Passage Annotation and Character Study
*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

**About this Lesson**
Authors often reveal meaning in a work of fiction through the characters they create. The motivations and conflicts of these characters, as well as how they resolve those conflicts, all combine to reveal the author’s purpose and to establish universal meaning. One of the most well-known and beloved characters in fiction is Atticus Finch from Harper Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In this lesson, students are asked to define the character of Atticus Finch by analyzing selected excerpts from the novel. Students are asked to read, annotate, summarize, consider conflicts, and make assertions about Atticus based on these close reading and writing activities.

*Note:* The word “flag” in the directions for this lesson refers to students who have school copies of the text and can’t mark or highlight in them. These students would need to mark the pages and the text with something like a post-it note.

Although this lesson incorporates passages from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it can easily serve as a model for teachers wishing to create a lesson based on any other complex character from a richly-layered text.

Passages for LTF® lessons are selected to challenge students while lessons and activities make texts accessible. Guided practice with challenging texts allows students to gain the proficiency necessary to read independently at or above grade level.

This lesson is included in Module 13: The Literary Response.

**Objectives**
Students will
- examine a writing prompt prior to provide a focus as they read and analyze passages from *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
- read, annotate, and summarize selected excerpts from the novel.
- make assertions about the character of Atticus based on his responses to conflicts in the excerpts.

**Level**
Grades Nine and Ten

**Connection to Common Core Standards for English Language Arts**
The activities in this lesson allow teachers to address the following Common Core Standards:
Explicitly addressed in this lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Level of Thinking</th>
<th>Depth of Knowledge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RL.9-10.1</td>
<td>Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td>RL.9-10.2</td>
<td>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
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<td>RL.9-10.3</td>
<td>Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
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<td>RL.9-10.4</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
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<td>RL.9-10.5</td>
<td>Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
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<td>RL.9-10.6</td>
<td>Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
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<td>L.9-10.6</td>
<td>Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
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<tr>
<td>W.9-10.9</td>
<td>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
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Implicitly addressed in this lesson

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<td>RL.9-10.10</td>
<td>By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>II</td>
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<td>L.9-10.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. a. Use parallel structure. b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent, noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.</td>
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<td>L.9-10.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. a. Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses. b. Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation. c. Spell correctly.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
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<td>L.9-10.4</td>
<td>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph; or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy). c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology. d. Verify the preliminary determination of the</td>
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| **L.9-10.5** | Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.  
  a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.  
  b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations. | Understand I |
| **SL.9-10.1** | Initiate and participate in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.  
  a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.  
  b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.  
  c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.  
  d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, quality or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented. | Understand II |
LTF Skill Focus
The foundation for LTF English lessons is the Skill Progression Chart that identifies key skills for each domain, beginning with grade 6 and adding more complex skills at each subsequent grade level while reinforcing skills introduced at previous grade levels. The Skill Focus for each individual lesson identifies the skills actually addressed in that lesson.

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Connections to AP*
Character analysis is an integral part of both the multiple choice and free response sections of the AP English Literature Exam. Pre-AP students need guided practice in identifying details that provide direct and indirect characterization within a text and in connecting characterization to the overall meaning of a literary work.

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Materials and Resources
- copies of Student Activity
- copies of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

Assessments
The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:
- guided questions
- summary statements
Teaching Suggestions
Before completing the annotation and analysis activities, teachers should take time to guide their students in an analysis of the writing prompt that will focus students’ attention as they complete the exercises:

Authors use **direct and indirect characterization** to create characters in works of literature. Through words and actions, a character can “come to life” for the reader. In Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the author draws a vivid picture of the character of Atticus Finch as he responds to conflict. In a well-developed, multi-paragraph essay, discuss how the character of Atticus reveals meaning in the novel. Support your opinion with specific evidence from the text.

Be sure that students can identify the concrete elements (“words and actions,” “conflict”) and the abstract element (“meaning in the novel”) in the writing prompt and discuss with them how the character of Atticus and his response to conflicts in the novel reveal meaning about men and society in general.

Students may need to be reminded how to write a concise summary of a text. Teachers may also want to review such literary elements as conflict, motivation, and resolution, and they may want to provide students with copies of the “Character and Style Analysis Word List” from the LTF website.

If annotation and character analysis are new for students, it is a good idea for teachers to begin this activity by modeling, working through the first one or two passages with the class as a whole:
- Read aloud the directions preceding the first excerpt.
- Ask for a volunteer to read Excerpt 1.
- Discuss what parts of the passage students have—or should—highlight.
- Guide students as they complete the summary and assertion questions.

When teachers are satisfied that students understand the process, they should divide the class into small groups and assign each group one or two excerpts to read, highlight, and complete the questions. When all groups have completed their assignments, teachers should have a student from each group share their highlighted text and their responses, using a document camera if available.

Teachers may want to extend this activity by showing the video clip of Atticus’ speech to the jury, available on the American Rhetoric site at [http://www.americanrhetoric.com/MovieSpeeches/moviespeechtokillamockingbird.html](http://www.americanrhetoric.com/MovieSpeeches/moviespeechtokillamockingbird.html).

**Answers**
As students analyze the writing prompt, they should realize that it asks them to write an essay, to discuss how Atticus’ response to conflict reveals meaning in the text, and to provide specific evidence from the text to support their assertions.

Answers for the annotation section of this lesson are subjective and will vary; however assertions about Atticus should be similar to those provided below. To obtain the maximum benefit of the lesson, ask students to go beyond the expected responses.

**Excerpt 1**
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Atticus is fair, logical, and concerned about what makes Scout happy.

**Excerpt 2**
Atticus is determined, ethical, and able to withstand peer pressure.

**Excerpt 3**
Atticus is unlike most fathers in Maycomb both in age and in occupation; he is also nonjudgmental and dislikes violence (guns).

**Excerpt 4**
Atticus is modest and competent and dislikes violence.

**Excerpt 5**
Atticus is ethical, fair-minded, concerned about his children, and perseverant.

**Excerpt 6**
Atticus is determined and honest and seeks justice.

**Excerpt 7**
Atticus is brave and ethical.

**Excerpt 8**
Atticus is smart and honorable, understands people, and displays integrity.

**Excerpt 9**
Atticus is patient, understanding, and unselfish.

**Excerpt 10**
Atticus is fair-minded, understanding, and concerned.
Passage Annotation and Character Study
*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

**Activity One: Directed Reading Using Prompts**
Read the prompt below and answer questions 1 – 3.

Authors use **direct and indirect characterization** to create characters in works of literature. Through words and actions, a character can “come to life” for the reader. In Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the author draws a vivid picture of the character of Atticus Finch as he responds to conflict. In a well-developed, multi-paragraph essay, discuss how the character of Atticus reveals meaning in the novel. Support your opinion with specific evidence from the text.

1. What are the tasks of the prompt?
   - write
   - discuss
   - provide

2. While you are reading the novel, what must you focus on in order to be able to write an essay addressing this prompt?

3. What kind of evidence will provide support for your essay?
Activity Two: Passage Analysis

Directions: Characterization is developed through words, actions and descriptions. What does a character do, especially when facing a conflict? What does a character say? What do others say about him or her? As you read, highlight or “flag” lines that reveal the character of Atticus. As you finish each passage, complete the activities that follow it.

Excerpt 1 from Chapter 3:

Bit by bit, I told him the day’s misfortunes. ——and she said you taught me all wrong, so we can’t ever read any more, ever. Please don’t send me back please sir.”

Atticus stood up and walked to the end of the porch. When he completed his examination of the wisteria vine he strolled back to me.

—First of all,” he said, —if you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you’ll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—”

—Sir?”

—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

Atticus said I had learned many things today, and Miss Caroline had learned several things herself. She had learned not to hand something to a Cunningham, for one thing, but if Walter and I had put ourselves in her shoes we’d have seen it was an honest mistake on her part. We could not expect her to learn all Maycomb’s ways in one day, and we could not hold her responsible when she knew no better.”

. . .

. . . —But if I keep on goin’ to school, we can’t ever read any more. . . .”

—That’s really bothering you, isn’t it?”

—Yes sir.”

When Atticus looked down at me I saw the expression on his face that always made me expect something. —Do you know what a compromise is?” he asked.

—Bending the law?”

—No, an agreement reached by mutual concessions. It works this way,” he said. —If you’ll concede the necessity of going to school, we’ll go on reading every night just as we always have. Is it a bargain?”

—Yes sir!”

—We’ll consider it sealed without the usual formality,” Atticus said, when he saw me preparing to spit.

As I opened the front screen door Atticus said, —By the way, Scout, you’d better not say anything at school about our agreement.”

—Why not?”

—I’m afraid our activities would be received with considerable disapprobation by the more learned authorities.”

Jem and I were accustomed to our father’s last-will-and-testament diction, and we were at all times free to interrupt Atticus for a translation when it was beyond our understanding.
Summary of the passage: __________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? ________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

How does he deal with that conflict? ______________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Assertions about Atticus based on the passage: Atticus is ________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
Excerpt 2 from Chapter 9

Atticus sighed. "I'm simply defending a Negro—his name's Tom Robinson. He lives in that little settlement beyond the town dump. He's a member of Calpurnia's church, and Cal knows his family well. She says they're clean-living folks. Scout, you aren't old enough to understand some things yet, but there's been some high talk around town to the effect that I shouldn't do much about defending this man. It's a peculiar case—it won't come to trial until summer session. John Taylor was kind enough to give us a postponement . . ."

"If you shouldn't be defendin' him, then why are you doin' it?"

"For a number of reasons," said Atticus. "The main one is, if I didn't I couldn't hold up my head in town, I couldn't represent this county in the legislature, I couldn't even tell you or Jem not to do something again."

"You mean if you didn't defend that man, Jem and me wouldn't have to mind you any more?"

"That's about right."

"Why?"

"Because I could never ask you to mind me again. Scout, simply by the nature of the work, every lawyer gets at least one case in his lifetime that affects him personally. This one's mine, I guess. You might hear some ugly talk about it at school, but do one thing for me if you will: you just hold your head high and keep those fists down. No matter what anybody says to you, don't you let 'em get your goat. Try fighting with your head for a change . . . it's a good one, even if it does resist learning."

"Atticus, are we going to win it?"

"No, honey."

"Then why—"

"Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win," Atticus said.

Summary of the passage: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________
____________________________________

What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? __________________________

How does he deal with that conflict? ____________________________________________

Assertions about Atticus based on the passage:  Atticus  is __________________________

_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________

Excerpt 3 from Chapter 10

Atticus was feeble; he was nearly fifty. When Jem and I asked him why he was so old, he said he got started late, which we felt reflected upon his abilities and manliness. He was much older than the parents of our school contemporaries, and there was nothing Jem or I could say about him when our classmates said, "My father—"

Jem was football crazy. Atticus was never too tired to play keep-away, but when Jem wanted to tackle him Atticus would say, "I'm too old for that, son."

Our father didn't do anything. He worked in an office, not in a drugstore. Atticus did not drive a dump-truck for the county, he was not the sheriff, and he did not farm, work in a garage, or do anything that could possibly arouse the admiration of anyone.

Besides that, he wore glasses. He was nearly blind in his left eye, and said left eyes were the tribal curse of the Finches. Whenever he wanted to see something well, he turned his head and looked from his right eye.

He did not do the things our schoolmates' fathers did: he never went hunting, he did not play poker or fish or drink or smoke. He sat in the living room and read.

With these attributes, however, he would not remain as inconspicuous as we wished him to: that year, the school buzzed with talk about him defending Tom Robinson, none of which was complimentary . . .

When he gave us our air-rifles Atticus wouldn't teach us to shoot. Uncle Jack instructed us in the rudiments thereof; he said Atticus wasn't interested in guns. Atticus said to Jem one day, "I'd rather you shot at tin cans in the back yard, but I know you'll go after birds. Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

That was the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something . . .

Summary of the passage: 

What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? 

How does he deal with that conflict? 

Assertions about Atticus based on the passage: Atticus is

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Excerpt 4 from Chapter 10

I thought mad dogs foamed at the mouth, galloped, leaped and lunged at throats, and I thought they did it in August. Had Tim Johnson behaved thus, I would have been less frightened.

Nothing is more deadly than a deserted, waiting street. The trees were still, the mockingbirds were silent, the carpenters at Miss Maudie’s house had vanished. I heard Mr. Tate sniff, then blow his nose. I saw him shift his gun to the crook of his arm. I saw Miss Stephanie Crawford’s face framed in the glass window of her front door. Miss Maudie appeared and stood beside her. Atticus put his foot on the rung of a chair and rubbed his hand slowly down the side of his thigh.

→ There he is, he said softly.

Tim Johnson came into sight, walking dazedly in the inner rim of the curve parallel to the Radley house.

→ Look at him, whispered Jem. — Mr. Heck said they walked in a straight line. He can’t even stay in the road. . . .

. . . Tim Johnson reached the side street that ran in front of the Radley Place, and what remained of his poor mind made him pause and seem to consider which road he would take. He made a few hesitant steps and stopped in front of the Radley gate; then he tried to turn around, but was having difficulty.

Atticus said, — He’s within range, Heck. You better get him before he goes down the side street—Lord knows who’s around the corner. Go inside, Cal.”

Calpurnia opened the screen door, latched it behind her, then unlatched it and held onto the hook. She tried to block Jem and me with her body, but we looked out from beneath her arms.

→ Fake him, Mr. Finch.” Mr. Tate handed the rifle to Atticus; Jem and I nearly fainted.

→ Don’t waste time, Heck,” said Atticus. — Go on.”

→ Mr. Finch, this is a one-shot job.”

Atticus shook his head vehemently: — Don’t just stand there, Heck! He won’t wait all day for you—”

→ For God’s sake, Mr. Finch, look where he is! Miss and you’ll go straight into the Radley house! I can’t shoot that well, and you know it!”

→ Haven’t shot a gun in thirty years—”

Mr. Tate almost threw the rifle at Atticus. — I’d feel mighty comfortable if you did now,” he said.

In a fog, Jem and I watched our father take the gun and walk out into the middle of the street. He walked quickly, but I thought he moved like an underwater swimmer: time had slowed to a nauseating crawl.

When Atticus raised his glasses Calpurnia murmured, — Sweet Jesus help him,” and put her hands to her cheeks.

Atticus pushed his glasses to his forehead; they slipped down, and he dropped them in the street. In the silence, I heard them crack. Atticus rubbed his eyes and chin; we saw him blink hard.

In front of the Radley gate, Tim Johnson had made up what was left of his mind. He had finally turned himself around, to pursue his original course up our street. He made two steps forward, then stopped and raised his head. We saw his body go rigid.

With movements so swift they seemed simultaneous, Atticus’s hand yanked a ball-tipped lever as he brought the gun to his shoulder.

The rifle cracked. Tim Johnson leaped, flopped over and crumpled on the sidewalk in a brown-and-white heap. He didn’t know what hit him . . .

Jem became vaguely articulate: — Did you see him, Scout? ‘d you did him just standin’ there?
...‘n’ all of a sudden he just relaxed all over, an’ it looked like that gun was a part of him. . . an’ he did it so quick, like. . .I hafta aim for ten minutes ‘fore I can hit somethin’. . . .‖

Miss Maudie grinned wickedly. —Well now, Miss Jean Louise,” she said, —still think your father can’t do anything?”

—Nome,” I said meekly.

—Forgot to tell you the other day that besides playing the Jew’s Harp, Atticus Finch was the deadest shot in Maycomb County in his time.”

Summary of the passage: __________________________________________________________
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What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? ____________________________
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How does he deal with that conflict? _________________________________________________
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Assertions about Atticus based on the passage: Atticus is ______________________________
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Excerpt 5 from Chapter 11

Atticus pushed my head under his chin. "It's not time to worry yet," he said. "I never thought Jem'd be the one to lose his head over this—thought I'd have more trouble with you."

I said I didn't see why we had to keep our heads anyway, that nobody I knew at school had to keep his head about anything.

"Scout," said Atticus, "when summer comes you'll have to keep your head about far worse things. It's not fair for you and Jem, I know that, but sometimes we have to make the best of things, and the way we conduct ourselves when the chips are down—well, all I can say is, when you and Jem are grown, maybe you'll look back on this with some compassion and some feeling that I didn't let you down. This case, Tom Robinson's case, is something that goes to the essence of a man's conscience—Scout, I couldn't go to church and worship God if I didn't try to help that man."

"Atticus, you must be wrong..."

"How's that?"

"Well, most folks seem to think they're right and you're wrong..."

"They're certainly entitled to think that, and they're entitled to full respect for their opinions," said Atticus, "but before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience."

Summary of the passage: ____________________________________________
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What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? ________________________________
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How does he deal with that conflict? ________________________________________________
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Assertions about Atticus based on the passage: Atticus is ______________________________
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Excerpt 6 from Chapter 15

Dill and I took another window. A crowd of men was standing around Atticus. They all seemed to be talking at once.

→ . . movin' him to the county jail tomorrow,” Mr. Tate was saying, → don't look for any trouble, but I can't guarantee there won't be any. . . .”

→ Don’t be foolish, Heck,” Atticus said. → This is Maycomb.”

→ . . said I was just uneasy.”

→ Heck, we’ve gotten one postponement of this case just to make sure there’s nothing to be uneasy about. This is Saturday,” Atticus said. → Trial'll probably be Monday. You can keep him one night, can’t you? I don’t think anybody in Maycomb’ll begrudge me a client, with times this hard.”

There was a murmur of glee that died suddenly when Mr. Link Deas said, → Nobody around here’s up to anything, it’s that Old Sarum bunch I’m worried about . . . can’t you get a—what is it, Heck?”

→ Change of venue,” said Mr. Tate. → Not much point in that, now is it?”

Atticus said something inaudible. I turned to Jem, who waved me to silence.

→ besides,” Atticus was saying, → you’re not scared of that crowd, are you?”

→ . . know how they do when they get shinnied up.”

→ They don’t usually drink on Sunday, they go to church most of the day . . .” Atticus said.

→ This is a special occasion, though . . .” someone said.

They murmured and buzzed until Aunty said if Jem didn’t turn on the living room lights he would disgrace the family. Jem didn’t hear her.

→ don’t see why you touched it in the first place,” Mr. Link Deas was saying. → You’ve got everything to lose from this, Atticus. I mean everything.”

→ D you really think so?”

This was Atticus’s dangerous question. → Do you really think you want to move there, Scout?”” Bam, bam, bam, and the checkerboard was swept clean of my men. → Do you really think that, son? Then read this.” Jem would struggle the rest of an evening through the speeches of Henry W. Grady.

→ Link, that boy might go to the chair, but he’s not going till the truth’s told.” Atticus’s voice was even. → And you know what the truth is.”

Summary of the passage:

What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? ____________________________

How does he deal with that conflict? ____________________________

Assertions about Atticus based on the passage: Atticus is ____________________________
Excerpt 7 from Chapter 15

As we walked up the sidewalk, we saw a solitary light burning in the distance. "That's funny," said Jem, "Jim doesn't have an outside light."

"Looks like it's over the door," said Dill.

A long extension cord ran between the bars of a second-floor window and down the side of the building. In the light from its bare bulb, Atticus was sitting propped against the front door. He was sitting in one of his office chairs, and he was reading, oblivious of the nightbugs dancing over his head.

I made to run, but Jem caught me. "Don't go to him," he said, "he might not like it. He's all right, let's go home. I just wanted to see where he was."

We were taking a short cut across the square when four dusty cars came in from the Meridian highway, moving slowly in a line. They went around the square, passed the bank building, and stopped in front of the jail.

Nobody got out. We saw Atticus look up from his newspaper. He closed it, folded it deliberately, dropped it in his lap, and pushed his hat to the back of his head. He seemed to be expecting them.

Summary of the passage: ____________________________________________
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What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? ___________________________
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How does he deal with that conflict? _____________________________________________
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Assertions about Atticus based on the passage: Atticus is ___________________________
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Excerpt 8 from Chapter 20 (Atticus’ closing argument)

―I have nothing but pity in my heart for the chief witness for the state, but my pity does not extend so far as to her putting a man’s life at stake, which she has done in an effort to get rid of her own guilt.‖

―Say guilt, gentlemen, because it was guilt that motivated her. She has committed no crime, she has merely broken a rigid and time-honored code of our society, a code so severe that whoever breaks it is hounded from our midst as unfit to live with. She is the victim of cruel poverty and ignorance, but I cannot pity her: she is white. She knew full well the enormity of her offense, but because her desires were stronger than the code she was breaking, she persisted in breaking it. She persisted, and her subsequent reaction is something that all of us have known at one time or another. She did something every child has done—she tried to put the evidence of her offense away from her. But in this case she was no child hiding stolen contraband: she struck out at her victim—of necessity she must put him away from her—he must be removed from her presence, from this world. She must destroy the evidence of her offense.‖

―What was the evidence of her offense? Tom Robinson, a human being. She must put Tom Robinson away from her. Tom Robinson was her daily reminder of what she did. What did she do? She tempted a Negro.‖

―She was white, and she tempted a Negro. She did something that in our society is unspeakable: she kissed a black man. Not an old Uncle, but a strong young Negro man. No code mattered to her before she broke it, but it came crashing down on her afterwards.‖

―Her father saw it, and the defendant has testified as to his remarks. What did her father do? We don’t know, but there is circumstantial evidence to indicate that Mayella Ewell was beaten savagely by someone who led almost exclusively with his left. We do know in part what Mr. Ewell did: he did what any God-fearing, persevering, respectable white man would do under the circumstances—he swore out a warrant, no doubt signing it with his left hand, and Tom Robinson now sits before you, having taken the oath with the only good hand he possesses—his right hand.‖

―And so a quiet, respectable, humble Negro who had the unmitigated temerity to ‘feel sorry’ for a white woman has had to put his word against two white people’s. I need not remind you of their appearance and conduct on the stand—you saw them for yourselves. The witnesses for the state, with the exception of the sheriff of Maycomb County, have presented themselves to you gentlemen, to this court, in the cynical confidence that their testimony would not be doubted, confident that you gentlemen would go along with them on the assumption—the evil assumption—that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral beings, that all Negro men are not to be trusted around our women, an assumption one associates with minds of their caliber.‖

―Which, gentlemen, we know is in itself a lie as black as Tom Robinson’s skin, a lie I do not have to point out to you. You know the truth, and the truth is this: some Negroes lie, some Negroes are immoral, some Negro men are not to be trusted around women—black or white. But this is a truth that applies to the human race and to no particular race of men. There is not a person in this courtroom who has never told a lie, who has never done an immoral thing, and there is no man living who has never looked upon a woman without desire.‖

Atticus paused and took out his handkerchief. Then he took off his glasses and wiped them, and we saw another ‘first’: we had never seen him sweat—he was one of those men whose faces never perspired, but now it was shining tan.

―One more thing, gentlemen, before I quit. Thomas Jefferson once said that all men are created equal, a phrase that the Yankees and the distaff side of the Executive branch in Washington are fond of hurling at us. There is a tendency in this year of grace, 1935, for certain
people to use this phrase out of context, to satisfy all conditions. The most ridiculous example I can think of is that the people who run public education promote the stupid and the idle along with the industrious—because all men are created equal, educators will gravely tell you, the children left behind suffer terrible feelings of inferiority. We know all men are not created equal in the sense some people would have us believe—some people are smarter than others, some people have more opportunity because they’re born with it, some men make more money than others, some ladies make better cakes than others—some people are born gifted beyond the normal scope of most men.”

—But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal—there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein, and the ignorant man the equal of any college president. That institution, gentlemen, is a court. It can be the Supreme Court of the United States or the humblest J.P. Our courts have their faults, as does any human institution, but in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts all men are created equal.”

—I’m no idealist to believe firmly in the integrity of our courts and in the jury system—that is no ideal to me, it is a living, working reality. Gentlemen, a court is no better than each man of you sitting before me on this jury. A court is only as sound as its jury, and a jury is only as sound as the men who make it up. I am confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you have heard, come to a decision, and restore this defendant to his family. In the name of God, do your duty.”

Summary of the passage: ____________________________

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What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? ____________________________

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How does he deal with that conflict? ____________________________

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Assertions about Atticus based on the passage: Atticus is ____________________________

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Excerpt 9 from Chapter 23

“I wish Bob Ewell wouldn’t chew tobacco,” was all Atticus said about it.

According to Miss Stephanie Crawford, however, Atticus was leaving the post office when Mr. Ewell approached him, cursed him, spat on him, and threatened to kill him. Miss Stephanie (who, by the time she had told it twice was there and had seen it all—passing by from the Jitney Jungle, she was)—Miss Stephanie said Atticus didn’t bat an eye, just took out his handkerchief and wiped his face and stood there and let Mr. Ewell call him names wild horses could not bring her to repeat. Mr. Ewell was a veteran of an obscure war; that plus Atticus’s peaceful reaction probably prompted him to inquire, “Too proud to fight, you n*lovin’ bastard?” Miss Stephanie said Atticus said, “N, too old,” put his hands in his pockets and strolled on. Miss Stephanie said you had to hand it to Atticus Finch, he could be right dry sometimes.

Jem and I didn’t think it entertaining.

“After all, though,” I said, “he was the deadest shot in the county one time. He could—”

“You know he wouldn’t carry a gun, Scout. He ain’t even got one—” said Jem. “You know he didn’t even have one down at the jail that night. He told me havin’ a gun around’s an invitation to somebody to shoot you.”

“This is different,” I said. “We can ask him to borrow one.”

We did, and he said, “Nonsense.”

Dill was of the opinion that an appeal to Atticus’s better nature might work: after all, we would starve if Mr. Ewell killed him, besides be raised exclusively by Aunt Alexandra, and we all knew the first thing she’d do before Atticus was under the ground good would be to fire Calpurnia. Jem said it might work if I cried and flung a fit, being young and a girl. That didn’t work either.

But when he noticed us dragging around the neighborhood, not eating, taking little interest in our normal pursuits, Atticus discovered how deeply frightened we were. He tempted Jem with a new football magazine one night; when he saw Jem flip the pages and toss it aside, he said, “What’s bothering you, son?”

Jem came to the point: “Mr. Ewell.”

“What has happened?”

“Nothing’s happened. We’re scared for you, and we think you oughta do something about him.”


“When a man says he’s gonna get you, looks like he means it.”

“He meant it when he said it,” said Atticus. “Jem, see if you can stand in Bob Ewell’s shoes a minute. I destroyed his last shred of credibility at that trial, if he had any to begin with. The man had to have some kind of comeback, his kind always does. So if spitting in my face and threatening me saved Mayella Ewell one extra beating, that’s something I’ll gladly take. He had to take it out on somebody and I’d rather it be me than that houseful of children out there. You understand?”

Summary of the passage: ________________________________________________________

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What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? ____________________________
How does he deal with that conflict?  

Assertions about Atticus based on the passage: **Atticus is** 

“Then it all goes back to the jury, then. We oughta do away with juries.” Jem was adamant.

Atticus tried hard not to smile but couldn’t help it. “You’re rather hard on us, son. I think maybe there might be a better way. Change the law. Change it so that only judges have the power of fixing the penalty in capital cases.”

“Then go up to Montgomery and change the law.”

“You’d be surprised how hard that’d be. I won’t live to see the law changed, and if you live to see it you’ll be an old man.”

This was not good enough for Jem. “Sir, they oughta do away with juries. He wasn’t guilty in the first place and they said he was.”

“If you had been on that jury, son, and eleven other boys like you, Tom would be a free man,” said Atticus. “So far nothing in your life has interfered with your reasoning process. Those are twelve reasonable men in everyday life, Tom’s jury, but you saw something come between them and reason. You saw the same thing that night in front of the jail. When that crew went away, they didn’t go as reasonable men, they went because we were there. There’s something in our world that makes men lose their heads—they couldn’t be fair if they tried. In our courts, when it’s a white man’s word against a black man’s, the white man always wins. They’re ugly, but those are the facts of life.”

“Doesn’t make it right,” said Jem stolidly. He beat his fist softly on his knee. “You just can’t convict a man on evidence like that—you can’t.”

“You couldn’t, but they could and did. The older you grow the more of it you’ll see. The one place where a man ought to get a square deal is in a courtroom, be he any color of the rainbow, but people have a way of carrying their resentments right into a jury box. As you grow older, you’ll see white men cheat black men every day of your life, but let me tell you something and don’t you forget it—whenever a white man does that to a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine a family he comes from that white man is trash.”

Atticus was speaking so quietly his last word crashed on our ears. I looked up, and his face was vehement. “There’s nothing more sickening to me than a low-grade white man who’ll take advantage of a Negro’s ignorance. Don’t fool yourselves—it’s all adding up and one of these days we’re going to pay the bill for it. I hope it’s not in you children’s time.”

Summary of the passage: ____________________________________________________________

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What type of conflict does Atticus deal with in this passage? __________________________

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How does he deal with that conflict? _____________________________________________

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Assertions about Atticus based on the passage: Atticus is __________________________

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