

Name _____

Date _____

Analyzing the Literature

Directions: Think about the section you have just read. Read each question and state your response with textual evidence.

1. Describe the setting of the story.

2. Describe Scout and Jem's relationship.

3. How is Atticus different from others in Maycomb?

4. How has Jem shown bravery in these chapters so far?

Analyzing the Literature

Directions: Think about the section you have just read. Read each question and state your response with textual evidence.

1. Describe the setting of the story.

2. Describe Scout and Jem's relationship.

3. How is Atticus different from others in Maycomb?

4. How has Jem shown bravery in these chapters so far?

Name _____

Date _____

▲ Analyzing the Literature

Directions: Think about the section you have just read. Read each question and state your response with textual evidence.

1. Why do you think the author chose to set the story in the 1930s instead of in the 1960s when it was written?

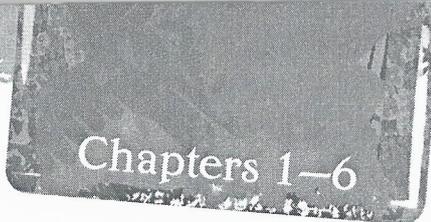
2. Compare and contrast Scout and Jem's relationship to your relationship with your siblings or other siblings you know.

3. What advantages and/or disadvantages could Atticus's differences bring him?

4. Has Jem shown true bravery in his antics with the Radleys? Explain your thinking.

Name _____

Date _____



Close Reading the Literature

Directions: Closely reread the section in chapter 3 in which Walter goes home with Scout and Jem for lunch. Start when they arrive at the house, “By the time we reached our front steps” Continue reading until Burris leaves the classroom, “He waited until he was sure she was crying.” Read each question and then revisit the text to find the evidence that supports your answer.

1. Use the text to describe the different ways Calpurnia and Scout feel about Walter eating at the house.

2. Though both Walter Cunningham and Burris Ewell are poor, use information in the book to explain how they are different.

3. Give evidence to show that Miss Caroline is an outsider in Maycomb.

4. According to the section, why is Burris at school?

Making Connections—The Great Depression

Directions: Understanding the Great Depression is an important part of understanding the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Using resource books, an online encyclopedia, or other websites, do some brief research on this time in American history.

1. When and why did the Great Depression begin?

2. When and how did the Great Depression finally end?

3. Give an example of something the government did to try and help people.

4. Describe at least two other interesting or new things that you learned about the Great Depression.

Name _____

Date _____

Chapters 1–6

Creating with the Story Elements

Directions: Thinking about the story elements of character, setting, and plot in a novel is very important to understanding what is happening and why. Complete **one** of the following activities about what you've read so far. Be creative and have fun!

Characters

Use your imagination and your knowledge of the characters to rewrite the following scene from Dill's point of view. Rewrite the end of chapter 1 when Dill dares Jem to approach the Radley house, argues about lighting a match under a turtle, and runs away after Jem finally touches the house.

Setting

Draw a map of Scout's neighborhood. Use the book to figure out where Scout's neighbors would be located, as well as the school, post office, and any other places mentioned.

Plot

Create a comic strip retelling Scout, Jem, and Dill's escapade in chapter 6 when they attempt to peek in the window at Boo Radley's house.

Myths and Urban Myths

Myths are not just stories people believed long ago. People throughout time have believed myths. The people of Maycomb County in the 1930s did, and we have myths we believe today. Myths help us make sense of our world. They explain why things are the way we think they are, why people do as they do. Myths are not always about gods and goddesses. They explain the trivial as well as the important. They may not be true, but many people believe them anyway.

The myths of Maycomb County taught its citizens that certain things were true: Crawfords don't mind their own business; Bufords walk a certain way because they're Bufords; Delafields don't tell the truth, so never take a check from one without calling the bank first; Mrs. Merriweather sips gin out of a Lydia Pinkham tonic bottle just like her mother did; non-whites are not quite human and do not fall under the same protection as whites; a lazy white man is more deserving of justice than a hard-working non-white.

While Scout, Jem, and Dill, thanks to the admonitions of Atticus, do not believe the local myths about non-whites, they have their own myths. Many of these concern Arthur "Boo" Radley, who is white. Since they have never seen him, despite his living nearby, they speculate about him endlessly. They think that he goes out at night when it is pitch dark to spy through folks' windows and to scratch at their screens; that he is six-and-one-half feet tall and eats raw squirrels and cats, leaving his hands bloodstained; that his face is scarred, his teeth yellow, his eyes popped out, and he drools. One could be killed just going up to his door and knocking!

Their myths about Boo lead the children into mischief. They become obsessed with the prospect of making Boo "come out," while at the same time they fear doing so. Their summers center around an irresistible desire to see Boo in the flesh, while at the same time they dread the terrible fate which awaits them if they do. It feels to them like walking barefoot down a grassy path, hoping to see a rattlesnake in the grass but fearing getting bitten while doing so.

In the meantime, while the children's self-made explanations about Boo Radley color their days and lead them into less than compassionate activities aimed at seeing him, the townspeople's explanations about non-whites and whites lead them to accept activities aimed at preserving life as they have always known it. Their myths tell them things should stay the way they have always been to make the world safer. Then they suddenly learn to their shame that what they had always known to be true may not be true after all.

What kinds of myths do we have today? Most are harmless, the stuff of entertainment. Some are beliefs which lead people to fear and illogical behaviors.

Our modern world is filled with a new phenomenon called the urban myth or legend. These are stories and beliefs which get started in various ways. Sometimes a television personality makes an offhand statement which is taken seriously. A talk-show host may state an opinion his or her listeners take as gospel truth. Someone posts something on the Internet on a message board which is repeated and spread onto other boards and other venues until no one knows where it began. A newspaper editor writes an opinion which is taken as fact. Sometimes an urban myth gets started as a joke which, over time, is taken seriously.

On the following page are some urban myths and their possible origins. Read them and then do the activities that follow.

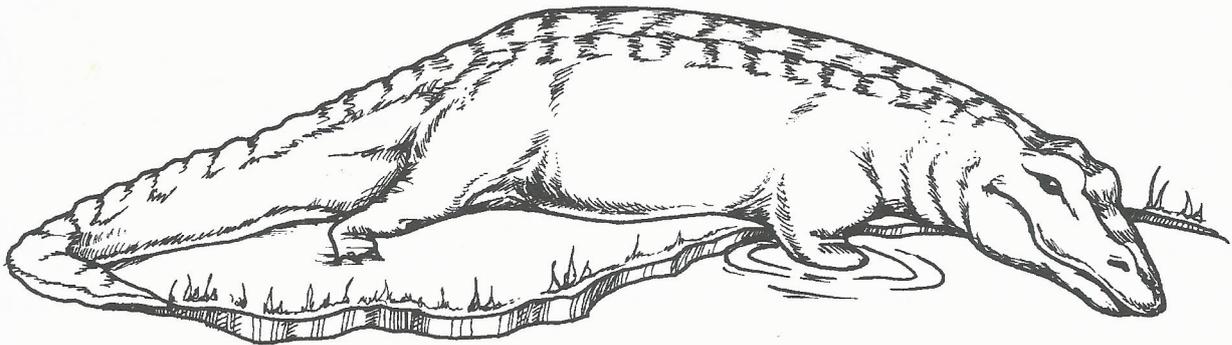
Myths and Urban Myths (cont.)

Here are some recent urban myths and their possible explanations.

- 1. Urban Myth:** A thriving colony of white alligators lives in the sewers of New York City, the offspring of baby alligators brought back as pets from Florida, where they grow to huge sizes and terrorize anyone brave enough to go under the city.

Possible Origin: There are many stories from the past 90 years of alligators found in streams, parks, bushes, even the rivers of New York, some of which were later found to be lizards. One "spinner of colorful yarns" actually claimed to have found a large number of alligators there but never proved any of his stories.

Fact: Alligators cannot live in the cold temperatures of New York City, and they would die very quickly from the bacteria present in sewers. They have never been found there.



- 2. Urban Myth:** Spiders will crawl into the hair of a person with a lot of hair or with dreadlocks and cause the person to grow sick and die.

Possible Origin: People have often said that with some hairdos, a person might forego washing it in order to preserve the style.

Fact: There is no known case of someone having died from a bite by a spider who set up residence in a person's hair.

- 3. Urban Myth:** A woman dies of a heart attack after her husband calls her from his grave.

Possible Origin: Some people's fear of being buried alive leads them to invent devices to put in a tomb so the dead can call out and say a mistake has been made.

Fact: There have been no proven cases of the deceased giving the living a call on the telephone.

Activities

- In groups of three or four, find and list several myths from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. These may be myths the children believe or ones believed by adults in the community. Record the myths, identify their sources, if you can find them, and tell what actually happened. Discuss the reasons you think the myths got started and why anyone would believe them.
- Can you identify any such myths which have circulated around your school, your neighborhood, or your city? Report back to the class on what you have discovered.

The Great Depression

When the stock market crashed in 1929, America's economy had been deteriorating for several years. The government had a practice of not interfering with business practices in any way, and when the market crashed, the entire country went into a terrible period known as the Great Depression. During the first two years of the Depression these things happened:

- 25% of those wanting to work could not find jobs.
- The stock market lost 80% of its value in two years.
- Over 13 million people lost their jobs.
- Farm prices fell 53%.
- Thousands of banks closed because people panicked and withdrew their money.
- At least half of the American people lived below the subsistence level (that is, with less money than needed to pay for food and shelter).



Millions of people went hungry and lost their homes. Highways and cities became crowded with the homeless who often built Hoovervilles, communities where they scooped out underground hovels covered by sheets of tin in which to live. Once-wealthy businessmen jumped from high buildings to their deaths rather than to live with nothing. There was no Social Security to support people financially.

The physical troubles of the Depression also caused emotional depression in millions of people. The Depression lasted for years, never really ending until World War II began. Throughout these years, the poor were unbelievably destitute. Conditions for families like the Ewells were common. As sometimes happens when people are desperate, they begin to look for someone to blame (regardless of the truth), and this blame turns to hatred and fear. Consequently, one result of the misery in America during the Depression was the uprising of the Ku Klux Klan.

The Depression affected families in many different ways. People made do with less. Clothing was passed down from one child to another, and most were grateful to have someone else's hand-me-down clothing, shoes, and/or toys. What clothing that was new was usually made by hand, because few could afford to buy readymade clothing. Toys were handmade, also. Most people planted vegetable gardens and raised chickens for the eggs. Those who had no homes often ate in soup kitchens or worked for their meals, if they could find someone who had odd jobs to be done.

Activity

The attitudes and life habits of many people who lived through the Depression were changed, sometimes for the rest of their lives, even if they later made money and were no longer poor. Interview someone who lived through the Great Depression and was old enough at the time to remember it. This may be a great-grandparent or neighbor. Many of these people are now becoming quite old, and you may not know anyone who lived then. In that case, you might contact a nursing home or retirement center to find someone who lived at the time. This person may be able to come to your classroom to answer your questions. Follow the guidelines on the next page for your interview.

“The Great Depression” Interview Guidelines

When someone has given consent for you to interview him or her, it is important to remember that this person is doing you a favor. You must treat the person with respect and use good manners at all times. Ask your questions in a polite, considerate way. Remember to use the magic words of “please” and “thank you.” Allow the person to finish answering one question before asking a new one. Smile. Be pleasant and kind. Remember that in the case of someone surviving today from the Great Depression, he or she has lived much longer than you, and you can learn a great deal from him or her. It may not seem so now, but someday, if you are fortunate and live a healthy life, you may be aged as well, so treat the person you are interviewing as you would like to be treated yourself.

Perhaps of most importance while conducting an interview is taking notes on the person’s answers to your questions. Here are some questions you might ask:

- How old were you when you first knew about the Depression?
- How did the Depression affect your life?
- What was your family life like at the time?
- What did you do for entertainment then?
- Did your family have to move from one place to another during the Depression?
- What were some of the typical foods your family ate during the Depression years?
- What sorts of clothing did you wear, and where did you get it?
- Where did you live, and what was your home like?
- Did you ever know of hoboes or tramps who came around where you lived? What did they do?
- Did you listen to the radio during those years? Why, or why not?
- What kinds of toys did children play with back then?
- Did you grow any of your own food? If so, what kind?
- Did your family preserve food in any way? How?
- What kind of furniture did you have, and where did you get it?
- Did you know of any movie stars or musicians who were famous at the time? Who? Tell me about them and their work as well as your interest in them.
- How did life change for you after the Great Depression?
- Are there any lessons or fears you learned during the Depression that you keep with you today?

When your interview is finished, thank the person. Write a report about what you learned, and give a copy of your report to the person you interviewed as well as to your teacher.