

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

To Kill a Mockinbird

by Harper Lee

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Chapter 1

1. In 1934, in Maycomb, Alabama, things seemed to move quite slowly. As you read the description of Maycomb on page 5, how do you think you'd feel about living and growing up in that town at that time?
2. What do you find interesting about this first chapter?

Chapter 2

3. What is your opinion of the scene in which Scout is trying to tell her teacher something, but the teacher won't listen to her? Has anything like this ever happened to you? Explain.
4. Scout explains the Cunningham philosophy of life, which is, "If you don't have it, you do without." What is your opinion of the Cunninghams and their philosophy?

Chapter 3

5. Atticus tells Scout, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view." Think of someone you were upset with or argued with recently, and try to write down the incident that upset you from the other person's point of view.

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6. Understanding a person's point of view, however, doesn't mean you have to agree with it. Having explained the other person's perspective, has it changed your thinking or feelings? If you still disagree with that point of view, tell why you do.
7. Atticus explains to Scout that in regard to the Ewells, it is sometimes "better to bend the law a little in special cases." Some people would agree, and some would disagree with this statement. Do you think it's a good or bad idea? Relate an incident in which you saw this done in a school situation.
8. What is your initial opinion of Atticus as a father?

Chapter 4

9. Scout feels that at school, she is being cheated out of something. Apparently, she feels she should be learning more than she is, or learning something different than what she is being taught. Have you ever felt cheated in this fashion? If so, what did you do, or, what might you have done about it?
10. At the end of this chapter, Scout says that she had heard someone inside the house laughing. Who do you think was laughing? Why was he or she laughing? What inferences might you draw from the laughing?

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Chapter 5

11. Miss Maudie says, "...sometimes the Bible in the hand of one man is worse than a whiskey bottle in the hand of [someone else]." Try to explain her meaning to a classmate who doesn't understand.

Chapter 6

12. Imagine you are new in Maycomb and had recently met Scout, Jem, and Dill. In a letter to a friend in your old hometown, describe the three of them.
13. Jem has to go back for his pants. Respond in the dialogue below, and explain his actions to a friend who says,

Friend: It was stupid of Jem to go back for his pants; he could have been killed.

You:

Chapter 7

14. Jem is crying at the end of this chapter. Explain the reason to a classmate who hasn't a clue.
15. Why do you suppose Mr. Walter Radley fills the knothole with cement? Write down the conversation that might have taken place between Walter Radley and Arthur Radley before the cementing of the knothole was done.

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Chapter 8

16. The first eight chapters are part of what we could call plot line #1. Summarize the action of this plot line and give it a name.
17. A number of things happen in this chapter and some questions could be raised. For example, where does the blanket come from that is put around Scout's shoulders? What is snow like to someone who has never experienced it? Respond to these or any other points in this chapter that interest you.

Chapter 9

18. Plot line #2 begins with this chapter. From the clues that have been given, what do you suppose this plot line will follow. What name could we give to plot line #2?
19. Atticus tells his sister that he's doing the best he can in raising two young children without a mother. How do you suppose that you'd do as a single parent raising two children? Is there anything you'd try to do or avoid doing in this situation?
20. Aunt Alexandra believes that Scout doesn't behave as a proper young woman should. Do you have any thoughts on how a proper young woman should behave?

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21. Atticus says using bad language is a stage all young people go through and then outgrow. Would you agree with that? Today, you hear bad language so often that you get used to it, and you almost stop noticing it. What's your opinion about bad language?
22. Consider the social climate in Alabama and other Southern states at this point in history; to a classmate who doesn't understand try to explain why Atticus defending Tom Robinson is as important as it is.

Chapter 10

23. Miss Maudie says, "People in their right minds never take pride in their talents." Why does she say that? Do you agree with her?
24. Jem says of his father, "Atticus is a gentleman just like me!" Given the context of the story how do you suppose Jem means the word "gentleman"? How would you define the word "gentleman"?
25. Jem has gone from feeling ashamed of his father because of his apparent lack of athletic ability, to feeling very proud of him. Atticus is the embodiment of what a man should be—Atticus is the man Jem wishes to become. In your mind, what would the model embodiment of a man be?
26. Is Jem correct in his changed opinion of Atticus, simply because of the shooting of the mad dog? What ability do you have that no one knows about; if your friends knew of it, how differently would they treat you?