

## **DO PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE WHEREVER THEY WANT, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT WANTED?**

From *The Trumbull Park Homes Disturbances: A Chronological Report*  
By The Chicago Commission on Human Relations

### Vocabulary Warm-Up

#### Section A

1. Keeping the house under surveillance probably meant keeping some kind of watch over the house, as noted by the two visits by police officers. If the Commission had kept men posted at the house, the house would have been under constant surveillance. I guess they decided the costs of constant surveillance outweighed the benefits.
2. The term interracial is used in the quotation to suggest the idea of mixed-race housing, as in housing in which black people and white people lived in houses in the same housing project or the same neighborhood, but it does not describe black people and white people living together under one roof or together as a family. We might describe a neighborhood which houses families of different racial backgrounds as diverse, integrated, heterogeneous, or multicultural.
3. The Commission staff probably met and spoke with the police captain and the commission. Perhaps they had an informal conference about how best to deal with this situation.

#### Section B

1. a
2. a
3. b
4. a
5. d
6. a

#### Section C

1. The term friction here might describe the forces for and against integration at the Trumbull Park Homes, exerting energy against each other and creating heat and tension. The term friction here is used as a figurative version of the physics term, although it might be worth noting that the two objects in this scenario, the family and the protestors, would surely create vastly uneven forces, based on their relative size.
2. Knots of people would be gatherings or clusters of people. The term knot also suggests areas of lesser movement, places in the crowd where the people are gathered together but stuck. The knots in the crowd, then, would be little masses or bumps, like the knots in shoelaces.
3. A savory dish would be pleasant to the smell and taste. An unsavory dish might be bland or tasteless or it might actually taste bad. Buck is using this term to conjure the idea that things in South Deering are not only unpleasant and unappealing but even offensive.

#### Section D

1. I notice strife all the time at my school. Different groups of students compete for use of the school spaces, for example. The athletes might need the gym for practice, but the honors society wants to hold a meeting there. I think the fact that we don't have enough space to go around is mostly responsible for the strife.

2. I like to term myself a chocolate connoisseur. I love to try different kinds of chocolate and taste the differences among different kinds. Perhaps chocolate connoisseur doesn't define my personality, but maybe it speaks to my adventurousness, at least in terms of food.
3. I do worry about surveillance. Even if I don't have anything to hide, I don't like the idea of the government being in everyone's business. It seems like a recipe for abuse and trouble.
4. I hate any kind of friction. My parents used to fight a lot at home, so tension makes me anxious. I like it when people get along.
5. I think my birth would be the first most important event, since without it I wouldn't exist. And my death would probably be the last important event in a chronology of my life.
6. I think more people need to understand that the idea of racial categories or kinds of people is made up. People are people. Whites aren't significantly different genetically from Asians, for example, so they can't be superior or inferior, as a group. The difficulty is that women are genetically different from men, so it's easier for people to justify their ideas about male superiority.
7. I deplore the idea that bread and pasta are unhealthy. I think a life without carbohydrates is not worth living.

#### Section E

1. b
2. c
3. a
4. c
5. c

#### Check for Understanding

1. a
2. a
3. c
4. a
5. d
6. d
7. c
8. 1=e, 2=d, 3=a, 4=b
9. d
10. b, d, f

#### Writing and Discussion

##### Section A: A disturbing report?

##### 1. Table A-1: Textual features

<b>Textual feature</b>	<b>Specific example from the text</b>	<b>Your understanding of the effect of the textual feature</b>
An abstract title	"The Trumbull Park Homes Disturbances: A Chronological Report"	The title is objective and abstract; it doesn't show an opinion; the subtitle stresses that

		we are dealing with specific events in a specific order and thus that the report is factual.
Subheadings	“ALLEGED NEGRO MOVE-IN”; “WORD SPREADS, VIOLENCE OCCURS”; “ROUTINE OF VIOLENCE”	The subheadings obviously shape our understanding of the subjects of the various sections, but they also frame the events. The first section could have been headed, FAMILY MOVES IN, NEIGHBORS ARE HOSTILE. The section subheadings offer objective organization, but they also provide a commentary on the content.
Introductory comment	“Trumbull Park Homes has been the scene of Chicago’s largest and costliest racial <i>friction</i> since 1919. As this report is issued, over 250 police officers are still assigned to the project and the surrounding areas to protect persons and property. It is the hope of the Commission that all citizens, especially those of the affected area, will use their influence to secure an end to the disorders.”	The comment here frames the project of the commission report in terms of ending “disorders.” It references “racial <i>friction</i> ” and the police presence as objective facts. It avoids issues of cause or blame for the events and avoids any mention of the violence discussed in the actual report. The report, then, avoids all appearance of partiality, but it does so by dancing around the underlying issues of anti-integration agitation and violence.
Dates	Dated entries	Like the other elements of the report, the dated entries give the report a veneer of objectivity and factuality – as if the report is simply an unbiased record of facts and events. Of course that’s not the case; choices have been made about what to include and not include.

2. Table A-2: The Commission Report and the *Daily Calumet*

Key lines	Tone	Your reflections on the effect of the language on the reader
From the Commission Report: “At midnight ... the crowd directly in front of the Howard home was small but it began to grow rapidly.”	Dry and matter-of-fact, recording the events objectively	Language is specific in terms of time, place, and number and makes the report seem accurate, fair, and objective

<p>From the Commission Report:</p> <p>“... In the afternoon Chicago Housing Authority telephoned the Chicago Commission on Human Relations and reported that their staff had overheard many remarks by police officers at Trumbull Park Homes which were anti-Negro in character.”</p>	<p>Reports on claims made by others at the Chicago Housing Authority about racist comments made by police; accusations of anti-Negro comments, then, come from the Chicago Housing Authority and are being recorded in the report, without confirmation or dispute</p>	<p>The Commission Report again sounds objective and fair; it includes accusations of racism but does not make any accusations itself. It neither confirms nor denies the report and does not make any comment about the fact that police may be racist. It must be an objective organization.</p>
<p>From the Commission Report:</p> <p>“The Chicago Commission on Human Relations staff then conferred with Supervising Captain Albert Anderson, who had been in direct command of the police detail at Trumbull Park during the evening. Captain Anderson estimated the disturbances might grow increasingly serious. The Chicago Commission on Human Relations staff conferred with the Commissioner of Police during the day in respect to increasing the detail.”</p>	<p>The tone here is efficient and business-like. The Commission staff is conducting appropriate meetings with the people in charge, including the police captain and commissioner.</p>	<p>The Commission represents its own dealings as professional and competent. Violent mayhem may be going on, but the Commission is calmly holding appropriate meetings with important people. It must be a trustworthy organization.</p>
<p>From the editorial: “It constitutes a sad state of affairs when the taxpayers are compelled to foot the bill of keeping 750 policemen on duty to guard one family from the wrath of its neighbors.”</p>	<p>Emotional and judgmental: “sad state,” “taxpayers are compelled,” “wrath of its neighbors”</p>	<p>The emotional tone is not objective but instead one of frustration. The specific comparison drives home the point that it is “sad” that 750 policemen are necessary to guard one family. Note as well that the line makes it sound as if 750 officers are all on duty guarding the Howards at the same time.</p>
<p>From the editorial: “Mayor Martin H. Kennelly is determined to force all nationalities to accept all races as neighbors. The city executive stands on firm legal ground. The constitution of the United States sets out all men are equal and it makes no exceptions. <i>The Daily Calumet</i> applauds that great stroke of liberty in our basic law. Many things are legal, but many legal propositions are impractical. It seems foolish to risk the lives of a Negro family—</p>	<p>Calm and intelligent but practical and commonsensical</p>	<p>The editorial admits that the mayor has legal justification for his policy, but the editorial contrasts this legal justification with common sense and practical concerns. The editorial appeals to all readers by accepting the legal precedents and celebrating our constitution and freedoms. But it makes clear that the law here, labeled “legal propositions,” is foolish” and that these fancy ideas are not realistic or reasonable.</p>

or the father, mother and children of any other race or nationality—because they decide to live in a neighborhood where they are positively not wanted.”		
From the editorial: “Chicago is a city of heterogeneous population. There is absolutely no racial strife of any kind between our scores of creeds and colors—except when a man or an agency attempts to mix them socially. America is not ready for that today. Until it is, better leave good-enough alone and find another suitable place for South Deering’s new tenant.”	Accepting of racial heterogeneity but wise enough to identify that American shouldn’t be pushed; all in good time	Because the editorial seems to celebrate Chicago as a place of racial heterogeneity, the writer forestalls accusations of racism. He seems willing to accept racial mixing, but he claims that America (not necessarily himself) is not ready yet. He calmly and openly suggests that this idea might be fine in the future (again he is accepting), but the time is just not here yet.

3. Students should consider whether the editorial serves to bolster the Commission Report’s calm, dispassionate reportage of events. Does the more inflammatory and emotional language of the report undermine the editorial writer and thus make the report itself seem stronger and more objective? Or does the inclusion of the report give the editorial and its ideas a kind of equal footing, justifying the ideas and making them seem just like more facts about the case?

4. Building on the answers above, the student can probably make a case either way. Regardless of which side the student takes, he or she should note how the Commission Report works hard to establish objectivity and neutrality in reporting on the issues. The student will probably want to note the same attempts in the editorial, although more complicated appeals to common sense and emotion are at work there. Hopefully, students can discuss the cracks in the veneer of both texts.

Section B: What kind of welcoming committee is this?

1. Table B-1: What is Mr. Lindner’s reasoning?

<b>Lindner’s argument</b>	<b>What Lindner really means</b>
“you’ve got to admit that a man, right or wrong, has the right to have the neighborhood he lives in a certain kind of way.”	White people, right or wrong, have the right to live separate from African-American people.
“people should talk to each other and see if we couldn’t find some way to work this thing out. As I say, the whole business is a matter of <i>caring</i> about the other fellow.”	If the Youngers really understood and cared for the people in Clybourne Park, they wouldn’t move into the neighborhood.
“at the moment the overwhelming majority of our people out there feel that people get along better, take more of a common interest in the life of the community, then	Because the Youngers are different and don’t share a common background with the people in Clybourne Park, the Youngers will be less likely to get along with the

they share a common background”	others in the neighborhood.
“I want you to believe me when I tell you that race prejudice simply doesn’t enter into it.”	We aren’t racist.
“What do you think you are going to gain by moving into a neighborhood where you just aren’t wanted and where some elements – well – people can get awful worked up when they feel that their whole way of life and everything they’ve ever worked for is threatened.”	Be careful; you aren’t wanted and since you are threatening people’s whole way of life, you can expect some kind of consequences – perhaps violence.
“You just can’t force people to change their hearts, son.”	I’m looking out for you and your family, as a father would to a son when I warn you that others, not me, are racist.

2. Clearly Mr. Lindner is insinuating violence. Whether he is making a violent threat to the Youngers or merely referencing the violence that families who were trying to integrate white neighborhoods commonly faced, the implication is clear. Some white people in Clybourne Park feel threatened about “their whole way of life.” They can get “awful worked up” and surely will respond in some way. The Commission Report shows the real world consequences of many, many white people getting worked up and acting out their aggression on the Howard family in Trumbull Park.

3. Table B-2: What is the editorial writer’s reasoning?

<b>Editorial writer’s argument</b>	<b>What the editorial writer really means</b>
“Many things are legal, but many legal propositions are impractical.”	It may be legal for the Howards to live in Trumbull Park, but because they are unwelcome, it is impractical and they should leave.
“It constitutes a sad state of affairs when the taxpayers are compelled to foot the bill of keeping 750 policemen on duty to guard one family from the wrath of its neighbors.”	The sad state of affairs is having to keep 750 policeman on duty, not the “wrath” of the neighborhood being directed against the Howards.
“it is unfair to the children of the Negro family to be brought up in a neighborhood constantly projecting hate and prejudice against them, <i>deplorable</i> as it may be.”	It is in the best interests of the children for the Howard family to move.
“Logically then, other suitable housing must be found for the unwelcome family.”	The logical solution is for the family to move, and perhaps for the city to find other housing for them.
“There is absolutely no racial strife of any kind between our scores of creeds	Chicago is a diverse city, but people are not ready now for social integration.

and colors—except when a man or an agency attempts to mix them socially. America is not ready for that today. Until it is, better leave good-enough alone and find another suitable place for South Deering’s new tenant.”	This integration should not be forced on them until they are ready, and so the Howards should leave.
“Mayor Martin H. Kennelly is determined to force all nationalities to accept all races as neighbors.”	This is a political issue; it’s the mayor who is behind this and who is forcing the issue.

4. Students can talk about how both Mr. Lindner and the editorial writer try to present themselves as reasonable, caring, accepting people. They are simply trying to look out for the black families who have made this poor decision to move to a white neighborhood. They both explain why this is a bad idea, simply because they are not wanted, but not because of racism. Both offer the idea of reason and commonsense to underscore how this kind of change is not in anyone’s best interest and is disrespectful to the wishes of the majority in the white communities.

#### Section C: Bombs in *Raisin*?

1. Students might think about whether Ruth’s indifference reflects the fact that she has become inured to this kind of violence because it is so commonplace. Walter, however, is less accepting generally and this moment, like so many in the play, may suggest his desire for change. Whether or not students think this is a direct reference to the kind of bombing in the Commission Report, they should note that the play is deliberately vague and this may reflect the fact that Hansberry knew and perhaps acceded to pressure to tone down the play’s more challenging elements.

2. Unlike the first bombing reference, this scene makes clear the very specific violence the Youngers faced in moving into Clybourne Park. It also clearly labels this violence as the kind of blatant racism associated with reconstruction and Jim Crow in the South. In this sense, the scene confronts audience members in the north with their own racism and makes clear that attacks on blacks are not something happening elsewhere. The epithet is interesting in that it adds an element of class to the discussion, perhaps suggesting that this kind of behavior might be expected from poor white people and appealing to wealthier white audience members to disassociate themselves from the attitudes and actions of their poor white peers.

3. Students might argue for the inclusion of the bombing reference and/or the previously omitted scene or they might side with the original producers and argue to leave the reference and/or the original ending out. Students might argue to include the bombing reference but not the original ending. Either way, their arguments should consider the impact of including or excluding either or both on their intended audience and how they might understand or react to the play overall. They might consider whether they want their new production to make an overt political statement relevant to the present day, whether including the omitted reference and scene would help achieve that goal, and how they would stage the omitted scene toward that end. They might use details from the Commission Report to help construct the original ending, or they strive for the objective tone of the Report in order to avoid being inflammatory. The treatment should also reflect their understanding of the characters from the rest of the play.

## Class Activity

Table 1: A house in Clybourne Park?

Character	Evidence/example from the text	Your understanding of the example
Mama	<p>“(Frightened at this telling) Well – well – it’s out there in Clybourne Park”</p> <p>“(Smiling at her) First of the month.” (stage directions)</p>	<p>Mama is frightened because she know that moving into this white neighborhood represents a risk for the family.</p> <p>Mama is excited to share the news of the house with Ruth and can’t wait to move.</p>
Ruth	<p>“(Throwing back her head with jubilation) Praise God!”</p> <p>“RUTH’s radiance fades abruptly”</p> <p>“Mama, there ain’t no colored people living in Clybourne Park.”</p> <p>“(she builds with momentum as she starts to circle the room with an exuberant, almost tearfully happy release) ... HALLELUJAH! AND GOOD-BYE MISERY</p>	<p>Ruth is ecstatic over the news of the house.</p> <p>Ruth immediately and definitively recognizes the danger in the house’s location.</p> <p>Ruth’s comment here also illustrates how well-known and well-understood the particulars of segregation in Chicago were.</p> <p>This moment (and the rest of her speech here) underscores just how close Ruth is to the breaking point and how much she wants and needs this change.</p>
Walter	<p>“WALTER finally turns slowly to face his mother with incredulity and hostility”</p> <p>“(Bitterly) So that’s the peace and comfort you went out and bought for us today!”</p>	<p>Walter can’t believe what Mama has done and he is angry about it, perhaps because he recognizes just how dangerous the situation is.</p> <p>Walter seems to be looking ahead here and isn’t happy with the troubled future he sees for them in Clybourne Park.</p>
Mrs. Johnson	<p>“(Lifting her head and blinking with the spirit of catastrophe) You mean you ain’t read ‘bout them colored people that was bombed out their place out there?”</p>	<p>Mrs. Johnson seems to take pleasure in the drama of the situation and doesn’t seem to care much for Mama or the danger she and the family face.</p>



	<p>“(Rising, somewhat offended) Mmmmmmmmm. The Youngers is too much for me! (She looks around) You sure one proud-acting bunch of colored folks.”</p>	<p>While Mama announces the purchase of the house as expedient, the best she could get at the price, Mrs. Johnson very clearly sees it as a political act and one she does not approve of.</p>
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2. Table 2: Effects of moving into Trumbull Park

<b>People</b>	<b>Consequences of the move</b>	<b>Evidence of consequences from the text</b>
Mr. Howard	Harassed and physically attacked at his home	“At about 8:40 P.M. the crowds moved to the Howard’s and it was reported by Mr. Howard that he went out and shouted at the crowd and was hit in the face by an unidentified man. Police pulled the man away and Howard went inside.”
Mrs. Howard	Wounded by broken glass caused by the attack on her house	“Mrs. Howard was calm although her arm was scratched by the glass from the broken window.”
The Howard children	White children played with them – although perhaps only until they realized they were black and the disturbances began	“children in the project had called to play with their children”