To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapters 1-6

Chapters 1-4
1. Page 28: Explain the social differences exposed through the students at school. What does Burris Ewell represent?
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2. Page 34: Predict who is putting the pennies and gum in the knothole of the tree. What does this suggest about the true character of this person?
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3. Predict who is laughing when Scout bumped into the Radley house in the tire. Why would this person be laughing?
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Chapters 5-6
4. Pages 41-42: How does Jem and Scout’s relationship progress/change?
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5. Page 56: Reference the pants incident. What is Jem afraid of? Why does he insist on recovering his pants? What does this show about Jem’s maturity as a character?
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Page 1
To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapters 7-9

Chapters 7-8
6. Page 58: What was the condition of Jem’s pants when he found them? What was his reaction? Who mended them? Why?

7. Page 73: After the fire is over, how does Miss Maudie feel about the destruction of her house? What does this tell you about her character and values?

Chapter 9
8. Page 76: This is the first mention of Atticus’ defense of Tom Robinson. Scout asks why. What is Atticus’ reasoning for defending Tom Robinson? What does he mean when he says, “Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win”? This speaks to a major theme in the novel. What is it?

Notes:
To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions
Chapters 10-11

Chapter 10
9. Page 90: What does Atticus mean when he says, “It’s a sin to kill a mockingbird”? Predict how this idea will become a major theme in the novel? Who are the metaphorical “mockingbirds” in the story?
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10. Pages 92-97: Describe the situation with the mad dog. How does this change the children’s perception of Atticus?
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Chapter 11
11. Page 103: Jem cuts the tops off of Mrs. Dubose’s Camilla plants. Why?
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12. Page 112: Atticus explains to the children why he considered Mrs. Dubose to be a “great lady” and a brave person. How is this symbolically relevant to why he is defending Tom Robinson?
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13. Page 112: Reread the paragraph beginning, “She was. She had her own views….” What theme does Harper Lee present here? How?
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Page 3
To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions
Chapters 12-13

Chapter 12
14. Discuss Jem as a 12 year old. How is he changing? How does this affect Scout?

15. Page 119: Scout and Jem attend Cal’s church. Discuss the following characters: Lula, Reverend Sykes, and Zeebo. What do these characters say about African American society in the story?

16. Discuss Cal’s dialect variation/code switching. Why does she do it?

Chapter 13
17. Aunt Alexandra arrives to stay at the Finch house; discuss her role in the Finch house, her role in Maycomb society, her personality, and her beliefs.

18. Reread the conclusion of Chapter 13. What is Atticus trying to convey to Jem and Scout? Why does he leave without communicating his point?

Notes:
To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions
Chapters 14-15

Chapter 14
19. Discuss the tensions that develop when Scout asks Atticus if she can visit Calpurnia’s home. Discuss Jem’s reaction.

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20. How are the Jem and Scout’s perception of things changing?

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21. Explain the reasons for Dill running away. Compare his relationship with his parents to Scout’s relationship with Atticus and Cal. How does this contribute to Dill being a “mockingbird”?

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Chapter 15
22. Discuss the events that occur Sunday night before the trial. What was the “mob” trying to do? What stopped them? How is this related to a theme in the story?

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23. What was Mr. Underwood doing while this was going on? Why is it strange that he would do this? And why does he do this?

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To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions
Chapters 16-17

Chapter 16
24. Who is Dolphus Raymond? What is his story?
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25. Page 165: The Cunningham vs. Coningham court case demonstrates Harper Lee’s use of a literary descriptive technique called “local color.” What is “local color” and why does she use it here?
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Chapter 17
27. At the trial, why does Atticus keep asking if anyone called a doctor? What do people think of this?
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28. Summarize Bob Ewell’s testimony. Discuss the left-hand, right-side significance and Atticus’s reason for asking Bob the questions he asks. Why didn’t Bob go to get a doctor?
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To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapter 18

29. Discuss Mayella as a character. What do you think of her? Why do you think this?
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30. Summarize Mayella’s testimony? What are the flaws in her testimony?
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31. Page 181: How does Atticus “mock” Mayella? What does this say about her character?
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32. Page 185: Tom Robinson stands and Mayella identifies Tom Robinson. What does Scout notice? How is this important?
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33. What side of Mayella’s face was bruised according to Heck Tate and Bob Ewell? After Tom stands, what side of Mayella’s face was bruised according to Mayella? What does this say about Atticus as a lawyer?
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34. Page 188: Mayella makes her final speech. What does she reveal about herself? What are her reasons for saying all of this?
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To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions
Chapter 19

35. Page 190: Tom Robinson takes the stand. Summarize his testimony.

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36. What does his testimony reveal about Bob Ewell?

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37. What does Tom’s presence on the stand say about him as a character/human/African American?

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To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapter 20

38. Why was Dill crying?
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39. What do we find out about Dolphus Raymond?
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40. Why does Dolphus avoid white society? What does this say about him? Is he a coward? What does this say about Maycomb?
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41. What’s Jem’s projected verdict on the case so far? What does this say about him?
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42. Page 203: Discuss Atticus’s final statement. What are some key parts? To what points does he call attention? Why does he unbutton his vest and loosen his collar?
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Page 9
To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions
Chapters 21-22

Chapter 21

43. What is Jem’s reaction to the jury’s verdict? Why does he react this way?
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44. What does the African American crowd do as Atticus leaves the courtroom? Why?
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Chapter 22

45. The day after the trial, why do people bring food to the Finch home?
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46. Overall, what is the reaction of the children (Jem, Scout, and Dill)? Do they understand? Connect it to a theme.
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47. Stereotype Miss Stephanie and Aunt Rachel as characters (as “stock” characters).
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48. Miss Stephanie reveals an important event at the end of Chapter 22. What is it?
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To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapter 23

49. Describe how Atticus reacted to Bob Ewell’s insult.
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50. How do the children react to Bob Ewell’s insult?
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51. Page 218: Why (according to Atticus) does Bob Ewell spit on and threaten Atticus? Why is this ironic?
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52. Pages 220-221: Reread the two paragraphs beginning with, “You couldn’t, but they could and did…” and ending in, “…children’s time.” What does this reveal about Atticus’s character that we have not seen before?
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53. Page 222: What about the jury’s deliberation gave Atticus a glimmer of hope and made his efforts worthwhile?
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54. Page 227: What is Jem’s interpretation of the Maycomb caste system? What is happening to Jem? What is Scout’s response, and what does this show about her?
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55. Page 227: Why does Jem say Boo Radley wants to stay inside?
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Notes:
To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapter 24

56. Discuss Aunt Alexandra’s missionary circle. What is the point of the meeting? What do the women talk about? What are their views of other cultures? Are they hypocritical?

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57. Characterize Grace Merriweather and Mrs. Farrow (describe them).

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58. Page 235: We find out that Tom Robinson dies. Why does he run?

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59. Aunt Alexandra goes back into the circle of women who have just insulted her brother. She is polite and courteous. What important lesson does Scout learn from her?

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To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapters 25-26

Chapter 25
60. Page 238: Summarize the “roly-poly” bug incident. How does it reinforce a theme?
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61. Page 241: Why is it significant that Mr. Underwood describes Tom’s death as “the senseless slaughter of songbirds” in his editorial?
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Chapter 26
62. We find out that Atticus knows about the incident with Jem’s pants. How does this affect Scout’s perception of her father?
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63. Page 245: Because of the students’ current events assignments, Mrs. Gates discusses democracy and Hitler. What does she say about prejudice? Why is this ironic? (See page 247.)
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64. How does this (Mrs. Gates and prejudice) affect Scout?
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Page 13
To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapter 27

65. Pages 248-249: What three strange events happen in Maycomb?

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66. Page 250: Reread the paragraph beginning “I think I understand….” Why does Atticus believe that Bob Ewell acts so cruelly?

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To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapter 28

67. As Jem and Scout walk to the pageant at the school, what happens? What literary device is at work here?
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68. Page 257: Just before the pageant, what upsets Scout about her costume? What literary device is at work here?
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69. Summarize what happens while they are at the Halloween pageant.
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70. Page 262: What happens to Scout and Jem as they are walking home from the pageant? Summarize the events from here to the end of the chapter.
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71. Who is the man who comes to the children’s rescue?
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To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapters 29-30

Chapter 29
72. Scout retells what happened, and then on page 270 she describes the man in the corner (Boo). What does he look like?

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73. How does Scout react when she realizes it is him? Why does she react in this way?

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Chapter 30
74. Page 271: How do Atticus, Aunt Alexandra, and Dr. Reynolds treat Boo/Arthur?

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75. Pages 272-273: Heck and Atticus argue on the front porch. What do they argue about?

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76. Why can’t Atticus “put two and two together” like he usually can?

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77. Page 276: Important theme: Scout understands why Heck doesn’t want to reveal Boo’s participation in the events of the evening. How does she explain her understanding?

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Page 16
To Kill a Mockingbird Discussion Questions

Chapter 31

78. Boo says goodbye to Jem and Scout walks him home. She never sees him again. What does this imply?

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79. Pages 278-279: Why does Scout retell the whole story though seasons?

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80. Page 281: What is significant about Atticus reading the “Gray Ghost” story at the end of the novel?

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