

Plot

Part 1 Narrated by Scout who lives with her father, Atticus, and brother, Jem, in Maycomb. They meet a boy named Dill and they soon bond. The Radley family live nearby and the children are fascinated by Boo Radley; they have heard stories about Boo stabbing his father with scissors. Scout prepares for school and meets her teacher Miss Caroline; she is not very good with children. Scout notices a piece of tin foil sticking out of a tree at the Radley's. Boo leaves presents for the children. Scout starts spending time with Miss Maudie. The children go to the Radley's and peer through their window. They see someone inside and run away. They hear a shotgun from the Radley's. Jem loses his trousers while running. He sneaks out to get them; they are folded and mended. They find more things in the knothole but soon find it filled with cement. Mr. Radley says the tree was dying. One night Scout goes out to find that Miss Maudie's house on fire. While outside, someone puts a blanket on her. Jem thinks it was Boo. The next day Miss Maudie is happy, saying she didn't even like her old house. Scout learns Atticus is defending a black man accused of rape, Tom Robinson. There is a mad dog roaming about Maycomb. Atticus helps hunt it down and shoots it after he drops his glasses. The children learn he used to be known as 'One-Shot Finch'. When the children pass Mrs Dubose's house, she yells something about Atticus and Jem gets angry. She does this for many days. Jem cannot control his anger and destroys her flower garden. As punishment, Jem must read to Mrs. Dubose. Mrs. Dubose dies and Jem receives a box from her which contains a white camellia.

Part 2 Calpurnia brings the children to her church. Aunt Alexandra decides to help with the upbringing of the children. Scout and Jem fight. Scout hears a noise under her bed and discovers Dill, who ran away. Atticus stays outside the jail to protect Tom from a lynch mob. The men feel guilty and leave when they see Scout. The trial begins; the children sit with Rev Sykes. Bob and Mayella lie on the witness stand. Atticus tries to prove Tom's innocence. Tom is found guilty, despite being innocent. Tom is shot and killed whilst trying to escape prison. On their way home from a Halloween party, Jem and Scout are attacked by Bob Ewell. Boo Radley saves them, and Bob is killed. Scout brings Boo onto the porch and they talk. Scout walks Boo back home.

Themes

Prejudice	Innocence	Family life	Friendship
Childhood	Racism	Education	Integrity
Courage	Growing up	Justice	Social inequality

Character

Atticus

Scout and Jem's father, a widower and lawyer in Maycomb. Atticus has passed on to his children his strong sense of morality and justice. He agrees to defend Tom Robinson, a black man charged with raping a white woman, exposing himself and family to the anger of the white community. He is the moral backbone of the novel with his wisdom and empathy.

Scout (Jean Louise Finch)

The narrator and main character who begins her story at almost six years old. A rebellious tomboy, Scout has a fierce disposition toward any who challenge her; at heart she believes in the goodness of people. Scout doesn't lose hope in humanity, despite the events of the book.

Jem (Jeremy Finch)

Scout's brother and constant playmate at the beginning. He is a typical American boy, refusing to back down from dares. Four years older than Scout, he gradually separates himself from her games, but remains her close companion and protector. Jem becomes an adolescent during the story, and his ideals are shaken badly by the evil and injustice that he witnesses during the trial of Tom Robinson.

Dill (Charles Baker Harris)

Jem and Scout's summer neighbour and friend. Dill is a small, confident boy with an active imagination. He becomes fascinated with Boo Radley and represents the perspective of childhood innocence in the novel.

Tom Robinson

The black worker accused of raping Mayella Ewell. Tom is one of the novel's 'mockingbirds', an important symbol of innocence destroyed by evil.

Aunt Alexandra

Atticus's sister. A strong-willed woman with a fierce devotion to her family. A stereotypical Southern lady, which leads her to clash with Scout.

Calpurnia

The Finches' black cook. Calpurnia is a stern disciplinarian and the children's bridge between the white world and her own black community.

Bob Ewell

A drunken, unemployed member of Maycomb's poorest family. He deliberately and wrongfully accuses Tom Robinson of raping his daughter. He represents the dark side of the South: ignorance, poverty, squalor, and hate-filled racial prejudice.

Arthur 'Boo' Radley

A recluse who never leaves his house, Boo dominates the imaginations of Jem, Scout, and Dill. He is a powerful symbol of goodness, hidden by shroud of creepiness, leaving presents for Scout and Jem and emerging at a key moment to save the children. An intelligent child emotionally damaged by his cruel father, Boo is an example of the threat evil poses to innocence/goodness. He is one of the 'mockingbirds', a good person injured by the evil of mankind.

Context

Set in 1930s Alabama, a particularly racist time in the Southern States of America. Black people were treated as second class citizens.

Although slavery had been abolished in 1890 it did little to change the way many white people felt about black people.

Black people were kept separate from white people because of segregation laws. Black children went to separate schools, black people worshipped in their own church and lived in their own separate housing estates.

It was common for black people to be accused of crimes they did not commit. Many white people believed black people were guilty of crimes and did not care if they got a fair trial. Therefore, Atticus is courageous in defending Tom Robinson.

Lynch mobs were gangs of men who imposed their own form of justice on a black person who they felt had committed a 'crime'. An example of this would be the men who go to the jail where Tom Robinson is held.

A group called the Ku Klux Klan were often responsible for lynchings. The KKK often wore white hoods to protect their identity and to make themselves appear even more frightening to their victims.

Vocabulary

Narrative	Bildungsroman	First person
Metaphor	Simile	Setting
Atmosphere	Tension	Perspective
Foreshadowing	Humour	Bigotry
Symbolism	Mood	Dialogue
Protagonist	Superstition	Outcasts
Community		

Assessment Objectives

- AO1** Respond to texts critically and imaginatively; select and evaluate relevant textual detail to illustrate and support interpretations.
- AO2** Explain how language, structure and form contribute to writers' presentation of ideas, themes and settings.
- AO4** Relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts; explain how texts have been influential and significant to self, and other readers in different contexts and at different times.

Tips

- In your essay support points with reference to characters and events and refer back to the question set.
- In your essay remember to integrate points of context into discussion of the characters, events and themes.

Structure and Form

The narrator, Scout, is retelling and explaining the events that led up to her brother, Jem, breaking his arm when he was nearly thirteen. She narrates the events in **chronological** order. By the end of the novel, two years later, events have come full circle and the characters must come to terms with what has happened.

The novel is structured into two main parts to juxtapose the carefree life of childhood with the horrors of prejudice and racism that dominate life in Maycomb County during the trial of Tom Robinson.

You are advised to spend about 40 minutes on this question.

How is the character of Scout presented in the novel? Remember to support your answer with reference to the text and to comment on its social, historical and cultural context. (20)

Scout is a very important character in 'To Kill a Mockingbird' because not only is she the narrator but she also takes the reader on a journey; through her education and learning we see her growth and maturity. We also see Scout finally understand the true value of being a lady and we also see the novel presented through the eyes of a six year old child.

Throughout the novel, Scout grows up and matures from a hot-headed 6 year old to a mature young lady. From Calpurnia, Scout learns the meaning of respect for those who may be slightly different as it 'don't matter who they are, anybody sets foot in this house yo'company'. This is something she learns when Walter Cunningham comes. She shouldn't judge him because his manners are slightly different; she should just show him respect, even if she doesn't agree. She also learns how to control her emotions when she wants to fight Cecil because if she did, she would be 'letting Atticus down'. She doesn't want to let him down after he asked her not to, showing that she can keep her cool when she feels pressurised. Normally, she would have fought Cecil, but because Atticus asked her not to, she won't. She cares too much to let her father down. Lastly, at the end of the novel, we see Scout has finally learned to 'climb in [his] skin and walk around in it' - Boo's. She understands the view of life in Maycomb from his perspective, something she couldn't have done before. It just shows how mature she has become, thinking of someone else and how they actually feel. It is like she is now on a mutual level with Boo.

Also we see Scout finally understand the true value of being a lady, something she didn't think she would ever understand herself. At the Missionary Circle, when Miss Maudie stands up for Atticus, she sees Aunt Alexandra 'give her a look of pure gratitude'. She now knows that she is grateful for what Miss Maudie did, and she is 'silently thanking' her for it. She is loyal to their family and Scout sees even Aunt Alexandra being grateful. She also sees how to be a true lady when things have gone badly (with Tom Robinson dying). She realises that if 'Aunty could be a lady at a time like this, so could I'. Even if something bad happens, you can still put on a brave face to please the crowd, and seeing Aunt Alexandra do this, Scout appreciates her more now than at first. Lastly, Scout is able to put being a lady when Boo asks to go home, as she would 'lead him through our house, but never lead him home'. She understands that it would dent Boo's pride, he is a gentleman so therefore, he should lead the lady home. Scout actually does this, as Boo is 'escorting (Scout) down the sidewalk as any gentleman would do.' She wouldn't want to be seen walking Boo down the street and Boo wouldn't want that either. At the end of the novel, she has finally worked out the value of being a lady.

As a child narrator, Scout provides the reader with an insight into everything which happens in the novel. At the end when Scout is looking back over past events, she feels she has 'learnt everything except possibly algebra'. Even though this still shows her youth, Scout feels herself like she has learnt all she can; this shows she has taken everything they have gone through seriously and she has learnt a lot about herself and from other people. However, we see Scout's youth and innocence again when she 'felt very old'. At the age of nine, this is something you would not expect to hear, however from everything she has learnt whilst growing up, it seems a lot in such a short space of time.

The trial of Tom Robinson is shown through Scout's ideas, and along with her, we are shocked and appalled at the narrow minded, bigoted and racist attitudes of the Maycomb community. Despite the overwhelming evidence to suggest his innocence, despite Atticus' brave defence and despite the fact that Bob Ewell is totally discredited, Tom is pronounced guilty.

Overall, Scout is a key character because as the narrator, the reader sees the story through the eyes of a young innocent child. It allows us to see how adult attitudes of race and class seem wrong through a young child. Her innocence and youth are still present, but overall, she allows the reader to see a story evolve, from beginning to end and back to the beginning.

Commentary

This response is confident, evaluative and well referenced in the text. Quotations are integrated effectively and knowledge is secure.

You are advised to spend 20 minutes on this question.

Look closely at how Atticus speaks and behaves here. What does it reveal about his character? [10]

In ones and twos, men got out of the cars. Shadows became substance as light revealed solid shapes moving towards the jail door. Atticus remained where he was. The men hid him from view. 'He in there, Mr Finch?' a man said.

'He is,' we heard Atticus answer, 'and he's asleep. Don't wake him up.'

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. '

You know what we want,' another man said. 'Get aside from the door, Mr Finch.

'You can turn around and go home again, Walter,' Atticus said pleasantly. 'Heck Tate's around somewhere,'

'The hell he is,' said another man. 'Heck's bunch's so deep in the woods they won't get out till mornin'.'

'Indeed? Why so?'

'Called 'em off on a snipe hunt,' was the succinct answer. 'Didn't you think a'that, Mr Finch?'

'Thought about it, but didn't believe it. Well, then,' my father's voice was still the same, 'that changes things, doesn't it?'

'It do,' another deep voice said. Its owner was a shadow.

'Do you really think so?'

This was the second time I heard Atticus ask that question in two days, and it meant somebody's man would get jumped. This was too good to miss. I broke away from Jem and ran as fast as I could to Atticus.

Jem shrieked and tried to catch me, but I had a lead on him and Dill. I pushed my way through dark smelly bodies and burst into the circle of light.

'H-ey, Atticus?'

I thought he would have a fine surprise, but his face killed my joy. A flash of plain fear was going out of his eyes, but returned when Dill and Jem wriggled into the light.

There was a smell of stale whisky and pig-pen about, and when I glanced around I discovered that these men were strangers. They were not the people I saw last night. Hot embarrassment shot through me: I had leaped triumphantly into a ring of people I had never seen before.

Atticus got up from his chair, but he was moving slowly, like an old man. He put the newspaper down very carefully, adjusting its creases with lingering fingers. They were trembling a little.

'Go home, Jem,' he said. 'Take Scout and Dill home.' We were accustomed to prompt, if not always cheerful acquiescence to Atticus's instructions, but from the way he stood Jem was not thinking of budging.

'Go home, I said.'

Jem shook his head. As Atticus's fists went to his hips, so did Jem's, and as they faced each other I could see little resemblance between them: Jem's soft brown hair and eyes, his oval face and snugfitting ears were our mother's, contrasting oddly with Atticus's greying black hair and square-cut features, but they were somehow alike. Mutual defiance made them alike.

'Son, I said go home.'

In the extract, a lynch mob has just arrived where Atticus is staying with Tom Robinson and they want to take him away. Obviously Atticus refuses. When Scout thinks she sees a group of people she knows, she decides to run over and see what is going on. Only then does she realise she has never seen these people before and Atticus realises that his children could be in danger.

At the start of the extract, the mob want to see Tom Robinson, but Atticus' tone suggests different as he tells them 'don't wake him up'. The imperative tone suggests that Atticus is not going to let these people see Tom at all; he needs to keep him safe and protected from these people as they want to hurt him.

Atticus then addresses the group of men pleasantly as he suggests for them to 'turn around and go home again'. Since he is suggesting this pleasantly, it suggests that he doesn't want to start a fight with any of them. By being polite, Atticus can get across that there is no real need for a fight; if they turn around now, nothing else will be said. It shows how fair he is being considering the situation.

He then goes on to have a 'flash of plain fear' as Scout runs over to get in on the action. He is clearly worried for his daughter's safety but because she is there it could mean that the men won't do anything to himself or Tom in front of a little girl. However, the fear returned when Dill and Jem showed up; they can all leave and let the men do what they came for. It suggests that Atticus is now becoming increasingly nervous for all of their safety. The adjective 'plain' and the word 'fear' suggest that Atticus is showing how worried he is. It is obviously very noticeable.

The reader then sees how much of a strain all of this is having on Atticus as he was 'moving slowly like an old man'. The simile of being like an old man just shows the reader how bad this has gotten, it is too much for someone of his age to take. This suggests that Atticus is at an age where dealing with situations like this is too much for him. His behaviour shows that coping with this is very difficult and the whole case is very stressful; but he doesn't want to let anyone down.

Atticus then tries to prolong his time by 'lingering' when putting down the paper. The verb suggests he is trying to gather his thoughts on how he should deal with the situation. However, he is 'trembling'. Again this word suggests that he is still very nervous as he doesn't know what is going to happen.

At the end of the extract, we see Jem and Atticus in 'mutual defiance'. Jem isn't going to leave like he has been asked and Atticus isn't going to back down in making Jem leave. The word 'defiance' suggests that they are both very similar in their attitudes. If they believe in something, neither of them will back down.

Commentary

The response covers the extract in detail. The points are clearly evaluative and sensitive, using apt textual support.