

CHAPTER 12 Connection Questions

1. Scout notices that Jem, who has turned 12 at the beginning of Chapter 12, has changed. Describe how Jem is different. How has the relationship between the siblings changed?
2. Calpurnia changes the way she addresses Jem at the beginning of Chapter 12. What does she call him now? Why?
3. Scout tells us that when Calpurnia stays overnight at the Finches', she sleeps on a cot in the kitchen. Why do you think Harper Lee chose to include this detail in this chapter? What is she trying to show us about the Finches and the rules of Maycomb society?
4. What are the differences between the white church that Scout and Jem usually attend and the black church where Calpurnia takes them?
5. What do Scout and Jem notice about the way that Calpurnia talks when she is among other African Americans at church? How does Calpurnia explain the difference? Do Scout and Jem approve of the way she talks to other African Americans?
6. How would you describe the First Purchase Church community's universe of obligation? Use specific evidence from the book to support your answer.
7. How does the woman named Lula react when she sees Scout and Jem arrive at the First Purchase Church with Calpurnia? Why do you think she reacts as she does? How do the other congregants of First Purchase react to Scout and Jem's presence?
8. After going to Calpurnia's church, Scout states, "That Calpurnia led a modest double life never dawned on me." In what sense does Calpurnia lead a double life?
9. What does Scout learn when she accompanies Calpurnia to church? Why might this be a pivotal moment for Scout?
10. What is naïveté? How do Jem and Scout show naïveté in their questions and comments at church? How do their questions reflect assumptions that turn out not to be true?

11. What do we learn about Tom Robinson in this chapter? What can the reader piece together about Tom Robinson and his family that Scout does not understand?
12. Why do you think that Harper Lee chose to write a scene in which Scout and Jem go to church with Calpurnia? How does this scene help us better understand the complexity of the characters? What themes does it prompt us to think more deeply about?

CHAPTER 13 Connection Questions

1. What evidence is there in this chapter that Jem is continuing to try to live up to the idea of being a gentleman? What evidence is there that Scout continues to resist the idea of being a proper lady?
2. Describe Aunt Alexandra. In what ways is she a proper “Southern lady”? Why do you think Atticus asks her to come live with the family? What concerns does Aunt Alexandra have about the way Atticus is raising his children?
3. Early in the chapter, Scout recognizes that she asked Alexandra a question that is not tactful. What is tact? What other evidence can you find in this chapter that Scout is learning to be more tactful?
4. Scout tells us that, according to Aunt Alexandra, “Everybody in Maycomb, it seemed, had a Streak: a Drinking Streak, a Gambling Streak, a Mean Streak, a Funny Streak.” What is a “streak”? How does she account for these “streaks”? What does this reveal about her assumptions about human behavior? How is Alexandra’s theory about “streaks” different from Scout’s theory that “Fine folks were ones who did the best they could with the sense they had”?
5. Do you think these “streaks” are a form of stereotyping? Why or why not? How might believing in “streaks” affect the relationships between townspeople?
6. Scout tells us, “Aunt Alexandra fitted into the world of Maycomb like a hand into a glove, but never into the world of Jem and me.” Based on what you have learned so far, how is the world of Scout and Jem different from the “world of Maycomb”? What factors make these worlds different?

7. How does Atticus feel when he delivers his lecture to Scout and Jem about their family's "gentle breeding"? What does Scout notice that leads her to conclude, "This was not my father"? Point to evidence in the text that signals to you how Atticus feels about what he is saying.
8. Scout, as a narrator looking back many years later, concludes, "I know what he was trying to do, but Atticus was only a man. It takes a woman to do that kind of work." What does she mean? Has Scout, as an adult, accepted the gender roles that Aunt Alexandra tries so hard to teach her? How do you interpret her tone in this statement?

CHAPTER 14 Connection Questions

1. When seeing Scout and Jem in town, a man on the street mumbles, "They c'n go loose and rape* up the countryside for all of 'em who run this county care." What does he mean? Why does this man say such a thing at the sight of Scout and Jem? Who is this man accusing of being rapists?
2. How does Atticus explain rape to Scout? Do you think Scout understands him? Do you think Atticus intends for her to understand it?
3. Why does Atticus reprimand Scout after her disclosure about going with Calpurnia to church? What rule did she break that makes Atticus angry?
4. What does Alexandra mean when she calls Atticus "soft-hearted"? What has he done, in Alexandra's view, that is soft-hearted?
5. What is the difference between the way Atticus defines family and the way Alexandra does? What factors have you learned about so far in your study of *To Kill a Mockingbird* that might help explain each of their perspectives? How does Alexandra's universe of obligation differ from Atticus's?
6. How does Jem show in this chapter that he has become more mature and responsible than his younger sister? In what ways is he still a child? How does Scout prove to herself that they are "still equals"?
7. What does this chapter reveal to us about Scout's point of view? What is she learning about herself, her family, and her community? What is she struggling to understand? What parts of the story might the reader

* We recommend that teachers review "Discussing Sensitive Topics in the Classroom" on page xv before using these questions in class.

understand better than Scout? How does this dramatic irony affect the experience of reading the novel?

CHAPTER 13 Connection Questions

1. Why do Heck Tate, Link Deas, and others come to the Finches' house? What do they discuss with Atticus? What do they hope to avoid?
2. What does Scout mean when she says that "Do you really think so?" is Atticus's "dangerous question"? When does he ask that question in this chapter? How do you imagine his tone of voice sounds when he asks it?
3. When Link questions Atticus's judgment for defending Tom Robinson, Atticus replies: "Link, that boy might go to the chair, but he's not going till the truth's told . . . And you know what the truth is." What is the truth? How might the reader understand this situation better than Scout?
4. Why do you think Jem comes to the door to tell Atticus the phone is ringing, when he could have answered it himself? Why do the men "jump a little"? Does Jem understand the conversation the men are having? Why is he scared for Atticus?
5. What does Atticus mean when he tells Alexandra that he is "in favor of preserving Southern womanhood as much as anybody, but not for preserving polite fiction at the expense of human life"? What is the polite fiction he refers to, and whose life does it threaten?
6. When a group of men, led by Mr. Cunningham, shows up at the Maycomb jailhouse the night before the Tom Robinson trial, what have they come to do? Why is Atticus there waiting? How do you think the men's ideas about justice differ from Atticus's?
7. When the group of men arrives, Atticus confirms that Tom Robinson is inside the jailhouse sleeping and tells the men not to awaken him. Scout reports: "In obedience to my father, there followed what I later realized was a sickeningly comic aspect of an unfunny situation: the men talked in near-whispers." What is "sickeningly comic" about the situation? Why is it ironic that the men agree to talk in whispers?
8. What is a mob? What is mob mentality? Is the group of men that Atticus confronts at the jailhouse a mob?

9. Why does Jem refuse to leave the jailhouse? How does his defiance of Atticus's order to leave make him similar to Atticus in Scout's estimation?
10. When one of the men tries to grab Jem, Scout kicks him while Atticus tells her, "Don't kick folks." Who do you think had the more appropriate response to the man, Atticus or Scout? If not for Scout's actions, how might Atticus have responded to the man trying to grab Jem?
11. Analyze Scout's attempts to engage Mr. Cunningham in conversation. Why does this exchange convince Mr. Cunningham and the other men to leave?
12. How would you characterize Atticus's actions on the night the men came to the jailhouse? What do his actions tell you about his character? What do you think would have happened if the children hadn't arrived at the jailhouse when they did?
13. Early in the chapter, Atticus describes how Sam Levy made the Ku Klux Klan members so ashamed of themselves that they left him alone. How does Atticus suggest Levy made the Klansmen feel ashamed? How does that story parallel the scene at the jailhouse? What do both of these incidents suggest about mob mentality and how Harper Lee thinks it might be defeated? Compare Harper Lee's perspectives with the insights shared by historian Paula Lee Giddings in the video "The Origins of Lynching Culture."
14. How does Scout's limited understanding of the events in this chapter affect the reader? What parts of the story must the reader piece together on his or her own? What does this process reveal about her reliability as a narrator?

AFTER READING SECTION 4 Connection Questions

1. Does Atticus have a choice about being Tom Robinson's attorney? Does he have a choice about how seriously he takes this role?
2. How do you evaluate the decision Atticus makes in response to the choices available to him in Question 1? Set up two columns in your journal. Label the left column "Risks" and the right column "Benefits." List as many examples of risks and benefits as you can think of, and then use those risks and benefits to help you analyze his choice.

3. Is Atticus living up to his definition of *courage*? Who else behaves courageously in Chapters 12 through 15?
4. How well does Scout, the narrator, understand the story she is telling us? How might the way that she tells the story bias the reader toward or against other characters? How does she limit what we know about the story, the setting, and the other characters? What would you most like to know that Scout hasn't told us?
5. What can we learn about point of view in "real life" by analyzing Scout's limitations as the narrator of *To Kill a Mockingbird*? How can it help us better understand the stories that others tell us? How can acknowledging the perspective of the narrator in a work of fiction help us acknowledge our own limited perspective?
6. Who is Tom Robinson? What do we know about him? What important questions about him has the novel left unanswered? If you lived in Maycomb in the 1930s, how might you find out more about Tom? How would your identity influence your options for finding out more about him? What role would race, gender, age, and class play?
7. In Chapter 15, a group of men from Maycomb sets out to lynch Tom Robinson. Such killings are often referred to as acts of "mob justice." How is "mob justice" different from the type of justice Atticus believes in? What are the risks to society when mob justice overrides legal justice? What other beliefs about justice have you found so far in the novel?