

To Kill a Mockingbird: Study Guide

Directions: Answer each question **in complete sentences** and **include the page number** where you found the information. You will turn this in and have a test over the novel the first week of school.

Chapter 1

1. What do you learn in this chapter about Maycomb, Atticus Finch, and his family?
2. What do you notice about the narrative voice and viewpoint in the novel?

Chapter 2

3. Why is Scout looking forward to starting school?

Chapter 3

4. Atticus says that you never really understand a person "until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." What does this mean? Is it an easy thing for Scout to learn? (In the last chapter of the novel, Scout repeats this, but she changes "skin" to "shoes" - this is probably not a mistake: Harper Lee suggests that Scout cannot clearly recall exactly what Atticus said and when, but the reader can check this!)

Chapter 4

5. What superstitions do the children have in connection with the Radley house?

Chapter 5

6. Describe Miss Maudie Atkinson? How typical is she of Maycomb's women? What do the children think of her?
7. What reasons does Atticus give for the children not to play the Boo Radley game? Do you think he is right? Why?

Chapter 6

8. What does Mr. Nathan Radley know about the intruders in his garden? Why does Miss Stephanie refer to a "negro" over whose head Mr. Nathan has fired?

Chapter 7

9. Can you find any evidence that Jem is beginning to understand more than Scout about Boo Radley? What do you think this is?

Chapter 8

10. Explain what Atticus means by telling Jem not to let his discovery "inspire" him to "further glory?" Is there any reason why Jem might now do as his father says?

Chapter 9

11. How well does Atticus feel he should defend Tom Robinson? Is it usual for (white) lawyers to do their best for black clients in Alabama at this time?
12. Read the final sentence of this chapter. Explain in your own words what it means and why it might be important in the story.

Chapter 10

13. In this chapter Atticus tells his children that "it's a sin to kill a mockingbird." What reason does he give for saying this?

Chapter 11

14. Atticus says that Mrs. Dubose is a model of real courage rather than "a man with a gun in his hand." What does he mean? Do you think he is right?
15. Chapters ten and eleven are the last two chapters in the first part of the book. Explain why Harper Lee chooses to end the first part here.

Chapter 12

16. Comment on Jem's and Scout's visit to First Purchase church.

Chapter 13

17. Comment on Aunt Alexandra's ideas about breeding and family. Why does Atticus tell them to forget it? Who is right, do you think?

Chapter 14

18. Why does Alexandra think Atticus should dismiss Calpurnia? How does Atticus respond to the suggestion?

Chapter 15

19. Comment on the way Scout affects events without realizing it at the time.

Chapter 16

20. What "subtle change" does Scout notice in her father?
21. Comment on Judge Taylor's attitude to his job. Does he take the trial seriously or not?

Chapter 17

22. What do we learn indirectly about the home life of the Ewell family in this chapter?
23. Why does Atticus ask Bob Ewell to write out his name? What does the jury see when he does this?

Chapter 18

24. How well does Mr. Gilmer prove Tom's guilt in the eyes of the reader (you) and in the eyes of the jury? Can you suggest why these might be different?

Chapter 19

25. Why does Scout think that Mayella Ewell was “the loneliest person in the world?”

Chapter 20

26. What, according to Atticus, is the thing that Mayella has done wrong?
27. Explain, in your own words, Atticus's views on people being equal.

Chapter 21

28. As Scout waits for the verdict, she thinks of earlier events. What are these and how do they remind us of the novel's central themes?

Chapter 22

29. Although Atticus did not want his children in court, he defends Jem's right to know what has happened. Explain, in your own words, Atticus's reasons for this. (Look at the speech beginning, “This is their home, sister.”)
30. This story is set in the 1930s but was published in 1960. Have attitudes to racism remained the same or have there been any changes (for the better or worse) since then, in your view?

Chapter 23

31. What is “circumstantial evidence?” What has it got to do with Tom's conviction?

Chapter 24

32. How, in this chapter, do we see Aunt Alexandra in a new light? How does Miss Maudie support her?

Chapter 25

33. Explain the contrast Scout draws between the court where Tom was tried and “the secret courts of men's hearts.” In what way are hearts like courts?

Chapter 26

34. Why does Scout's question upset Jem? Is there a simple answer, or any answer, to the question “How can you hate Hitler an' then turn around an be ugly about folks right at home?”

Chapter 27

35. What three things does Bob Ewell do that alarm Aunt Alexandra?

Chapter 28

36. Comment on the way this chapter reminds the reader of earlier events in the novel.
37. Why does Jem say that Boo Radley must not be at home? What is ironic about this? (Is it true? Does he really mean it? Why might it be important for him and Scout that Boo should not be at home?)

Chapter 29

38. What explanation does Atticus give for Bob Ewell's attack? What does Heck Tate give as the reason for the attack?

Chapter 30

39. Who does Atticus think caused Bob Ewell's death? Why does Heck Tate insist that Bob Ewell's death was self-inflicted? In what way is this partly true?

Chapter 31

40. How do the events of the final chapters explain the first sentence in the whole novel?
41. Comment on the way the writer summarizes earlier events to show their significance.
42. How does Scout make sense of an earlier remark of Atticus's as she stands on the Radley porch?
43. How much of a surprise is it to find what Boo Radley is really like? Has the story before this point prepared the reader for this discovery?
44. 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?