: Read the article by Cheng:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/you/article-3101123/If-follow-simple-cake-recipe-applied-mathematics.html>

Use the rhetorical pentagon when analyzing it. Incorporate in your analysis also terms as: modes of appeal – strong/weak arguments – claim – warrant – intention – etc.

Discuss in pairs: The gender aspect of the subject of math, and also how it is dealt with in "Proof". Next, discuss the following statement by Cheng: "*Regardless of gender can math make links to things that otherwise seem unconnected*".

**Task 2:** Write an article to a scientific magazine about the fantastic world of math. Take your starting point in the above statement, "*Regardless of*

*gender can math make links to things that otherwise seem unconnected*". And develop your argumentation from there. Remember to back up your argumentation by giving examples and by referring to reliable sources.

7. **Study, "Proof", having watched the play on stage by That-theatre in Krudttønden:**

**Task 1:** Which moments of the play, "Proof", are memorable to you – and why? What made you laugh? Or cry? Made you think. Any universal themes?

**Task 2:** Which characters of the play are memorable to you – and why?

**Task 3:** How do the choices of design elements (set, lighting, costume, props and sound) contribute to your understanding of "Proof"?

**Task 4:** What choices could have been made for the design of the show that could that have made the experience on stage different?

**Task 5:** How does the actress playing Catherine make her inner conflicts, her worries about her own sanity, and her grief over her father's death apparent on stage?

**Task 6:** How does the actress playing Claire make her character apparent on stage? And what about Robert, the father, and Hal, the student?

## **8. Study , “Proof”, writing activities for students**

**Task 1:** Write a review of the play you have seen performed at Krudttønden, Østerbro. Did the actors do well on stage – why/why not? Did the actors live up to your expectations – why/why not? Your review must focus on a specific aspect of the show.

**Task 2:** My prediction about Catherine’s future life. Continue writing about Catherine: *The play is about Catherine and her struggle to put her life back on track. While she wallows in the memory of her dead father, and wonders if she has inherited his mental illness, her life is falling apart. She will not be ...*

**Task 3:** Comment on the following statement: *Character seems to be the single most important dramatic element in “Proof”. The relationship between all four characters almost makes the plot seem secondary. The main idea of the play centers on Catherine and her relationships. Through the use of clever and funny dialogue, Auburn has created a realistic drama about characters and events to which nearly every reader can relate to”.*

**Task 4:** Letter writing. Catherine’s father is thankful for all the years that Catherine has spent with him. Continue the letter that Robert seems to start in Act I, scene 1. *Dear Cathy, Most of all I want to thank you for the years you have cared for me. Your refusal to let me be institutionalized – you keeping me at home, caring for me yourself, has certainly saved my life.*

*Made it possible to imagine doing math again. Where does your strength come from? I can never repay you, but I ....*

**Task 5:** Write a speech from Hal to Catherine. Take your point of departure in the following lines said by Hal: *“I want to spend the day with you if possible. I’d like to spend as much time with you as I can unless of course I’m coming on way too strong right now and scaring you in which case I’ll begin backpedaling immediately ...*

**Task 6:** Write a speech from Claire to Hal. Take your point of departure in the following lines said by Catherine: *“You have no idea what she needs. You don’t know her! She’s my sister. Jesus, you fucking mathematicians: you don’t think. You don’t know what you’re doing. You stagger around creating these catastrophes and it’s people like me who end up flying in to clean them up (beat). She needs to get out of Chicago, out of this house. I’ll give you my number in New York. You can call her once she’s settled there. That’s it, that’s the deal”.*

**Task 7:** Create a formal debate. Argue for or against insanity in the play “Proof”. Before you begin find and write down your arguments for or against.

**Task 8:** Write an analytical essay about “Proof”. Your essay must incorporate a characterization of Catherine and her relationship to the other characters in the play. Moreover, it is important that you come around the composition of the play and the themes. Also remember that your essay must have an introduction- a body part – and a conclusion.



**Task 9:** Diary writing. Catherine's life takes a turning point when her sister, Claire, comes home from New York. To cope with the presence of her sister Catherine starts writing in her diary. Pretend you are Catherine, and write down her thoughts about Claire, from the moment Claire enters the house to where she goes with her to New York.

**Task 10:** Compare and contrast the ending of the film with the ending of the play. Write down five lines and argue in favour for or against the film's ending of the play - or the script's ending of the play.

**Task 11:** Write an article to a magazine about the issue of the unhealthy – or healthy father-daughter relationship. Take your starting point in “Proof”, and the relationship between Catherine and her father – and Claire and her father. Before you begin writing your article search the Internet and find reliable sources and arguments to back up your argumentation.

**Task 12:** Letter writing. Write a letter from Catherine to her sister's husband, Mitch in New York. Focus in your letter about the way Catherine feels about coming “home” to her father's funeral.

## 9. Study, “Proof”, grammar and translation activities

**Task 1:** Translate into Danish: “*Proof is a family drama that explores the relationship between brilliance and madness. It centers on the character of Catherine, a young woman who has spent years caring for her father, a once-great mathematician now stricken with mental illness. The play opens on the eve of his funeral, as Catherine begins her struggles with issues of responsibility, trust, and the possible inheritance of her father’s brilliance and madness*”.

**Task 2:** Doing grammar from present to past tense. Change the following verbs from the present tense to the past tense. *Proof. Born in Chicago, Illinois, David Auburn grew up in Ohio and Arkansas. He returned to Illinois to attend the University of Chicago, where he worked with a group that wrote and performed improvisational sketches and comedies. Auburn wrote several plays while at the university. He then moved to Los Angeles to become a screenwriter, but he experienced little success. He then went to New York, where he wrote advertising labels for a carpet shampoo until he began the playwriting program at the Julliard School that resulted in his first full-length play ...*”

**Task 3:** Doing grammar talking about word-classes. What is a noun? What is an adjective? Find all the adjectives and the nouns in the following lines, said by Catherine in “Proof”: “*Mitch has become an excellent cook. It’s like his hobby now. He buys all these gadgets. Garlic press, olive oil spray ... Every night there’s something new. Delicious, wonderful meals. The other day he made vegetarian chili!*”.

**Task 4:** Talking about style and language. What is the difference between formal and informal language? Rewrite the following dialogue into more formal English, by changing some of the informal words and expressions.

*Robert: Kid, I've seen you. You sleep till noon, you eat junk, you don't work, the dishes pile up in the sink. If you go out it's to buy magazines. You come back with a stack of magazines this high – I don't know how you read that crap. And those are the good days. Some days you don't get up, you don't get out of bed.*

*Catherine: Those are the good days.*

*Robert: Bullshit. Those days are lost. You threw them away. And you'll never know what else you threw away with them – the work you lost, the ideas you didn't have, discoveries you never made because you were moping in your bed at for in the afternoon (Beat). You know I'm right (Beat.).*

*Catherine: I've lost a few days*

*Robert: How many?*

*Catherine: Oh, I don't know*

*Robert: I bet you do.*

*Catherine: What?*

*Robert: I bet you count.*

*Catherine: Knock it off*

*Robert: Well, do you know or don't you?*

*Catherine: I don't.*

*Robert: Of course you do. How many days have you lost?*

*Catherine: A month. Around a month.*

*Robert: Exactly.*

*Catherine: Goddamn it, I don't –*

*Robert: How many?*

*Catherine: Thirty-three days.*

*Robert: Exactly?*

*Catherine: I don't know.*

*Robert: Be precise, for Christ sake.*

*Catherine: I slept till noon today.*

*Robert: Call it thirty-three and a quarter days.*

*Catherine: Yes, all right.*

*Robert: You're kidding!*

*Catherine: No*

*Robert: Amazing number!*

*Catherine: It's a depressing fucking number.*

**Task 5:** Correct the following incorrect sentences, and explain to each other the grammatical issue.

- Catherine and Claire is sisters both they do not live together
- "Proof" is a play who deals with the issue of insanity
- We will never know how the life of the sisters will be in the future
- If you are teacher bring along your students, and come in and watch the play "Proof" being performed at Krudttønden
- Claires sister is called Catherine, and her boyfriend is called Hall
- You have no idea of what she need, she is my sister and I know what is best for her.

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