



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# **Grade 8: Module 2A: Unit 2: Lesson 6**

## **Analyzing Word Choice: Atticus's Closing Speech** (Chapters 20-21)



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Analyzing Word Choice:  
Atticus’s Closing Speech (Chapters 20-12)

Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)

I can determine the meaning of words and phrases in literary text (figurative, connotative, and technical meanings). (RL.8.4)

I can analyze the development of a theme or central idea throughout the text (including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot). (RL.8.2)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can understand the literal and figurative meaning of Atticus’s language in his closing speech.
- I can understand the irony in Atticus’s word choice in his closing speech.
- I can analyze how Atticus’s closing speech relates to the themes of taking a stand and the Golden Rule.

Ongoing Assessment

- Structured notes for Chapters 20 and 21 (from homework)
- Atticus’s Closing Speech Note-catcher



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Agenda	Teaching Notes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Engaging the Reader: Focus Question from Homework (5 minutes)</li> <li>B. Review Learning Targets (3 minutes)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Work Time               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Analyzing Word Choice: Atticus’s Closing Speech (20 minutes)</li> <li>B. Analyzing Theme: Taking a Stand (15 minutes)</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Closing and Assessment               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Debrief Learning Targets and Briefly Preview Homework (2 minutes)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Homework               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Complete a first read of Chapters 22 and 23 with structured notes.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this lesson, students will analyze a key line from Atticus’s closing speech by studying the literal and figurative meanings of what Atticus says to the jury. Students will also analyze the line to understand the irony of what Atticus says. By doing this, students will synthesize and refer to the racial prejudice and tension that this trial represents. This is a crucial aspect of the novel that comes to the forefront in Part 2.</li> <li>• Students will also relate Chapters 20 and 21 to taking a stand as they continue to study this theme across various scenes, individuals, and groups of people in the novel.</li> <li>• In this lesson, students will work with their Discussion Appointment partner to analyze the key quote. As pairs complete each question on the Note-catcher, one at a time, they will debrief with the whole class. Use the Atticus’s Closing Speech Note-catcher (for Teacher Reference) to guide and support student thinking. For the purposes of the whole group sharing, designate each student in a Discussion Appointment partnership as either A or B to provide the opportunity for total participation.</li> <li>• For a sample completed version of the Atticus Note-catcher, see the supporting materials in Unit 1, Lesson 10.</li> <li>• In advance: Determine Discussion Appointment partners for the lesson.</li> <li>• Post: Learning targets.</li> </ul>



Analyzing Word Choice:  
Atticus's Closing Speech (Chapters 20-12)

Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
<p>irony, literally, figuratively; detachment (202), subsequent (203), unmitigated, temerity (204), integrity (205), acquit, indignant (207)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Atticus Note-catcher (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 9)</li><li>• Document camera</li><li>• Irony example (one for display)</li><li>• <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> (book; one per student)</li><li>• Atticus's Closing Speech Note-catcher (one per student)</li><li>• Atticus's Closing Speech Note-catcher (for Teacher Reference)</li><li>• Taking a Stand anchor chart (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 11)</li><li>• <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> Structured Notes graphic organizer, Chapters 22 and 23 (one per student)</li><li>• <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> Supported Structured Notes graphic organizer, Chapters 22 and 23 (optional; for students needing additional support)</li></ul>



Analyzing Word Choice:  
Atticus’s Closing Speech (Chapters 20-12)

Opening	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p><b>A. Engaging the Reader: Focus Question from Homework (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite students to pair up with their new Discussion Appointment partner and share their responses to the focus question from homework. Cold call students to share out what Mr. Raymond means when he says Atticus is not a “run-of-the-mill man.” Invite students to add this information to their <b>Atticus Note-catcher</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Discussion Partners allows for total participation of students. It encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and social construction of knowledge. It also helps students practice their speaking and listening skills.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Review Learning Targets (3 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud the first two learning targets and share with students that they will analyze a specific line from Atticus’s closing speech that has both literal and figurative meanings. Invite students to turn and talk to their partner about what these two words mean. Cold call pairs and be sure students understand that the word literally means “actually and without exaggeration.” Figuratively means the opposite; it is language that is used symbolically or is an exaggeration. Students will also analyze the irony of this specific line. Share that, in this case, irony means something that is true but is also the opposite of what is actually said. It’s the use of words that express something different from and often opposite to their literal meaning.</li> <li>• Using a <b>document camera</b>, display the <b>Irony example</b>. Share with students the real-life example of the saying, “Easy as 1-2-3!” when it is said after four hours of putting a bike together. Be sure the class understands how this saying has both literal and figurative meanings. It also can be ironic, which means that it can be taken exactly how it is said or it can mean the opposite.</li> <li>• Read aloud the third learning target and share with students that they will also analyze Atticus’s closing speech to find the connection to the theme of taking a stand.</li> </ul>	



Analyzing Word Choice:  
Atticus’s Closing Speech (Chapters 20-12)

Work Time	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p><b>A. Analyzing Word Choice: Atticus’s Closing Speech (20 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite students to take out their copies of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>. Distribute the Atticus’s Closing Speech Note-catcher and orient them to the two parts. Read the line from the beginning of the speech: “This case is as simple as black and white” (202). Explain that in this one line, Atticus captures the simplicity and the complexity of the trial. Share that students will work with their partners to complete the Note-catcher using the strongest evidence and details from Chapter 21. Remind them that there are two important words in the questions that they should be sure they understand: literally and figuratively. Clarify if necessary.</li> <li>• Share with students that they will use the Think-Write-Pair-Share protocol as they work through the Note-catcher as a class. For each pair of students, identify one as A and the other as B for the purposes of the whole group share-out of the Note-catcher.</li> <li>• Give directions for the partner work:</li> <li>• After you hear the question read aloud, take 1 minute to think about your answer, locating evidence in the novel to support your thinking.</li> <li>• Write down your thinking and page numbers on your Note-catcher.</li> <li>• Pair up with your discussion partner to share your thinking and writing. Be sure to add to your Note-catcher during this time.</li> <li>• As pairs work, circulate and use Atticus’s Closing Speech Note-catcher (for Teacher Reference) to support and guide their understanding.</li> <li>• After students have worked on the first question, direct their attention to the whole group. Cold call several A students in the class to share the thinking they and their partners did with the first question. Be sure students understand what is provided on the Atticus’s Closing Speech Note-catcher (for Teacher Reference) for Question 1.</li> <li>• Repeat the Think-Write-Pair-Share sequence with Question 2. Cold call B students during the whole-group sharing.</li> <li>• As students begin Question 3, refer them to the definition of irony provided on the Note-catcher. Explain that Atticus’s statement holds both the true and opposite meanings at the same time. Read aloud Question 3 and invite pairs to engage in the Think-Write-Pair-Share sequence described above, cold calling A students to share out during whole group for Question 3.</li> </ul> <p>* Repeat the Think-Write-Pair-Share sequence with Question 4 and have B students share out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text-dependent questions can be answered only by referring explicitly back to the text being read. This encourages students to reread the text for further analysis and allows for a deeper understanding.</li> <li>• Use of protocols like Think-Write-Pair-Share and designating A and B partners allows for total participation of students. It encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and social construction of knowledge. It also helps students practice their speaking and listening skills.</li> </ul>



Analyzing Word Choice:  
Atticus's Closing Speech (Chapters 20-12)

Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>B. Analyzing Theme: Taking a Stand (15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draw students' attention to Part B of the Atticus's Closing Speech Note-catcher and share with them that in Chapters 21 and 22, the theme of taking a stand comes up in a couple of ways. Read aloud the first question:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* "Atticus calls on the jury to uphold the integrity of the justice system. In what ways did Atticus's speech relate to taking a stand? Use the strongest evidence from the text to support your answer."</li></ul></li><li>• Draw students' attention to the word integrity and have them circle the word on their Note-catcher. Invite them to share their understanding of the word integrity and be sure they understand that it means "honor, honesty, and reliability."</li><li>• Invite students to continue using the Think-Write-Pair-Share protocol for the two questions in Part B. Probe and guide them using the information on the Teacher Reference Note-catcher. Be sure they understand the key ideas for each question.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During this work time, you may want to pull a small group of students to support in finding evidence from the novel. Some students will need more guided practice before they are ready for independent work.</li></ul>



Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Debrief Learning Targets and Briefly Preview Homework (2 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud the first two learning targets and cold call two students to share their learning from today's lesson that is related to these two targets. Repeat the process with the third learning target.</li> <li>• As time permits, invite students to share their insights whole group. Chart their thinking on the Taking a Stand anchor chart.</li> <li>• Distribute the <b><i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> Structured Notes graphic organizer, Chapters 22 and 23</b>. Preview the homework.</li> </ul>	
Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Complete a first read of Chapters 22 and 23 with structured notes. Answer the focus question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* "Miss Maudie says, 'There are some men in this world who were born to do our unpleasant jobs for us. Your father's one of them' (215). What does she mean? What evidence from the novel supports this statement?" □</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Consider collecting Atticus's Closing Speech Note-catchers to formatively assess students' learning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide struggling learners with the supported structured notes for additional scaffolding as they read the novel.</li> </ul>



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## Supporting Materials



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Irony Example

After spending hours putting a bike together, Dad said, “Easy as 1, 2, 3.”

Literal and Figurative Meanings

1. How was putting the bike together literally as easy as 1-2-3?

**The dad could have said this literally because there may have actually been three steps.**

2. How was putting the bike together figuratively as easy as 1-2-3?

**He could have also meant this figuratively because counting to three is easy, so this simile is a way of saying “easy.”**

Describe the irony of Atticus’s statement.

**Irony: words that express something different from and often opposite to their literal meaning.**

3. What do Dad’s words mean without irony?

**Without irony, Dad’s words mean that it was an easy job with three steps.**

4. Dad is speaking with irony here. What do his words really mean?

**Dad’s words really mean that it was not an easy job at all, since it took him four hours to do just three steps.**



Atticus's Closing Speech Note-catcher

**Part A. Word Choice: Analyzing Meaning and Irony**

"This case is as simple as black and white."

Literal and Figurative Meanings

1 How is this case literally about black and white?

2 How is this case black and white, figuratively speaking?

Describe the irony of Atticus's statement.

Irony: words that express something different from and often opposite to their literal meaning.

3. What do Atticus's words mean without irony?

4. Atticus is speaking with irony here. What do his words really mean?



**Part B. Taking a Stand in the Courtroom**

After Atticus's speech to the court in Chapter 21, how do both the jury and the black community take a stand? How is this tied to the Golden Rule? Explain.

A large, empty rectangular box intended for students to write their answers to the question above.

Atticus's Closing Speech Note-catcher  
(for Teacher Reference)

**Part A. Word Choice: Analyzing Meaning and Irony**

“This case is as simple as black and white.”

Literal and Figurative Meanings

1 How is this case literally about black and white?

**This case is about a black person and a white person: Tom and Mayella. It's also very simple. There is nothing involved but race.**

2 How is this case black and white, figuratively speaking?

**This case is black and white, figuratively speaking, in that it is clear-cut. It is not a confusing or difficult case to understand. The facts are clear, and it is obvious what the verdict should be: not guilty.**

Describe the irony of Atticus's statement.

Irony: words that express something different from and often opposite to their literal meaning.

3. What do Atticus's words mean without irony?

**Atticus means exactly what he says, because this case is both about black and white people and the facts are clear and obvious.**

4. Atticus is speaking with irony here. What do his words really mean?

**Atticus means the opposite of what he says, because there is nothing simple about racial prejudice and crossing racial lines. The issues of the case are not simple at all; they are complex issues in the Jim Crow South. Mayella did something that was taboo in the South, yet it was something that was a natural human behavior. Tom Robinson did something taboo, as well: He felt sorry for a white woman, even though this was also a natural human behavior. The situation is complex, so when Atticus says it's as simple as black and white, it is ironic because while the facts are simple, the context is not.**



Atticus's Closing Speech Note-catcher  
(for Teacher Reference)

**Part B. Taking a Stand in the Courtroom**

After Atticus's speech to the court in Chapter 21, how do both the jury and the black community take a stand? How is this tied to the Golden Rule? Explain.

**When the jury gives a guilty verdict, they take a stand for the status quo. The jury decides on a verdict that is based in self-interest, not the Golden Rule.**

**However, the black residents in the courthouse all stood up as Atticus passed by them. They did this out of respect for what Atticus did to respect Tom. They literally took a stand for Atticus, but they figuratively took a stand in support of what Atticus stood for: respect for all people, the integrity of the justice system, and the Golden Rule.**



*To Kill a Mockingbird* Structured Notes:  
Chapter 22 & 23

.....  
**Name:**  
.....

.....  
**Date:**  
.....

What is the gist of what you read?

Focus Question: Miss Maudie says, “There are some men in this world who were born to do our unpleasant jobs for us. Your father’s one of them” (215). What does she mean? What evidence from the novel supports this statement?



*To Kill a Mockingbird* Structured Notes:  
Chapter 22 & 23

**Vocabulary**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Context clues: How did you figure out this word?</b>
cynical (214)		
fatalistic (215)		
ruefully (215)		
wryly (218)		
furtive (218)		
commutes (219)		
vehement (221)		



*To Kill a Mockingbird* Supported Structured Notes:

Chapter 22 & 23

Chapter 22 Summary

Jem starts to cry and cannot believe the jury would convict Tom when it was so obvious he hadn't raped Mayella. He and Scout are both in shock. The next morning, the Finches are surprised by the amount of food that was left on the back porch from black people in the community, mostly from Calpurnia's neighborhood, to tell Atticus "thank you" for defending Tom Robinson, in spite of the verdict. The children have a conversation with Miss Maudie, who tells them that it wasn't just Atticus trying to help Tom Robinson. The judge was trying, Mr. Heck Tate was trying, there were lots of people behind the scenes trying. They might have lost the case, she says, but only Atticus could have kept a jury out so long deciding. In her mind, it's a baby step toward equality.

Chapter 23 Summary

The next drama of the day is that Bob Ewell spits in the face of Atticus and says he'll get him back for embarrassing him so badly in court. Atticus passes it off as an empty threat and does his best to assuage the fears of Jem and Scout, who are very worried for him. Atticus has not lost hope for Tom Robinson, either. There's still the appeal, which he's confident they have a good chance of winning. As Jem and Scout discuss the lives and ways of Maycomb County folks after the trial, they begin to realize something disturbing about human nature, and the ways people can come up with to just be mean-spirited. Jem begins to understand that the reason Boo Radley never comes out of his house is not because he can't, but because he doesn't want to.



*To Kill a Mockingbird* Supported Structured Notes:  
Chapter 22 & 23

**Focus Question:** Miss Maudie says, “There are some men in this world who were born to do our unpleasant jobs for us. Your father’s one of them” (215). What does she mean? What evidence from the novel supports this statement?

A large, empty rectangular box intended for students to write their answers to the focus question.



*To Kill a Mockingbird* Supported Structured Notes:  
Chapter 22 & 23

**Vocabulary**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Context clues: How did you figure out this word?</b>
cynical (214)	skeptical, suspicious	
fatalistic (215)	believing that outcomes to events are determined in advance by fate	
ruefully (215)	with a feeling of sorrow or regret	
wryly (218)	mockingly	
furtive (218)	secret	
commutes (219)	alters, changes	
vehement (221)	passionately, intensely	