

Close Read & Annotation
(p. 203 Old Book, p. 271 new book)
***To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee**

The following passage from Chapter 20 in *To Kill A Mockingbird* has significant meaning to the trial, the Maycomb community, and to readers of the novel. Atticus is in the beginning of his closing statement to the jury in Tom Robinson's trial.

Task 1

Directions: Read the passage carefully and annotate according to the directions.

- **Underline the claims** that Atticus makes. **In the margins**, write the claims in your own words.
- Ask questions. **Place a star** next to any moment where you have a question regarding the text. Write your question **in the margin**.
- **Highlight** rich diction or detail. Determine its connotative meaning and **write it in the margins**.

Text Excerpt: Atticus' Closing Statement

"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.

"I 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."

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Task 2

Directions: Read the following claim: *Mayella Ewell should be pitied*. Decide whether you agree or disagree with this statement. Write a response explaining your view. Use your knowledge of the trial and her life circumstances.

“Mayella Ewell must have been the loneliest person in the world...when Atticus asked had she any friends, she seemed not to know what he meant, then she thought he was making fun of her. She was as sad, I thought, as what Jem called a mixed child: white people wouldn’t have anything to do with her because she lived among pigs; Negroes wouldn’t have anything to do with her because she was white” (Lee 256).

““She says she never kissed a grown man before an’ she might as well kiss a [negro]. She says what her papa do to her don’t count”” (Lee 260).

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