

**COURTROOM TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:**

Mayella Ewell is the **plaintiff** - the person who is accusing someone else of committing a crime.

Mr. Gilmer is the **prosecutor**, or here, the **solicitor** - the lawyer employed by the county to represent plaintiffs in criminal trials.

Tom Robinson is the **defendant** - the person accused of the crime.

Atticus Finch is the **defense attorney** - the lawyer who represents the accused person.

John Taylor is the **judge** - the person who presides over the courtroom, runs the trial, makes rulings about courtroom procedure, and gives instructions to the jury. Judge Taylor also appointed Atticus to represent Tom Robinson to try to get Tom a fair trial.

**Testimony** - information given under oath about the case (verb: to testify).

**Evidence** - facts and testimony provided by lawyers on both sides to prove their case. **Direct evidence vs. circumstantial evidence** - direct evidence is a fact that leads directly to a conclusion of guilt or innocence (for example, medical evidence of a rape), while circumstantial evidence requires a jury to come up with a reasonable explanation of events (for example, evidence of a defendant's presence at a crime scene).

**Witness** - a person giving testimony to prove either side of a case. Sheriff Heck Tate, Bob Ewell, and Mayella Ewell are the **witnesses for the prosecution**. Tom Robinson is the only **witness for the defense**.

**Jury** - a group of 12 people (in Alabama in 1935, all White and all male) who hears the case and then decides if a defendant is innocent or guilty of the crime

**Cross-examination** - each lawyer has the right to question, or *cross-examine*, a witness testifying for the other side

**Closing argument** - after the prosecution and the defense "rest" their cases, each lawyer makes a speech to the jury in which s/he reviews the case and presents all the reasons the jury should find the defendant guilty or not guilty.

**Verdict** - the decision of whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty

**Mistrial** - if all the members of the jury cannot agree on a verdict (called a **hung jury**), the judge declares a mistrial, and the defendant must be retried.

**Acquittal** - if the defendant is found not guilty, he is *acquitted* of the charges.

**Sentence** - the punishment for the crime, decided by the law and the judge in the case.

**Capital offense** - a crime punishable by death. Rape was a capital offense in Alabama at the time of the case.

**Appeal** - if a defendant is found guilty, his lawyer can appeal the verdict in a higher court - that is, get a new trial before an appeals court judge (no jury). Atticus plans to appeal Tom's case.

**QUESTIONS BY CHAPTER BEGIN ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

## THE WEEKS LEADING UP TO THE TRIAL

### Chapter 12

1. How old are the children at the beginning of part 2 of the novel?
2. How does Calpurnia now refer to Jem? What does this show?
3. The summer after Scout's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year, why doesn't Dill plan to visit Maycomb?
4. Why do the children end up going to First Purchase Church with Cal?
5. What do the children notice about Calpurnia's behavior in her church community?
6. Who is Helen Robinson? Why can't she get work?
7. Cal to Scout: "It's not necessary to tell all you know. It's not ladylike" (167). What is the context for this statement? Can you relate it to a motif?

### Chapter 13

1. Why has Aunt Alexandra come to stay with the Finches?
2. Give three words that describe Aunt Alexandra. What evidence do you have for these descriptors?
3. What does Atticus tell the children about being a Finch? Why does he do this?
4. How do Aunt Alexandra and Atticus differ? Explain.

### Chapter 14

1. How does Aunt Alexandra react when she learns that Scout and Jem went to church with Calpurnia?
2. What "blind spot" does Scout have regarding the effects of Tom Robinson's defense on Atticus? Does Jem share this blind spot? Why or why not?
3. Again there is evidence that Jem and Scout's relationship is changing. Provide evidence of this.
4. Whom do Jem and Scout find hiding under the bed?
5. Explain why Jem tells Atticus about Dill's presence. What does this show about Jem? Do Scout and Dill understand? How do you know?
6. At the end of chapter 14, Scout asks Dill why he thinks Boo Radley has never run away, and Dill responds, "Maybe he doesn't have anywhere to run off to . . ." (192). Why do you think Boo has never run away? How has Dill's idea of Boo changed?

## Chapter 15

1. Why does a group of men visit the Finches house to talk to Atticus?
  - A. Why is Sheriff Heck Tate concerned about Tom Robinson?
  - B. What is Heck implying about the group of men from Old Sarum? What does he mean when he says that Atticus knows "how they do when they get shinned up" (194)?
2. Why does Link Deas say to Atticus, ". . . don't see why you touched it [the case] in the first place . . . You've got everything to lose from this, Atticus. I mean everything" (195)?
3. Why does the mob gather at the jail on Sunday night? What is their intent?
4. Reread the mob scene carefully. How does Scout defeat the mob? Why is she successful at getting the mob to disperse?

## Chapter 16

1. There are many parallels / similarities between Part 1 and Part 2 of the novel. At the beginning of chapter 16, Scout reflects on the mob that went to the jail to lynch Tom Robinson and connects the image of Atticus in front of the courthouse to the image of Atticus "standing in the middle of an empty waiting street, pushing up his glasses" (209). What event is she recalling, and why does she cry?
2. Atticus states: "Mr. Cunningham is basically a good man . . . he just has his blind spots along with the rest of us"(210).
  - A. What are Mr. Cunningham's blind spots?
  - B. What does this quotation reveal about Atticus? Explain.
  - C. How does Jem respond to this remark?
2. Describe the atmosphere in Maycomb on the day of the trial.
3. Who is Dolphus Raymond? What do we learn about him?
4. As the children listen to the townsfolk talk of the trial, they overhear that Atticus has been appointed to defend Tom Robinson. Someone says, "Atticus aims to defend him. That's what I don't like about it" (218). What is this person saying?
5. Where do the children sit in the courtroom?

## THE TRIAL

### Chapter 17

1. Identify the following characters:- (see courtroom terms above):

Judge Taylor  
Mr. Gilmer  
Heck Tate  
Bob Ewell  
Mayella Ewell

2. Summarize Heck Tate's testimony about Mayella's injuries.

3. Pick out some key phrases describing the Ewells' property on pp. 227-228 .

4. Speculate about the "brilliant red geraniums" on the Ewells' property. Who tends them? (Not Miss Maudie!)
5. Describe Bob Ewell's manner in court (that is, the way he conducts himself).
6. Summarize Bob Ewell's testimony.
7. What does Atticus establish by asking Bob Ewell to write his name? Why does he do this?
8. Why does Jem say, "We've got him" (178).

### Chapter 18

1. Describe Mayella Ewell based on her behavior and manner in the courtroom.
2. What can you infer about her life based on her testimony? Identify at least 3 inferences with evidence (include page #'s).
3. How convincing is Mayella's testimony? To what extent do you believe her / trust her? What leads you to this conclusion?
4. How might this case present the opportunity for Mayella to complete a hero's journey? (What is her call?) Does she complete it?

## Chapter 19

- Pages 256-257 - What does Scout say about Mayella Ewell? To whom does she compare her (she mentions a couple of people)? What quality does Scout show in this reflection about Mayella's circumstances?
- Pay attention to the details of Tom Robinson's testimony. What details correspond to Mayella and Bob Ewell's testimonies? What details contradict their testimony? (You will have to refer back to ch. 18.)
  - When and why did Tom first "go inside the fence" of the Ewell's property?
  - How many times did Tom "go inside the fence"?
  - What did Mayella ask Tom to do each time?
  - Did Mayella pay Tom for his services?
  - Why is Tom willing to do the things Mayella asks him to do?
  - What is different about Mayella's house on the evening of the alleged rape?
  - What does Mayella do and say to Tom?
  - What does Bob Ewell say to Mayella through the window?
  - Why, according to Tom, does he run away from the house?
- Who is Link Deas? Whose "side" is he on?
- How does the prosecutor, Mr. Gilmer, treat Tom? Note how he addresses Tom, for example. How might this influence the jury?
- Page 264 - What is Tom's "mistake"?
- Why is Dill crying?
- What blind spot does Scout still appear to have? Quote a line that indicates that she still needs to adjust her attitude about Tom Robinson.

## Chapter 20

- How does Atticus's closing statement help his defendant, Tom Robinson? How does his closing statement hurt his defendant?
- What elements of ethos, pathos, and logos do you see in Atticus's closing statement?
- How do you think the jury will react to Atticus's closing statement? Explain your reasoning.

## Chapter 21

1. Who believes that Tom Robinson has a chance at being set free? Why does he believe this?
2. What is the jury's verdict?
3. Why do Reverend Sykes and the rest of the African American spectators stand for Atticus, even after his defendant Tom was found guilty?

## Chapter 22

1. Explain how Atticus's character has influenced Jem. Identify evidence that supports Jem's reaction to the guilty verdict.
2. How do the children (Jem, Scout, and Dill) deal with the outcome of the trial? What do their coping mechanisms reveal about each of them?
3. How do the adults (Atticus, Miss Rachel, Calpurnia, Aunt Alexandra, Miss Stephanie, Miss Maudie, and Bob Ewell) deal with the outcome of the trial? What do their reactions and comments reveal about each of their characters?

## THE AFTERMATH OF THE TRIAL

### Chapter 23

1. What are the children worried about at the beginning of chapter 23?
2. Where is Tom Robinson in this chapter?
3. How does Atticus define "trash"? How does Aunt Alexandra define it?
4. What does Atticus expect Jem to learn if he "stand[s] in Bob Ewell's shoes a minute"? What is Mr. Ewell so angry about?

### Chapter 24

1. Who is at the Finches' house for the Missionary Society meeting? What does Aunt Alexandra expect of Scout at this gathering?
2. Who is J. Grimes Everett? Who are the Mrunas? What is the attitude of the ladies toward them?
3. How does this scene develop the motif of hypocrisy?
4. What news does Atticus tell Aunt Alexandra and Calpurnia? How does Atticus explain what happened?
5. How is Aunt Alexandra's attitude about the trial changing? See her exchange with Miss Maudie on p. 316.
6. What new understanding does Scout have of what it means to be a "lady" by the end of this chapter?



## Chapter 25

1. What causes Scout to comment that Jem is acting more like a girl everyday? What definition of "girl" does this imply?
2. How does Scout learn about Helen's reaction to Tom's death?
3. Mr. Ewell said Tom's death meant "one down and about two more to go." What does he mean?

## Chapter 26

1. Summarize Miss Gates's current events lesson.
2. What blind spot becomes apparent during this lesson?
3. What has Scout overheard that confuses her about Miss Gates's view of Hitler?
4. Jem reacts furiously to Scout's question about Miss Gates's remark at the trial. What do you think the trial meant to him that it did not mean to Scout?

## Chapter 27

1. Whom does Bob Ewell blame for the loss of his WPA job?
2. What happens at Judge Taylor's house?
3. What event has been added to the fall social calendar in Maycomb?
4. What is Scout's Halloween costume? What are its chief drawbacks?

## THE CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION

### Chapter 28

1. What happens on Halloween night after Scout and Jem leave the pageant? (What can we tell from Scout's account?)
2. "The man who brought Jem in . . . was some countryman I did not know" (356). Why is it important that Scout doesn't identify the rescuer?

### Chapter 29

1. How is Scout's recognition of this countryman (362) also a revelation? What blind spot is removed?

### Chapter 30

1. In the course of chapter 30, what does Scout do in true ladylike fashion to make Boo feel more comfortable? (List three or more gestures she makes.)
2. What does Atticus think happened out there in the dark? (Note: This reveals his blind spot!) What does he think Heck Tate is trying to do in claiming Mr. Ewell fell on his knife?
3. Heck Tate finally loses his patience with Atticus when he says emphatically, "... *I'm not thinking of Jem!*" (368). Of whom is he thinking? That is, what person is he trying to protect, if not Jem?
4. Explain how the "official" story of the night's events ("Bob Ewell fell on his knife") is different from the true story. What reasons does Heck Tate give for covering up the truth?
5. After Heck Tate leaves, Atticus must explain the lie to Scout. Why is it easier than he expects? (HINT: What word does Tate use that makes it easy for Scout to see the necessity of the lie?)

### Chapter 31

1. What do you think Scout means when she says she "could never lead [Boo] home" (372)?
2. How does the point of view change during Scout's fantasy description of Boo's view from the Radley porch?
3. How does this walk to the Radley house and back complete Scout's hero's journey -- and her moral education?
4. Where does the novel end? How does this tie in to Jem's revelation in Part 1, now understood by Scout? How do Atticus's final words confirm a key theme in the story?