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M 2 The Monkey Trial – Sunday school vs science class

The excerpt is taken from the play *Inherit the Wind*. It is based on a true event which took place in Tennessee, USA in 1925. Back then, the conflict between people who took the Bible literally and those who interpreted it in a less literal way reached its climax at the so-called "Monkey Trial". A Tennessee law prohibited the teaching of "any theory that denies the divine creation of man and teaches instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals." The defence (Drummond) calls the prosecutor (Brady) to the stand as an expert on the Bible. Drummond's interrogation of Brady at the Hillsboro Courthouse becomes the most famous event of the trial.

A. Approaching the text

1. Work in pairs. Partner A describes the scene in the picture as it is. Partner B describes the scene in the picture as the opposite of what it is.
2. Read the text and find information associated with your descriptions.



Source: University of Missouri-Kansas (UMKC)

Excerpt from *Inherit the Wind* (1955) by Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee

- DRUMMOND: [...] I call to the stand one of the world's foremost experts on the Bible and its teachings – Matthew Harrison Brady! [...]
- JUDGE: (*To BRADY*) The court will support you if you wish to decline to testify – as a witness against your own case ...
- BRADY: (*With conviction*) Your Honor, I shall not testify *against* anything. I shall speak out, as I have all my life – on behalf of the Living Truth of the Holy Scriptures! [...] (*BRADY sits, confident and assured. His air is that of a benign and learned mathematician about to be quizzed by a schoolboy on matters of short division.*)
- DRUMMOND: Am I correct, sir, in calling on you as an authority on the Bible?
- BRADY: I believe it is not boastful to say that I have studied the Bible as much as any layman. And I have tried to live according to its precepts.
- DRUMMOND: Bully for you. Now, I suppose you can quote me chapter and verse right straight through the King James Version, can't you?
- BRADY: There are many portions of the Holy Bible that I have committed to memory. [...]
- DRUMMOND: I don't suppose you've memorized many passages from the *Origin of Species*?
- BRADY: I am not in the least interested in the pagan hypotheses of that book.
- DRUMMOND: Never read it?
- BRADY: And I never will. [...]
- DRUMMOND: Now tell me. Do you feel that every word that's written in this book [the Bible] should be taken literally?
- BRADY: Everything in the Bible should be accepted, exactly as it is given there.
- DRUMMOND: [...] I recollect a story about Joshua, making the sun stand still. Now as an expert, you tell me that's as true as the Jonah business. Right? (*BRADY nods, blandly*) That's a pretty neat trick. [...]
- BRADY: I do not question or scoff at the miracles of the Lord – as do ye of little faith.
- DRUMMOND: Have you ever pondered just what would naturally happen to the earth if the sun stood still?
- BRADY: You can testify to that if I get you on the stand.
- DRUMMOND: If they say that the sun stood still, they must've had a notion that the sun moves around the earth. Think that's the way of things? Or don't you believe the earth moves around the sun?
- BRADY: I have faith in the Bible!
- DRUMMOND: You don't have much faith in the solar system.

BRADY: (*Doggedly*) The sun stopped.

DRUMMOND: Good. [...] Now if what you say factually happened – if Joshua halted the sun in the sky – that means the earth stopped spinning
60 on its axis; continents toppled over each other, mountains flew out into space. And the earth, arrested in its orbit, shriveled to a cinder and crashed into the sun. [...] How come they missed *this* tidbit of news?

65 BRADY: They missed it because it didn't happen.

DRUMMOND: It must've happened! According to natural law. Or don't you believe in natural law, Colonel? Would you like to ban Copernicus from the classroom, along with Charles Darwin? Pass
70 a law to wipe out all the scientific development since Joshua. Revelations – period!

BRADY: (*Calmly, as if instructing a child*) Natural law was born in the mind of the Heavenly Father. He can change it, cancel it, use
75 it as He pleases. It constantly amazes me that you apostles of science, for all your supposed wisdom, fail to grasp this simple fact. [...]

DRUMMOND: Listen to this: Genesis 4:16. "And Cain went out from the presence of the
80 Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the East of Eden. And Cain *knew his wife!*" Where the hell did *she* come from?

BRADY: Who?

DRUMMOND: Mrs. Cain. Cain's wife. If, "In the beginning" there were only Adam and Eve,
85 and Cain and Abel, where'd this extra woman spring from? Ever figure that out?

BRADY: (*Cool*) No, sir. I will leave the agnostics to hunt for her. (*Laughter*)

90 DRUMMOND: Never bothered you?

BRADY: Never bothered me.

DRUMMOND: Never tried to find out?

BRADY: No.

DRUMMOND: Figure somebody pulled off
95 another creation, over in the next county?

BRADY: The Bible satisfies me, it is enough.

DRUMMOND: It frightens me to imagine the state of learning in this world if everyone had your driving curiosity. [...]

100 BRADY: [...] Is it possible that something *is* holy to the celebrated agnostic?

DRUMMOND: Yes! [...] The individual human mind. In a child's power to master the multiplication table there is more sanctity than in all your shouted "Amens!", "Holy, Holies!" and
105 "Hosannahs!" An idea is a greater monument than a cathedral. And the advance of man's knowledge is more of a miracle than any sticks turned to snakes, or the parting of waters! But are we now to halt the march of progress because
110 Mr. Brady frightens us with a fable? [...] Darwin moved us forward to a hilltop, where we could look back and see the way from which we came. But for this view, this insight, this knowledge, we must abandon our faith in the pleasant poetry
115 of Genesis.

BRADY: We must *not* abandon faith! Faith is the important thing!

DRUMMOND: Then why did God plague us with the power to think? Mr. Brady, why do you deny
120 the *one* faculty which lifts man above all other creatures on the earth: the power of his brain to reason. What other merit have we? The elephant is larger, the horse is stronger and swifter, the butterfly more beautiful, the mosquito more
125 prolific, even the simple sponge is more durable! [...] Or does a *sponge* think?

BRADY: I don't know. I'm a man, not a sponge. (*There are a few snickers at this; the crowd seems to be slipping away from BRADY and aligning
130 itself more and more with DRUMMOND.*) [...]

DRUMMOND: It's sad that we aren't all gifted with your positive knowledge of Right and Wrong, Mr. Brady. How old do you think this
135 rock is? [...]

BRADY: (*Intoning*) I am more interested in the Rock of Ages, than I am in the Age of Rocks. [...]

DRUMMOND: Dr. Page of Oberlin College tells me that this rock is at least ten million years old.

BRADY: (*Sarcastically*) Well, well, Colonel
140 Drummond! You managed to sneak in some of that scientific testimony after all. [...]

DRUMMOND: Look, Mr. Brady. These are the fossil remains of a pre-historic marine creature, which was found in this very county – and which
145 lived here millions of years ago, when these very mountain ranges were submerged in water.

BRADY: I know. The Bible gives a fine account of the flood. But your professor is a little mixed up on his dates. That rock is not more than six
150

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thousand years old.

DRUMMOND: How do you know?

BRADY: A fine Biblical scholar, Bishop Usher, has determined for us the exact date and hour of
155 the Creation. It occurred in the Year 4004 B.C.

DRUMMOND: That's Bishop Usher's opinion.

BRADY: It is not an opinion. It is literal fact, which the good Bishop arrived at through careful computation of the ages of the prophets
160 as set down in the Old Testament. In fact, he determined that the Lord began the Creation on the 23rd of October in the Year 4004 B.C. at – uh, at 9 A.M.! [...]

DRUMMOND: A normal day, a literal day, a
165 twenty-four-hour day? [...]

BRADY: I do not know.

DRUMMOND: What do you think?

BRADY: (*Floundering*) I do not think about things that ... I do not think about!

170 DRUMMOND: Do you ever think about things that you *do* think about? Isn't it possible that first day was twenty-five hours long? There was no way to measure it, no way to tell! Could it have been twenty-five hours? [...]

175 BRADY: (*Hesitates – then*) It is ... *possible* ... [...]

DRUMMOND: Oh. You interpret that the first day recorded in the Book of Genesis could be of indeterminate length.

180 BRADY: (*Wriggling*) I mean to state that the day referred to is not necessarily a twenty-four-hour day.

DRUMMOND: It could have been thirty hours! Or a month! Or a year! Or a hundred years! Or
185 ten million years! [...]

BRADY: I'll tell you what he's trying to do! He wants to destroy everybody's belief in the Bible, and in God!

DRUMMOND: You know that's not true, I'm
190 trying to stop you bigots and ignoramuses from controlling the education of the United States! And you know it! [...]

BRADY: How dare you attack the Bible?

DRUMMOND: The Bible is a book. A good
195 book. But it's not the only book.

BRADY: It is the revealed word of the Almighty.

God spake to the men who wrote the Bible.

DRUMMOND: And how do you know that God didn't "spake" to Charles Darwin?

BRADY: I know, because God tells me to oppose
200 the evil teachings of that man.

DRUMMOND: Oh. God speaks to you.

BRADY: Yes.

DRUMMOND: He tells you exactly what's right and what's wrong?
205

BRADY: (*Doggedly*) Yes.

DRUMMOND: And you act accordingly?

BRADY: Yes.

DRUMMOND: So you, Matthew Harrison Brady, through oratory, legislation, or whatever,
210 pass along God's orders to the rest of the world! Gentlemen, meet the "Prophet from Nebraska!" [...]

BRADY: (*Almost inarticulate*) I – Please –!

DRUMMOND: (*With increasing tempo, closing in*): Is that the way of things? God tells Brady what is good! To be against Brady is to be against God! [...]
215

BRADY: Ridiculous, ridiculous! There is only one great Truth in the world –
220

DRUMMOND: The Gospel according to Brady! God speaks to Brady, and Brady tells the world! Brady, Brady, Brady, Almighty! (*DRUMMOND bows grandly. The crowd laughs.*)

BRADY: The Lord is my strength –
225

DRUMMOND: What if a lesser human being – a Cates, or a Darwin – has the audacity to think that God might whisper to him? That an un-Brady thought might still be holy? Must men go to prison because they are at odds with the
230 self-appointed prophet? Extend the Testaments! Let us have a Book of Brady! We shall hex the Pentateuch, and slip you in neatly between Numbers and Deuteronomy! [...]

BRADY: My friends – Your Honor – My
235 Followers – Ladies and Gentlemen –

DRUMMOND: The witness is excused.

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3. Although the excerpt from the drama deals with a serious topic, the scene does not turn into a sharp confrontation. Identify incidents that make the excerpt humorous.

A moment of **comic relief** in a serious play amuses the audience. For a short time there is less tension. Comic relief can also create suspense because the development of the action is held up for a moment.

E. Going beyond the text

1. Almost 50 years after *Inherit the Wind* was published, another play quoted a Baptist minister:

“My dear brothers and sisters: I am here today to bring you the Word of the Lord. Now, I have a simple truth that I tell to my colleagues and I’m going to tell it to you today: The word is either sufficient or it is not.

Scientists tell me that human history, that the world is five or six billion years old – after all, what’s a billion years give or take. The Bible tells me that human history is six thousand years old.

The word is either sufficient or it is not.”

Source: Moises Kaufman et al., *The Laramie Project* (Vintage Books: New York, 2001, 2014), p. 21.

Together with a partner, relate the Baptist minister’s statement to the drama excerpt from *Inherit the Wind* and comment on it.

2. On the day after the trial, the local newspaper’s front page reads: “Drummond and Brady clash on Bible”. Write an article to the headline (app. 150 words).

How to write a newspaper article

Before writing

- Decide whether you are going to inform or to evaluate.
- Take notes about the “who”, “what”, “where”, “why” and “how” of the event.
- Decide on the order of the points.

While writing

- Begin your article with an introduction to the event.
- Use your notes.
- Divide your article into paragraphs.
- Come to a short conclusion.
- Do not use the first person singular – make it neutral.

After writing

- Does the article contain enough information? Add more if necessary.
- Is the article interesting and easy to understand?



Extra task: The authors Lawrence and Lee set the time of *Inherit the Wind* as “Not too long ago” and therefore indicate the trial might have taken place yesterday but could also take place tomorrow. Should the teaching of Christian belief influence what is taught in your school?

Work in groups of 4.

1. Students A and B: Discuss how Christian belief should not influence what is taught in your school. Take notes.
2. Student C and D: Discuss how Christian belief should influence what is taught in your school. Take notes.
3. Students A, B, C and D: Discuss your findings in your group.

M 3 The Moral Majority – conservative Christians and their role in politics

The following text excerpt from *Religion in America* informs you about the influence of the Christian right on American politics.

A. Approaching the text

The wordle contains words and phrases from the text which you will read. Together with your partner, choose one of the words and research its meaning in the context of the USA. Explain the word in not more than three sentences.

born-again Christian
intelligent design
evangelical voters
abortion
prayer in schools
stem cell research

Excerpt from *Religion in America* (2008) by Timothy Beal

- These days [...] we have all grown very aware of how politically charged religion in America is. Conservative Christian values organizations are the primary movers on numerous fronts that concern specific policy issues: abortion, stem cell research, prayer in schools, teaching “intelligent design” as an alternative to evolution in science classrooms, and so on. There has never been a non-
- 5 Christian president of the United States, and all save one (Kennedy) have been Protestant. No doubt Mitt Romney’s run for the Republican nomination in 2008 was hurt by his Mormonism, which steered many conservative Christian voters toward other candidates like Baptist preacher Mike Huckabee. Since the contested win of George W. Bush over Al Gore in 2004, the general public has become much more aware of the conservative, Republican-leaning “evangelical vote,” which
- 10 most consider to have been the deciding factor in that election. But the influence of evangelical Christianity in election politics has been building for decades. Ironically, it was a liberal Democrat, Jimmy Carter, who first “came out” as an evangelical Christian in an election. “The most important thing in my life,” he often said during his 1976 campaign, “is Jesus Christ.” Describing himself as an evangelical, born-again Christian – language that was at the time unfamiliar in mainstream
- 15 news – Carter earned the endorsements of several prominent evangelical leaders. At the 1976 Southern Baptist Convention, he was introduced as the only candidate whose “initials are the same as our Lord’s.” He easily won the election, earning more than 50 percent of the evangelical vote. As president, however, Carter’s support of the Equal Rights Amendment, the *Roe v. Wade* decision, and other progressive initiatives, alienated him from many conservative Christians. Disappointed
- 20 in him but bolstered by a new sense of political power and influence, charismatic Christian media entrepreneurs and televangelists like Pat Robertson, James Robison, and Jerry Falwell began to organize themselves politically into what came to be known as the New Christian Right. The most powerful organization was Falwell’s Moral Majority, founded in 1979 with the political goal of unifying and mobilizing evangelical voters – as well as like-minded non-evangelicals – to
- 25 remove Carter from office and deliver a president, congress, and Supreme Court that would help legislate their agenda, which included outlawing abortion, encouraging public prayer in schools, and supporting traditional, patriarchal family values. Falwell famously declared three priorities for all Americans: to be saved, to be baptized, and to vote. In that order. Ronald Reagan’s catering to the Moral Majority and other conservative evangelical leaders won him the presidency in 1980, and
- 30 the New Christian Right was born. [The former President] George W. Bush, himself a born-again evangelical Christian with an agenda explicitly in line with Christian Rightist organizations, is its greatest success.

Source: Timothy Beal. *Religion in America*. A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press: New York, 2008. pp. 53 ff.

1 **charged**: a situation or topic that is charged causes strong feelings or arguments – 2 **mover**: here: a powerful and influential person – 5 **save**: except – 6 **Mitt Romney**: the Republican Party’s

D. Studying the text

1. The text excerpt indirectly informs the reader about the values of Christian fundamentalists. Identify the values together with a partner. You can use the info box for help.

Values are principles, standards or qualities that an individual or group of people hold in high regard. These values guide our basic emotions and thus the way we live our lives and the decisions we make.



Me-Values: e.g. ego, status, self-importance, achievement, survival, pleasure

Us-Values: e.g. being accepted by the group, belonging to the group, acting as a member of the group, accepting the values of the group

Moral Values: e.g. religious values, social customs, general observance of the law

2. Charged words or expressions can produce a strong emotional response in the reader. Together with a partner, write down 3 charged expressions from the text, their connotations and the emotions they suggest in the graphic below.

Expressions	Connotations	Emotions

E. Going beyond the text

1. Read the text again. Evaluate the religious, social and political aspects of fundamentalism as described in the text.
2. Joe, the author, visits his brother Mike, the pastor, to talk about how dangerous the religious right can be for a democratic society.
 - a) In groups of 3, write the dialogue. Consider the following questions to help you write the conversation:
 - How would Joe approach the subject of religion and politics?
 - Would Mike be friendly and polite or act coldly, or negatively?
 - Would Mike be willing to consider the subject at all?
 - b) Practise your dialogue and act it out in class.

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M 7 The religious right – wrapping it up

In this unit you have learned about the Christian right in the USA and its influence on society and politics. Discuss the issue.

Tasks**1. Simulation**

The illustration on the right reflects an attitude towards the Christian right. Imagine that Drummond, Brady, Falwell, Joe, Mike, Helen and Deacon Chase come together to discuss their reaction to the illustration.

- Work in 7 groups. Each group adopts the view of one of the 7 characters. Carefully re-read the relevant text and take notes on the views and attitudes of your character.
- Form new groups of 7. This time each of you represents the view of one of the characters. Discuss your opinion on the illustration.

The politics of the Christian Right have nothing to do with the teachings of Christ.



Source: facebook.com/the
reprimandproject

2. Assessment

- Use the table below to assess what you have learned about the Christian right in the United States. Under "Pluses", write down all the possible positive aspects of the Christian right. Under "Minuses", write down all the negative aspects. Under "Interesting", write down all of the interesting implications and possible results, if their agenda was to become more influential.

Pluses	Minuses	Interesting

- Work in groups of 4 and prepare a presentation on your assessment. Use the info

How to give a convincing presentation

Your goal is to present your assessment to convince others. The following guidelines will help you do so.

- ☒ I will begin and end with a strong, sincere, and enthusiastic appeal.
- ☒ I will present several points of evidence organised in a logical way.
- ☒ During my presentation, I will select a few major points, and expand on them by using examples from the texts I read. To ensure that the audience does not miss the important points supporting our position, I will make the point, say it again in different words, illustrate the point with an example, and then state it once more.
- ☒ I will make eye contact with all members of the audience.
- ☒ I will keep my presentation within the time limit.
- ☒ I have developed visual aids for my presentation.
- ☒ I have practised my presentation.

