

Discussion Questions for *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

(some questions take or adapted from http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides3/to_kill_a_mockingbird1.asp)

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. Did you find the dialog in the story and the characterization of the time realistic?
3. In Scout's account of her childhood, her father Atticus reigns supreme. How would you characterize his abilities as a single parent?
4. Scout ages two years – from six to eight – over the course of the novel, which is narrated from her perspective as an adult. Did you find her account believable? Were there incidents or observations in the book that seemed unusually “knowing” for such a young child?
5. *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been challenged repeatedly by the political left and right, who have sought to remove it from libraries for its portrayal of conflict between children and adults; ungrammatical speech; references to sex, the supernatural, and witchcraft; and unfavorable presentation of blacks. Did you find any of those elements especially troubling, persuasive, or insightful?
6. Towards the end of Chapter 23, Jem says there are four kinds of folks: “There’s the ordinary kind like us and the neighbors, there’s the kind like the Cunninghams out in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and Negroes.” He adds: “...our kind of folks don’t like the Cunninghams, the Cunninghams don’t like the Ewells, and the Ewells hate and despise the colored folks.” What do you think of the ways in which Lee explores race and class in 1930s Alabama? What significance, if any, do you think these characterizations have today?
7. Scout responds to Jem with this statement: “Naw, Jem, I think there’s just one kind of folks. Folks.” Who is right, Jem or Scout?
8. One of the chief criticisms of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is that the two central storylines – Scout, Jem, and Dill’s fascination with Boo Radley and the trial between Mayella Ewell and Tom Robinson – are not sufficiently connected in the novel. Do you think that Lee is successful in incorporating these different stories? Were you surprised at the way in which these story lines were resolved? Why or why not?
9. In what way did Boo’s past history of violence foreshadow his method of protecting Jem and Scout from Bob Ewell? Does this repetition of aggression make him more or less of a sympathetic character?
10. What elements of this book did you find especially memorable, humorous, or inspiring? Are there individual characters whose beliefs, acts, or motives especially impressed or surprised you? Did any events in this book cause you to reconsider your childhood memories or experiences in a new light?
11. Has anyone had an experiences that relate to places or experiences in the book?
12. Any comments about the way the book ended?
13. Are there questions you would like to ask?