

***To Kill a Mockingbird* Comprehension Questions**

Name _____

Read the questions for each chapter to set a purpose before reading. Answer the questions after reading each chapter.

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. What do you think of Miss Caroline Fisher as a teacher? List qualities which would make her good or not so good at her job.

Chapter 3

7. Who is Calpurnia? What is her place in the Finch household?
8. What is Walter Cunningham like? What does his behavior during lunch suggest about his home life?
9. How does Atticus treat Walter, and what does this show about Atticus's character? What does it show about Walter?
10. Contrast the difference in the way Jem and Scout treat Walter. What does this show about the difference between Jem and Scout at this point in the novel?
11. 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? Why?
12. What do you learn in this chapter about the Ewells?

Chapter 4

13. What does Scout think of current fashions in education?
14. What characteristics of children are revealed through the Boo Radley game?

15. Why doesn't Scout enjoy the games as much as the boys do?

16. What might be the cause of the laughter from inside the house?

Chapter 5

17. Describe Miss Maudie Atkinson. What do the children think of her?

18. What purpose do you think Miss Maudie's character plays in the novel?

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

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

Chapter 6

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

22. 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?

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

Chapter 7

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

25. Can you find any evidence that Jem is beginning to understand more than Scout about Boo Radley?

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

27. 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

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

29. Why does Atticus save Miss Maudie's oak rocking chair?

30. When Atticus asks Scout about the blanket around her shoulders, what does Jem realize?

31. 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

32. How well does Atticus feel he should defend Tom Robinson? What are his reasons?

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

38. 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? Why? Does she still think this after the events recorded in this chapter?
39. In this chapter Atticus tells his children that “it's a sin to kill a mockingbird”. What reason does he give for saying this?
40. 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?
41. 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

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

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

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

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

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

47. Atticus says that Mrs. Dubose is a model of real courage rather than "a man with a gun in his hand." What was her courageous act? What does he mean? Do you think he is right?

48. Chapters ten and eleven are the last two chapters in the first part of the book. Explain why you think Harper Lee chooses to end the first part here.

Chapter 12

49. What new things does Scout learn from Jem's and Scout's visit to First Purchase church about how the black people live?
50. What does Scout learn from Calpurnia's account of Zeebo's education?
51. Explain why Calpurnia speaks differently in the Finch household, and among her neighbors at church.
52. How are Jem and Scout accepted at First Purchase?

Chapter 13

53. Why does Aunt Alexandra come to stay with Atticus and his family? What is she like?
54. Read the **first two things** Alexandra says when she comes to the Finch house. Are these typical of her or not?
55. What are Aunt Alexandra's ideas about breeding and family? Why does Atticus tell them to forget it? Who do you think is right?

Chapter 14

56. Why does Alexandra think Atticus should dismiss Calpurnia? How does Atticus respond to the suggestion?
57. Why is Scout pleased when Jem fights her back? Why is she less pleased when he tells Atticus about Dill?
58. What do we learn from Dill's account of his running away?

Chapter 15

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

60. Why did Heck Tate and the other men come to see Atticus?

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

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

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

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

Chapter 16

65. What does the atmosphere in Macomb at the beginning of the trial show about human nature?

66. What sort of person is Dolphus Raymond?

67. How does Reverend Sykes help the children see and hear the trial?

68. Why is Scout confused after overhearing remarks about her father's defense of Tom Robinson?

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

Chapter 17

70. What are the main points in Heck Tate's evidence?

71. What does Atticus show in his cross-examination of Sheriff Tate?

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

73. What do you learn from Bob Ewell's evidence?

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

Chapter 18

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

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

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

78. 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

79. What made Tom visit the Ewell's house in the first place?
80. Why does Scout think that Mayella Ewell was “the loneliest person in the world”?
81. Describe Mayella’s relationship with her father.
82. How does Mr. Gilmer’s treatment of Tom contrast with Atticus’s treatment of Mayella in the previous chapter?
83. What social mistake does Tom make in his testimony?
84. Why does Dill become sick?

Chapter 20

85. Scout says that “Mr. Dolphus Raymond was an evil man.” Is she right?
86. 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?
87. What, according to Atticus, is the thing that Mayella has done wrong?
88. Explain, in your own words, Atticus's views on people's being equal.

Chapter 21

89. What does Jem expect the verdict to be? Does Atticus think the same? Why?
90. What is unusual about how long it takes the jury to reach a verdict? Is the verdict predictable or not?
91. What does Reverend Sykes instruction to Scout to stand up show about his people's attitude toward Atticus?

Chapter 22

92. 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.")
93. Miss Maudie tells Jem that "things are never as bad as they seem." What reasons does she give for this view?

Chapter 23

94. What explanation does Atticus give for Bob Ewell's personal attack and threat?
95. What is "circumstantial evidence"? What has it got to do with Tom's conviction?
96. What reason does Atticus give about why the jury took so long to convict Tom?
97. Why does Aunt Alexandra accept that the Cunninghams may be good but are not "our kind of folks"?

98. 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

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

100. What is your opinion of the ladies of Maycomb? Explain.

101. Explain briefly how Tom was killed. What is Atticus's explanation for Tom's attempted escape?

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

103. What shows that Scout has new respect for Aunt Alexandra?

Chapter 25

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

105. Comment on the idea that Tom's death was “typical.”

106. Explain the contrast Scout draws between the court where Tom was tried and “the secret courts of men's hearts.”

107. Why did Jem not want Scout to tell Atticus about Bob Ewell's at the end of the chapter? Was this a wise thing to ask her to do?

Chapter 26

108. 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?

109. Why is Scout puzzled by Miss Gates' disapproval of Hitler?

110. 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

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

112. Why, according to Atticus, does Bob Ewell bear a grudge?

Chapter 28

113. How do the opening pages of this chapter reminds the reader of earlier events in the novel?

114. Scout decides to keep her costume on while walking home. How does this affect her understanding of what happens on the way?

115. Why had Atticus not brought a chair for the man in the corner? Who might this stranger be?

Chapter 29

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

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

118. What does Heck Tate give as the reason for the attack?

119. Why should the reader not be surprised about the identity of the children's rescuer?

Chapter 30

120. Who does Atticus think caused Bob Ewell's death?

121. Why does Heck Tate insist that Bob Ewell's death was self-inflicted?

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

Chapter 31

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

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

125. 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?