Then she went to the blackboard and printed the alphabet in enormous square capitals, turned to the class and asked, “Does anybody know what these are?”

Everybody did; most of the first grade had failed it last year.

I suppose she chose me because she knew my name; as I read the alphabet a faint line appeared between her eyebrows, and after making me read most of My First Reader and the stock-market quotations from The Mobile Register aloud, she discovered that I was literate and looked at me with more than faint distaste. Miss Caroline told me to tell my father not to teach me any more, it would interfere with my reading.

“Teach me?” I said in surprise. “He hasn’t taught me anything, Miss Caroline. Atticus ain’t got time to teach me anything,” I added, when Miss Caroline smiled and shook her head. “Why, he’s so tired at night he just sits in the livingroom and reads.”

“Did you forget your lunch this morning?” asked Miss Caroline.

Walter looked straight ahead. I saw a muscle jump in his skinny jaw.

“Did you forget it this morning?” asked Miss Caroline. Walter’s jaw twitched again.

“Yeb’m,” he finally mumbled.

Miss Caroline went to her desk and opened her purse. “Here’s a quarter,” she said to Walter. “Go and eat downtown today. You can pay me back tomorrow.”

Walter shook his head. “Nome thank you ma’am,” he drawled softly.

Impatience crept into Miss Caroline’s voice: “Here Walter, come get it.”

Walter shook his head again.

When Walter shook his head a third time someone whispered, “Go on and tell her, Scout.”

I turned around and saw most of the town people and the entire bus delegation looking at me. Miss Caroline and I had conferred twice already, and they were looking at me in the innocent assurance that familiarity breeds understanding.

I rose graciously on Walter’s behalf: “Ah—Miss Caroline.”

“What is it Jean Louise?”

“Miss Caroline, he’s a Cunningham.”
Then she went to the blackboard and printed the alphabet in enormous square capitals, turned to the class and asked, "Does anybody know what these are?"

Everybody did; most of the first grade had failed it last year. "Yikes! Most of the town is uneducated." I suppose she chose me because she knew my name; as I read the alphabet a faint line appeared between her eyebrows, and after making me read most of My First Reader and the stock-market quotations from The Mobile Register aloud, she discovered that I was literate and looked at me with more than faint distaste. Miss Caroline told me to tell my father not to teach me any more, it would interfere with my reading.

"Teach me?" I said in surprise. "He hasn't taught me anything, Miss Caroline."

Atticus ain't got time to teach me anything," I added, when Miss Caroline smiled and shook her head. "Why, he's so tired at night he just sits in the livingroom and reads."

"Atticus works hard all day on behalf of his clients, the people of Maycomb."

"Did you forget your lunch this morning?" asked Miss Caroline.

Walter looked straight ahead. I saw a muscle jump in his skinny jaw.

"Did you forget it this morning?" asked Miss Caroline. Walter's jaw twitched again.

"Yeb'm," he finally mumbled. "He's lying!"

Miss Caroline went to her desk and opened her purse. "Here's a quarter," she said to Walter. "Go and eat downtown today. You can pay me back tomorrow."

Walter shook his head. "None thank you ma'am," he drawled softly.

Impatience crept into Miss Caroline's voice: "Here Walter, come get it."

Walter shook his head again.

When Walter shook his head a third time someone whispered, "Go on and tell her, Scout."

I turned around and saw most of the town people and the entire bus delegation looking at me. Miss Caroline and I had conferred twice already, and they were looking at me in the innocent assurance that familiarity breeds understanding.

I rose graciously on Walter's behalf. "Ah—Miss Caroline."

"What is it Jean Louise?"

"Miss Caroline, he's a Cunningham."

Interestingly, these words remind the reader of an attorney. Scout is described in a way similar to her neighbors and friends.
Atticus sighed. “I’m simply defending a Negro – his name’s Tom Robinson. He lives in that little settlement beyond the town dump. He’s a member of Calpurnia’s church, and Cal knows his family well. She says they’re clean-living folks. Scout, you aren’t old enough to understand some things yet, but there’s been some high talk around town to the effect that I shouldn’t do much about defending this man. It’s a peculiar case – it won’t come to trial until summer session. John Taylor was kind enough to give us a postponement...”

“If you shouldn’t be defendin’ him, then why are you doin’ it?”

“For a number of reasons,” said Atticus. “The main one is, if I didn’t I couldn’t hold up my head in town, I couldn’t represent this county in the legislature, I couldn’t even tell you or Jem not to do something again.”

“You mean if you didn’t defend that man, Jem and me wouldn’t have to mind you any more?”

“That’s about right.”

“Why?”

“Because I could never ask you to mind me again. Scout, simply by the nature of the work, every lawyer gets at least one case in his lifetime that affects him personally. This one’s mine, I guess. You might hear some ugly talk about it at school, but do one thing for me if you will: you just hold your head high and keep those fists down. No matter what anybody says to you, don’t you let ‘em get your goat. Try fighting with your head for a change...it’s a good one, even if it does resist learning.”

“Atticus, are we going to win it?”

“No, honey.”

“Then why –”

“Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win,” Atticus said.
To Kill a Mockingbird, Ch. 9, Close Reading

Directions: Read the following passage from ch. 9 and annotate your thoughts, ideas, and/or questions as you read.

Atticus sighed. “I’m simply defending a Negro – his name’s Tom Robinson. He lives in that little settlement beyond the town dump. He’s a member of Calpurnia’s church, and Cal knows his family well. She says they’re clean-living folks. Scout, a contrast. Tom is better than his surroundings, perhaps. You aren’t old enough to understand some things yet, but there’s been some high talk around town to the effect that I shouldn’t do much about defending this man. It’s a peculiar case – it won’t come to trial until summer session. John Taylor was kind enough to give us a postponement…”

“If you shouldn’t be defendin’ him, then why are you doin’ it?”

“For a number of reasons,” said Atticus. “The main one is, if I didn’t, I couldn’t hold up my head in town. I couldn’t represent this county in the legislature, I couldn’t even tell you or Jem not to do something again.”

“You mean if you didn’t defend that man, Jem and me wouldn’t have to mind you any more?”

“That’s about right.”

“Why?”

“Because I could never ask you to mind me again. Scout, simply by the nature of the work, every lawyer gets at least one case in his lifetime that affects him personally. This one’s mine, I guess. You might hear some ugly talk about it at school, but do one thing for me if you will: hold your head high and keep those fists down. No matter what anybody says to you, don’t you let ‘em get your goat. Try fighting with your head for a change...it’s a good one, even if it does resist learning.”

“Atticus, are we going to win it?”

“No, honey.”

“Then why…”

“Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win,” Atticus said.
Jem turned out the livingroom lights and pressed his nose to a window screen...Dill and I took another window. A crowd of men was standing around Atticus. They all seemed to be talking at once.

“…movin’ him to the county jail tomorrow,” Mr. Tate was saying, “I don’t look for any trouble, but I can’t guarantee there won’t be any…”

“Don’t be foolish, Heck,” Atticus said. “This is Maycomb...Heck, we’ve gotten one postponement of this case just to make sure there’s nothing to be uneasy about. This is Saturday...Trial’ll probably be Monday. You can keep him one night, can’t you? I don’t think anybody in Maycomb’ll begrudge me a client, with times this hard.”

There was a murmur of glee that died suddenly when Mr. Link Deas said, “Nobody around here’s up to anything, it’s that Old Sarum bunch I’m worried about...can’t you get a–what is it, Heck?”

“Change of venue,” said Mr. Tate. “Not much point in that, now is it?”

Atticus said something inaudible. I turned to Jem, who waved me to silence.

“–besides,” Atticus was saying, “you’re not scared of that crowd, are you?”

“...know how they do when they get shinnied up.”

“They don’t usually drink on Sunday, they go to church most of the day…” Atticus said.

“This is a special occasion, though…” someone said.

They murmured and buzzed until Aunty said if Jem didn’t turn on the livingroom lights he would disgrace the family. Jem didn’t hear her.

“–don’t see why you touched it in the first place,” Mr. Link Deas was saying. “You’ve got everything to lose from this, Atticus. I mean everything.”

“Do you really think so?”

This was Atticus’s dangerous question. “Do you really think you want to move there, Scout?” Bam, bam, bam, and the checkerboard was swept clean of my men. “Do you really think that, son? Then read this.” Jem would struggle the rest of an evening through the speeches of Henry W. Grady.

“Link, that boy might go to the chair, but he’s not going till the truth’s told.” Atticus’s voice was even. “And you know what the truth is.”

As we walked up the sidewalk, we saw a solitary light burning in the distance. “That’s funny,” said Jem, “jail doesn’t have an outside light.”

“Looks like it’s over the door,” said Dill.

A long extension cord ran between the bars of a second-floor window and down the side of the building. In the light from its bare bulb, Atticus was sitting propped against the front door. He was sitting in one of his office chairs, and he was reading, oblivious of the nightbugs dancing over his head.
To Kill a Mockingbird, Ch. 15, Close Reading

Directions: Read the following two passages from ch. 15 and annotate your thoughts, ideas, and/or questions as you read.

Jem turned out the livingroom lights and pressed his nose to a window screen...Dill and I took another window. A crowd of men was standing around Atticus. They all seemed to be talking at once. “...movin’ him to the county jail tomorrow,” Mr. Tate was saying, “I don’t look for any trouble, but I can’t guarantee there won’t be any...”

“Don’t be foolish, Heck,” Atticus said, “This is Maycomb...Heck, we’ve gotten one postponement of this case just to make sure there’s nothing to be uneasy about. This is Saturday...Trial’ll probably be Monday. You can keep him one night, can’t you? I don’t think anybody in Maycomb’ll begrudge me a client, with times this hard.”

There was a murmur of glee that died suddenly when Mr. Link Deas said, “Nobody around here’s up to anything, it’s that Old Sarum bunch I’m worried about...can’t you get a--what is it, Heck?”

“Change of venue,” said Mr. Tate. “Not much point in that, now is it?”

Atticus said something inaudible. I turned to Jem, who waved me to silence.

“...besides,” Atticus was saying, “you’re not scared of that crowd, are you?”

“...know how they do when they get shimmied up,”

“They don’t usually drink on Sunday, they go to church most of the day...” Atticus said.

“This is a special occasion, though...” someone said.

They murmured and buzzed until Auntie said if Jem didn’t turn on the livingroom lights he would disgrace the family. Jem didn’t hear her.

“--don’t see why you touched it in the first place,” Mr. Link Deas was saying. “You’ve got everything to lose from this, Atticus. I mean everything.”

“Do you really think so?”

This was Atticus’s dangerous question. “Do you really think you want to move there, Scout?” Bam, bam, bam, and the checkerboard was swept clean of my men. “Do you really think that, son? I hear what this.” Jem would struggle the rest of an evening through the speeches of Henry W. Grady.

“Link, that boy might go to the chair, but he’s not going till the truth’s told.” Atticus’s voice was even. “And you know what the truth is:"

As we walked up the sidewalk, we saw a solitary light burning in the distance. “That’s funny,” said Jem, “jail doesn’t have an outside light.”

“Looks like it’s over the door,” said Dill.

A long extension cord ran between the bars of a second-floor window and down the side of the building. In the light from its bare bulb, Atticus was sitting propped against the front door. He was sitting in one of his office chairs, and he was reading, oblivious of the nightbugs dancing over his head.

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Atticus is the light. This is a symbol. He represents truth, revealing of lies, He’s also a force of goodness and purity.

[...other annotations and thoughts...]

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“I wish Bob Ewell wouldn’t chew tobacco,” was all Atticus said about it.

According to Miss Stephanie Crawford, however, Atticus was leaving the post office when Mr. Ewell approached him, cursed him, spat on him, and threatened to kill him. Miss Stephanie (who, by the time she had told it twice was there and had seen in all – passing by from the Jitney Jungle, she was) – Miss Stephanie said Atticus didn’t bat an eye, just took out his handkerchief and wiped his face and stood there and let Mr. Ewell call him names wild horses could not bring her to repeat.

“Doesn’t make it right,” said Jim stolidly. He beat his fist softly on his knee. “You just can’t convict a man on evidence like that – you can’t!”

“You couldn’t, but they could and did. The older you grow the more of it you’ll see. The one place where a man ought to get a square deal is in a courtroom, be he any color of the rainbow, but people have a way of carrying their resentments right into a jury box. As you grow older, you’ll see white men cheat black men every day of your life, but let me tell you something and don’t you forget it – whenever a white man does that to a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine a family he comes from, that white man is trash.”

Atticus was speaking so quietly his last word crashed on our ears. I looked up, and his face was vehement. “There’s nothing more sickening to me than a low-grade white man who’ll take advantage of a Negro’s ignorance. Don’t fool yourselves – it’s all adding up and one of these days we’re going to pay the bill for it. I hope it’s not in you children’s time.”

“...Naw, Jem, I think there’s just one kind of folks. Folks.”

Jem turned around and punched his pillow. When he settled back his face was cloudy. He was going into one of his declines, and I grew wary. His brows came together; his mouth became a thin line. He was silent for a while.

“That’s what I thought, too,” he said at last, “when I was your age. If there’s just one kind of folks, why can’t they get along with each other? If they’re all alike, why do they go out of their way to despise each other? Scout, I think I’m beginning to understand something. I think I’m beginning to understand why Boo Radley’s stayed shut up in the house all this time...it’s because he wants to stay inside.”
To Kill a Mockingbird, Ch. 23, Close Reading

Directions: Read the following three passages from ch. 23 and annotate your thoughts, ideas, and/or questions as you read.

"I wish Bob Ewell wouldn't chew tobacco," was all Atticus said about it.

According to Miss Stephanie Crawford, however, Atticus was leaving the post office when Mr. Ewell approached him, cursed him, spat on him, and threatened to kill him. Miss Stephanie (who, by the time she had told it twice was there and had seen in all — passing by from the Jiminy Jungle, she was) — Miss Stephanie said Atticus didn’t bat an eye, just took out his handkerchief and wiped his face and stood there and let Mr. Ewell call him names. Wild horses could not bring her to repeat.

"Doesn’t make it right," said Jim stolidly. He beat his fist softly on his knee. "You just can’t convict a man on evidence like that — you can’t!"

"You couldn’t, but they could and did. The older you grow the more of it you’ll see. The one place where a man ought to get a square deal is in a courtroom, be he any color of the rainbow, but people have a way of carrying their resentments right into a jury box. As you grow older, you’ll see white men cheat black men every day of your life, but let me tell you something and don’t you forget it — whenever a white man does that to a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine a family he comes from, that white man is trash."

This makes me think of business owners who take advantage of new immigrants. Atticus was speaking so quietly his last word crashed on our ears. I looked up, and his face was vehement. "There’s nothing more sickening to me than a low-grade white man who’ll take advantage of a Negro’s ignorance. Don’t fool yourselves — it’s all adding up and one of these days we’re going to pay the bill for it. I hope it’s not in you children’s time."

"...Naw, Jem, I think there’s just one kind of folks. Folks."

Jem turned around and punched his pillow. When he settled back his face was cloudy. He was going into one of his declines, and I grew wary. His brows came together; his mouth became a thin line. He was silent for a while.

"That’s what I thought, too," he said at last, "when I was your age. If there’s just one kind of folks, why can’t they get along with each other? If they’re all alike, why do they go out of their way to despise each other? Scout, I think I’m beginning to understand something. I think I’m beginning to understand why Boo Radley’s stayed shut up in the house all this time... it’s because he wants to stay inside.”

Jem is seeing the corruptions of the adult world.