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**“The Monsters are due on Maple Street”**

**A teleplay by Rod Serling from *The Twilight Zone***

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

“The Monsters are due on Maple Street” is an episode of the American television anthology series *The Twilight Zone*. Its stories often involved ordinary people in suburban settings typical of the late 1950’s. Although the events in the series were far from ordinary, they were a window into an imaginary world written in the context of science fiction. As characters faced the unknown, they reacted in both typical and unexpected ways. This particular episode originally aired on March 4, 1960 to help teach the dangers of prejudice and hysteria.

Rod Serling (1924-1975), the creator, writer, and narrator of *The Twilight Zone* wrote 92 of the 156 episodes.

**Setting the Stage:**

When you come up against something strange and unknown, how do you react? What do you do when you think danger is near? How does fear affect the decisions you make? Does being a part of a crowd make a situation worse? Have you ever gone against your own beliefs because it’s what all your friends were doing?

**Discuss with your table partner:**

Reflecting on the statements above, what is the difference in how individuals react when they are on their own compared to how individuals react when they are part of a crowd or group? Why do you think individuals react differently in these different situations?

**Themes explored in this story:**

* **Fear**—an unpleasant, often strong emotion caused by expectation or awareness of danger
* **Suspicion**—a state of mental uneasiness and uncertainty; doubt; mistrust
* **Prejudice**—an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge

**Discussion with your table partner:**

What effect do today’s adults’ fears, suspicions, or prejudices have on future generations?

**Before Reading:**

Today we are going to read a story set on Maple Street; any town, any country, any time . . . universal Maple Street, where everyone knows everyone else, and everyone is friendly and trusting. Something has happened on Maple Street and the only thing people are certain of is that it isn’t THEIR fault; THEY are not responsible. But what about their neighbors? Maybe it was him, or her, or that kid—it could be anyone . . .

We are going to hear from all of the characters on Maple Street as they try to defend themselves and explain their situation to us.

**During Reading**:

We will read both valid and invalid conclusions made by the residents of Maple Street. As you read, look for examples of both valid and invalid conclusions from the story.

A **valid conclusion**: is based on strong evidence or sound reasoning.

Story example:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

An **invalid conclusion**: is not well founded. It is based on little or no evidence, faulty evidence, or on poor thinking.

Story example:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**After reading:**

Consider what the scene might be like the next morning on Maple Street. Will all be “back to normal?” Will neighbors act differently?

How does the theme statement below reflect the situation from the story?

**When we let prejudice and suspicion control us, we become our own worst enemy.**