

**THE LAST CONFESSION**  
**THE LESSON PLANS FOR WORDS ON THE STREET**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Grades</b>           | <b>9 - 12</b>   |
| <b>Lesson Plan Type</b> | <b>Standard Lesson</b>  |
| <b>Estimated Time</b>   | <b>Eleven 50 minute sessions (Two sample sessions included)</b> |
| <b>Lesson Author</b>    | <b>Solomon Jones</b>  |

**OVERVIEW**

As a class, students read Solomon Jones's *The Last Confession* and discuss culturally relevant themes including: the consequences of violence on individuals and families; the effects of the drug culture on urban communities; the choice between violence and forgiveness; the power of personal responsibility and; the effect of prejudice on interpersonal relationships. Students learn to identify and utilize story elements such as setting, character, and plot. Using a four step paradigm consisting of perspective, preparation, penning, and publishing, students construct their own stories, study publishing options, and learn to better evaluate and understand the writings of others.

**FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

Reading culturally relevant texts engages students at a deeper level that leads to richer understanding, and helps them to find their own voices. This curriculum combines culturally relevant text and themes with professional writing and editing techniques to improve critical thinking skills and enable students to both write their own experiences and better evaluate the writings of others.

**Further Reading**

Freeman, Yvonne, and David Freeman. "Connecting Students to Culturally Relevant Texts." *Talking Points* 15.2 (April/May 2004): 7–11.

**NCTE/IRA-EQUIVALENT NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

- 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).
- 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 nonprint texts.
- 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).

## RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

### MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

Blackboard, whiteboard, or flip chart for compiling class responses.

### PRINTOUTS

- Philadelphia Data Sheet
- Character Questionnaire
- Character Definitions
- Literary Terms
- The “Prejudice vs. Reality” Packet
- The “Effects of Drugs In Communities” Packet
- Dialogue, Action & Description Study Guide
- Plot To Published Study Guide (with sample query letter)
- Group-specific Homework Packets
- *The Last Confession* Vocabulary
- *The Last Confession* Plot Summary

### PREPARATION

- Read Chapters 1 through 6 of *The Last Confession* to familiarize yourself with the characters and themes. You will work through the analysis of the text as a class. Print the page numbers of the most relevant passages so that students may read ahead prior to beginning the lessons. Sign up for the Words On The Street Facebook and Twitter pages.
- Make copies of the handouts for the lesson.
- If students have access to computers, they can sign up for the Words On The Street Facebook and Twitter pages.

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Analyze passages within *The Last Confession* that amplify culturally relevant themes.
- Articulate the connections between themes found in the text and real-life challenges that impact their communities.
- Identify and analyze story elements in *The Last Confession* such as main character, supporting characters, setting and plot.
- Develop their writing skills by using techniques employed to write *The Last Confession*.
- Apply culturally relevant themes, standard story elements and professional writing techniques while writing and editing a 1,000 to 1,500 word short story.

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

### SESSION ONE

1. To activate students' prior knowledge, ask what they know about Philadelphia, the city in which *The Last Confession* is set. Have them brainstorm a list of the city's attributes by asking such questions as: What features make Philadelphia different from other cities? What distinguishes its neighborhoods? Is there crime in Philadelphia? How much? On a blackboard or flip chart, create a list of Philadelphia's features generated by class discussion and leave it posted.
2. Distribute **Philadelphia Data Sheet**, which contains 2009 census data and crime statistics on Philadelphia. Have the students compare **Philadelphia Data Sheet** to the data generated by the class discussion. Highlight similarities.
3. Explain to students that much like their opinions of Philadelphia were based on their interpretation of the facts, writers use facts and personal interpretation to bring settings to life. Setting is time and place. In *The Last Confession*, the setting is Philadelphia in 2009.
4. Pick three students to read Chapter 1 of *The Last Confession* aloud in class.
5. Following the reading, break students into four groups and record the identities of the students in each group. These groups will work together on several assignments throughout the curriculum. In this activity, each group will have 5-10 minutes to list what they observed about an assigned setting from Chapter 1. Group one will examine the church. Group two, the rail station and surrounding neighborhood. Group three, Coletti's South Philadelphia. Group four, Old City. Each group should list their impressions of their assigned setting using the following criteria:
  - a. What facts did you learn about the setting?
  - b. How did the description of the setting appeal to your senses (sight, sound, etc.)
  - c. How did the setting make you feel (tense, relaxed, afraid, at peace)?
  - d. To what familiar place would you compare the setting?
6. Bring the students together to share their findings. As a class, have them decide what the four settings reveal about Philadelphia. List their findings on a separate chart. Help determine how their new findings are the same or different from their first impressions.
7. For homework, have students fill out the **Character Questionnaire** for Coletti and Mann based on facts found in Chapter 1.

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

### SESSION TWO

1. Have students take out the **Character Questionnaire** they completed for homework. Spend 10 minutes having students share what they wrote on the questionnaire for each character.
2. Explain that Solomon Jones uses three types of characters in *The Last Confession*: Main character (or protagonist), opposing character (or antagonist), and supporting character. Hand out **Character Definitions** and explain aloud the attributes of the three types of characters. After reading these attributes, ask students to identify the main character in *The Last Confession*.
3. Once students have identified Mike Coletti as the main character, spur discussion of his character by asking questions such as: How does Coletti see Philadelphia? How does he see himself? What problem (conflict) does he face regarding the Confessional Murders? What is at stake if he does not find the real killer? How does he see his new partner?
4. Segue to Charlie Mann, Mike Coletti's new partner. Explain to students that Charlie Mann is a supporting character, and is defined as such because he has a direct relationship with the main character that reveals things not only about Mann, but also about Coletti. Spur discussion of Mann's character with questions such as: How has Mann's education impacted his ability to adapt and survive? How is he different from or similar to Coletti? What is his main source of trouble at his job? Do you see yourself in him? How?
5. Pick three students to read Chapter 2 of *The Last Confession* aloud in class.
6. Break students into their groups. Each group will have 5-10 minutes to fill out **Character Questionnaires** for their assigned character. Group 1 will have Sharon Jackson. Group 2, Commissioner Lynch. Group 3, Mary Smithson. Group 4, the Angel of Death. In addition to filling out **Character Questionnaires**, each group will answer the following about their assigned character:
  - a. What is unique about your character?
  - b. Is your character a leader or a follower?
  - c. Is your character a supporting character or an antagonist, and why?
7. Have a representative from each group share their written findings aloud. After each representative has read, open the findings to class discussion. As a class, have students discuss character and setting. Use the following prompts: What do the character's actions and interactions with the setting do for the story's overall feel or tone? Do the

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

characters seem at home in the setting? Do their reactions and interactions with the setting make the setting feel real?

8. For homework, assign each group to read a chapter of *The Last Confession*. Have each group member fill out the **Chapter Questionnaire** that corresponds to their assigned chapter: Group 1 – Ch. 3; Group 2 – Ch. 4; Group 3 – Ch. 5; Group 4 – Ch. 6. Based on the answers in the questionnaire, students should be prepared to make a 2-to-3 minute oral presentation that summarizes their assigned chapter.

## Character Definitions

**Character** - Perhaps the most important element of literature, characters are the means by which a writer brings a plot to life. Characters are responsible for the thoughts and actions within a story, and they are the means by which readers interact with the story. Every character has a personality that is defined by attitudes, mannerisms, speech patterns, cultural background, educational level, age, and appearance. Characters influence other major elements in a literary work, including setting, theme, and tone.

- **Protagonist** - Major character at the center of the story. The story is told primarily from this character's point of view. The character is faced with a conflict or problem. The character must make a choice to resolve the conflict, and his or her choice drives the story.
- **Antagonist** - A character or force that opposes the protagonist. This character is often the source of the story's conflict.
- **Supporting character** – A character who interacts with the protagonist in a meaningful way, and whose involvement with the protagonist illuminates the qualities of the protagonist.
- **Minor character** – A character who appears for a limited time. Minor characters are often unnamed, and are used as a device to move the story forward. They are sometimes called flat characters.
- **Static character** - A character who remains the same.
- **Dynamic character** - A character who changes in some important way.
- **Characterization** - The means by which a writer reveals character.

*Solomon Jones on character: "I try to create characters that are interesting enough to make readers turn the page. In 'The Last Confession,' detectives Coletti and Mann are opposites in many ways, from age to race to educational level. Yet they establish a relationship based on what they have in common. Coletti has a different relationship with the Angel of Death, but it is just as compelling. As in any good story, relationships provide the plot's conflict(s), and within those relationships, readers can find the function and significance of each character."*

## Character Questionnaire

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the questions for each character listed in homework assignment.

1. What is the character's name?
2. What is the character's age?
3. What does the character look like?
4. What does the character like to do and/or what are the character's habits?
5. What makes the character "different" than others?
6. What does the character care about most?
7. What does the character fear?
8. How would a friend describe the character?
9. Who are the important people in the character's life?
10. What is the problem the character is facing?

## Philadelphia Fact Sheet - 2009

| <b>People Quick Facts</b>                                     | <b>Philadelphia County</b> |
|---|----------------------------|
| Population, 2009 estimate                                     | 1,547,297                  |
| Population, percent change, April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2009     | 2.0%                       |
| Population estimates base (April 1) 2000                      | 1,517,542                  |
| Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2009                      | 7.1%                       |
| Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2009                     | 23.5%                      |
| Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2009                  | 12.5%                      |
| Female persons, percent, 2009                                 | 53.2%                      |
| White persons, percent, 2009 (a)                              | 48.6%                      |
| Black persons, percent, 2009 (a)                              | 43.7%                      |
| American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2009 (a)  | 0.5%                       |
| Asian persons, percent, 2009 (a)                              | 5.7%                       |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2009 (a) | 0.1%                       |
| Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2009            | 1.4%                       |
| Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2009 (b)       | 11.7%                      |
| White persons not Hispanic, percent, 2009                     | 39.7%                      |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/42/42101.html>

| <b>Crime</b>       | <b>2008</b> | <b>2009</b> | <b>Percent Change</b> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Murder             | 333         | 305         | -8.4%                 |
| Rape               | 1105        | 957         | -13.4%                |
| Robbery            | 9343        | 8738        | -6.5%                 |
| Aggravated Assault | 9350        | 8398        | -10.2%                |
| Violent Crime      | 20131       | 18398       | -8.6%                 |
| Burglary           | 12518       | 10561       | -15.6%                |
| Theft              | 40425       | 37793       | -6.5%                 |
| Vehicle Theft      | 8882        | 6829        | -23.1%                |
| Property Crime     | 61825       | 55183       | -10.7%                |
| Total              | 81956       | 73581       | -10.2%                |

Source: Philadelphia Police: <http://www.phillypolice.com/assets/PPD.News-Release.2009.Year-End-Statistics.pdf>

## Philadelphia Fact Sheet - 2009

### Modern Philadelphia

The city houses more than 90 museums; innumerable Colonial churches, row houses, and mansions; an Ivy League campus at the University of Pennsylvania; more Impressionist art than you'll find in any place outside of Paris; and leafy, distinguished parks, including Fairmount Park-- the largest park within city limits in the United States.

- Median household income in 2009 was \$37,045 (it was \$30,746 in 2000)
- Estimated per capita income in 2009 was \$21,661  
Estimated median house or condo value in 2009 was \$150,000 (it was \$61,000 in 2000)
- Median gross rent in 2009 was \$819
- Percentage of residents living in poverty in 2009 was 25.0%

Sources: Frommer's Travel Guides: <http://www.frommers.com/destinations/philadelphia/0023010029.html> and City-Data.com: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Philadelphia-Pennsylvania.html>

### Historical Philadelphia

Philadelphia was founded in 1682 by William Penn. Captain Thomas Holmes designed the city in a grid pattern with wide streets, green public spaces, and public squares which still exist - Washington, Franklin, Rittenhouse and Logan squares. The First Continental Congress met at Carpenters' Hall in 1774. The Second Continental Congress met in 1775 and later drafted the Declaration of Independence. The colonies declared their independence at the State House in 1776. Philadelphia served as America's capital from 1790 to 1800. The following historical sites in Independence National Historical Park are open to the public:

- **The Liberty Bell** – Arrived in Philadelphia in 1752. The bell tolled to assemble citizens for first reading of the Declaration of Independence.
- **Independence Hall** - Built between 1732 and 1756 as the Pennsylvania State House, this is the site where the Declaration of Independence was first adopted and the United States Constitution was written.
- **Carpenters' Hall** - Built from 1770-1774 for the Carpenters' Guild. The First Continental Congress met here in 1774. The hall served as a hospital during the Revolutionary War.
- **Second Bank of the United States** - The 19th-century bank is now a portrait gallery housing paintings of the leaders and politicians of Colonial U.S.A.
- **Franklin Court** - The site of Benjamin Franklin's home now houses a steel "ghost structure" of Franklin's house, the U.S.A.'s first post office, archeological displays and an 18th-century printing shop.
- **The President's House** – The site pays homage to nine documented enslaved persons of African descent who were part of the George Washington household and addresses the topic of slavery in early American history.

Sources: Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau: <http://www.philadelphiausa.travel/visitors/things-to-do/attractions/iconic-philadelphia/historical-sites/> and the City of Philadelphia: <http://www.phila.gov/presidentshouse/>

## Literary Terms

**Theme** - The idea or point of a story. In American literature, dominant themes include innocence vs. experience, life vs. death, appearance vs. reality, free will vs. fate, love vs. hate, and good vs. evil. Themes may also have a single rather than a dual nature. For example, the theme of a story may be a mid-life crisis, or imagination, or the contradictions of humankind.

**Character** - Perhaps the most important element of literature, characters are the means by which a writer brings a plot to life. Characters are responsible for the thoughts and actions within a story, and they are the means by which readers interact with the story. Every character has a personality that is defined by attitudes, mannerisms, speech patterns, cultural background, educational level, age, and appearance. Characters influence other major elements in a literary work, including setting, theme, and tone.

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## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

*just as compelling. As in any good story, relationships provide the plot's conflict(s), and within those relationships, readers can find the function and significance of each character."*

**Plot** - The arrangement of ideas and/or incidents that make up a story.

- **Causality** - One event occurs because of another event.
- **Foreshadowing** - A suggestion of what is going to happen.
- **Suspense** - A sense of worry established by the author.
- **Conflict** - Struggle between opposing forces.
- **Exposition** - Background information regarding the setting, characters, plot.
- **Complication or Rising Action** - Intensification of conflict.
- **Crisis** - Turning point; moment of great tension that fixes the action.
- **Resolution** - The way the story turns out.

*Solomon Jones on plot: "I have often been told that stories are either plot driven or character driven. I would argue that a good plot is driven by the characters. Through their relationships with one another, the conflict arises and the characters are shaped by that conflict. Eventually the main character must make a decision that will resolve the conflict, and in that way, he or she shapes the story's resolution and completes the plot. As in The Last Confession, where a detective makes a moral decision to try to right a wrong he created, strong characters always make for strong plots."*

**Setting** - The place or location of the action, the setting provides the historical and cultural context for characters.

**Point of View** – This pertains to who tells the story and how it is told.

- **Narrator** - The person telling the story.
- **First-person** - Narrator participates in action but sometimes has limited knowledge/vision.
- **Objective** - Narrator is unnamed/unidentified (a detached observer). Does not assume character's perspective and is not a character in the story. The narrator reports on events and lets the reader supply the meaning.

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- **Omniscient** - All-knowing narrator (multiple perspectives). The narrator takes us into the character and can evaluate a character for the reader (**editorial omniscience**). When a narrator allows the reader to make his or her own judgments from the action of the characters themselves, it is called **neutral omniscience**.
- **Limited omniscient** - All-knowing narrator about one or two characters, but not all.

**Language and Style** - Style is the verbal identity of a writer, oftentimes based on the author's use of diction (word choice) and syntax (the order of words in a sentence). A writer's use of language reveals his or her **tone**, or the attitude toward the subject matter.

**Irony** - A contrast or discrepancy between one thing and another.

- **Verbal irony** - We understand the opposite of what the speaker says.
- **Irony of Circumstance or Situational Irony** - When one event is expected to occur but the opposite happens. A discrepancy between what seems to be and what is.
- **Dramatic Irony** - Discrepancy between what characters know and what readers know.
- **Ironic Vision** - An overall tone of irony that pervades a work, suggesting how the writer views the characters.

**Allegory** - A form of narrative in which people, places, and events seem to have hidden meanings. Often a retelling of an older story.

**Connotation** - The implied meaning of a word.

**Denotation** - The dictionary definition of a word.

**Diction** - Word choice and usage (for example, formal vs. informal), as determined by considerations of audience and purpose.

**Figurative Language** - The use of words to suggest meanings beyond the literal. There are a number of figures of speech. Some of the more common ones are:

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- **Metaphor** - Making a comparison between unlike things without the use of a verbal clue (such as "like" or "as").
- **Simile** - Making a comparison between unlike things, using "like" or "as".
- **Hyperbole** - Exaggeration
- **Personification** - Endowing inanimate objects with human characteristics

**Imagery** - A concrete representation of a sense impression, a feeling, or an idea which appeals to one or more of our senses. Look for a pattern of imagery.

- **Tactile** imagery - sense of touch.
- **Aural** imagery - sense of hearing.
- **Olfactory** imagery - sense of smell.
- **Visual** imagery - sense of sight.
- **Gustatory** imagery - sense of taste.

**Symbolism** - When objects or actions mean more than themselves.

**Syntax** - Sentence structure and word order.

**SESSION TWO HOMEWORK- GROUP 1**

**Chapter 3**

**Instructions:** Fill in the answers to the questions below and be prepared to make a 2-to-3 minute oral presentation that summarizes this chapter during the next class session.

1. Coletti asks Lynch to help get a stay of execution for Father O'Reilly. What does Lynch demand from Coletti in order to justify the stay of execution?
2. Coletti and Lynch argue over Coletti's culpability in the Angel Of Death's rampage. What does Lynch believe Coletti could have done if Coletti suspected he'd arrested the wrong man?
3. Lynch is suspicious of Mary Smithson's motives toward Coletti. Does she genuinely like him?
4. In explaining his suspicions, Lynch reveals several of Coletti's character flaws. What are they?
5. How old is Mary Smithson?
6. What hospital does Coletti visit to interview the suspect who dropped off the note at the art gallery? What is the suspect's name and what does he reveal about the Angel of Death?
7. What do Coletti and the suspect have in common?
8. Charlie Mann is working in DPR with other officers when he meets Officer Frank Dougherty—an officer who tells him Coletti's history. What happened when Coletti was in the police academy? What does this incident reveal about Coletti's character?
9. According to Officer Frank Dougherty, why is Coletti so angry?
10. What is Coletti trying to make up for? How has it affected Coletti's career?

**SESSION TWO HOMEWORK- GROUP 2**

**Chapter 4**

**Instructions:** Fill in the answers to the questions below and be prepared to make a 2-to-3 minute oral presentation that summarizes this chapter during the next class session.

1. Where does Coletti go to find out if the suspect he interviewed at the hospital was telling the truth? What does he learn from the men who live there?
2. What does Coletti reveal to Smithson about his knowledge of the ‘Angel of Death?’ How does Coletti know so much about him?
3. Smithson says she believes the killer thinks he’s invincible. Why does she believe this?
4. What role do Coletti and Smithson believe the church plays in the killer’s plans?
5. Who do Coletti and Smithson travel together to interview?
6. Where does the killer show up next?
7. What are the ethnicities that Solomon Jones identifies when describing the people who live in that area?
8. Who are the white men that neighbors normally see in that area, according to Jones? Where do they come from?
9. How do the neighbors know the killer does not belong in the area?
10. Where does the drive-by shooting take place? What do the neighbors do when the shooting begins? What does the killer do?

**SESSION TWO HOMEWORK- GROUP 3**

**Chapter 5**

**Instructions:** Fill in the answers to the questions below and be prepared to make a 2-to-3 minute oral presentation that summarizes this chapter during the next class session.

1. What did Coletti see in his dreams, and from whose perspective?
2. What do Coletti and Father O'Reilly have in common?
3. What did Coletti do to reinvestigate the Confessional Murders as a result of his dreams?
4. How does Coletti's relationship with Smithson change during the trip?
5. Describe the scene that Sandy Jackson sees as she patrols Walnut Street. What are the differences between the two groups of people she sees as she engages in "people-watching"?
6. What makes Sandy notice the man who is standing on the corner near the church? What happens when she tries to stop him?
7. What did Kannitha and Chavy Seng experience in 1970s Cambodia?
8. Why did Kannitha and Chavy choose Philadelphia when they got the chance to come to America?
9. Why did they save their money to send for Boran?
10. What message does the killer convey to the priest?

**SESSION TWO HOMEWORK- GROUP 4**

**Chapter 6**

**Instructions:** Fill in the answers to the questions below and be prepared to make a 2-to-3 minute oral presentation that summarizes this chapter during the next class session.

1. Where is O'Reilly scheduled to be transferred since the governor has signed his death warrant?
2. What did Father O'Reilly feel toward Coletti after being jailed for the Confessional Murders, and how did his feelings change over the years?
3. What act frees both Coletti and Father O'Reilly from the anger and guilt of their pasts?
4. How does Father O'Reilly confirm that what Coletti dreamed is what actually happened?
5. What does the homicide captain tell Commissioner Lynch about the Angel of Death that convinces him the new murders are connected to the Confessional Murders?
6. What does Lynch recount about Philadelphia's architecture and blight that convinces him the killer could easily hide in the city?
7. How did his parents' marriage and their dependence on each other make Coletti sour on marriage? How is Smithson's experience with her parents and marriage similar and/or different?
8. What was the priest's relationship with the Seng family? How did that relationship shape his view of the Cambodian community?
9. What possible connection does Mann think the drive-by shooting has to the Seng shootings?
10. How does the priest describe the killer? What does killer's the note say?

## Session Four - Prejudice: Assumption vs. Fact

### Part I.

In the sequence below, which takes place on page 15 of *The Last Confession*, Detective Mike Coletti, the 58-year-old son of working class Italian immigrants, confronts Charlie Mann, a 20-something college educated black man who is seemingly his opposite. Mann has been involved in a shooting, and in recounting the details of the incident, Coletti makes derogatory statements. Author Solomon Jones, in explaining this sequence, says, "There are three elements to prejudice. It begins with an assumption, which leads to an action that culminates in a consequence."

"Yep, Charlie shot a suspect with a hundred commuters in the line of fire," Coletti said, pausing for effect. "I wonder if he would've been that trigger happy if he was shooting at one of his own."

"What's that supposed to mean?" a voice called out from across the room.

Coletti looked up and saw Mann walking in with a thin, blond-haired woman beside him. Mann looked angry, but Coletti wasn't about to back down.

"You went to college and you don't know what 'one of his own' means?" Coletti asked coolly.

"Yeah, I know what it means," Mann said angrily. "It means you don't think I belong here."

"You belong if you earn it," Coletti shot back. "But you don't make homicide just because somebody decides there's a quota."

### A. Assumption

1. Coletti assumes that Mann has been assigned to the police department's homicide unit in order to fulfill a quota.
2. Mann assumes that Coletti is a racist based on Coletti's rant.

### B. Action

1. Coletti makes a blanket statement to everyone in the office, implying that Mann is unqualified and got his assignment based on his race.
2. Mann assume that Coletti is a racist and initiates a fight.

### C. Consequence

1. The two best detectives in homicide become enemies, possibly hampering the effectiveness of the unit.

### Part II.

In this sequence, which begins on page 18, Commissioner Kevin Lynch forces Mann and Coletti to go beyond their assumptions. "Prejudice begins with opinions that aren't rooted in firsthand knowledge," says author Solomon Jones. "When assumptions are replaced by facts, people can take actions that lead to different consequences. While doing so, people from different cultures and backgrounds often learn that they are more alike than they thought."

"You think you're the only one who's ever had a hard time in Homicide?" Lynch snapped. "Well, I've got news for you, Detective. You're not. When I came to Homicide, I was the college boy who was rising a little too fast, and everybody hated me, too, right Coletti?"

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

“Nobody hated you,” Coletti said to the commissioner before nodding toward Mann. “And nobody hates him, either. The kid just rubs me the wrong way.”

“Why? Because I’m black?” Mann asked as Smithson shifted uncomfortably.

“No, because you’re just like I was when I got to Homicide. A smart-ass who thinks he’s got it all figured out.”

“Racists always have an excuse,” Mann mumbled.

“Look, I’m not a racist,” Coletti said, shifting his gaze from Mann to Lynch and back. “But I shouldn’t have said what I said, and I’m man enough to admit I was wrong.”

Clearly, Mann wasn’t prepared to accept Coletti’s apology. It was Lynch who broke the silence.

“Everything isn’t always what it seems, Detective Mann. If you’re gonna be a good cop, you need to learn that.”

“Not from him,” Mann said, staring angrily at Coletti.

“Oh, I think he’ll be a fine teacher,” Lynch said. “That’s why I’ve decided to make the two of you partners. Mann, you’ll make your appearance in DPR. After that, you’ll partner with Coletti. He’s gonna share all the lessons he learned back when *he* was the young hotshot, and before he retires, he’s gonna show you what it takes to be the top detective in this unit.”

### A. Facts

1. Mann works in homicide, where he is the only black detective.
2. Lynch has been in Mann’s position, but has also worked with Coletti for years.
3. Coletti, much like Mann, was once the “young hotshot.”

### B. Action

1. Lynch partners Mann with Coletti, thus forcing them to confront their commonalities.

### C. Consequence

1. The two best detectives in homicide have the chance to combine their skills.

## Part III

In this passage, Mann meets Officer Frank Dougherty, a police department veteran who knows Coletti’s past. When Dougherty explains what makes Coletti tick, Mann is forced to rethink his initial impression of Coletti. Author Solomon Jones explains this way: “Prejudice thrives when good people don’t speak up. I wanted to create a character witness who could tell Coletti’s story in a way that Coletti himself could not; a character who could challenge Mann’s assumptions and begin the process of change.”

“So um, how do you know Coletti?”

“We came into the Academy together back in ’78.”

“Thirty one years is a long time,” Mann said. “I’m sure he’s a lot different than he was back then.”

The cop shook his head. “People don’t change, times do,” he said in a faraway voice. “And it was a different time when Coletti and I went through the Academy. Most of the cops in Philly were just like us—white, blue collar guys from rowhouse neighborhoods. There weren’t many women or blacks, and there was nobody to tell us what we couldn’t do, so things got kinda crazy sometimes.

“There was this one black cadet named Harry Williams who came through the Academy with us. He was short, kinda stocky, but you could tell he was a pretty sharp guy—serious about being a cop. Some of the guys didn’t like that. They thought he was a little too uppity, so while everybody else was making friends,

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

Harry was getting harassed. I still remember this one guy from South Philly kept calling him spade. He'd say it while we were doing a run or something, just loud enough for Harry and a couple other guys to hear. People would laugh and Harry would ignore it, but you could tell he was starting to get mad. Well, it took about a month for the whole thing to blow up. Harry caught the guy by himself and beat him up pretty good. Some of the guys from South Philly heard about it and they wanted to put Harry in his place.

"Naturally they came to Coletti for help since he was from South Philly, too. And the day it was all supposed to go down, Coletti was there, only he was standing with Harry. It was just the two of them against ten guys. I'll never forget what Coletti said when they asked him why he was with Harry instead of them.

"He said, 'My father came over from Naples and people laughed at him because he was different. He just wanted his little piece of America, and there was always somebody trying to keep him in his place. Well, Harry's different, too. But you're not gonna do to him what they did to my father. Harry's not gonna let you, and neither am I.'

"A few of them tried to get loud and the instructors came and broke it up," the cop said. "Coletti and Harry went their separate ways after that, but nobody bothered Harry again. And even though most of us never said it, we all respected Coletti for standing up the way he did. In fact, we all respect him to this day."

Mann sat for a few moments, trying to reconcile what he'd just heard with what he'd seen that morning. He couldn't, so he tried to get the cop to do it for him. "What made Coletti change?"

"He hasn't changed," the cop said insistently. "He's still a loner—he only had one partner in thirty-one years, and the two of them had some kind of falling out and Coletti started working alone again. But through it all, he always tried to stand up for people. That got him enemies. I think that's why Coletti never rose through the ranks. He stood up one time too many."

"Is that why he's so angry now?"

The cop thought about it for a moment. "There's more to it than that," he said. "Coletti's angry because he wanted to be the guy he was back at the Academy. He wanted to get justice for people who couldn't get it for themselves, but no matter how hard he tried, he could never get it right. To this day, he's still trying to make up for it."

### A. Facts

1. Coletti's experience with his immigrant father gave him an idea of what it was like for outsiders.
2. In the police academy, Coletti stood up for a black cadet who was being harassed.
3. Coletti's always stood up for people and it's hurt his career.

### B. Actions

1. Mann tries to reconcile this story with what he experienced with Coletti that morning.

### C. Consequence

1. With both Commissioner Lynch and Frank Dougherty acting as character witnesses for Coletti, Mann is forced to rethink his own opinion of Coletti.

## The Last Confession Vocabulary

### **Abomination** *a·bom·i·na·tion*

[uh·bom·uh·ney·shuh n]—noun

1. anything abominable; anything greatly disliked or abhorred.
2. intense aversion or loathing; detestation: *He regarded lying with abomination.*
3. a vile, shameful, or detestable action, condition, habit, etc.: *Spitting in public is an abomination.*

### **Absolve** – ab·solve

[ab·zolv, -solv] –**verb (used with object)**, -solved, -solv·ing.

1. to free from guilt or blame or their consequences.
2. to set free or release, as from some duty, obligation, or responsibility (usually fol. by *from*): *to be absolved from one's oath.*  
*Ecclesiastical .*
  - a. to grant or pronounce remission of sins to.

He wondered if saving Father O'Reilly could **absolve** him of his sins, or if he'd need to make a few confessions of his own.

### **Apocalypse** *a·poc·a·lypse*

[uh·pok·uh·lips]—noun

1. a prophetic revelation, esp. concerning a cataclysm in which the forces of good permanently triumph over the forces of evil.

### **Apprehension** – ap·pre·hen·sion

[ap·ri·hen·shuh n]—noun

1. anticipation of adversity or misfortune; suspicion or fear of future trouble or evil.

*As he disconnected the call and walked into Internal Affairs, Charlie Mann read the **apprehension** in Jackson's silence.*

### **Birkenstock** - Bir·ken·stock

[bur·kuhn·stok] - *Trademark .*

1. a brand of sandals having a contoured sole.

*Yet Mary Smithson—a woman who seemed to have more in common with the **Birkenstock**-clad crowd across the street than with him—had asked him to meet her there.*

### **Brie**

[bree]—noun

1. a salted, white, soft cheese, ripened with bacterial action, originating in Brie.

*Seeing the place reassured her that Philadelphia was still cheesesteaks with onions rather than foie gras and **Brie**.*

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

**Calamity** – ca·lam·i·ty

[kuh-lam-i-tee]—**noun, plural -ties.**

1. a great misfortune or disaster, as a flood or serious injury.
2. grievous affliction; adversity; misery: *the calamity of war.*

**Conspiratorial** - con·spir·a·cy

[kuhn-spir-uh-see]—**noun, plural -cies.**

1. an evil, unlawful, treacherous, or surreptitious plan formulated in secret by two or more persons; plot.

*The man with the pockmarked face spoke in a **conspiratorial** whisper. “The guy said he was the angel o’ death. You’d be scared o’ that, too.”*

**Contrition** con·tri·tion

[kuhn-trish-uhn]—**noun**

1. sincere penitence or remorse.

**Desolation** des·o·la·tion

[des-uh-ley-shuhn]—**noun**

1. devastation; ruin

**Dispassionate** dis·pas·sion·ate

[dis-pash-uh-nit]—**adjective**

1. free from or unaffected by passion; devoid of personal feeling or bias; impartial; calm: a *dispassionate critic.*

**Enamor** - en·am·or

[ih-nam-er] - **verb**

—**verb (used with object)**

1. to fill or inflame with love (usually used in the passive and fol. by *of* or sometimes *with*): *to be enamored of a certain lady; a brilliant woman with whom he became enamored.*

*As they crossed Fifth Street, then Fourth, they grew more **enamored** with their surroundings, and a bit more relaxed with one another.*

**Eschew** es·chew

[es-choo]—**verb (used with object)**

1. to abstain or keep away from; shun; avoid: *to eschew evil.*

**Foie gras**

[fwah grah; Fr. fwah GRAH]—**noun**

1. the liver of specially fattened geese or ducks, used as a table delicacy, esp. in the form of a paste (pâté de foie gras).

*Seeing the place reassured her that Philadelphia was still cheesesteaks with onions rather than **foie gras** and Brie.*

**Gentrification** gen·tri·fi·ca·tion

[jen-truh-fi-key-shuhn]—**noun**

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

1. the buying and renovation of houses and stores in deteriorated urban neighborhoods by upper- or middle-income families or individuals, thus improving property values but often displacing low-income families and small businesses.

### **Gaunt**

[gawnt]—**adjective**, -er, -est.

1. extremely thin and bony; haggard and drawn, as from great hunger, weariness, or torture; emaciated.

*As he passed Ninth Street, his **gaunt**, pale face took on a resolute expression.*

### **Heinous hei-nous**

[hey-nuhs]—**adjective**

1. hateful; odious; abominable; totally reprehensible: *a heinous offense.*

### **Hodgepodge hodge-podge**

[hoj-poj]—**noun**

1. a heterogeneous mixture; jumble.

### **Impish – im-pish**

[im-pish]—**adjective**

1. mischievous; maliciously or playfully annoying.

*“That’s what I meant,” Coletti said **impishly**. “You didn’t think I was flirting, did you?”*

### **Impromptu - im-promp-tu**

[im-promp-too, -tyoo]—**adjective**

1. made or done without previous preparation: *an impromptu address to the unexpected crowds.*

*As news of the suspect’s capture made its way back to the **impromptu** staging area at the art gallery, Coletti and Lynch remained in the back room away from the others.*

### **Indignation – in-dig-na-tion**

[in-dig-ney-shuh n]—**noun**

1. strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive, insulting, or base; righteous anger.

*“I’m hurt,” Coletti said with mock **indignation**.*

### **Intermittent - in-ter-mit-tent**

[in-ter-mit-nt]—**adjective**

1. stopping or ceasing for a time; alternately ceasing and beginning again: *an intermittent pain.*

*With six foot potted palms **intermittently** placed along its carpeted floors, and delicate flower arrangements on unvarnished pine tables, the gallery smelled of an earthy mix of wood, soil and chemicals.*

### **Jackal jack-al**

[jak-uhl, -awl]—**noun**

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

1. any of several nocturnal wild dogs of the genus *Canis*, esp. *C. aureus*, of Asia and Africa, that scavenge or hunt in packs.

### **Livid liv-id**

[liv-id]—**adjective**

1. enraged; furiously angry

### **Nonchalant – non-cha-lant**

[non-shuh-lahnt, non-shuh-lahnt, -luhnt]—**adjective**

1. coolly unconcerned, indifferent, or unexcited; casual

*“Oh, I don’t know,” Lynch said, his tone **nonchalant**.*

### **Oblivion - ob-liv-i-on**

[uh-bliv-ee-uhn]—**noun**

1. the state of being completely forgotten or unknown.

*Most of the time they’d smile and nod while she spoke. Then they’d return to smoking or drinking themselves into **oblivion**.*

### **Pawn**

[pawn]—**noun**

1. Chess . one of eight men of one color and of the lowest value, usually moved one square at a time vertically and capturing diagonally.
2. someone who is used or manipulated to further another person's purposes.

*“I’m saying your suspect might’ve talked to the murderer. He might’ve even seen him, but he’s not the man you want. He’s just a **pawn**.”*

### **Piety - pi-e-ty**

[pahy-i-tee]—**noun, plural -ties.**

1. reverence for god or devout fulfillment of religious obligations: *a prayer full of piety.*

*The city’s Quaker roots, though in many ways forgotten, still demanded a certain **piety** when it came to drinking.*

### **Prattle prat-tle**

[prat-l] -tled, -tling, **noun –verb (used without object)**

1. to talk in a foolish or simple-minded way; chatter; babble.

### **Proselytize**

[pros-uh-li-tahyz]—**verb (used with object), verb (used without object), -ized, -iz-ing.**

1. to convert or attempt to convert as a proselyte; recruit.

*The Mormon Church on Broad Street sent them into the neighborhood to **proselytize**.*

### **Protract - pro-tract**

[proh-trakt, pruh-]—**verb (used with object)**

1. to draw out or lengthen, esp. in time; extend the duration of; prolong.

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

There was a moment of **protracted** silence as Coletti smiled again.

**Resolute** – res·o·lute

[rez-uh-loot]—**adjective**

1. firmly resolved or determined; set in purpose or opinion.

As he passed Ninth Street, his gaunt, pale face took on a **resolute** expression.

**Retribution** – ret·ri·bu·tion

[re-truh-byoo-shuhn]—**noun**

1. requital according to merits or deserts, esp. for evil.
2. retaliation, repayment, recompense. See revenge.

The shotgun blasts, the killer's flight, O'Reilly's attempt to exact **retribution**.

**Reverberate** - re·ver·ber·ate

[v. ri-vur-buh-reyt; **adj.** ri-vur-ber-it] **adjective – verb (used without object)**

1. to reecho or resound.

At six thirty, Coletti pulled out of the hospital parking lot as the suspect's words **reverberated** in his head: "He said he knew everything. He said he was the angel o' death."

**Revulsion** re·vul·sion

[ri-vuhl-shuhn]—**noun**

1. a strong feeling of repugnance, distaste, or dislike: *Cruelty fills me with revulsion.*
2. a sudden and violent change of feeling or response in sentiment, taste, etc.

**Salient** sa·li·ent

[sey-lee-uhnt, sey-l-yuhnt]—**adjective**

1. prominent or conspicuous: *salient traits.*

**Succumb** - suc·cumb

[suh-kuhm] —**verb (used without object)**

1. to give way to superior force; yield: *to succumb to despair.*
2. to yield to disease, wounds, old age, etc.; die.

But just like in his dreams, something reached down and grabbed him before he **succumbed**.

**Truism** tru·ism

[troo-iz-uhm]—**noun**

1. a self-evident, obvious truth.

**Wan**

[won]— **adjective**, wan·ner, wan·nest, **verb**, wanned, wan·ning.

—**adjective**

1. showing or suggesting ill health, fatigue, unhappiness, etc.: *a wan look; a wan smile.*

## Sample Words On The Street Curriculum

*Coletti looked at her. "You're the closest thing I've got to a shrink," he said with a **wan** smile. "I guess that means I can trust you."*