FILE 9 The arty Thirties

EXPLORE Social criticism in film and theatre

TB → p. 83 (doc 3)

A Federal Theatre Project play

LOUDSPEAKER This is New York City in 1938, considered by many to be the wealthiest city in the world. Skyscrapers, Wall Street, the Empire State. In some part of this area seven million people have a place they call "home".

(PARK AVENUE – and sign "NO DOGS ALLOWED")

Park Avenue where some of America's millionaires have their homes.

The same Park Avenue – further along. The rent is much cheaper here. Dogs run all over the place and nobody minds.

(TENEMENTS)

Slums[1]. The lower East Side.

(AIRSHAFT)[2]

Air and sunshine, primary requirements for growing children.

To avoid being hit by automobiles children are advised to play in their backyards.

(MAN EMERGES FROM CELLAR[2] *DOOR)*

Yes, he lives down there.

See those vertical ladders on the fire escapes? How would you like to climb down one of those in the middle of the night when a fire breaks out?

Or try to get though these barred windows.

(FIRE SCENE)

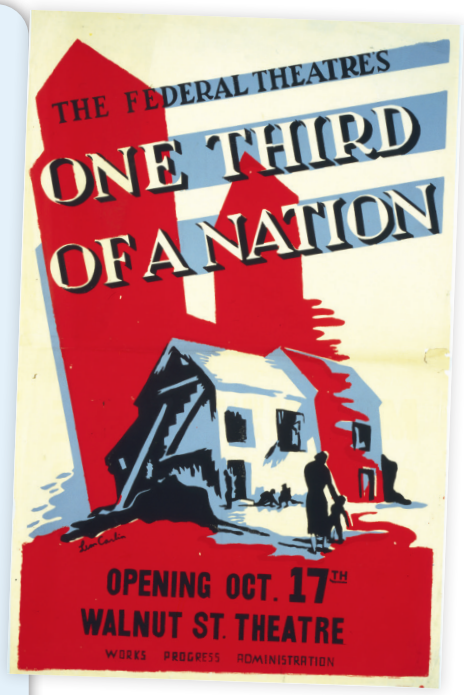
And there are fires. How many lives were lost in this one? How many people were trapped in the halls? How many old men and women missed their footing on those vertical ladders? How many firemen were killed when the wall caved in[4]?

(GARBAGE CANS)

A million and three quarter people look at these every day of their lives. Garbage... filth... disease... crime... slums!

Arthur ARENT, *One-Third of a Nation*, 1938

1. *taudis, bidonville* 2. ventilation chimney 3. *cave* 4. *s'effondra*



▲ Poster for the Federal Theatre Project production of *One Third of a Nation* at the Walnut St. Theatre in Philadelphia, 1938.

WAY 1 DIFFÉRENCIATION

1. Observe the poster and **tick** the elements you can associate with the play.

❑ romance ❑ social inequalities ❑ luxury and wealth ❑ war ❑ poor housing conditions

2. Read the extract and **fill in** the table with information about the places mentioned.

Places	Description	Impression created
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

3. Reorder the following words to make a correct statement.

contrasts • text • the • rich • poor • the • of • and • lives

.....

4. Pick out the adjectives that best describe the living conditions in the tenements. **Justify** each answer with a sentence.

❑ luxurious ❑ filthy ❑ comfortable ❑ dangerous ❑ unequal

.....

.....

5. Choose explanations for the use of the loudspeaker.

❑ It is similar to a character giving a monologue explaining his or her emotions.
❑ It is similar to the voiceover on a documentary or news report.
❑ It criticises the city's living conditions.
❑ It praises the city's living conditions.
❑ It is entirely objective.
❑ It elicits the audience's emotions.

6. Focus on lines 23-26.

a. Pick out the quantifier repeated in the questions.

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b. Explain its effect.

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7. Sum up the main ideas of the text. **Use** the following words/expressions.

wealth • slums • inequalities • dangerous • loudspeaker • criticise

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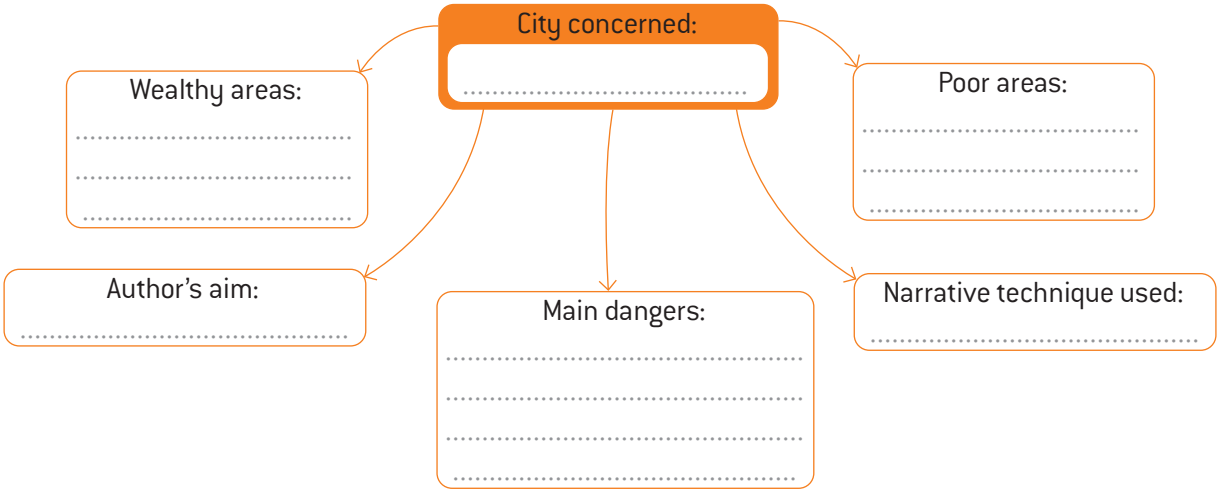
WAY 2

1. Observe the poster, **read** the title and **identify** the main theme of the play.

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2. Read the text and **fill in** the following mindmap.



3. Complete the sentence to explain the contrast between the different locations.

The text opposes ..... neighbourhoods and ..... slums. Rich people live .... places whereas poor people live in ..... and ..... conditions.

4. Pick out the repeated quantifier in the document and **explain** its role.

.....

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5. Focus on the loudspeaker and **say** whether it is effective or not. **Justify** your answer.

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6. Sum up the main ideas of the document using the following prompt:

The play presents New York .....

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Task
Location
Industry
Possible audie
Salary