

ESOL Film Day
Dead Poets Society

When: Tuesday, November 25, 10:00am-2:00pm
Where: Performing Arts Center, Fine Arts Building

Main Characters:

Mr. Keating or “Captain” – the English professor who teaches his students to think for themselves, challenge traditional beliefs, and resist conformity

Neil Perry – the student who wants to be an actor but whose father wants him to be a doctor

Todd Anderson – Neil’s roommate, a shy student

Knox Overstreet – the student who falls in love with Chris, the daughter of his parents’ friends

Charlie – a student that is part of the main group of boys; he is the most defiant one

Mr. Nolan – the head of Welton Academy; a very conservative man who does not want students to think independently

Basic Plot: Mr. Keating, or “Captain,” is a new English teacher at Welton Academy, a private school for boys. The school is very conservative and does not encourage the boys to think freely. Mr. Keating uses poetry to inspire his students to live life passionately and think for themselves. The boys begin to pursue their own desires, which causes conflict between them and the school.

Vocabulary:

Welton Academy – a private school that admitted only boys and prepared them to enter the best universities

Dead Poets Society – a secret “club” of students at Welton who escape from school at night and read poetry

Carpe Diem – a Latin term meaning “Seize the day,” or the idea that you should make the most out of the present moment and not worry about the past or future

pillar – a foundation on which something is built

Ivy Leagues – the top universities in the United States, including Harvard, Yale, and Princeton

a stiff – slang term for a dead body or a boring, conservative person

valedictorian – the person with the best grades in a high school class

the annual – a book that has photos of each student in a class, produced at the end of the year

dispel – to eliminate

an iota – a very tiny amount of something

legacy – something that happens in the past or that comes from someone in the past

trig –short for “trigonometry”

tragedy – a very sad and shocking event

objective – something you try hard to achieve; a goal

savor – to smell or taste something with pleasure or intensity

cynic – a person who does not easily trust what he or she is told by others

demerit – a bad mark on a student’s school record, usually from breaking the rules

swoon – to be overwhelmed by joy, or to faint

conformity – the process of acting like everyone else so that you are all the same

a scapegoat – a person who is wrongly blamed for a situation by someone else

Poets mentioned in the movie: <i>Walt Whitman</i> <i>Henry David Thoreau</i> <i>William Shakespeare</i> <i>Lord Byron</i>
