With censorship, a good offense is sometimes the best defense. This means that you think ahead and try to avoid having conflicts with parents and community members. One of the best ways to do this is to get in the habit of thinking about why you have chosen to teach a particular book to a whole class. See the textbook pp. 391-393 about the necessity of having reasons for your book choice and of ways of communicating these reasons to parents. For any book that you plan to teach, you need to write a rationale explaining what the book is about, how other respected teachers and scholars view the book, why you have chosen to teach it, and what you hope students will get from the book.

It is important that you do this for all the books you are going to teach. Parents will surely be suspicious if you do it only for the one or two books that they might have already heard about as being obscene, full of swear words, anti-establishment, filthy, or whatever. From the books you have read this semester, choose one that you think is rich enough to be worthy of taking class time to teach. Write a rationale that you can envision presenting to your department chair and/or to the principal, as well as to any parent who comes in and asks why you have chosen to teach this particular book.

You can find some examples in *Rationales for Teaching Young Adult Literature* edited by Louann Reid and Jamie Hayes Neufeld (Heinemann, 1999) and *Celebrating Censored Books* edited by N. J. Karolides and L. Burress (Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, 1985), and *Censored Books: Critical Viewpoints*, (Scarecrow Press, 1993).