

## Key Passages in To Kill a Mockingbird

### Chapter 1

“Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom. People said he existed, but Jem and I had never seen him. People said he went out at night when the moon was down, and peeped in windows. When people’s azaleas froze in a cold snap, it was because he had breathed on them. Any stealthy small crimes committed in Maycomb were his work. Once the town was terrorized by a series of morbid nocturnal events: people’s chickens and household pets were found mutilated; although the culprit was Crazy Addie, who eventually drowned himself in Barker’s Eddy, people still looked at the Radley Place, unwilling to discard their initial suspicions. A Negro would not pass the Radley Place at night, he would cut across to the sidewalk opposite and whistle as he walked. The Maycomb school grounds adjoined the back of the Radley lot; from the Radley chickenyard tall pecan trees shook their fruit into the schoolyard, but the nuts lay untouched by the children: Radley pecans would kill you. A baseball hit into the Radley yard was a lost ball and no questions asked.”

(Reread page 9-16)

### 4Cs

1. How does this **CONNECT** with what you already know?
2. What ideas in this passage **CHALLENGE** your thinking?
3. What key **CONCEPTS** emerge from this passage?
4. How does Scout’s view of the Radleys **CHANGE** over the course of the novel?

### Chapter 3

“It was then that Calpurnia requested my presence in the kitchen.

She was furious, and when she was furious Calpurnia’s grammar became erratic. When in tranquility, her grammar was as good as anybody’s in Maycomb. Atticus said Calpurnia had more education than most colored folks.

When she squinted down at me the tiny lines around her eyes deepened. “There’s some folks who don’t eat like us,” she whispered fiercely, “but you ain’t called on to contradict ‘em at the table when they don’t. That boy’s yo’ comp’ny and if he wants to eat up the table cloth you let him, you hear?”

“He ain’t company, Cal, he’s just a Cunningham-”

“Hush your mouth! Don’t matter who they are, anybody sets foot in this house’s yo’ comp’ny, and don’t you let me catch you remarkin’ on their ways like you was so high and mighty! Yo’ folks might be better’n the Cunninghams but it don’t count for nothin’ the way you’re disgracin’ ‘em—if you can’t act fit to eat at the table you can just set here and eat in the kitchen!”

### Chapter 3

“First of all,” he said, “if you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you’ll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view-”

“Sir?”

“-until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

Atticus said I had learned many things today, and Miss Caroline had learned several things herself. She had learned not to hand something to a Cunningham, for one thing, but if Walter and I had put ourselves in her shoes we’d have seen it was an honest mistake on her part. We could not expect her to learn all Maycomb’s ways in one day, and we could not hold her responsible when she knew no better. “

(Reread pages 25-35)

### CIRCLE OF VIEWPOINTS

1. Consider this passage from the perspective of:
  - a. Calpurnia
  - b. Walter
  - c. Scout
  - d. Atticus
2. What perspective might each bring to the interaction?
3. What questions emerge from that viewpoint?

## Chapter 9

“Before I’m through, I intend to jar the jury a bit—I think we’ll have a reasonable chance on appeal, though. I really can’t tell at this stage, Jack. You know, I’d hoped to get through life without a case of this kind, but John Taylor pointed at me and said, ‘You’re It.’”

“Let this cup pass from you, eh?”

“Right. But do you think I could face my children otherwise? You know what’s going to happen as well as I do, Jack, and I hope and pray I can get Jem and Scout through it without bitterness, and most of all, without catching Maycomb’s usual disease. Why reasonable people go stark raving mad when anything involving a Negro comes up, is something I don’t pretend to understand... I just hope that Jem and Scout come to me for their answers instead of listening to the town. I hope they trust me enough... Jean Louise?”

My scalp jumped. I stuck my head around the corner. “Sir?”

“Go to bed.”

I scurried to my room and went to bed. Uncle Jack was a prince of a fellow not to let me down. But I never figured out how Atticus knew I was listening, and it was not until many years later that I realized he wanted me to hear every word he said.”

(Reread pages 94-98)

### STEP INSIDE

1. What is Atticus intent in this passage?
2. What does Scout understand from this conversation?
3. What is Jack’s view?

## Chapter 10

When he gave us our air-rifles Atticus wouldn't teach us to shoot. Uncle Jack instructed us in the rudiments thereof; he said Atticus wasn't interested in guns. Atticus said to Jem one day, "I'd rather you shot at tin cans in the back yard, but I know you'll go after birds. Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

That was the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something, and I asked Miss Maudie about it.

"Your father's right," she said. "Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

(Reread pages 98-101 )

1. What is the central message of this passage?
2. How does it relate to the rest of the text?
3. How might it relate to an example from real life?

## Chapter 11

“She was. She had her own views about things, a lot different from mine, maybe... son, I told you that if you hadn’t lost your head I’d have made you go read to her. I wanted you to see something about her—I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It’s when you know you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do. Mrs. Dubose won, all ninety-eight pounds of her. According to her views, she died beholden to nothing and nobody. She was the bravest person I ever knew.”

(Reread page 117-124)

### 4Cs

1. How does this **CONNECT** with what you already know?
2. What ideas in this passage **CHALLENGE** your thinking?
3. What key **CONCEPTS** emerge from this passage?
4. How does the children’s view of Mrs Dubose **CHANGE**?

## Chapter 14

Atticus's voice was even: "Alexandra, Calpurnia's not leaving this house until she wants to. You may think otherwise, but I couldn't have got along without her all these years. She's a faithful member of this family and you'll simply have to accept things the way they are. Besides, sister, I don't want you working your head off for us—you've no reason to do that. We still need Cal as much as we ever did."

"But Atticus—"

"Besides, I don't think the children've suffered one bit from her having brought them up. If anything, she's been harder on them in some ways than a mother would have been... she's never let them get away with anything, she's never indulged them the way most colored nurses do. She tried to bring them up according to her lights, and Cal's lights are pretty good—and another thing, the children love her."

(Reread pages 148-151)

### CIRCLE OF VIEWPOINTS

1. Consider this passage from the perspective of:
  - a. Alexandra
  - b. Calpurnia
  - c. Atticus
2. What perspective might each bring to the interaction?
3. What questions emerge from that viewpoint?

## Chapter 15

“Hey, Mr. Cunningham.”

The man did not hear me, it seemed.

“Hey, Mr. Cunningham. How’s your entailment gettin’ along?”

Mr. Walter Cunningham’s legal affairs were well known to me; Atticus had once described them at length. The big man blinked and hooked his thumbs in his overall straps. He seemed uncomfortable; he cleared his throat and looked away. My friendly overture had fallen flat. Mr. Cunningham wore no hat, and the top half of his forehead was white in contrast to his sunscorched face, which led me to believe that he wore one most days. He shifted his feet, clad in heavy work shoes.

“Don’t you remember me, Mr. Cunningham? I’m Jean Louise Finch. You brought us some hickory nuts one time, remember?” I began to sense the futility one feels when unacknowledged by a chance acquaintance.

“I go to school with Walter,” I began again. “He’s your boy, ain’t he? Ain’t he, sir?”

Mr. Cunningham was moved to a faint nod. He did know me, after all.

“He’s in my grade,” I said, “and he does right well. He’s a good boy,” I added, “a real nice boy. We brought him home for dinner one time. Maybe he told you about me, I beat him up one time but he was real nice about it. Tell him hey for me, won’t you?”

Atticus had said it was the polite thing to talk to people about what they were interested in, not about what you were interested in. Mr. Cunningham displayed no interest in his son, so I tackled his entailment once more in a last-ditch effort to make him feel at home.

“Entailments are bad,” I was advising him, when I slowly awoke to the fact that I was addressing the entire aggregation. The men were all looking at me, some had their mouths half-open. Atticus had stopped poking at Jem: they were standing together beside Dill. Their attention amounted to fascination. Atticus’s mouth, even, was half-open, an attitude he had once described as uncouth. Our eyes met and he shut it.

“Well, Atticus, I was just sayin’ to Mr. Cunningham that entailments are bad an’ all that, but you said not to worry, it takes a long time sometimes... that you all’d ride it out together...” I was slowly drying up, wondering what idiocy I had committed. Entailments seemed all right enough for livingroom talk.

I began to feel sweat gathering at the edges of my hair; I could stand anything but a bunch of people looking at me. They were quite still.

“What’s the matter?” I asked.

Atticus said nothing. I looked around and up at Mr. Cunningham, whose face was equally impassive. Then he did a peculiar thing. He squatted down and took me by both shoulders.

“I’ll tell him you said hey, little lady,” he said.

Then he straightened up and waved a big paw. “Let’s clear out,” he called. “Let’s get going, boys.”

(Reread pages 165-171)

### SENTENCE-PHRASE-WORD

1. Identify a SENTENCE, then a PHRASE and then a WORD from this passage that moves, engage, provoked or was in some way meaningful to you. Explain why you have chosen this SENTENCE-PHRASE-WORD

## Chapter 16

I was playing in it with the spoon. “I thought Mr. Cunningham was a friend of ours. You told me a long time ago he was.”

“He still is.”

“But last night he wanted to hurt you.”

Atticus placed his fork beside his knife and pushed his plate aside. “Mr. Cunningham’s basically a good man,” he said, “he just has his blind spots along with the rest of us.”

Jem spoke. “Don’t call that a blind spot. He’d killed you last night when he first went there.

“He might have hurt me a little,” Atticus conceded, “but son, you’ll understand folks a little better when you’re older. A mob’s always made up of people, no matter what. Mr.

Cunningham was part of a mob last night, but he was still a man. Every mob in every little Southern town is always made up of people you know— doesn’t say much for them, does it?”

“I’ll say not,” said Jem.

“So it took an eight-year-old child to bring ‘em to their senses, didn’t it?” said Atticus. “That proves something—that a gang of wild animals can be stopped, simply because they’re still human. Hmp, maybe we need a police force of children... you children last night made Walter Cunningham stand in my shoes for a minute. That was enough.”

(Reread page 173-182)

### 3-2-1 LINK

1. What 3 Thoughts emerge from this passage?
2. What 2 Questions emerge from this passage?
3. What 1 Analogy might you use to explain this central message?
4. How does this link to the rest of the text?



## Chapter 19

As Tom Robinson gave his testimony, it came to me that Mayella Ewell must have been the loneliest person in the world. She was even lonelier than Boo Radley, who had not been out of the house in twenty-five years. When Atticus asked had she any friends, she seemed not to know what he meant, then she thought he was making fun of her. She was as sad, I thought, as what Jem called a mixed child: white people wouldn't have anything to do with her because she lived among pigs; Negroes wouldn't have anything to do with her because she was white. She couldn't live like Mr. Dolphus Raymond, who preferred the company of Negroes, because she didn't own a riverbank and she wasn't from a fine old family. Nobody said, "That's just their way," about the Ewells. Maycomb gave them Christmas baskets, welfare money, and the back of its hand. Tom Robinson was probably the only person who was ever decent to her. But she said he took advantage of her, and when she stood up she looked at him as if he were dirt beneath her feet.

(Reread page 211-220)

### CIRCLE OF VIEWPOINTS

1. Consider this passage from the perspective of:
  - a. Tom
  - b. Mayella
  - c. Atticus
  - d. Scout
2. What perspective might each bring to the interaction?
3. What questions emerge from that viewpoint?

## Chapter 21

Judge Taylor was saying something. His gavel was in his fist, but he wasn't using it. Dimly, I saw Atticus pushing papers from the table into his briefcase. He snapped it shut, went to the court reporter and said something, nodded to Mr. Gilmer, and then went to Tom Robinson and whispered something to him. Atticus put his hand on Tom's shoulder as he whispered. Atticus took his coat off the back of his chair and pulled it over his shoulder. Then he left the courtroom, but not by his usual exit. He must have wanted to go home the short way, because he walked quickly down the middle aisle toward the south exit. I followed the top of his head as he made his way to the door. He did not look up.

Someone was punching me, but I was reluctant to take my eyes from the people below us, and from the image of Atticus's lonely walk down the aisle.

"Miss Jean Louise?"

I looked around. They were standing. All around us and in the balcony on the opposite wall, the Negroes were getting to their feet. Reverend Sykes's voice was as distant as Judge Taylor's:

"Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father's passin'."

(Reread page 227-233)

### 3Cs

1. How does this **CONNECT** with what you already know?
2. What ideas in this passage **CHALLENGE** your thinking?
3. What key **CONCEPTS** emerge from this passage?

## Chapter 23

“Jem, see if you can stand in Bob Ewell’s shoes a minute. I destroyed his last shred of credibility at that trial, if he had any to begin with. The man had to have some kind of comeback, his kind always does. So if spitting in my face and threatening me saved Mayella Ewell one extra beating, that’s something I’ll gladly take. He had to take it out on somebody and I’d rather it be me than that houseful of children out there. You understand?”

“If you had been on that jury, son, and eleven other boys like you, Tom would be a free man,” said Atticus. “So far nothing in your life has interfered with your reasoning process. Those are twelve reasonable men in everyday life, Tom’s jury, but you saw something come between them and reason. You saw the same thing that night in front of the jail. When that crew went away, they didn’t go as reasonable men, they went because we were there. There’s something in our world that makes men lose their heads—they couldn’t be fair if they tried. In our courts, when it’s a white man’s word against a black man’s, the white man always wins. They’re ugly, but those are the facts of life.”

(Reread page 239-245)

### 3-2-1 LINK

1. What 3 Thoughts emerge from this passage?
2. What 2 Questions emerge from this passage?
3. What 1 Analogy might you use to explain this central message?
4. How does this link to the rest of the text?

## Chapter 30

Mr. Tate stopped pacing. He stopped in front of Atticus, and his back was to us. "I'm not a very good man, sir, but I am sheriff of Maycomb County. Lived in this town all my life an' I'm goin' on forty-three years old. Know everything that's happened here since before I was born. There's a black boy dead for no reason, and the man responsible for it's dead. Let the dead bury the dead this time, Mr. Finch. Let the dead bury the dead."

Mr. Tate went to the swing and picked up his hat. It was lying beside Atticus. Mr. Tate pushed back his hair and put his hat on.

"I never heard tell that it's against the law for a citizen to do his utmost to prevent a crime from being committed, which is exactly what he did, but maybe you'll say it's my duty to tell the town all about it and not hush it up. Know what'd happen then? All the ladies in Maycomb includin' my wife'd be knocking on his door bringing angel food cakes. To my way of thinkin', Mr. Finch, taking the one man who's done you and this town a great service an' draggin' him with his shy ways into the limelight—to me, that's a sin. It's a sin and I'm not about to have it on my head. If it was any other man, it'd be different. But not this man, Mr. Finch."

Mr. Tate was trying to dig a hole in the floor with the toe of his boot. He pulled his nose, then he massaged his left arm. "I may not be much, Mr. Finch, but I'm still sheriff of Maycomb County and Bob Ewell fell on his knife. Good night, sir."

Mr. Tate stamped off the porch and strode across the front yard. His car door slammed and he drove away.

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 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?"

(Reread page )

### 4Cs

1. How does this **CONNECT** with what you already know?
2. What ideas in this passage **CHALLENGE** your thinking?
3. What key **CONCEPTS** emerge from this passage?
4. How does Scout's view **CHANGED** over the course of the novel?

## **Chapter 31**

Neighbours bring food with death and flowers with sickness and little things in between. Boo was our neighbour. He gave us two soap dolls, a broken watch and chain, a pair of good-luck pennies, and our lives. But neighbours give in return. We never put back into the tree what we took out of it: we had given him nothing, and it made me sad.

(Reread page 305-309)

### **3-2-1 LINK**

1. What 3 Thoughts emerge from this passage?
2. What 2 Questions emerge from this passage?
3. What 1 Analogy might you use to explain this central message?
4. How does this link to the rest of the text?