

HANDOUT 7.1C Assessing Evidence From Outside the Text

Assess the safety of each of the six pieces of textual evidence below. That is, decide how likely it is that your audience would accept the piece of evidence. Remember, even after you establish safety, you still have to answer the “So what?” question and explain why the evidence matters.

In favor of Atticus as a role model:

According to Casey Cess in an article in the *New Yorker*, “Atticus has inspired legions of lawyers, been memorialized with a public sculpture, had professional-achievement awards and a nonprofit organization named after him, and been invoked admiringly by Barack Obama, who quoted one of the character’s folksy fatherisms in his farewell address as president: ‘You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.’”



Completely safe

Not safe at all

In a review posted on amazon.com, reader Rachel McElhany writes, “*To Kill a Mockingbird* is full of life lessons. Atticus is pretty much the perfect human and the wisdom he imparts to Scout and Jem is profound.”



Completely safe

Not safe at all

Atticus (played by Gregory Peck) was rated the #1 film hero of all time by the American Film Institute.



Completely safe

Not safe at all

Against Atticus as a role model:

Former teacher and award-winning novelist Julia Franks argues that Atticus’s ideas are “paternalistic” and “old-fashioned.”



Completely safe

Not safe at all

In the *Washington Post* (July 22, 2020), writer Errin Haines argues that Atticus Finch took the Tom Robinson case “not only to attempt to prevent a miscarriage of justice but to maintain the racial order in Maycomb.”



Completely safe

Not safe at all

Teacher Andrew Simmons criticizes Atticus for not recognizing the bigotry of the townspeople of Maycomb and for seriously underestimating the threat of racism.



Completely safe

Not safe at all