

Reading Guide

Part 2

Chapters 9-15

1. Explain Atticus' statements about the following:
 - a. the use of the word "nigger" (p. 79)
 - b. his personal reasons for defending Tom Robinson (p.80)
 - c. "Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win." (p.80)
 - d. "Don't pay any attention to her, Jack. She's trying you out. Cal says she's been cussing fluently for a week, now." (p. 83)
 - e. "When a child asks you something, answer him, for goodness' sakes. But don't make a production of it. Children are children, but they can spot an evasion quicker than adults...." (p. 92)
 - f. "...the answer is she knows I know she tries. That's what makes a difference." (p. 92)
 - g. "Why reasonable people go stark raving mad when anything involving a Negro comes up, is something I don't pretend to understand" (p. 93)
2. Who are the following people, and how are they related to Atticus and to the children?
 - a. Alexandra
 - b. Francis
 - c. Jack
 - d. Jimmy

Chapter 10

1. At the beginning of this chapter, Scout is ashamed of Atticus. List his faults as she sees them.
2. Explain why it is a sin to kill a mockingbird, according to Miss Maudie.
3. Miss Maudie tries to explain Atticus' excellent marksmanship and his lack of pride in it. How does she do this?
4. Why won't Jem allow Scout to brag about Atticus at school? Do you agree with him? Why?

Chapter 11

1. Why is Atticus so insistent about:
 - a. Jem and Scout being polite to Mrs. Dubose?
 - b. Jem's reading to Mrs. Dubose?
2. Why do you think the author gives such a detailed and ugly description of Mrs. Dubose? How does it make you feel?
3. Discuss Atticus' description of the phrase "nigger-lover" on p. 113. Do you agree with his ideas on this subject? Why?
4. On p. 116, Atticus explains to the children why he considered Mrs. Dubose to be a "great lady" and a brave person. How does this "fit in" with his explanation of why he is defending Tom Robinson?

Chapter 12

1. Jem is now 12. There is widening gap of understanding between Scout and Jem. Find two or three examples which illustrate the emotional distance between them.
2. How do you explain Lula's antagonism toward Jem and Scout?
3. Scout finds the church service to be similar to her own except for few differences. Explain what these are.
4. Why does Cal speak one way around colored people and another way around white people? Is she being honest or hypocritical in what she does? Explain.

Chapter 13

1. Scout and Aunt Alexandra communicate very poorly with each other. Is the fault more with one than the other, or are they equally at fault? Explain.
2. Discuss Cousin Joshua Finch as:
 - a. Atticus describes him
 - b. Aunt Alexandra describes himExplain the difference in opinion.
3. What did Scout mean on page 137 when she stated, "I know what he was trying to do, but Atticus was only a man. It takes a woman to do that kind of work."

Chapter 14

1. How does Aunt Alexandra feel about Calpurnia? Explain why this is "in character" for Aunt Alexandra.
2. Why is Scout so happy about the brawl with Jem?
3. Explain how Jem "broke the remaining code of our childhood." (p. 143)
4. Dill tries to explain to Scout why he did not want to stay with his mother and stepfather. State his reasons briefly in your own words.

Chapter 15

1. Atticus discusses the Ku Klux Klan on p. 149 and concludes by saying that the Klan is gone. Is this statement correct? Explain.
2. Describe events prior to the scene at the Maycomb jail that show the tension and unrest of the town. Be specific.
3. Discuss the irony of the following statement and the situation which it describes on p. 153. "...there followed what I later realized was a sickeningly comic aspect of an unfunny situation: the men talked in near-whispers."
4. Why does Jem openly defy Atticus and refuse to leave?
5. What does Scout's childish attempt at conversation accomplish? Explain.
6. Why was Atticus so affectionate toward Jem after Jem had disobeyed him?