

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

American writer Nelle Harper Lee (1926–2016) was born and grew up in Alabama. As an adult, she moved to New York City, where she wrote and published several short stories. She then took a year off from work to write *To Kill a Mockingbird*, using her father as a model for Atticus Finch. *To Kill a Mockingbird* won much acclaim when it was published and a Pulitzer Prize in 1961.

Novel

from
To Kill a Mockingbird
(Chapter 1)

by Harper Lee

1 When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow. When it healed, and Jem’s fears of never being able to play football were **assuaged**, he was seldom self-conscious about his injury. His left arm was somewhat shorter than his right; when he stood or walked, the back of his hand was at right angles to his body, his thumb **parallel** to his thigh. He couldn’t have cared less, so long as he could pass and punt.

2 When enough years had gone by to **enable** us to look back on them, we sometimes discussed the events leading to his accident. I maintain that the Ewells started it all, but Jem, who was four years my senior, said it started long before that. He said it began the summer Dill came to us, when Dill first gave us the idea of making Boo Radley come out.

3 I said if he wanted to take a broad view of the thing, it really began with Andrew Jackson. If General Jackson hadn’t run the Creeks up the creek, Simon Finch would never have paddled up the Alabama, and where would we be if he hadn’t? We were far too old to settle an argument with a fist-fight, so we **consulted** Atticus. Our father said we were both right.

Second Read

- Reread the novel excerpt to answer these text-dependent questions.
 - Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
- 3. Craft and Structure:** What is the point of view of the novel, and what do we know about the novel’s narrator?

My Notes

assuaged: soothed; calmed

parallel: extending in the same direction

enable: make possible

consulted: sought advice from

A Scouting Party

My Notes

4. **Craft and Structure:** What can you infer about the novel’s setting based on the first few paragraphs of the novel?

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight details that reveal characterization, such as a character’s appearance, thoughts, actions, or words.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

Novel

from

To Kill a Mockingbird

(Chapter 1)

by Harper Lee

1 Early one morning as we were beginning our day’s play in the back yard, Jem and I heard something next door in Miss Rachel Haverford’s **collard** patch. We went to the wire fence to see if there was a puppy—Miss Rachel’s rat terrier was expecting—instead we found someone sitting looking at us. Sitting down, he wasn’t much higher than the collards. We stared at him until he spoke:

2 “Hey.”

3 “Hey yourself,” said Jem pleasantly.

4 “I’m Charles Baker Harris,” he said. “I can read.”

5 “So what?” I said.

6 “I just thought you’d like to know I can read. You got anything needs readin’ I can do it. ...”

7 “How old are you,” asked Jem, “four-and-a-half?”

8 “Goin’ on seven.”

9 “Shoot no wonder, then,” said Jem, jerking his thumb at me. “Scout **yonder**’s been readin’ ever since she was born, and she ain’t even started to school yet. You look right **puny** for goin’ on seven.”

10 “I’m little but I’m old,” he said.

11 Jem brushed his hair back to get a better look. “Why don’t you come over, Charles Baker Harris?” he said. “Lord, what a name.”

collard: leafy vegetable

yonder: over there

puny: small

12 “s not any funnier’n yours. Aunt Rachel says your name’s Jeremy Atticus Finch.”

13 Jem scowled. “I’m big enough to fit mine,” he said. “Your name’s longer’n you are. Bet it’s a foot longer.”

14 “Folks call me Dill,” said Dill, struggling under the fence.

15 “Do better if you go over it instead of under it,” I said. “Where’d you come from?”

16 Dill was from Meridian, Mississippi, was spending the summer with his aunt, Miss Rachel, and would be spending every summer in Maycomb from now on. His family was from Maycomb County originally, his mother worked for a photographer in Meridian, had entered his picture in a Beautiful Child contest and won five dollars. She gave the money to Dill, who went to the picture show twenty times on it.

17 “Don’t have any picture shows here, except Jesus ones in the courthouse sometimes,” said Jem. “Ever see anything good?”

18 Dill had seen *Dracula*, a **revelation** that moved Jem to eye him with the beginning of respect. “Tell it to us,” he said.

19 Dill was a curiosity. He wore blue linen shorts that buttoned to his shirt, his hair was snow white and stuck to his head like duck-fluff; he was a year my senior but I towered over him. As he told us the old tale his blue eyes would lighten and darken; his laugh was sudden and happy; he **habitually** pulled at a **cowlick** in the center of his forehead.

20 When Dill reduced *Dracula* to dust, and Jem said the show sounded better than the book, I asked Dill where his father was: “You ain’t said anything about him.”

21 “I haven’t got one.”

22 “Is he dead?”

23 “No...”

24 “Then if he’s not dead you’ve got one, haven’t you?”

25 Dill blushed and Jem told me to hush, a sure sign that Dill had been studied and found acceptable. Thereafter the summer passed in routine **contentment**.

Second Read

- Reread the novel excerpt to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

5. **Key Ideas and Details:** Compare and contrast the characters of Jem and Dill. How are their characters the same? How are they different?

My Notes

revelation: something revealed

habitually: regularly

cowlick: tuft of hair that grows in a different direction to the rest of the hair

contentment: state of being satisfied

A Scouting Party

GRAMMAR & USAGE Clauses

A **relative clause** is a type of dependent clause that begins with a relative pronoun: *who*, *whom*, *that*, *which*, or *whose*. A relative clause modifies a noun much like an adjective does.

These clauses can be **restrictive** (essential) or **nonrestrictive** (nonessential). Commas are usually used to set off nonrestrictive clauses. Consider these examples:

Nonrestrictive: “She gave the money to Dill, *who went to the picture show twenty times on it.*” The relative clause tells more about what Dill did with the money, but it is not essential to understanding the sentence.

Restrictive: “He wore blue linen shorts *that buttoned to his shirt ...*” Consider why the author stating that Dill’s shorts buttoned to his shirt is an essential part of this sentence.

My Notes

6. **Key Ideas and Details:** How can you tell that Dill is an outsider in the Maycomb community?

7. **Key Ideas and Details:** Why does Jem tell Scout to hush, and what does this action reveal about their characters?

Working from the Text

8. From what point of view is the novel told?
9. How is it both similar to and different from the point of view established in the opening credits of the film?
10. Why is each point of view appropriate for its medium—film or literature?
11. As a group, sketch the characters and the scene you just read, indicating the relationships among the children in your drawing. Annotate the sketch with textual evidence to support your analysis of the scene. Include details about how your character looks, acts, speaks, and thinks as well as other characters’ reactions.

Check Your Understanding

Summarize the sketches you made of the characters. What can you infer about the characters based on the text evidence you chose?

Visual Prompt: As you read the rest of Chapter 1, choose a passage that describes a setting, such as the town of Maycomb or the Radley house. Visualize and sketch the setting, and then annotate your sketch with textual evidence.

In addition to details about the setting’s appearance, include examples of the diction and imagery that help to create the author’s attitude or tone.

Narrative Writing Prompt

Think about the scene you just read. Write an “unseen scene” that either comes before or goes after the scene. Or, continue one of the excerpted scenes. Use both dialogue and description in your scene. Be sure to:

- Include a new conflict for the unseen scene, or a continuation of the conflict from the excerpted scene.
- Write dialogue that creates a vivid picture of the characters and conflict.
- Create a consistent point of view.