

To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee

Reading Questions

Complete the following questions after reading each set of chapters. Your responses should be detailed and include evidence and support from the text in the form of examples or quotations.

Chapter 1

1. What do you learn about Maycomb, Atticus Finch and his family (ancestors) in this chapter?
2. What do you learn about Dill's character?
3. What, briefly, has happened to Boo Radley?
4. Why does the Radley place fascinate Scout, Jem and Dill?
5. What do you notice about the narrative voice and point of view in the novel?

Chapter 2 – 3

1. What is Miss Caroline Fisher like as a teacher? List the characteristics that make her a good or not so good at her job.
2. Who is Calpurnia? What is her place in the Finch household?
3. Discuss the different ways that Jem, Scout and Atticus treat Walter. What does this show about their personalities?
4. Atticus states that "[y]ou never really understand a person until you...climb into his skin and walk around in it" (39). What does this mean? Is this easy for Scout to do? Why or why not?
5. What do you learn in these chapters about the Ewells?

Chapter 4 – 6

1. What characteristics of the children are revealed through the Boo Radley game?
2. Why doesn't Scout enjoy the games as much as the boys do?
3. What purpose do you think Miss Maudie's character plays in the novel?
4. What reasons does Atticus give for the children not to play the Boo Radley game? Do you think he is right? Why or why not?
5. Why does Dill's explanation of Jem's state of dress almost get him in trouble?

Chapter 7 – 8

1. What evidence is there that Jem is starting to understand more than Scout about Boo Radley?
2. How has Jem's reaction to the gifts in the tree changed? Why?
3. When the children decide to send a letter to the person leaving gifts, they are prevented. What happens? Do you think this will stop them?
4. Why is Miss. Maudie's reaction to the fire unusual?

Chapter 9 – 11

1. Why does Atticus feel he should defend Tom Robinson?
2. What does Scout learn from overhearing Atticus' conversation with Uncle Jack?
3. Read the final sentence of chapter 9. Explain, in your own words, what it means and why it might be important to the novel.
4. In chapter 10, Atticus tells the children that it is a sin to kill a mockingbird. What reason does he give for saying this?
5. Why, in Atticus' view, was Mrs. Dubose a great lady?

Chapter 12 – 13

1. What new things does Scout learn from Jem's and Scout's first visit to First Purchase church about how the black people in the community live?
2. Explain how Calpurnia speaks differently in the Finch household compared to when she is with her neighbors at church.
3. Why does Aunt Alexandra come to stay with Atticus and his family? Describe her personality.

Chapter 14 – 15

1. Why does Alexandra think Atticus should dismiss Calpurnia? How does Atticus respond to this suggestion?
2. What do we learn about Dill from his account of running away?
3. What was (and is) the Ku Klux Klan? What do you think of Atticus' comment about it?
4. How does Scout affect the events of the lynch mob without even realizing it?

Chapter 16 – 17

1. What does the atmosphere in Maycomb at the beginning of the trial reveal about human nature?
2. Why is Scout confused after overhearing remarks about her father's defense of Tom Robinson?
3. What do we learn about the home life of the Ewell family in this chapter?
4. Why does Atticus ask Bob to write his name? What effect does this have on the jury?

Chapter 18 – 19

1. How does Mayella differ from her father and her siblings? What is her relationship like with her father?
2. How well does Atticus prove Mayella is lying in the eyes of the reader? Give examples for support.
3. Why does Scout think that Mayella Ewell was “the loneliest person in the world”?
4. How does Mr. Gilmer’s treatment of Tom (chapter 19) contrast with Atticus’ treatment of Mayella (chapter 18).

Chapter 20 – 22

1. Scout says that Mr. Dolphus Raymond was an evil man. Is she right?
2. Explain Atticus’ views on people being equal
3. What does Jem expect the verdict to be? Does Atticus think the same? Why?
4. Although he doesn’t want his children in court, Atticus believes Jem has the right to know what happened. What reasons does Atticus’ give Aunt Alexandra for this?
5. Miss Maudie tells Jem that things are never as bad as they seem. What reasons does he give for this?

Chapter 23 – 25

1. What explanation does Atticus give for Bob Ewell’s personal attack and threat?
2. At the end of chapter 23, Jem forms a new theory about why Boo does not leave his house. What is this theory? Do you think it is true?
3. Describe the ladies of Maycomb? What is your opinion of them?
4. How, in chapter 24, do we see Aunt Alexandra in a new light?
5. Explain how Tom was killed and how Maycomb reacts to his death.

Chapter 26 – 27

1. Why is Scout puzzled by Miss. Gates’ disapproval of Hitler?
2. What three things does Bob Ewell do that alarms Aunt Alexandra?
3. Why, according to Atticus, does Bob Ewell hold a grudge?

Chapter 28 – 31

1. Describe Bob Ewell’s attack on the children.
2. Do you think Heck Tate is right to spare Boo the publicity of an inquest? Give reasons for your answer.
3. How does Scout make sense of earlier remarks of Atticus’ as she stands on the Radley porch?
4. At the end of the novel, Atticus reads to Scout. Comment on his choice of story. Does it have any connection with themes earlier in the novel and in its ending?