

S T O R Y P A T H[®]

Sample Pages

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CRITICAL INCIDENT

A MOVE OVERSEAS

5

EPISODE

INTRODUCING THE CRITICAL INCIDENT

page 34

Students receive the news that the toy company is being moved overseas.

Materials Teaching Master 3, *Memo from the Company President*, TH p. 43

Grouping Whole class

Schedule Approximately 20 minutes

REACTING TO THE PROBLEM

page 35

Students react and respond to the news with appropriate methods.

Materials Portfolio 14, *Prewriting: Problem-Solution Letter*, p. 18

Portfolio 15, *Drafting: Problem-Solution Letter*, p. 19

Optional materials:

For the press conference:

■ Optional materials: video camera and VCR or tape recorders and tapes

For posters or signs:

■ poster board, paint and brushes, colored markers, crayons

■ glue, tape, construction paper

Grouping Students can work individually or in their groups.

Schedule Approximately 1 1/2–2 hours

CONCLUDING EPISODE 5

page 37

Students reflect on their responses to the problem.

Materials None

Grouping Whole class

Schedule Approximately 30 minutes

EPISODE OBJECTIVES



■ **Geography** *Consider existing uses of the toy company's resources and land; propose and evaluate alternatives to moving the company.*

■ **Economics** *Examine how labor and costs of resources influence the economic decision to move the company overseas.*

■ **Civic Competence** *Cite examples of how freedom of expression can be exercised in a democratic society.*

■ **Civic Competence** *Identify examples of freedoms, rights, and responsibilities of citizens in responding to a controversy.*

■ **Civic Competence** *Identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation.*

■ **Civic Competence** *Explain actions citizens can take to influence policy decisions.*

■ **Literacy** *Read a fictional company memo for specific information related to a company's marketplace strategies.*

■ **Literacy** *Write a problem-solution letter.*

INTRODUCING THE CRITICAL INCIDENT

TEACHING
MASTER

T3

AUTHOR NOTE

“Hitting Close to Home”

Has an incident similar to this one actually happened in your community? This would afford students a real-life example of how these types of problems are handled in actual communities. However, carefully gauge your reactions so that you are not perceived as taking a particular position.

LITERACY

Speaking and Listening

When students participate and listen in a meeting, they

- use details and facts to convey their ideas;
- provide reasons for their opinions;
- deliver their opinions to persuade others;
- listen for information.

Receive the news

As the story continues, introduce the critical incident by distributing copies of Teaching Master 3, “Memo from the Company President,” TH page 43, to students. Have them read the memo to find out what is going to happen to their company. Help them with any difficult vocabulary or concepts that appear in the memo. As alternatives to receiving a memo, company employees could hear the news as a news flash read over the school intercom or as a newspaper article you write and paste into your

Optional Activity: Different Critical Incidents

If the suggested critical incident does not meet the needs of your students—or if you wish to add other critical incidents to your class’s Storypath—consider using one of these alternate scenarios:

- The wood used in some of the toys comes from old-growth forests, or another nonrenewable resource is being used by the company.
- A toy previously developed by other inventors has been sold to many consumers. It is proven to be unsafe, causing a backlash against the company and all the toys it produces.
- The toy company receives word that some of the resources it is using in its toys, or the toys themselves, are being produced in another country by child labor.

local paper.

Discuss the problem

Suggest to students that the company employees call a meeting to discuss the move overseas. Students should discuss the issues while playing the roles of company employees. A student acting as CEO—or you as the Storypath narrator—might use questions such as the following to start the discussion:

- 1 Why does the president want to move our company overseas? (*Lead the discussion so that students realize the move is a result of economics—the company can find cheaper labor and materials elsewhere. By moving, the company will make more money.*)
- 2 Why is this a problem for us as employees? (*Students will probably point out the obvious problem—that the employees will lose their jobs. This not only affects the employees themselves, but also their families and the community as a whole.*)
- 3 How might government tariffs—additional charges placed on goods from other countries—affect the company’s decision? (*Lead students to understand that tariffs could raise the cost of goods. Thus, the overall prices of toys could actually remain the same.*)

CUSTOMIZE

Dramatizing the Event

If appropriate, a few volunteers with signs to picket the toy company would add drama to the controversy and provide an opportunity to discuss how picketing would influence the situation.

AUTHOR NOTE

Meeting Skills

Usually, students will take the meeting very seriously and will role-play the situation with maturity and thoughtfulness. Students often exceed expectations by listening carefully to one another and clearly articulating ideas.

- ❓ How will our customers view this problem—what might happen to our company’s toy sales? (*Some customers will only buy products that are made in the USA, and others might view the company as being unstable—thereby causing sales to drop. Still other customers, however, may be happier because the prices of the toys could drop, leading to better overall sales figures for the company.*)
- ❓ As employees, what do we want the customers to know? (*Lead students to consider that employees may feel the need to “educate” the public: Although the move overseas may result in less expensive toys, the move will cause workers and their families to suffer. Also, when the company closes, the unemployed workers will be competing for jobs with those already looking for work in the community. Closing the company means less revenue overall for the entire community.*)

REACTING TO THE PROBLEM

AUTHOR NOTE

Expect the Unexpected

Students may have creative responses you haven’t considered. Allow students time and opportunity to pursue their ideas and let events unfold according to the story. You may be pleasantly surprised with the outcome.

LITERACY

Writing

- Identify a problem and a solution.
- State and support a position.
- Write persuasively.
- Use letter format.

Organize a response

After discussing the problem, students can discuss a wide range of responses. They may want to

- write letters to the president of the company expressing their reactions to the announcement;
- arrange for a press conference where they can tell their side of the story;
- write members of Congress in an attempt to influence tariff policy;
- make posters to display at a company or community meeting;
- create radio or television ads.

Explain to students that in their writing, they will present the problem and suggest a solution to the problem. Briefly review the characteristics of problem-solution writing.

Problem-Solution Writing

- Identify the problem. Use facts or personal experiences to help explain the problem.
- State your position or view of the problem.
- Support your position. Use facts or personal experiences to strengthen your position.
- Offer a solution. Use facts to explain why it is a good one.
- Explain how the recipient of the letter can be a part of the solution.
- In the conclusion, briefly restate your solution.

CONNECT

Creative Arts

Students can use various forms of technology to create signs, banners, and other multi-media presentations.

CUSTOMIZE

Problem-Solution Poster

You might want to give students the option of creating a problem-solution poster, instead of writing a letter. For this optional activity, you can use Portfolio 16, pages 20–21, to help students organize their ideas.

This is a good opportunity to reinforce students' understanding of their civic responsibilities. What impact does the closing of the company have not just on themselves, but on their families and the community as a whole? Stress to students the importance of using facts to support their stands on issues and of using research to gather more information, if necessary.

The best way for students to learn about taking action is for them to decide how to respond to this critical incident. Students might work individually, in pairs, or in groups to carry out one of the responses discussed above.



Next, have students complete Portfolio page 18, "Prewriting: Problem-Solution Letter." Students will write their rough drafts on Portfolio page 19, "Drafting: Problem-Solution Letter." They will write their final drafts on separate sheets of paper.

When students have completed their responses, they can hold informal employee meetings to share their responses with one another. Encourage them to provide and use feedback to make their solutions even stronger.



ASSESSMENT

ASSESS: The problem-solution letter

- is written from the character's point of view;
- identifies the problem;
- states the position and offers a solution;
- explains how the recipient of the letter can be part of the solution;
- includes facts to explain the character's position.

Letters can be sent home to families, posted in the room, or "mailed" to the company president. Sharing students' letters in these ways increases the authenticity of the writing assignment.

Optional Activity: A Community Service Project


Students can use their responses from this episode to address a real-world critical incident based on a current event. For example, students could write to members of Congress to protest the use of child labor in the manufacturing arm of a company. Or, students may want to write letters to a company suggesting environmentally conscious packaging for its toys. Locally, students can collect toys for children in their community.

CONNECT

Social Studies

Factory closings and other related issues are frequently reported on the news. Students can compare these events with their own situation.

CUSTOMIZE



Model the process of writing a short problem-solution letter and then provide a written model for students' reference.

CONCLUDING EPISODE 5

AUTHOR NOTE

Selecting a Response

The purpose of the critical incident is to help students research and organize information to present points of view. To help them see that citizen action can affect the workplace and beyond, the Storypath should have a positive outcome, even though in real life that is not always the case.

Receive a response to employees' efforts

To bring closure to the activities, students should receive a response to their efforts. Depending on how your Storypath has progressed, consider using one of these responses:

- The president of the company is persuaded not to relocate the company, but he or she stipulates some conditions for not doing so, such as a decrease in wages or benefits.
- The company relocates, but the employees decide to create their own company.
- The design department stays, but the production department moves overseas.

Discuss students' experiences

Give students time to reflect on their experiences during this episode. These questions will initiate discussion:

- What were the issues surrounding the company's move overseas?
- Why was it important for employees to take a stand on the issues?
- Why was it important to present facts and clearly communicate a position?
- What other outcomes might have been possible in this situation?
- What examples of situations like this one have you heard about in our community and in other communities?
- What did you learn about persuasion from this activity?
- What did you learn about working with others?