<u>Gateway Activities</u>

Gateway activities are intended to help students generate criteria by which to make judgments about characters and themes. The goal is to help students begin to consider the complexities, contradictions, and differentiations that a rich consideration of a character or a theme invite, to steer students away from making simplistic and snap judgments. For example, students can wrestle with the problem of understanding how it is that human beings come to carry out acts that on the surface are bad, even evil (e.g. Raskolnikov in <u>Crime and Punishment</u>, Cholly in <u>The Bluest Eye</u>, Sethe in <u>Beloved</u>, Emily in <u>A Rose for Emily</u>); or whether Atticus is a good parent in <u>To Kill A Mockingbird</u>; or whether Odyssesus is a hero and if so what kind). Gateway activities can also involve generating definitions of themes (e.g. what is courageous action; what is justice; what is love). Our primary references for designing gateway activities come from the following research exemplars: (Johannesen, Kahn et al. 1982, Smagorinksy, McCann et al. 1987).