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Chapter 1

READING NOTES

1. **“Lawyers, I suppose, were children once.”** (Charles Lamb) – Lee begins *To Kill a Mockingbird* with an **epigraph**, a brief quotation placed at the beginning of a novel or other literary work, and which usually suggests the theme or subject of the work. This quote hints at a couple important ideas. Harper Lee's father was a lawyer, and she studied law as well. In the novel, Scout's father, Atticus, is a lawyer whose role is central to the main events of the story. Furthermore, Scout is a child who sees the world with the eyes of a child, but who will also come to see the world with the eyes of an adult.
2. **Maycomb, Alabama** – the **setting** of the story
3. **Atticus Finch** – the widowed father of Scout and Jem; the Maycomb lawyer assigned to represent Tom Robinson
4. **Calpurnia** – the African American housekeeper of the Finches; a strong, wise, motherly figure to Scout and Jem; teaches Scout how to write
5. **“Scout”** (Jean Louise Finch) – The narrator of the story. Scout is aged 6 to 9 when the events take place, though she narrates the story as an adult. Scout is a scrappy young girl, and somewhat of a tomboy.
6. **“Jem”** (Jeremy Atticus Finch) – Scout's older brother. Jem is aged 10 to 13 while the story takes place. He looks out for his sister, Scout, and they are close. As an adolescent and teenager in the story, Jem has to struggle through some difficult issues.
7. **Dill** (Charles Baker Harris) – Jem and Scout's close friend in their neighborhood. Dill spends each summer with his aunt, Miss Rachel Haverford. The rest of the year he lives in Meridian, Mississippi.
8. **Miss Rachel Haverford** – Dill's aunt; lives next door to the Finches

9. **Arthur “Boo” Radley** – The mysterious man who lives at home with the Radleys. He rarely comes out of the house and causes all sorts of speculation and fear in the community. The Radley house is three doors to the south of the Finches.
10. **Nathan Radley** – Boo Radley’s brother, who returns home from Pensacola to live with the family after Mr. Radley dies
11. **Mr. and Mrs. Radley** – the parents of Boo and Nathan Radley
12. **Miss Stephanie Crawford** – the neighborhood scold (gossip)
13. **chattels** (p. 4) – personal possessions
14. **eaves** (p. 9) – the part of a roof that meets or overhangs the walls of a house or building
15. **veranda** (p. 9) – a porch or balcony, often partly enclosed
16. **azaleas** (p. 9) – pretty pinkish-colored flowers
17. **flivver** (p. 11) – a small, inexpensive, usually old car
18. **beadle** (p. 11) – a church official
19. **neighborhood scold** (p. 11) – a busybody who nags or criticizes everyone and knows everything
20. **exposition** – the opening portion of a narrative where the author introduces the tone, setting, characters, and other important facts for understanding the story
21. **foreshadowing** – the arrangement of events and details in a way that later events are anticipated, or shadowed, beforehand

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

1. powerless; lacking strength
2. rash; lacking good judgment
3. walked at a slow, easy pace
4. lacking life; flat; dull
5. wishing to do evil or harm to others
6. occurring at night
7. liking; preference
8. vague; hazy

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Definitions Bank

lacking life; flat; dull	rash; lacking good judgment
a liking; preference	vague; hazy
occurring at night	walked at a slow, easy pace
powerless; lacking strength	wishing evil or harm to others

1. Simon would have regarded with **impotent** fury the disturbance between the North and the South (p. 4)
2. were **imprudent** enough to do it in the presence of three witnesses (p. 5)
3. They **ambled** across the square, shuffled in and out of the stores around it (p. 6)
4. But by the end of August our repertoire was **vapid** from countless reproductions (p. 9)
5. Inside the house lived a **malevolent** phantom. (p. 9)
6. Once the town was terrorized by a series of morbid **nocturnal** events (p. 9)
7. The Radleys, welcome anywhere in town, kept to themselves, a **predilection** unforgivable in Maycomb. (p. 10)
8. Boo's transition from the basement to back home was **nebulous** in Jem's memory. (p. 12)



Read Chapter 1, marking the text in key places according to the method taught in "How to Mark a Book."

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. List five details about the **setting** of Maycomb from pp. 5-6.
2. List three details about Calpurnia from the description given on p. 6. In your answer, include a quotation of the clause that features two **similes** and underline them in your quotation.
3. Whose house is two doors to the north of the Finch house? Whose house is three doors to the south?
4. List three details about Dill from the description given on pp. 7-8. For a fourth detail, provide a quotation of the clause that contains a **metaphor** and a **simile** and underline them.
5. *In spite of our warnings and explanations it drew him as the moon draws water, but drew him no nearer than the light-pole on the corner, a safe distance from the Radley gate.* (p. 9)
Who gave the boys the idea of making Boo Radley come out?
6. Give two details about the Radley Place (as described on p. 9). For a third detail, provide a quotation of the clause that includes **personification**.
7. What activity creates **suspense** at the end of the chapter?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. It is twenty miles east of Finch's Landing; the county seat of Maycomb County; tired old town; in rainy weather the streets turned to red slop; it is hot; bony mules hitched to Hoover carts; men's stiff collars wilted by 9 a.m. (from the heat); people moved slowly, and took their time about everything; a day seemed longer than 24 hours because there was nowhere to go and nothing to buy; a time of vague optimism.
2. Calpurnia is a force to be reckoned with; she is all angles and bones; she is nearsighted and squinted. She calls Scout home from playing; she orders him out of the kitchen. "*her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard.*"
3.
 - two doors to the north: Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose
 - three doors to the south: The Radley Place
4. Answers will vary. He wears blue linen shorts that button to his shirt; he is small; he is seven; his blue eyes lighten and darken; his laugh is sudden and happy; he habitually pulls the cowlick in the center of his forehead. "*his hair was snow white and stuck to his head like duck-fluff.*"
5. Dill
6. Answers will vary. The house is low, and long ago darkened to the color of the slate-gray yard around it. Rain-rotted shingles droop over the eaves; oak trees keep the sun away. "*The remains of a picket drunkenly guarded the front yard.*" (p. 9)
7. Scout and Dill daring Jem to go touch the Radley house

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. It marks the Finch family as different, set apart from the average everyday townsfolk. This foreshadows Atticus's independent spirit and willingness to go against the grain and stand up for what he thinks is right.
2. Answers will vary. This is just to get the students thinking about an important concept. The tradition of "living on the land" means each generation in a rural farming family stays on the land and carries on the family tradition of farming. This tradition is vitally important to two entities: one, the land because families who stay on their land generally feel a strong connection and history with it—and therefore treat the land better. And two, the family because the land nourishes and sustains the family, and keeps them together.
3. No, they do not seem correct. It is pretty obvious that the metaphor introduces a string of exaggerated, far-fetched imaginings by the townspeople. Notice the text says, "People said ..." and then there are a string of improbable speculations, like he goes out when the moon is down and peeps in windows, he makes their azaleas freeze by breathing on them, he commits petty crimes, and he mutilates pets, etc.
4. Answers will vary. This may be difficult for students to see on their own. "closed doors meant illness and cold weather only." (p. 10) The fact that the Radleys' doors are closed on Sundays symbolizes their resistance to and distance from the community of Maycomb. They are closed off from the community. Likewise, the community closes them out—perhaps even more strongly than the Radleys' resistance toward them.
5. One of the central ideas in the novel is the travesty of judging others based on false or distorted assumptions. This is one very effective and sinister way of making people into ghosts. This foreshadows the major event in the novel—the accusation of rape brought against Tom Robinson because of his skin color.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (LOGIC | Dialectic)

1. *Being Southerners, it was a source of shame to some members of the family that we had no recorded ancestors on either side of the Battle of Hastings. All we had was Simon Finch, a fur-trapping apothecary from Cornwall whose piety was exceeded only by his stinginess.* (p. 4)
What do you think might be Lee's **purpose** in revealing this about the Finches? How does it provide a kind of **foreshadowing**?
2. *Yet the tradition of living on the land remained unbroken until well into the twentieth century, when my father, Atticus Finch, went to Montgomery to read law, and his younger brother went to Boston to study medicine.* (p. 4)
Discuss "the tradition of living on the land remained unbroken." Think about this concept in general, not necessarily attached to this story. What does it mean, and why is it important? What is gained when family members break this tradition and move to the city for other kinds of work? And what is lost?
3. *Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom.* (p. 9)
By introducing a description of Boo Radley with this **metaphor**, the narrator goes on to convey the townspeople's perception of Boo. Do their perceptions seem correct? Or do they seem closer to fearful fantasies and legends? Why?
4. *The shutters and doors of the Radley house were closed on Sundays ...* (p. 10)
Explain the **symbolic** nature of the Radleys' closed shutters and doors.
5. *Atticus said no, it wasn't that sort of thing, that there were other ways of making people into ghosts.* (p. 12)
Explain the presence of **foreshadowing** in this quote. Though it is very early in your reading of the novel, do you think this quote might have something to do with the **Central One Idea** of the novel? Why or why not?