

## ***To Kill a Mocking Bird***

### **Resources**

The following is a small package of resources for *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. It comprises of the following:

1. Essay Writing: *To Kill a Mocking Bird*.
2. Comprehension (set on a section of Chapter 9).
3. Self Test Questions on Chapters 1 - 7.
4. An exploration of Atticus.
5. *To Kill a Mockingbird*: Studying the Novel on your own.

## ***To Kill a Mockingbird***

### **Essay Writing**

*When you write an essay you should organise it carefully and you should EXPLORE and EXPLAIN your ideas. Each section of the essay should be about an important idea. You must make a point, explain it fully and then explore it, using evidence from the novel Here is an example of what I mean. The essay is about Atticus as a hero. I have written an example of one paragraph and the start of the next paragraph. It is taken from the middle of the essay. Look carefully at how I have used quotations and at how the second paragraph is linked to the first one.*

Atticus is a proud, dignified man. It isn't just that everyone respects him: he also respects himself. He **has** to defend Tom Robinson because if he refuses to then he "couldn't hold up [his] head in town" - he would be ashamed of himself. This self-pride is far more important to Atticus than mere cheap popularity. "I've got to live with myself" is how he explains to Scout his determination to defend Tom Robinson. Of course pride is not always admirable. Proud people are often conceited and snobbish; but Atticus is neither: although he is "the deadeast shot in Maycomb County" he never boasts about this talent and would certainly disapprove of Scout boasting on his behalf. Despite his many talents, Atticus is a modest man. Yet, despite his achievements, his career and his education he never looks down on others, never assumes anyone is inferior to himself. When Walter Cunningham comes to lunch Scout is arrogant enough to declare, "he ain't company...", he's just a Cunningham", but Atticus converses at length with Walter as though they are equals: "they talked together like two men," Scout reports in amazement.

However, although Scout has much to learn, it is her own fierce pride that bonds her to her father and allows Atticus to show us another of his admirable talents: as teacher and adviser. He knows that Scout will always lose her self-control "if her pride's at stake" but he knows that lecturing, or threatening her will not be effective in changing her behaviour .....

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Open your copy of the book and read pages 82 (from the start of chapter 9) to page 85 (down to "Then Christmas came and disaster struck"). When you have finished reading you should write answers to the questions below.

Try to answer each question as fully as possible.

1. What do you think is meant by "Atticus had promised me he would **wear me out**"? (line 4-5)
2. Why do you think that Atticus doesn't like Scout calling black people "niggers".?
3. Why does Scout dislike school so much?
4. What is the name of the man who Atticus will be defending in court?
5. Atticus says that many local people say that he shouldn't be defending his client (the man in question 4). Why do local people object to Atticus defending his client?
6. Why is Atticus defending this man?
7. What advice does Atticus give to Scout? He gives more than one piece of advice.
8. What effect does Atticus' advice have on Scout? How does it affect the way she behaves at school the next day?
9. Think about the whole four pages. What do you think about Atticus and about his relationship with Scout? Try to explain your *thoughts*, and try to mention evidence from the four pages (and other parts of the book if you like).

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### **Self Test Questions on Chapters 1 - 7**

#### **Uncover the plot**

Delete two of the three alternatives given, to find the correct plot (beware possible misconceptions and muddles):

Jean-louise (Dill/Boo/Scout) and her brother John/Jem/Jack live with their father, Atticus, and their cook, Caroline / Maudie / Calpurnia, In Maycomb County, Alabama. It is the 1830s / 1930s / 1960s, and slavery / prejudice / economy, both racial and class-conscious, rages strongly. While Atticus practices criminal law / economy / tyranny the children spend their time at school and at play with their friend Walter / Burris / Dill. Their favourite game involves acting out the life of Arthur / Nathan / Chuck (Boo) Radley, a neighbour who has been shut away / dead / ill for so long that superstition surrounds him. As the game progresses (with Atticus' delight / disapproval / amusement) it becomes apparent that it is not going unnoticed by someone on the Finch / Crawford / Radley estate. During a night visit to the house, Jem loses his trousers: when he collects them they have been burned / stolen / folded and inexpertly darned. Small gifts are left in the knot-hole of a Radley oak, until Atticus / Boo's father / Boo's brother - claiming that the tree is dying - fills the hole with cement.

#### **Who? What? Why? When? Where? How?**

1. What does Scout think caused her father's 'profound distaste' for the practice of criminal law?
2. Where does Dill come from, and why does he come to Maycomb?
3. In what ways were the Radleys alien to Maycomb's ways?
4. How did Arthur's father view his son's sentence, and what was the result?
5. What can Scout do that - according to Miss Caroline - she shouldn't?
6. Who are 'the disgrace of Maycomb', and why?
7. How does Miss Maudie remember Arthur Rodley?
8. What does Mr Radley 'shoot' in his canard patch?
9. When does Scout think she and Jem first begin to part company, and why?
10. Why does Jem cry when Atticus says that the tree filled up by Mr Radley is not dying?

### **Who Is this?**

1. Who 'was all angles and bones; she was near-sighted, she squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard'?
2. Who 'habitually pulled at a cowlick in the centre of his forehead'?
3. Who 'was a thin leathery man with colourless eyes'?
4. Who 'never look anything off anybody'?
5. Who, according to Miss Maudie, 'is the same in his house as he is on the public streets'?
6. Who was 'a chameleon lady who worked in her flower beds in an old straw hat and men's coveralls, . . . '?
7. Who said: 'if he wanted to come out, he would', and of whom?
8. Who said: 'Don't you cry, now, Scout... don't cry now, don't you worry'?

### **Names and nicknames**

1. Why do Scout, Jem and Dill call Arthur Radley 'Boo'? Does the nickname have any particular effect(s), do you think?
2. 'We were for too old to settle an argument with a fist-fight, so we consulted Atticus. Our father said we were both right.' Atticus' name is very appropriate. Why? How does this quote illustrate Scout's (and Jem's) attitude to their father?
3. Jean-louise's nickname is 'Scout'. There is no reference to or explanation of this In the text: do you think it expresses her personality or describes her actions in any way?

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### **Atticus Finch**

**Answer the following questions as FULLY as possible; read ALL the questions before you answer the First one.**

1. Write about Atticus Finch, explaining what sort of man he is, whether he is admirable, what he does for a living. In other words, write anything you can about him.

When you answer the rest of the questions, explain your ideas fully and try to write about bits of the book that show what Atticus is like. Use quotations (bits copied out of the book) if you like but never use more than seven words at a time. Show quotations by putting them in speech marks at the “beginning and at the end of the quotation” - like *I* just did.

2. What does Atticus feel about the issue of RACE and the way that whites should behave towards blacks?
3. How do we know that Atticus is a wise and clever man?
4. How do we know that Atticus is a brave and honest man?
5. How do we know that Atticus doesn't believe in lecturing people and interfering in their lives; instead, he prefers to guide people and let them learn for themselves.
6. How do we know that Atticus is a kind and tolerant man who does not judge and condemn others even when he does not share their views?
7. Write about what Scout says and feels about Atticus. Don't forget that every word in the whole book is Scout's. You might like to write about Chapter 10 here (the shooting of the mad dog).
8. Why do we admire Atticus?

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### **Studying the Novel on your own**

You are now ready, to finish the novel on your own, make notes about it, and ask your teacher and friends for advice and ideas when you need them. In other words, you are ready to study independently.

1. **Read the rest of the novel on your own.**
2. **When you finish each chapter** write a few lines about the important things that happened. This will help you to fix the plot (story) in your mind and will also help your revision later. Also add information to your Maycomb map and - if possible - to your character charts.
3. When you have finished the novel write down in your character charts everything you can about its most important characters, especially Scout, Jem, Dill, Atticus, Calpurnia, Maudie Atkinson, Mrs Dubose, Boo Radley and the Ewells.
4. **Look at this list of words to describe characters:**

brave, proud, arrogant, superior, snobbish, prejudiced, evil, cruel, kind, wise, perceptive, patient, humorous, determined, heroic, imaginative, selfless, naive.

Next to the name of each important character write the words from the list above that are true of that character. Do this with a friend if possible to see if you can agree. Look for evidence in the text to support your choices.

5. **Look carefully at important episodes in the novel.** Imagine that a new film is going to be made of the novel and you have been given the job of writing the screen play (the script of the film). The film is only going to be an hour and a half long and therefore parts of the novel will have to be left out.

**Write a letter** to the film's director about three episodes in the novel that must **not** be cut out. Explain your choices in detail. In your letter you could also include advice about which real actors would be best suited to some of the major roles. You must explain and you must persuade.

You **could** hand this in as your coursework instead of number 6 that follows.

**6. You MUST write a piece of coursework about the novel.** Here is an essay title:

Atticus says, "Scout, you aren't old enough to understand some things yet." Write about the things that happen to Scout and how she learns from these experiences.

Plan your essay carefully. It should be about 800 words long (about three sides of A4). Plan your essay in sections (or paragraphs). The opening should be a general introduction to the novel in which you define the character of Scout (describe what she is like as a person) without going into close detail.

The next few paragraphs should each deal with an important Maycomb event, how Scout reacts to it, how she is affected by it, and how she is changed in some way. Everything that happens teaches her an important lesson. Try to make a central point in each paragraph, provide evidence to back up the point, and then discuss (write about) that evidence. **EXPLORE** the text; don't just make statements. Try to make each paragraph **link** to the next one.

Finally, write a concluding paragraph in which you draw your points together and consider whether in Scout's case experience is the best teacher. You can also consider how much she has matured and changed by the end of the novel.

I would recommend that you try to make each one of your paragraphs at least 100 words long otherwise the points you make will tend to sound superficial.

**Incidentally**, if you are wondering what 800 words look like then I can tell you that there are 616 in this 6 part exercise!