The House

The two boys ran until they came to the driveway. “See, I told you today was good for skipping school,” said Mark. “Mom is never home on Thursday,” he added. Tall hedges hid the house from the road so the pair strolled across the finely landscaped yard. “I never knew your place was so big,” said Pete. Yeah, but it’s nicer now than it used to be since Dad had the new stone siding put on and added the fireplace.”

There were front and back doors and a side door that led to the garage, which was empty, except for three parked 10-speed bikes. They went in the side door, Mark explaining that it was always open in case his younger sisters got home earlier than their mother.

Pete wanted to see the house so Mark started with the living room. It, like the rest of the downstairs, was newly painted. Mark turned on the stereo, the noise of which worried Pete. “Don’t worry, the nearest house is a quarter mile away,” Mark shouted. Pete felt more comfortable observing that no houses could be seen in any direction beyond the huge yard.

The dining room, with all the china, silver, and cut glass, was no place to play so the boys moved into the kitchen where they made sandwiches. Mark said they wouldn’t go to the basement because it had been damp and musty ever since the new plumbing had been installed.

“This is where my dad keeps his famous paintings and his coin collection,” Mark said as they peered into the den. Mark bragged that he could get spending money whenever he needed it since he’d discovered that his dad kept a lot in the desk drawer.

There were three upstairs bedrooms. Mark showed Pete his mother’s closet which was filled with furs and the locked box which held her jewels. His sister’s room was uninteresting except for the color TV which Mark carried to his room. Mark bragged that the bathroom in the hall was his since one had been added to his sisters’ room for their use. The big highlight in his room, though, was a leak in the ceiling where the old roof had finally rotted.

The House

Purpose
The purpose of this activity is to help students come to understand that their personal point of view influences what they believe. So, to think critically it is necessary to enter a complex issue from different perspectives to see the issue more clearly. In other words, we need to check the extent to which our personal bias may limit our understanding, and consequential beliefs and actions, of an issue/problem/topic.

Activity Directions
Each student individually reads The House. They will read the section three times. After each reading students will highlight, in a designated color, information relevant to a given point of view.

First Reading: Read The House and highlight (in color 1) what you think is the most important information.

Second Reading: Read the selection again and highlight (in color 2) any information you think is relevant to a person wanting to rob the house.

Third Reading: Read the selection a third time and highlight (in color 3) any information you think is relevant to a person wanting to buy the house.

The instructor can have students then compare their work at the end or after each reading. One may notice that there is more congruency in highlighted information in the second and third readings than there is in the first reading. Use this as an opportunity to explain how our personal points of view influence how we interpret the world and, thus, make decisions and judgments about others.

Discussion Questions:
- Are there any similarities in what each of us highlighted?
  - Why do you think these similarities exist?
  - If not, what may explain the differences in our perspectives?
- Can you think of other examples of how you interpreted a situation differently than a person in the same situation? What might explain the different interpretation?
- Is it useful to enter into other perspectives in order to see an issue a different way?
- Is it necessary to enter into other perspectives in order to see an issue a different way?
- Do you ever put yourself in someone else’s shoes to see the issue from his/her perspective?