

# *To Kill a Mockingbird*

## **Chapter 1**

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

## **Chapter 2**

- 6 Why is Scout so looking forward to starting school?
- 7 Why does Jem not want anything to do with Scout at school? Is his behaviour typical of an older child?
- 8 What do you think of Miss Caroline Fisher as a teacher? Can you find qualities which would make her good or not so good at her job?

## **Chapter 3**

- 9 Who is Calpurnia? What is her place in the Finch household?
- 10 What is Walter Cunningham like? What does his behaviour during lunch suggest about his home life?
- 11 What do you think of the way Atticus treats Walter?
- 12 Does Scout learn anything from Walter's visit? What do you think this is?
- 13 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?
- 14 What do you learn in this chapter about the Ewells?

## **Chapter 4**

- 15 What does Scout think of current fashions in education?
- 16 What superstitions do the children have in connection with the Radley house?
- 17 Why do the children make Boo's story into a game?

18 What do they do in this game? Do you think the game is an accurate version of what happens in the Radleys' home?

19 What might be the cause of the laughter from inside the house?

### **Chapter 5**

20 Describe Miss Maudie Atkinson? How typical is she of Maycomb's women? What do the children think of her?

21 What does Miss Maudie tell Scout about Boo? How does this compare with what Scout already believes?

22 Scout claims that "Dill could tell the biggest ones " (lies) she ever heard. Why might Dill have told such lies?

23 What reasons does Atticus give for the children not to play the Boo Radley game? Do you think he is right? Why?

### **Chapter 6**

24 Why does Scout disapprove of Jem's and Dill's plan of looking in at one of the Radleys' windows?

25 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?

26 Why does Dill's explanation of Jem's state of dress almost land him in trouble?

### **Chapter 7**

27 When Jem tells Scout about getting his trousers back, he tells her of something strange. What is this?

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

29 Does Jem still fear the gifts in the tree? Give reasons for your answer.

30 When the children plan to send a letter to the person who leaves the gifts, they are prevented. How does this happen? Who does it, and why might he do so?

### **Chapter 8**

31 Why does Scout quiz Atticus about his visit to the Radley house? How much does Atticus tell her?

- 32 What is the “near libel” which Jem puts in the front yard? How do Miss Maudie and Atticus react to it?
- 33 Why does Atticus save Miss Maudie's oak rocking chair?
- 34 When Atticus asks Scout about the blanket around her shoulders, what does Jem realize?
- 35 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**

- 36 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?
- 37 Scout and Jem have “mixed feelings” about Christmas? What are these feelings and why?
- 38 Uncle Jack Finch tells Scout that she is growing out of her pants. What does this mean and why might he say it?
- 39 When Francis talks to Scout he reveals an unpleasant feature of Aunt Alexandra. What is this?
- 40 Does Scout learn anything from overhearing Atticus's conversation with Uncle Jack? What might this be?
- 41 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**

- 42 Scout says that “Atticus was feeble”. Do you think that this is her view as she tells the story or her view when she was younger? Does she still think this after the events recorded in this chapter?
- 43 In this chapter Atticus tells his children that “it's a sin to kill a mockingbird”. What reason does he give for saying this?
- 44 Why does Heck Tate not want to shoot Tim Johnson?
- 45 Near the end of this chapter Atticus cuts off Heck Tate as he is speaking to Jem. What might Heck have been about to say, and why would Atticus want to stop him from saying it?

46 Jem and Scout have different views about telling people at school how well Atticus can shoot. Explain this difference. Which view is closer to your own?

### **Chapter 11**

47 How does Atticus advise Jem to react to Mrs. Dubose's taunts?

48 What does Mrs. Dubose say about the children's mother? How does Jem feel about this?

49 What request does Mrs. Dubose make of Jem? Is this a fair punishment for his "crime"?

50 Explain in your own words what Atticus thinks of insults like "nigger-lover". How far do you agree with him?

51 Why, in Atticus's view, was Mrs. Dubose "a great lady"?

52 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?

53 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**

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

55 What new things does Scout learn here about how the black people live?

56 What does Scout learn from Calpurnia's account of Zeebo's education?

57 Explain why Calpurnia speaks differently in the Finch household, and among her neighbours at church.

### **Chapter 13**

58 Why does Aunt Alexandra come to stay with Atticus and his family? What is she like?

59 Read the first two things Alexandra says when she comes to the Finch house. Are these typical of her or not?

60 Alexandra thinks Scout is “dull” (not clever). Why does she think this, and is she right? Are all adults good at knowing how clever young people are?

61 How does Aunt Alexandra involve herself in Maycomb's social life?

62 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**

63 Comment on Atticus's explanation of rape. How suitable is this as an answer to Scout.

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

65 Why is Scout pleased when Jem fights her back? Why is she less pleased when he tells Atticus about Dill?

66 What do we learn from Dill's account of his running away?

#### **Chapter 15**

67 What is the “nightmare” that now descends upon the children?

68 What was (and is) the Ku Klux Klan? What do you think of Atticus's comment about it?

69 How does Jem react when Atticus tells him to go home, and why?

70 What persuades the lynching-party to give up their attempt on Tom's life?

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

#### **Chapter 16**

72 What “subtle change” does Scout notice in her father?

73 What sort of person is Dolphus Raymond?

74 How does Reverend Sykes help the children see and hear the trial? Is he right to do?

75 Comment on Judge Taylor's attitude to his job. Does he take the trial seriously or not?

### **Chapter 17**

76 What are the main points in Heck Tate's evidence? What does Atticus show in his cross-examination of Sheriff Tate?

77 What do we learn indirectly of the home life of the Ewell family in this chapter?

78 What do you learn from Bob Ewell's evidence?

79 Why does Atticus ask Bob Ewell to write out his name? What does the jury see when he does this?

### **Chapter 18**

80 Is Mayella like her father or different from him? In what ways?

81 What might be the reason for Mayella's crying in the court?

82 How does Mayella react to Atticus's politeness? Is she used to people being polite?

83 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**

84 What made Tom visit the Ewell's house in the first place?

85 Why does Scout think that Mayella Ewell was "the loneliest person in the world"?

86 In your own words explain Mayella's relationship with her father.

87 How does Dill react to this part of the trial? Why is this, in your opinion?

### **Chapter 20**

88 Scout says that "Mr. Dolphus Raymond was an evil man". Is she right?

89 In most states of the USA people who drink alcohol in public places are required to hide their bottle in a paper bag. Why does Dolphus Raymond hide Coca-Cola in a bag?

90 What, according to Atticus, is the thing that Mayella has done wrong?

91 Explain, in your own words, Atticus's views on people's being equal.

### **Chapter 21**

92 What does Jem expect the verdict to be? Does Atticus think the same?

93 What is unusual about how long it takes the jury to reach a verdict? Is the verdict predictable or not?

94 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**

95 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".

96 Miss Maudie tells Jem that "things are never as bad as they seem". What reasons does she give for this view?

97 Why does Dill say that he will be a clown when he grows up? Do you think he would keep this ambition for long?

98 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? Explain.

99 Why does Bob Ewell feel so angry with Atticus? Do you think his threat is a real one, and how might he try to "get" Atticus?

### **Chapter 23**

100 What do you think of Atticus's reaction to Bob Ewell's challenge? Should he have ignored Bob, retaliated or done something else?

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

102 What does Atticus tell Scout about why the jury took so long to convict Tom?

103 Why does Aunt Alexandra accept that the Cunninghams may be good but are not “our kind of folks”? Do you think that people should mix only with others of the same social class? Are class-divisions good or bad for societies?

104 At the end of this chapter, Jem forms a new theory about why Boo Radley has never left his house in years. What is this? How likely is it to be true, in your opinion?

#### **Chapter 24**

105 Do you think the missionary ladies are sincere in worrying about the “Mrunas” (a tribe in Africa)? Give reasons for your answer.

106 Compare the reactions of Miss Maudie and the other ladies when Scout says she is wearing her “britches” under her dress.

107 What is your opinion of the Maycomb ladies, as depicted in this chapter?

108 Explain briefly how Tom was killed. What is Atticus's explanation for Tom's attempted escape. Do you agree with Atticus?

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

#### **Chapter 25**

110 How does Maycomb react to the news of Tom's death?

111 Comment on the idea that Tom's death was “typical”?

112 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?

113 Why did Jem not want Scout to tell Atticus about Bob Ewell's comment? Was this a wise thing to ask her to do?



## **Chapter 26**

- 114 In her lesson on Hitler, Miss Gates says that “we (American people) don't believe in persecuting anyone”. What seems odd to the reader about this claim?
- 115 Why is Scout puzzled by Miss Gates' disapproval of Hitler?
- 116 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**

- 117 What three things does Bob Ewell do that alarm Aunt Alexandra?
- 118 Why, according to Atticus, does Bob Ewell bear a grudge? Which people does Ewell see as his enemies, and why?
- 119 What was the purpose of the Halloween pageant? What practical joke had persuaded the grown ups to have an organized event?

## **Chapter 28**

- 120 Comment on the way this chapter reminds the reader of earlier events in the novel.
- 121 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?)
- 122 Scout decides to keep her costume on while walking home. How does this affect her understanding of what happens on the way?
- 123 Why had Atticus not brought a chair for the man in the corner? Who might this stranger be?

## **Chapter 29**

- 124 What causes the “shiny clean line” on the otherwise “dull wire” of Scout's costume?

125 What explanation does Atticus give for Bob Ewell's attack?

126 What does Heck Tate give as the reason for the attack?

127 Do you think the sheriff's explanation or Atticus's is the more likely to be true?

### **Chapter 30**

128 Who does Atticus think caused Bob Ewell's death?

129 Why does Heck Tate insist that Bob Ewell's death was self-inflicted? In what way is this partly true?

130 Is Heck Tate right to spare Boo then publicity of an inquest? Give reasons for your answer.

131 How does the writer handle the appearance, at the end of the story, of Boo Radley?

### **Chapter 31**

132 How do the events of the final chapters explain the first sentence in the whole novel?

133 Comment on the way the writer summarizes earlier events to show their significance.

134 How does Scout make sense of an earlier remark of Atticus's as she stands on the Radley porch?

135 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?

136 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?























