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## Study Guide: An Enemy of the People

### I. Pre-reading Activities

#### B. Thinking from Different Points of View

##### **CURRENT SITUATION**

People in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast of Mississippi are now trying desperately to get their lives back in order. When Hurricane Katrina ravaged the region in August 2005, it wreaked havoc over every aspect of their lives: their homes, their businesses and, in many cases, their physical well-being. As a result, the economic prosperity of the region has come to a halt. Death and destruction are the order of the day. People are very depressed, but they are hopeful.

##### **Consider this situation TEN YEARS FROM NOW:**

People in New Orleans have finally reconstructed their beautiful city and are enjoying a taste of prosperity again. Tourists have come back to visit, the jazz clubs in the French Quarter are booming, and the city in general is once more a beehive of activity.

A doctor, a native of New Orleans who also endured the trials and tribulations of reconstruction, has just found through research that the drinking water of New Orleans may be hazardous to people's health.

The doctor thinks that a new pumping process is to blame. It has been designed to make sure the levees on the banks of the Mississippi River won't collapse, but it is polluting the city's water supply. As a result, the drinking water is probably unsafe. Although the pump protects the city from excessive flooding, the pumping process will have to be changed if the doctor's word gets out, and this will probably take at least two years to do. Furthermore, if news of the quality of the drinking water is published, tourists may stop coming to New Orleans to listen to jazz and enjoy New Orleans' fine cuisine.

##### **POINT-OF-VIEW WRITING**

What would you do if you were the doctor? Would you make your findings known? Would you ask the city's main newspaper to publish your research findings?

##### **Here are some important facts:**

1. The doctor is a respected member of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, the city agency that promotes business and tourism in New Orleans.
2. The doctor's brother is the mayor of New Orleans.
3. The doctor's father-in-law is the inventor of the new pumping process.
4. The doctor's wife is now happy. She has enough money to put good food on the table. Her children go to an excellent school, and they have a lot of friends.
5. The doctor's best friend is a riverboat captain, a very ethical man who takes tourists on tours of the Mississippi River.
6. The publisher of the city's main newspaper knows that the doctor has received information about the quality of the city's drinking water.

*Take a point of view. What would the following individuals say to the doctor? Become either the mayor, the inventor of the new pumping process, the doctor's wife, the riverboat captain, or the newspaper publisher. Consider "your" personal interest in this situation, and write a letter to the doctor giving "your" recommendation.*

You are the mayor of New Orleans.

You are the inventor of the new  
pumping process.

You are the doctor's wife.

You are the riverboat captain.

You are the newspaper publisher.

Dear Doctor,

Sincerely,

*Now write the doctor's reply. Consider what the doctor would say in response to the letter that you have written.*

Dear ,

Sincerely,

Dr.

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