



■ Flavoring the Stew

Harper Lee uses a wealth of *local color* to make the fictional Maycomb seem like a real place.

Local color writing emphasizes the peculiarities of a particular region. This type of fiction emphasizes the characters' customs, speech, dress, and beliefs.

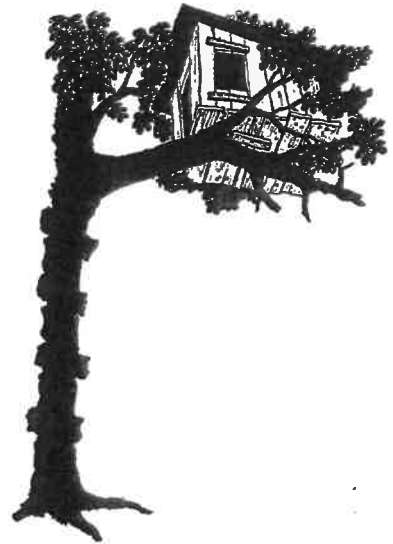
Local color details do more than just spice up a description of the setting. Those details also help readers draw conclusions about characters, places, and future events.

Directions

Read the following situation summaries. Then, using the choices from the box, decide what aspect of local color is revealed by each situation. You may use the choices as often as you believe they apply. Finally, draw a conclusion about Maycomb and its citizens based on the situation.

More than one category or conclusion may be possible for each situation. However, you are only required to give one answer for part a and one for part b of each question.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| religious/moral beliefs | dialect |
| cultural biases | cultural lore |
| environmental description | dress |



Example

Situation: Scout loves summer because it means sleeping on the back porch or in their treehouse and "a thousand colors in a parched landscape."

- a. Category environmental description
- b. Conclusion Summers are hot in Maycomb (Scout and Jem sleep outdoors), dry, but colorful. Also, it is safe enough in Maycomb for the children to sleep outdoors.

1. Situation: Jem explains to Scout that Indian-head pennies are "real strong magic."
- a. Category _____
- b. Conclusion _____
- _____
- _____

continued

Literary Skills: Local Color

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2. Situation: Scout and Jem believe it is all right to help themselves to a flower from someone's garden or a drink from someone's cow but that finding and taking someone's money is wrong.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

3. Situation: Dill arrives in Maycomb for the summer wearing clothing different from his previous clothes. Instead of a suit with a shirt buttoned to short pants, he is wearing real short pants with a belt.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

4. Situation: Cal calls superstitions about Hot Steams "nigger talk."

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

5. Situation: Miss Maudie wears overalls while gardening but then bathes at five and reappears on her porch, beautifully dressed.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

6. Situation: Miss Maudie's speech is different from that of other Maycomb inhabitants. She speaks crisply and calls the children by their full names, first and last.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

continued

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7. Situation: Scout sits on the porch with Miss Maudie during the long, peaceful twilights. They silently watch the sun set and the martins swoop over the roofs.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

8. Situation: Miss Maudie reports that "foot-washing" Baptists think she is a sinner because she spends too much time gardening and too little time reading scriptures.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

9. Situation: Scout mentions Miss Maudie's pecan trees and scuppernongs (grapes) and the collards growing in the Radleys' backyard garden.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

10. Situation: The Finches' neighbors are not quite as shocked when they hear that the children supposedly played strip poker with matches, not cards.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

11. Situation: Nathan Radley fires a gun at the intruders in his backyard.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

continued

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12. Situation: The neighbors accept without question Mr. Radley's statement that a black invaded his collard patch.

a. Category _____

b. Conclusion _____

One Step Further

Now tie together your conclusions about Maycomb. Imagine that you are a travel guide writer. For your guide, write a description of Maycomb at the time the story takes place. Your goal is to capture not only how the town looks but how it feels to walk its streets.

* Your guide must be unique to you! ⁵⁻⁷ ~~5-7~~ sentences after gallery walk.

Large lined writing area for the student's response.