To Kill a Mockingbird, Chapters 8 - 12

Chapter 8

1. When Miss Maudie’s house catches fire, Maycomb residents as well as others from as far as sixty miles away try to help. What do their actions indicate about the character of people in this region? What does Miss Maudie’s attitude about the tragedy indicate about her character? Quote appropriate lines from the novel to support your statements.

Chapter 9

2. Atticus confides in his brother, Jack, that he worries about how Scout will handle what she will be hearing during the next several months. What is she likely to hear? What does Atticus think she will do? How does he want her to react? What does he mean when he tells Jack he hopes to get both children through the summer without their catching “Maycomb’s usual illness?”

3. Is Scout justified in fighting with Francis? How might she have handled the situation differently?

Chapter 10

4. Why does Jem tell Scout not to brag about their father’s shooting ability? Why does he then say he wouldn’t care if Atticus had no special talents? What does he understand about Atticus that Scout is not yet mature enough to see? Do you have the same respect for Atticus that Jem does? Why or why not?

Chapter 11 - 12

5. How else might have Jem responded to Mrs. Dubose’s insults? Do you think that Atticus could have responded in a more effective way to Mrs. Dubose’s attacks? Explain your answers.

6. Consider Jem’s punishments for vandalizing Mrs. Dubose’s yard. Do you agree with the way Atticus handled the situation? Why or why not? What does Jem learn as a result of his experience?

7. Sum up your opinion of Mrs. Dubose. Do you think she was courageous? Did her age and sickness excuse what she said about Jem and Scout? How did she really feel about Atticus in your opinion? Explain your views.

8. Answer the following:
   a. What does Jem and Scout’s visit to Calpurnia’s church teach them about Cal’s life?
   b. About Tom Robinson’s situation?
   c. About their father’s place in the black community?
   d. About the relationship between the black and white communities in Maycomb?
   e. What might be the consequences of their appearance in Cal’s church?