

ANSWER KEY

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Interactive Novel Study

(For Parents & Teachers)

Section 1 — Answer Key

Multiple Choice:

1. a 2. a 3. a 4. a 5. a 6. a

Short Answer (Suggested Responses):

1. Maycomb is a small, tired, slow-paced Southern town during the Great Depression. Its isolation and economic hardship create a rigid social hierarchy and deep-rooted prejudice. The setting influences the characters by reinforcing traditional values, racial segregation, and class distinctions that drive the central conflicts of the story.

2. The Finches represent the educated, moral middle class. The Cunninghams are poor but proud farmers who refuse charity. The Ewells are the lowest white family, living off welfare near the town dump. This hierarchy shows that social class in Maycomb is based not just on wealth but on family reputation, education, and moral character.

3. Miss Caroline represents a rigid education system that values conformity over individual learning. She punishes Scout for being ahead of her peers, suggesting that the system is designed for the average student and cannot accommodate those who are different. This foreshadows the novel's broader theme of institutions failing individuals.

4. The children's obsession with Boo is based entirely on rumors, gossip, and their own imaginations. They have never met him and treat him as a source of entertainment and fear. Atticus tells them to stop tormenting Boo and to consider things from his perspective, planting the seed of the novel's central theme of empathy.



Section 2 — Answer Key

Multiple Choice:

1. a 2. a 3. a 4. a 5. a 6. a

Short Answer (Suggested Responses):

1. The fire brings the community together as neighbors help Miss Maudie save her belongings and the fire department works to prevent the fire from spreading. Miss Maudie's reaction is remarkably positive—she says she always wanted a smaller house and more room for her garden. This reveals her resilience, optimism, and refusal to be defined by material possessions.

2. Atticus tells Jem it is a sin to kill a mockingbird because mockingbirds do nothing but sing and bring joy. The title symbolizes the destruction of innocence—harming those who do no wrong. This metaphor applies to characters like Tom Robinson (an innocent man destroyed by racism) and Boo Radley (a gentle soul harmed by isolation and gossip).

3. The mockingbird represents innocence and goodness. Killing a mockingbird means destroying something pure that does no harm. Tom Robinson is a mockingbird because he is an innocent man falsely accused. Boo Radley is a mockingbird because he is a kind, shy person who helps others but is feared and misunderstood by the community.

4. Atticus wants Jem to learn that true courage is not physical bravery but moral fortitude. Mrs. Dubose was addicted to morphine and fought to break free before she died, even though she knew she was dying. Atticus says she was the bravest person he ever knew because she fought a battle she knew she would lose.



Section 3 — Answer Key

Multiple Choice:

1. a 2. a 3. a 4. a 5. a 6. a

Short Answer (Suggested Responses):

1. At Calpurnia's church, Jem and Scout discover that Calpurnia leads a double life—she speaks differently at church than at the Finch home. They learn about the Black community's poverty, their generosity (collecting money for Tom Robinson's family), and the fact that most cannot read. This broadens their understanding of racial inequality.

2. Aunt Alexandra believes 'fine folks' are determined by family background, heredity, and how long a family has been settled. Atticus believes people should be judged by their individual character and actions. This conflict confuses Scout, who is caught between two value systems.

3. The mob leaves because Scout's innocent conversation with Mr. Cunningham about his son and his entailment forces him to see Atticus as a neighbor and fellow human being, not just an obstacle. This shows that individual human connection can overcome mob mentality, and that even people caught up in hatred can be reached through empathy.

4. The courthouse seating reflects Maycomb's racial hierarchy. White citizens sit on the main floor, while Black citizens are relegated to the balcony. The children sit in the balcony with the Black community, symbolically aligning themselves with justice and equality rather than the prejudiced white establishment.



Section 4 — Answer Key

Multiple Choice:

1. a 2. a 3. a 4. a 5. a 6. a

Short Answer (Suggested Responses):

1. Atticus proves that Bob Ewell is left-handed (and therefore could have struck Mayella on the right side of her face), while Tom Robinson's left arm is completely useless. He also shows that no doctor was called to examine Mayella. Despite this clear evidence, the all-white jury convicts Tom because of deep-seated racial prejudice—a Black man's word could never be believed over a white person's in 1930s Alabama.

2. Tom's statement that he felt sorry for Mayella is devastating because in the Jim Crow South, a Black man expressing pity for a white woman violated the racial hierarchy. It implied that a Black man saw himself as superior to a white person, which was unacceptable to the white jury regardless of the evidence.

3. Jem is devastated and angry—he cries and cannot understand how the jury could ignore the evidence. His faith in justice is shattered. Scout, being younger, is sad but more resilient; she doesn't fully grasp the implications. Jem's reaction represents a deeper loss of innocence as he confronts the reality of systemic racism.

4. When Atticus leaves the courtroom, the entire Black community in the balcony stands in a gesture of profound respect and gratitude. Reverend Sykes tells Scout to stand because her father is passing. This moment shows that while Atticus lost the case, he won the moral victory and earned the deep respect of those he fought to protect.



Section 5 — Answer Key

Multiple Choice:

1. a 2. a 3. a 4. a 5. a 6. a

Short Answer (Suggested Responses):

1. Mr. Underwood's editorial compares Tom's death to the senseless slaughter of songbirds (mockingbirds), reinforcing the novel's central metaphor. Tom was an innocent man who was destroyed by a racist system, and his death while trying to escape represents the ultimate failure of justice. Even the typically prejudiced Mr. Underwood recognizes the moral outrage of Tom's death.

2. Sheriff Tate insists Bob Ewell fell on his own knife to protect Boo Radley from public attention and a trial. Tate knows that dragging the shy, reclusive Boo into the spotlight would destroy him. This echoes the mockingbird theme—exposing Boo to public scrutiny would be like killing a mockingbird, harming an innocent person who only wanted to help.

3. At the end of the novel, Scout stands on the Radley porch and sees the neighborhood from Boo's perspective. She imagines watching herself, Jem, and Dill playing over the years. This is the culmination of Atticus's lesson about climbing into someone else's skin. Scout finally understands Boo not as a monster but as a caring neighbor who watched over them.

4. Boo Radley transforms from a terrifying neighborhood legend into the children's silent protector. He leaves gifts in the knothole, puts a blanket on Scout during the fire, mends Jem's pants, and ultimately saves both children's lives. His character arc demonstrates the novel's theme that understanding comes from looking beyond rumors and prejudice to see people as they truly are.



