

***To Kill a Mockingbird* Reading Guide #1**

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 behavior 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 behavior 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. 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.