

Chapters 27–31

Questions:

1. What were the three out-of-the-ordinary things that happened in Maycomb that Scout says—in a way—concerned the Finches?
2. How did Mr. Link Deas help Helen Robinson support her family after Tom's imprisonment and death? How did he defend her from Bob Ewell? What do these two things tell you about Link Deas?
3. According to Atticus, why does Bob Ewell apparently hold a grudge against everyone involved in the case?
4. As Jem and Scout leave for the school pageant, Scout says "Thus began our longest journey together." What does she mean?

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5. What has happened to the children's superstitions as they have grown older? Why?

6. List three things that foreshadow the attack by Bob Ewell.

7. The attack in the dark is told from Scout's limited point of view. Working from Scout's description and knowledge of the outcome, give specifics about what happens. Make sure to identify the characters involved.

8. Who does Atticus think killed Bob Ewell? Why does Sheriff Tate insist that Bob Ewell fell on his own knife?

9. What does Sheriff Tate mean when he tells Atticus "Let the dead bury the dead"? Read Matthew 8:18–22. Do you see any connection between the Sheriff's words and Matthew 8:22?

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10. Read the following passage from the book:

Atticus sat looking at the floor for a long time. Finally he raised his head. "Scout," he said, "Mr. Ewell fell on his knife. Can you possibly understand?"

Atticus looked like he needed cheering up. I ran up to him and hugged him and kissed him with all my might. "Yes sir, I understand," I reassured him. "Mr. Tate was right."

Atticus disengaged himself and looked at me. "What do you mean?"

"Well, it'd be sort of like shootin' a mockingbird, wouldn't it?"

Explain what Scout means.

11. Why does the author have Scout reflect on the past while standing on the Radley's porch?

12. At the end of the story, Atticus reads *The Gray Ghost* to Scout. Scout, who has fallen asleep during the reading, tells Atticus how the story ends:

"An' they chased him 'n' never could catch him 'cause they didn't know what he looked like, an' Atticus, when they finally saw him, why he hadn't done any of those things . . . Atticus, he was real nice. . . ."

How is Boo Radley like the "Gray Ghost" in the story? Who are the other "Gray Ghosts" in this story?

Summary

Questions:

1. Characters in literature can be classified as either *dynamic* or *static* characters. A *dynamic* character is a character who we see change during the course of the novel. A *static* character is a character who remains essentially the same throughout the novel. For each of the characters listed below, indicate whether that character is static or dynamic. If the character is dynamic, indicate how that character has changed.

Scout—

Jem—

Dill—

Atticus—

Calpurnia—

Aunt Alexandra—

Boo (Arthur) Radley—

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2. Many characters in literature will serve specific functions. An author will often use a minor character to move the plot in a specific direction, to provide a foil to a main character, to reveal information necessary to the plot, etc. For example, Calpurnia's function in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is to model and pass along wisdom to Scout and Jem. Explain the function of each of the following characters in the novel.

Dill Harris—

Maudie Atkinson—

Aunt Alexandra—

3. The *theme* of a novel is the main idea the author hopes to communicate to her readers through the story. The most obvious theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird* regards racial and class prejudices. What do you think Harper Lee was trying to communicate to her readers about prejudice? (Consider when this novel was written.)

4. Another theme in this novel is the theme of courage. Considering the discussions of courage in the novel, which characters are shown to be courageous? What actions in this novel does the author mean for us to see as courageous?

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5. A *motif* is a recurring image, object, or idea in a novel. Motifs act as unifying devices in literature and are often related to a novel's theme. There are two obvious motifs in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. One is the proverbial mockingbird of the title. How does the author use the mockingbird to communicate one of the novel's major themes? Which characters are the "mockingbirds" in this novel? Explain why you think so.

6. Another motif would be the recurring idea of considering things from another person's point of view. Early in the novel Atticus tells Scout she will never really understand a person until she learns to "climb into his skin and walk around in it." From this point on, Scout uses this method to try to understand the people around her. How does this motif relate to one of the novel's main themes (racial and class prejudice)?

7. At the beginning of the novel Scout has difficulties adapting to public school.

... as I inched sluggishly along the treadmill of the Maycomb County school system, I could not help receiving the impression that I was being cheated out of something.

At the end of the novel Scout says, "... I thought Jem and I would get grown but there wasn't much else left for us to learn, except possibly algebra." From where has most of Scout's learning come?

