

***To Kill a Mockingbird*: Teacher's Guide - Essay Topics**

1. What are the different views of reading portrayed by Scout, Jem, and Atticus? How is reading linked to morality for each of these characters? Which view does the author advocate?
2. Lee writes of the Ewell property that held “six chipped-enamel slop jars.” This line relates to a symbol used within the novel. What other symbols are used throughout *To Kill a Mockingbird* and what essential social issue do they support?
3. A true gift is, in one sense, an unexpected blessing bestowed by a person—or even, perhaps, by fate. Some of them may be objects, while some may be things that cannot be seen but are no less important. Early in the novel, the children find a mysterious shiny package in the knothole of a live oak tree. What gifts are given in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and why might they be important to the unfolding of the story?
4. The Radley place undergoes a change in the course of the novel. At the beginning, the audience is told about the “malevolent phantom” that lives within its walls. By the end, Scout fearlessly walks Boo up to his front porch. What does this action show the audience about Scout and how have her changes in character allowed her to be the person she is at the end of the novel?
5. Maudie Atkinson says, “Atticus Finch was the dearest shot in Maycomb County in his time.” How does this experience, along with other experiences, change their views about their father and what the understanding of his most important gift to them?
6. Lee has the children visit the African American church. What primary theme does this experience express within the novel and how does it, along with other experiences, shape their thoughts about culture?