

Reading Guide

Chapter 1

- Chapter 1 introduces readers to the town of Maycomb, its appearance, its inhabitants, and the particular attitudes of many of its people. Find a sentence or a paragraph which illustrates each of the following attitudes/ideas. Quote at least a portion of the sentence or paragraph and give the page number.
 - pride in ancestry and “tradition”
 - pride in conformity and distrust of those who are different
 - awareness of differences in social classes
- Approximately when does the story begin? Show evidence to support your answer.
- What do we know for certain about Boo Radley?
- Why is Boo fascinating to the children?

Chapter 2

- Scout makes three mistakes during her first day at school. What are her mistakes, and why do they make Miss Caroline so angry?
- Why are the professional people in Maycomb poor at this time?
- What is the WPA, and why won't Mr. Cunningham work for it?

Chapter 3

- What do we learn about Calpurnia and Atticus when Scout criticizes Walter's manners?
- Burris Ewell, Walter Cunningham, and Chuck Little are all from extremely poor families; however, there are great differences both in appearance and in attitude, particularly between the Cunninghams and the Ewells. What are those differences, and why do you suppose they exist?
- Atticus talks to Scout about how people come to understand each other. What are some of the things that Scout begins to realize at this point?
- Why does Atticus say that the law is rigid for ordinary people, but it is bent in certain ways for the Ewells?
- What is the compromise which Atticus suggests?

Chapter 4

- In what specific ways does Scout criticize the school she is attending?
- Where do you suppose the gum and the pennies are coming from? What makes you think so?
- What two reasons does Scout have for wanting to quit the Radley Game?

Chapter 5

- Based on the description of Miss Maudie and her conversations with Scout, write a brief character analysis of Miss Maudie. Support your conclusions with evidence from the novel.
- When Miss Maudie shows her disgust with “foot-washing Baptists,” is she actually putting down all Baptists, or is she criticizing a particular point of view? Explain.

3. Explain Miss Maudie's statement about the relative dangers of a Bible and a whiskey bottle.
4. Paraphrase Atticus's speech about the Radleys' right to privacy. Do you agree with his point of view? Why or why not?

Chapter 6

1. What reasons do Jem and Dill give for trying to peek into the Radley window on this particular night?
2. What statement by Jem makes Scout finally go along with the plan?
3. After the incident, Jem's real desire is not just to recover his pants but to keep on good terms with Atticus. What does this tell you about Jem's relationship with his father?

Chapter 7

1. What is the condition of Jem's pants when he finds them? Why does their condition frighten him further?
2. What is the significance of the gifts in the tree?
3. Explain why Mr. Nathan Radley fills the hole in the tree with cement. Why does Jem cry about this?

Chapter 8

1. Why do Jem and Scout make the snowman such an obvious replica of Mr. Avery?
2. Why does Atticus decide to keep the blanket incident a secret?
3. After the fire, how does Miss Maudie feel about the destruction of her house? What does this tell you about her character, her values?

Chapter 9

1. Explain Atticus's statements about the following:
 - a. the use of the word *nigger*
 - b. his personal reasons for defending Tom Robinson
 - c. the children's language and behaviors
2. Who are the following people, and how are they related to Atticus and to the children?
 - a. Alexandra
 - b. Francis
 - c. Jack
 - d. Jimmy

Chapter 10

1. At the beginning of this chapter, Scout is ashamed of Atticus. List his faults as she sees them.
2. Explain why it is a sin to kill a mockingbird, according to Miss Maudie.
3. Miss Maudie tries to explain Atticus's excellent marksmanship and his lack of pride in it. How does she do this?
4. Why won't Jem allow Scout to brag about Atticus at school?

Chapter 11

1. Why is Atticus so insistent about Jem and Scout being polite to Mrs. Dubose and Jem's reading to Mrs. Dubose?
2. Why do you think the author gives such a detailed and ugly description of Mrs. Dubose? How does it make you feel?
3. Discuss Atticus's description of the phrase *nigger-lover*.
4. Atticus explains to the children why he considers Mrs. Dubose to be a real lady and a brave person. How does this fit in with his explanation of why he is defending Tom Robinson?

Chapter 12

1. Jem is now twelve years old. There is widening gap between Scout and Jem. Find two or three examples which illustrate the emotional distance between them.
2. How do you explain Lula's antagonism toward Jem and Scout?
3. Scout finds the church service to be similar to her own except for few differences. Explain what these are.
4. Why does Cal speak one way around colored people and another way around white people? Is she being honest or hypocritical in what she does? Explain.

Chapter 13

1. Scout and Aunt Alexandra communicate very poorly with each other. Is the fault more with one than the other, or are they equally at fault? Explain.
2. Discuss Cousin Joshua Finch as Atticus describes him and as Aunt Alexandra describes him. Explain the difference in opinion.

Chapter 14

1. How does Aunt Alexandra feel about Calpurnia? Explain why this is in character for Aunt Alexandra.
2. Why is Scout so happy about the brawl with Jem?
3. Dill tries to explain to Scout why he did not want to stay with his mother and stepfather. State his reasons briefly in your own words.

Chapter 15

1. Atticus discusses the Ku Klux Klan and concludes by saying that the Klan is gone. Is this statement correct? Explain.
2. Describe events prior to the scene at the Maycomb jail that show the tension and unrest of the town. Be specific.
3. Why does Jem openly defy Atticus and refuse to leave?
4. What does Scout's childish attempt at conversation accomplish? Explain.
5. Why is Atticus so affectionate toward Jem after Jem has disobeyed him?

Chapter 16

1. Atticus is in disagreement with Aunt Alexandra over many things. Discuss at least two matters of disagreement and each one's point of view.
2. Paraphrase how Atticus explains the mob's actions to Scout.
3. Why do you suppose a man like Mr. Underwood (who is a known racist) is covering Atticus at the jail?
4. Mr. Dolphus Raymond is evidently a complicated and interesting person. Describe his way of life and comment on its effect upon the town.
5. Judge Taylor's appearance and his ability are two different things. Why do you think this difference exists? Does he appear as he does on purpose?

Chapter 17

1. Atticus spends a great deal of time discussing Mayella Ewell's injuries. What does he seem to want to reveal?
2. The Ewells are "poor white trash." Explain this term according to what you know about the way they live and the kind of people they have appeared to be up to this point.

Chapter 18

1. How would you describe Mayella Ewell?
2. What is so important about Tom Robinson's physical appearance? What, according to the testimony, does this prove beyond a doubt?
3. How does Atticus appear to feel about his own method of cross examining Mayella? Explain why this is so.

Chapter 19

1. In contrast to the Ewells, what kind of person is Tom Robinson? Explain with evidence.
2. Why does Atticus mention Tom's previous record of conviction?
3. According to Tom's testimony, what actually happened on November 21? Be specific.
4. What mistake does Tom make in talking about Mayella?
5. Explain Scout's statement about Mayella's loneliness.

Chapter 20

1. How does Mr. Raymond defend his deliberate appearance of drunkenness?
2. Why does he tell Scout and Jem about his life?
3. In five or six sentences, paraphrase Atticus's summation to the jury.

Chapter 21

1. How does Scout know about the verdict before she hears it?
2. Why do the Negroes stand when Atticus leaves the courtroom?

Chapter 22

1. How does Atticus react when the verdict is announced?
2. After Jem expresses disillusionment over the trial and the verdict, Miss Maudie defends the town and its people. What does she say to Jem?
3. What causes Miss Maudie to say that at least they have made a step in the right direction?
4. What kind of clown does Dill decide to be? Explain his reasoning.

Chapter 23

1. How does Atticus react to Bob Ewell's threat against him?
2. Briefly show the difference in attitude toward the Cunninghams as expressed by Atticus and Aunt Alexandra.
3. Why can't Jem accept Scout's opinion about people?

Chapter 24

1. What unfortunate characteristics do the ladies of the missionary circle display? Do you think this is typical of such groups?
2. Discuss the irony of Mrs. Merriweather's admiration for J. Grimes Everett and her attitude toward the trial.
3. Scout feels she prefers men to women. Why?
4. In this chapter Scout learns something about being a true lady. Explain.

Chapter 25

1. How does most of the town react to Tom's death?
2. In what way is Mr. Underwood's editorial in the *Maycomb Tribune* similar to Atticus's advice to Jem and Scout when they got their guns?

Chapter 26

1. Scout is growing up. Explain her feelings now about the following items:
 - a. the games concerning Boo Radley
 - b. her remaining desire to see Boo in person

- c. Atticus's apparent knowledge about their previous activities
 - d. "Current Events" class
2. What is the irony of Miss Gates's lecture on democracy when compared to her comments at the trial?
 3. When Scout tries to tell Jem about Miss Gates, why does he react so violently? Explain Atticus's answer to her about this.

Chapter 27

1. What three threatening things happen in Maycomb by the middle of October? What do they tell you about the kind of man Bob Ewell is?
2. Why do Atticus and Aunt Alexandra not intend to go to the Halloween pageant?

Chapter 28

1. What does Cecil Jacobs do before the pageant which helps set up the incidents which occur after the pageant?
2. What do Jem and Scout think the noise might be?
3. How many people are finally involved in the skirmish under the tree?

Chapter 29

1. Who saves Jem and Scout?
2. Atticus and Heck Tate disagree over the essential worth of Bob Ewell. With whom do you agree, and why?
3. Briefly describe the meeting between Scout and Boo. How does this compare to how she imagined the meeting would be?

Chapter 30

1. There seems to be an immediate understanding between Scout and Boo. Why do you think this is so?
2. Atticus and Heck Tate have a heated argument. Does either really believe what he is saying?
3. How does Scout assure Atticus that Mr. Tate is right?

Chapter 31

1. When she takes Boo home, how has Scout's understanding changed?
2. Describe the feelings you experienced as you read the closing scene.