3. After all her ironic "thanking," Schindler ends more literally: "I wouldn't wish on your child what you did to mine." Is her closing weak because it drops the irony, or strong because it caps the point?

**Style:**

1. Six of Schindler's paragraphs have only one sentence. Give reasons. Is this style effective?
2. How CONCISE is this selection? Try to find one passage of deadwood that could have been cut.
3. How FORMAL or INFORMAL is Schindler's TONE? Give examples. Does the tone fit the content? Why or why not?

**Argumentation and Persuasion:**

1. "You could have kicked him to death, but you only left him to die, thank you," writes the victim's mother in paragraph 11. Her letter of "thanks" is persuasion as strong as any in this book. Explain the irony of Schindler's "thanking" her son's attackers.
2. Find and explain at least 10 more ironies in this selection.
3. The author might have called her son's attackers "thugs," "goons" or worse. Would this openly persuasive mode be more effective than the "thanks" she gives? Defend your answer with reasons.
4. In addition to irony, the introduction to this chapter lists repetition, fright and citation as techniques of persuasion. How does Schindler use each? Respond with examples.
5. Does Schindler make her point deductively (through an innate rejection of violence) or inductively (through the many examples she cites, leading to her point)? Can an argument go both ways at once? Would this be a failure of logic?

**Ideas for Discussion and Writing:**

1. Does Schindler attempt only to heap shame on her son's attackers, or do you also detect, for example in the closing, a desire for reconciliation?
2. When his friends desired revenge, the son said, "No, I don't want someone else's mother to go through what mine has" (par. 10). What would you have said? Defend your answer with reasons.
3. How much do techniques of nonviolent resisters such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King have in common with the responses of Rita Schindler and her son? Is their way ultimately weaker or stronger than the way of those who defend themselves through violence? Give examples.

4. Is there violent crime at your school or campus? If so, give examples. Defend or attack the "zero tolerance" policy of some school boards that permanently expel students who commit violent offences. Are there other solutions that would work?
5. Are public forums such as the letters to the editor column or electronic bulletin boards good vehicles for promoting our own ideas? Do others actually read and heed what we say?

**PROCESS IN WRITING:** Read the crime news in your newspaper or hear it on radio or TV. Choose one violent act that provokes your anger or concern. Consider how, like Rita Schindler, you can respond to it through irony to persuade your audience to take your side. Make notes, look them over, then write a rapid first draft of a letter to the perpetrator, to the public, or to both. The next day look it over. Will it startle and persuade the AUDIENCE by meaning the opposite of what it says? (Remember Schindler's "thanking" the attackers, or in Chapter 5 Russell Baker's "criticizing" Toronto, or in Chapter 8 Stephen Leacock's "advice" on how to live to be 200.) Is the irony TONE consistent? Is the letter concise, like Schindler's? If not, revise. Finally, check the spelling and grammar. When you have produced your good draft, send it as a letter to the editor of the newspaper you read. Or, if you are online, send it from your computer to an appropriate "bulletin board" on the Internet. Check either for responses. Collect them, then show them, with the original letter, to the class.

*Note: See also the Topics for Writing at the end of this Chapter.*