

Simon & Schuster Classroom Activities for the Enriched Classic edition of *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair 0-7434-8762-1 • \$5.95 / \$8.95 Can.

Activities created by Katie Gideon

Each of the three activities includes:

- NCTE standards covered
- An estimate of the time needed
- A complete list of materials needed
- Step-by-step instructions
- Questions to help you evaluate the results

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Lesson Plan #1

"To the workingmen of America"

(A Lesson in Historical Context)

In order to connect with *The Jungle*, it helps to have some understanding of the historical concepts that form the novel's backdrop. In this lesson, students will research one relevant topic and then share findings with the class. In addition to preparing them for the novel, this research activity demands that students critically read their information sources. It also gives them valuable rehearsal in creating correctly formatted bibliographies.

This activity takes two or three fifty-minute class periods and also includes homework.

NCTE Standards Covered:

- 3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- 4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- 7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- 8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- 11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

What To Do:

- 1. Have each student read *The Jungle* introductory materials (pgs. vii-xviii) for homework. As they read, they should track unfamiliar words and concepts. The goal is to come to class with questions regarding this transitional time in American history.
- 2. The next day in class, have students share any questions raised by the timeline. Discuss their initial observations: how is the Progressive Era similar to today's society? How is it different? How will this knowledge affect their reading of the novel?



- 3. Explain to students the importance of muckrakers during the Progressive Era. These were people who truly believed in the power of the pen—as Sinclair himself once said, "I aimed at the public's heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach." To celebrate the journalism of the early twentieth century, students will create their own front page of a newspaper as the end product for this research project.
- 4. Consult front pages from several contemporary newspapers. Ask students to note how text, font size, layout, and white space are used. Draw their attention to pictures and captions. Answer any questions they have about how to create a compelling front page.
- 5. Pass out Handout #1. Explain that each student will use at least one print resource and one online resource to create a poster explaining whatever topic they investigate. Go over your expectations for the assignment. Review with your students what web sources will be acceptable and unacceptable for this assignment. (e.g., do they need to restrict their research to university websites only?) Their findings will create the historical context necessary for building understanding of this novel.
- 6. Review the citation system at your school. Provide students with examples of correctly formatted bibliographies and in-line citations. Inform them that they'll have to redo any work that comes in without proper citations.
- 7. Assign two or three students each to one of the following potential topics. Students should work individually, but pairing up on topics ensures that the class receives quality information. Possible topics for research include:
 - a. Eugene V. Debs
 - b. Theodore Roosevelt
 - c. Socialism
 - d. Capitalism
 - e. Sacco-Vanzetti case
 - f. Oil Trust/Standard Oil Company
 - g. Coal Trust
 - h. Beef Trust
 - i. Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906
 - j. Sherman Antitrust Act
 - k. John D. Rockefeller
 - 1. Andrew Carnegie
 - m. J.P. Morgan
 - n. Industrial Workers of the World
 - o. American Federation of Labor
 - p. Triangle Shirtwaist Fire
 - q. Progressive Era immigration
- 8. Assist your students as they complete their research in the library. Encourage them to take accurate notes, complete with citations. Students will take their research home to create a draft of their newspaper page, which should be brought to class the next day.



- 9. Students will have the class period to create their newspaper pages, either in your classroom or a computer lab. The front pages are due at the end of class.
- 10. Choose the best front page articles and create a Xeroxed packet for students to use as reference over the course of the unit. After you give out the packets, read each front page together as a class. If so desired, create a pop quiz based on the information students gather.

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *The Jungle* (0743487621) for each student

Copies of Handout #1

Access to a library with both print resources and Internet

Art supplies and/or computer access to create front page of newspaper

How Did It Go?

Based on the criteria you chose for them, were the students able to distinguish between reputable and non-reputable web sources? Could they successfully locate and use print sources? During presentations, could they successfully share information with one another? Were their front pages attractive and useful? Did they correctly format their bibliographies? Finally, a question to revisit as you read the novel: did this historical research project build sufficient background knowledge to aid textual understanding?



Lesson #2

"In the face of all his handicaps"

(A Lesson in Character Analysis)

The following assessment activity assumes that students have finished reading the entire novel. It is designed to develop students' confidence and effectiveness as they write literary analysis. In this lesson, students will focus their attention on one specific character. They will analyze the beginning, middle, and end of that character's story arc using close reading and critical thinking skills. Students successfully completing the activity will be able to explain how their focus character embodies the larger themes of the text.

This activity takes two fifty-minute class periods and also includes homework. (It also includes a bit of pre-prep from the teacher, explained fully in the "What to Do" section.)

NCTE Standards Covered:

- **3.** Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- **4.** Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- **6.** Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
- **11.** Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

What To Do:

- 1. Begin class with a discussion of symbolism. A symbol is a concrete person, place, event, or thing used to represent something else (often an abstract idea). Ask students about the dollar sign (\$), an exclamation point (!), and tri-colored traffic lights. How do Americans interpret these symbols? What do these symbols tell us to do? How do they affect our reading of a situation—whether it's a bank statement, a sentence, or right-of-way at an intersection? If students already understand the basics of symbolism, move them directly to a discussion of more complex symbols—a white dove, a red heart, or a single long-stem rose. What do these symbols mean in our culture?
- 2. Explain to students that their skills interpreting visual symbols can also be used to interpret literary symbols. Remind students that Upton Sinclair wrote *The Jungle* as a protest novel—he hoped readers would feel sympathy for the American worker's plight and feel compelled to



change the capitalist system. Given this purpose, what characters, places, events, or things in the novel might be interpreted symbolically? What might they symbolize?

- 3. Tell students to pick a character—either Jurgis, Ona, Elzbieta, or Marija. They'll be creating a visual symbol to summarize the character's change over the course of the novel. Assist individuals as they identify three key moments that define their chosen character's story arc at its beginning, middle, and end. The incidents they choose should show how capitalism degrades the working class physically, mentally, and/or morally.
- 4. Pass out Handout #2, and read the general overview to students. Explain that they will start the symbol picture portion of the assignment in class, and finish it for homework. The placard paragraph portion of the assignment will be dealt with in class tomorrow—for now, they should just concentrate on the symbol picture. Direct their attention to the assessment criterion for the symbol picture. Make sure everyone understands what comprises "composition," "effort," and "symbolism." Answer any questions and support students as they work on their symbol pictures.
- 5. TEACHER PREP PIECE, PART ONE: In order to prepare for tomorrow's lesson, you'll need to acquire a puzzle and put it together. (Since any sort of puzzle will do, something from a thrift store, garage sale, or forgotten toy collection is ideal.) The students will be divided into groups in tomorrow's lesson. Get out enough containers (Ziploc bags, Tupperware) for each group, plus one more for your classroom demonstration.
- 6. TEACHER PREP PIECE, PART TWO: Put eleven puzzle pieces into each of your containers. The eleven puzzle pieces symbolize the eleven interlocking components of a successful placard paragraph. A successful character-analysis paragraph will include:
 - A topic sentence that introduces the importance of the character, both in regards to plot and in regards to Sinclair's overall theme (1 puzzle piece)
 - Early evidence from the character's introduction (1 puzzle piece)
 - ➤ Interpretation that provides <u>context</u> and <u>analysis</u> for the early evidence (2 puzzle pieces)
 - Midpoint evidence from the middle of the character's story arc (1 puzzle piece)
 - ➤ Interpretation that provides <u>context</u> and <u>analysis</u> for the midpoint evidence (2 puzzle pieces)
 - ➤ Closing evidence from the end of the character's story arc (1 puzzle piece)
 - ➤ Interpretation that provides <u>context</u> and <u>analysis</u> for the closing evidence (2 puzzle pieces)
 - A concluding sentence that summarizes the changes in the character and how this reinforces Sinclair's theme (1 puzzle piece)

As you break the puzzle into different containers, divide the pieces so that some groups will be able to put an entire section of the puzzle together without any problems. Give other groups scattered chunks of puzzle, so that they can put together little portions but not create a whole section. Finally, give at least one group a totally random assortment of pieces that will be impossible to put together. (This represents the range of quality generally seen in analytical writing—some paragraphs are completely cohesive, others contain successful elements but lack overall focus, and some are collections of sentences that fail to relate any unified thought.)



IMPORTANT: Your classroom demonstration assortment of puzzle pieces should fit together perfectly. Make sure that you give yourself a section of pieces that will link together without any problems! Label that container clearly so that you can set aside your puzzle pieces tomorrow.

- 7. TEACHER PREP PIECE, PART THREE: Before class starts the next day, arrange your set of puzzle pieces on top of the overhead so that none of the pieces are touching, but it will be easy to link them into the correct formation when you're talking to the class (Step 13).
- 8. The next day in class, divide students into groups. Hand each group one of the containers of puzzle pieces. Inform groups that they'll receive points for the activity based on whether or not they can put the puzzle pieces together. Groups that cannot put all of their pieces together will receive a zero. Time the students and (temporarily) encourage any feelings of pressure and frustration that occur.
- 9. After the time runs out, do a quick check. How many groups successfully put all of their pieces together? How many groups put together a portion of their puzzle? How many groups didn't manage to link any pieces? Have representatives from each group discuss how the group's success (or lack thereof) impacted their feelings. Did they feel victorious upon completing the puzzle? Determined to make the different chunks fit together? Angry that nothing seemed to be working? Encourage their honesty, and then reassure them that everyone *did* get points for the activity. Have them put the puzzle pieces back in the containers, and collect the containers.
- 10. Now, remind them of yesterday's exploration of symbolism. Inform them that the sections of puzzle represent the character analysis paragraphs they're about to write. Ask students to imagine that, instead of putting together a puzzle, their groups had written paragraphs. What kind of paragraph did the groups write if they (a) could put all of the pieces together (b) could put some of the pieces together and (c) failed to put any pieces together? (Students should describe the range of quality put forth in Step 6.)
- 11. Have students take out their completed symbol pictures (last night's homework) and Handout #2. Congratulate them on last night's work and reassure them that it will make the next component much easier: they already intuitively understand how their character has grown and changed over the course of the book. Now, they just need to explain their intuitive analysis using written evidence and explanation. The paragraph they write will be hung next to their picture; this will create a classroom museum exhibit that everyone can learn from and enjoy.
- 12. Tell students to silently read the rest of the rubric on Handout #2 (all of the items related to the paragraph). If they successfully include all of the criteria described, they'll have a cohesive paragraph.
- 13. Pass out Handout #3, and turn on your overhead. Explain that you want each student to think of his/her character analysis paragraph as a perfectly finished puzzle. They will use the graphic organizer you've just given them to ensure that they have all of the pieces necessary for a satisfactory character analysis. You will show them what you mean by moving the puzzle pieces about on your overhead and narrating as you do so. (Students will see the silhouettes moving and connecting.)



- 14. Explain to students that their first step is to create a strong thesis statement (represented by the first puzzle piece). This is the topic sentence for the paragraph, which will summarize the character's story arc and tell how it relates to the greater message of the novel. Next, introduce the character and his or her situation with three pieces of evidence from the book, from the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Each example should give the necessary context (piece #2), then present the evidence (piece #3), and interpret the situation (piece #4) so that the reader clearly understands the analysis. The students then repeat that pattern twice, using evidence from different points in the story (pieces #5-10), and finishing with a concluding sentence (piece #11). Completing these tasks will probably take the rest of the class period. Help individual students as necessary, and encourage them to start writing the paragraph directly onto Handout #3 once they've created a thesis (their topic sentence), and located satisfactory evidence.
- 15. Students should finish writing their paragraph directly onto Handout #3 for homework.
- 16. The next day in class, students will hand in their paragraphs. You will grade them to make sure that the paragraphs meet your criteria and direct students to fix any spelling errors. (Note: students must achieve each of the criteria to pass the activity.) As you deem each paragraph satisfactory, give the student author of that paragraph an index card. Each individual student should use his/her best penmanship as he copies his/her paragraph onto the card. Students can then turn in their placard paragraph with the symbol picture. You will post these satisfactory assignments on the classroom wall you've designated for the museum exhibit.
- 17. After a majority of students have posted their pictures and paragraphs, give the class a chance to walk through the exhibit and admire one another's work.

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *The Jungle* (0743487621) for each student

Copies of Handouts #2 & #3 (one for each student)

Puzzle pieces separated into containers

Overhead projector

4x6 index cards

How Did It Go?

Were students able to select appropriate evidence? Does their outline indicate a sense of organization? Did their paragraph thoughtfully examine the portrayal of a key character in Sinclair's novel? Could they consider the larger message of the book? Could they create a tightly locked argument by using intentional vocabulary and strong statements to relate evidence back to the thesis statement?



Lesson Plan #3

"Radical Democracy left without a lie"

(A Lesson in Controversial Issues)

The following assessment activity is designed to challenge students' synthesizing ability in an engaging, creative way. In this lesson, students will critically examine the form and function of two forms of reform writing: the protest novel, and the newspaper op-ed piece. Ultimately, they will create a short protest story of their own on the topic of their choice.

This lesson will take at least three fifty-minute class periods to complete, and also includes homework.

NCTE Standards Covered:

- **3.** Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- **4.** Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- **9.** Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
- 11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
- **12.** Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

- 1. Define the word "stance" for your students. Ask them: what is Upton Sinclair's stance on capitalism? What evidence can you point to in *The Jungle* that makes his stance clear? What is the interplay between facts and emotion/opinion in his story? Hopefully, students will realize that Sinclair uses both—his detailed description of Packingtown lends credibility to the story, while his portrait of Jurgis's family gives the struggle of the proletariat a human face.
- 2. Now, pass out copies of the op-ed piece (or pieces) that you've copied from your local newspaper and/or *The New York Times*. Ask students to identify the columnist's stance. What have they identified as a problem? What is their proposed solution? What evidence do they use to lend credence to their concern, and how do they discredit and/or disarm the opposing argument?



- 3. Ask students to compare *The Jungle* to the Op-Ed piece (or pieces) that you have provided. Which one do the students find more effective? Why? What are the similarities students have noticed between the two types of writing? What are the differences? (Each group of students may be swayed by a different from of writing, but you should emphasize the persuasive strategies of the Op-Ed pieces and the pathos of the protest fiction.)
- 4. Invite students to imagine themselves as modern-day muckrakers. Using *The Jungle* as their model, their goal is to write a well-researched short story that generates sympathy and offers a solution to a pressing contemporary social problem by looking through the personal lens of a character (or group of characters).
- 5. Pass out Handout #4 and talk about the different components. As with any story, the one they write should have a beginning, middle, and end. It should also demonstrate intentional word choice and attention to grammar rules. Additionally, a good protest story will be dramatic but plausible: the characters have a legitimate reason for interacting with each other, and the group function as a microcosm to critique a contemporary social issue. The author will find a way to give background on the issue before working in evidence that supports his/her stance. The plot, characters, and setting will all convey the author's stance on the issue. The narrative will discredit the other side of the story.
- 6. Brainstorm the different issues that students might explore in their story. Again, it may be helpful to refer to the Op-Ed pieces. What are the topics people are most concerned about right now? What are the issues the students themselves truly wish to explore? How can we do that through fiction, instead of through journalism? Finally, what kind of set-up might enable them to explore these issues fully? For example, maybe they write about a high school student who gets in a car accident, only to find that her family lacks health insurance. How will the medical bills affect everyone in the family? How can a writer weave narration about the specific characters into a larger argument about the state of health care?
- 7. Have students break into groups based on their interests. (One group might be doing education, one might be working on immigration, etc.) Give them a day at the library to do some research on their chosen topic. Aid them in employing all of the skills they used for the first activity of this unit. Each member of each group should research a different aspect of the topic, to gain the whole group as much research as possible.
- 8. After students have completed their research, allow them to confer and share notes. Then, release them to work independently. For the rest of the assessment period, you'll be working with each student about individual concerns. Your guidelines for the whole class are as follows: they should complete a story outline as homework. There's one more class day to work on the story. Anything students don't finish in class is homework.
- 9. Ask if there are any further questions that the whole group needs to hear. If not, release the students to work independently. For the rest of the assessment period, you'll be working with each student about individual concerns. Your guidelines for the whole class are as follows: they should complete the framing prologue as homework. There's one more class day to work on the character prologue and story—anything students don't finish in class is homework.



10. Students should turn in the final draft of their story with Handout #4 attached, so that you can use it to grade them.

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *The Jungle* (0743487621) for each student

Copies of several Op-Ed pieces (either from your local paper or the *New York Times*; one for each student)

Copies of Handout #4

Access to a research facility (library or computer lab)

How Did It Go?

Were students able to recognize persuasive strategies at work in contemporary media? Could they compare and contrast those strategies with the ones used by Sinclair? Did their final stories show an understanding of protest stories? Were they able to include all the necessary elements? Were they able to offer commentary on a contemporary social issue?



Handout #1

Historical Background Newspaper: Rubric

Front page of newspaper contains:

- Headline article with 7 pertinent facts regarding the event/person/tradition, woven together in journalistic story format
- At least one picture relating to the event/person/tradition
- Eye-catching headline created by the student which summarizes the impact this event/person/tradition had on America during the Progressive Era.
- At least one mock advertisement, letter to the editor, and/or horoscope that captures the mood of the Progressive Era.
- Shades of black, gray, and white only—no color. This needs to be easy and inexpensive to copy.

Category	Achieved	Not Achieved
Research notes	Research notes turned in with newspaper. They cover at least one print source and one reputable online source. They include bibliographic information as well as handwritten notes.	Research does not include required sources. Bibliographic information incomplete. Notes are cut-and-paste printouts from websites.
Required elements	The article includes all required elements and perhaps some additional information.	Required elements are missing.
Text—Clarity of Expression	The article gives the reader important background information about this event/person/tradition. It's easy to understand. There are no grammatical errors.	Information irrelevant and/or hard to follow. Grammatical errors disrupt clarity of article.
Graphics—Relevance	All graphics are related to the topic and make it easier to understand. All borrowed graphics have a source citation.	Graphics do not relate to the topic OR several borrowed graphics do not have a source citation.
Attractiveness	The newspaper is attractive in terms of design, layout, and neatness.	The newspaper is distractingly messy or poorly constructed.



The Jungle: Character Analysis

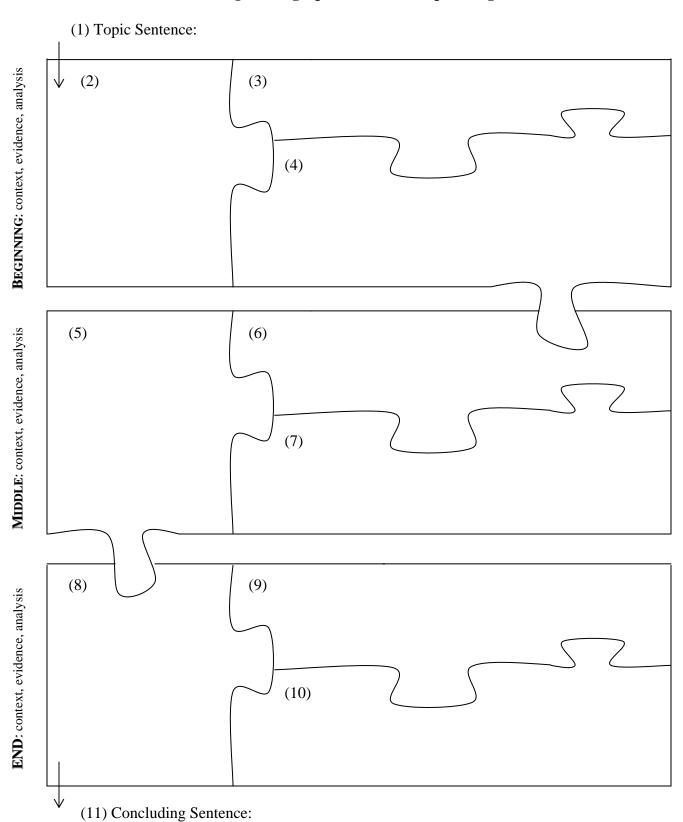
Create a mural or collage that illustrates changes in either Jurgis, Ona, Elzbieta, or Marija from the character's introduction through their exit from the novel. Your art piece will be posted as part of a classroom museum exhibit. You'll also write a paragraph on a placard explaining your interpretation of the character's growth. This will be posted alongside your collage.

Achieved?	Criterion
Y/N	Composition: elements of the collage/mural successfully arranged to create a unified piece of art. Effort: Art piece shows thoughtful exertion. Symbolism: elements of the collage/mural successfully convey changes in the character throughout piece.
Y/N	Placard paragraph: reads smoothly—uses transitions, sentence variety, and intentional word choice.
Y/N	Placard paragraph: should relate the character's story arc to the greater message of the novel, that "the combination of capitalism and corrupt government create a hell on earth for millions of urban workers, and radical social reform is necessary to save the masses." (pg. 441)
Y/N	Placard paragraph: Topic sentence is a thesis statement (stating unique subject and opinion in a clear, concise manner). Thesis statement explicitly states the argument you implicitly made with your art piece.
Y/N	Placard paragraph: contains cited evidence. Three direct quotes and/or paraphrases come from beginning, middle, and end of the novel. They are cited properly using MLA parenthetical notation.
Y/N	Placard paragraph: Each piece of evidence anchored by and explained through relevant interpretation. The interpretation relates the evidence directly back to the thesis/topic sentence. No redundant restating of the obvious.
Y/N	Placard paragraph: concluding sentence ties the paragraph together.



Handout #3

The Jungle Paragraph: "Puzzle" Graphic Organizer





Handout #4

The Jungle Protest Story Map

Your story should convey a sense that the stakes are always rising. Your characters must struggle against the contemporary social issue: the problems caused by the issue (numbers 3 and 5) drive the rest of the story. Fill out your plan for your protest story below.

1. Setting: introduces the reader to a world that will interest them. It should either be a place that shocks and/or intrigues the reader, or one that seems familiar to the reader. Choose a setting that will allow for maximum exploration of your social issue.
2. Dynamic introduction sympathetic of characters:
3. Introduction of problem: gives background on the contemporary social issue
4. First problem in face of social issue: the characters come up against the social issue in a dramatic but plausible way. The author gives evidence to support his/her stance on the social issue. Someone presents the other side of the contemporary social issue as a solution to the problem.
5. Second problem in face of social issue: trying to work from the other side of the contemporary social issue fails. Reactions to the first problem actually lead to more problems. The author gives more evidence to support his/her stance on the social issue.
6. The Moment of Despair: the characters feel that they can never recover.
7. Conclusion: either happy or tragic, it somehow fits with the rest of the piece while simultaneously suggesting the author's solution to the contemporary social issue.