

To Kill a Mockingbird

Glossary of terms used in the novel

The words below are defined as they are used *in the specific context of the novel*. The full meaning of the word, as given in the dictionary, has not been provided here. You may want to check the dictionary for more information on a particular word, including its pronunciation. Although the chapter numbers are accurate, the page numbers may not be, depending on the edition of the novel you are using.

CHAPTER 1

Page#

- 1 assuaged: to ease or satisfy; make less severe
- 8 Creeks: a tribe of Indians
Battle of Hastings: (1066) Norman conquest of England
apothecary: druggist; pharmacist
strictures: strict advice
dictum: an authoritative pronouncement
chattel: personal property: slaves
- 9 taciturn: habitually quiet, uncommunicative
trot-lines: long fishing lines with baited hooks at intervals
unsullied: unsoiled, not dirtied
dispatched: killed
- 10 Hoover carts: garden carts named after president Herbert Hoover
epic: heroic
- 11 entity: a thing
collard: a leafy green vegetable
- 12 cowlick: a lock of hair on the forehead
pocket Merlin: a readily-available wizard or magician
eccentric: odd
repertoire: assortment of skills
vapid: lacking interest; flat
- 13 eaves: the overhanging edges of a roof
veranda: a long, covered porch along the side of a house
picket: a stick fence
malevolent: evil
"morbid nocturnal events": gruesome and unwholesome nighttime events
predilection: a preference
- 14 domiciled: housed
beadle: a town constable or minor official
- 16 cannas: tropical plant with showy flowers
"wear us out": spank long and hard
- 18 terrain: land
foray: a sudden military advance; a venturing out

CHAPTER 2

- 21 indigenous: native to
- 22 "wallowing illicitly": rolling about in it unlawfully
covey: a group
- 25 scrip stamps: charitable loans or food stamps
entailment: an amount of money that is legally set aside for one purpose
smilax: a climbing vine
croker-sack: a cloth sack made of rough material, such as a horse's feed bag
"the crash": the stock market crash of 1929 which was followed by the Great Depression
- 26 WPA: Works Progress Administration—federal jobs program during the Depression
mortification: embarrassment
sojourn: stay

CHAPTER 3

- 27 free dispensation: an easy and quick giving away of
28 hain't: a spook or a ghost
expounding: seriously explaining
29 erratic: uneven, unpredictable
iniquities: sins
30 persevere: continue despite difficulties
cootie: a louse (plural: lice)
horrid: terrible, horrible
31 contemptuous: hateful and disrespectful
truant: absent without permission
32 contentious: argumentative
expansively: talkatively
33 fraught: filled or charged with something
monosyllabic: made up of one syllable
34 amiable: friendly
wisteria: a flowering, climbing vine
35 misdemeanor: a minor crime
begrudges: unhappily allows
36 disapprobation: disapproval
discernible: visible
severed: cut off

CHAPTER 4

- 37 auspicious: marked by success; favorable
39 parched: dry; arid
title: ownership
40 Camellia: a type of flower
scuppernongs: sweet, yellow grapes
42 palette: a range of colors, usually of paints on a hand-held mixing board
44 Gothic: grotesque and mysterious in style
melancholy: extremely sad
45 quelling: calming down

CHAPTER 5

- 46 benign: harmless, not evil
tacit: unspoken but agreed upon and understood
arbor: wooden structure to support vines or other plants
chameleon: an animal that changes its skin color to adapt to changing
surroundings
47 magisterial: royal, majestic
pestilence: a plague of insects
cordiality: friendliness, hospitality
benevolence: goodness
48 morbid: psychologically unhealthy
50 "raveling a thread": idly talking; daydreaming
53 "dried up": lost his nerve to speak
inquisitive: curious
54 asinine: stupid
edification: spiritual or intellectual improvement
gaped: stared with mouth hanging open
quibbling: arguing over trivial matters

CHAPTER 6

- 58 collards: a leafy green vegetable
59 cherub: a baby angel
60 malignant: evil, harmful

CHAPTER 7

62 gnats: tiny flies
64 perpetual: never-ending
hoo-dooing: voodoo, casting spells
67 vigil: a long time of watching and waiting
68 unfathomable: unknowable; not understandable
aberrations: departures from the normal or expected
touchous: sensitive, easily irritated

CHAPTER 8

69 bade: (past tense of "bid"): ordered (v.)
71 plaited: braided together
72 "perpetrated a near libel": committed an act of damaging one's reputation
caricature: an exaggerated and comical but recognizable picture of someone
"morphodite" (corrupt form of "hermaphrodite"): a person having both male and
female sexual organs
direst: warning of the most dreadful consequences
73 tousled: disarranged, uncombed
taffeta-like: crisp fabric that makes a rustling sound
spewing: spitting
75 quelled: stopped, ended, put out
78 cordial: friendly
perplexity: confusion
"right stove up": caved in; unable to function

CHAPTER 9

80 inordinately: exceeding reasonable limits
81 "drew a bead on him": aimed at him
lineaments: shapes, contours, lines
82 induce: to persuade or arouse, to bring about
ingenuous: unsophisticated
changelings: children secretly or purposely exchanged
analogous: comparable to; alike in some ways
hookah: a Turkish water pipe
84 jetty: a pier, wharf or projection of land into a body of water
guilelessness: plain, open honesty, without any tricks
85 overseer: man in charge of slaves in the field
trousseau: complete set of wedding garments
86 deportment: conduct, behavior
87 mortify: to embarrass
88 "nome": "no, M'am."
90 obstreperous: noisily defiant
91 "on tenterhooks:" anxiously waiting
92 invective: angry, abusive, complaining language

CHAPTER 10

94 tartly: sharply
95 Providence: God's loving kindness
mausoleum: a house of burial chambers
breastworks: a wall fortified for defense in a battle
"Jew's Harp": a small musical mouth harp with one vibrating fork
97 erratically: unpredictably, irregularly
101 'druthers: form of "I would rather"; preference
102 articulate: speaking clearly
103 jubilantly: joyfully and triumphantly

CHAPTER 11

- 103 passé: out of fashion
104 CSA: Confederate States of America (the South during the Civil War)
apoplectic: tending to apoplexy, or the loss of muscular control; so angry as
to cause apoplexy
livid: extremely angry
105 scuppernong arbor: (you should know! See p. 40 and 46 vocabulary above)
106 camisole: a woman's sleeveless undershirt or slip
philippic: a verbal denunciation characterized by invective
"took umbrage": took offense
107 rectitude: moral properness
interdict: (n.) order forbidding some action
skulked: lurked about, hiding from work or obligations
palliation: a state of making something less severe, less serious
108 relic: very old thing
109 essence: essential part of something
abide: to live, or live with
reconnaissance: exploratory search
calomel: a medicine intended to make one throw up
111 tirade: angry flow of words
cuticles: the skin at the base of the fingernails
nether: lower
undulate: to move in waves
viscous (not vicious!): thick and slow-flowing
112 propensities: inclinations to something
115 escapade: dangerous adventure
beholden: indebted to, owing something to someone
116 cantankerous: cranky and argumentative

CHAPTER 12

- 117 altercation: argument
118 barnacles: shell-like growths on the side of a ship or boat
119 frivolous: foolish, silly
120 castile: a type of soap
habiliments: clothes
121 asafoetida: a medicinal root with an offensive odor
contemptuously: hatefully
122 contentious: argumentative
122 rotogravure: a process of printing newspaper magazine sections
ecclesiastical: having to do with the church
impedimenta: baggage or objects that get in the way
qualms: worries, doubts
124 denunciation: verbal condemnation
austere: strict, stern
lapses: falls; failures
126 voile: sheer fabric for dresses
tedious: long and boring

CHAPTER 13

- 129 enarmored (not enamored!): covered with armor
"traveled in state": like a head of state--majestically
130 corset: a kind of girdle
131 shinny: an alcoholic beverage
tight: slightly drunk
Amanuensis: a person who takes dictation or copies writing down
132 morbid: psychologically unhealthy
obliquely: indirectly and not quite honestly
133 myopic: near-sighted; unable to see things clearly around you
caste system: system of social classification of people
134 dicta (plural of dictum): rules

mandrake: a plant with narcotic roots
135 elusive: hard to catch

CHAPTER 14

140 gouging: poking or forcing out
142 manacles: handcuffs

CHAPTER 15

147 placid: calm, peaceful
change of venue: change of location of a trial
150 linotype: a newspaper printer's type-setting machine
151 bade (past tense of bid): greet or say good bye
campaigner: an experienced soldier
152 venerable: worthy of respect and honor due to age
hideous: horribly ugly
Gothic: a medieval style of architecture
battlements: defense positions built on top of a wall
flying buttresses: supporting columns protruding from the sides of a building
façade: false front
ecclesiastical: having to do with the church
153: Victorian: ornate British building style of the late 1800's
privy: outhouse
discreet: quietly and purposely unnoticed
154 acquiescence: passive obedience
155 overture: initial attempt to start communication
156 futility: state of hopelessness; impossibility
aggregation: collection or grouping
uncouth: vulgar, without manners
157 encumbered: weighed down

CHAPTER 16

158 profane: vulgar, non-religious
fey: touched, mad, enchanted
161 Mennonites: members of a Protestant religious sect
akimbo: hands on hips, elbows sticking out
command: knowledge
formidable: powerful, dangerous
162 subpoena: a legal document requiring one to appear in court
elucidate: to make clear
164 reminiscent: reminding of
165 Greek revival: modern style of architecture imitating ancient Greek style
sundry: various
solicitor: a type of lawyer
unobtrusive: not noticeable
167: pilot fish: smaller fish that accompany sharks
convened: opened for session
168: litigants: opponents in a law suit
170 terse: short and brief
banged: bruised
171 gullet: throat
title dispute: disagreement over ownership of something
172: corroborating evidence: evidence that confirms the truth of a statement
bantam cock: a rooster
crepey: wrinkled
congenital: inherited
indigenous: native to, originally present in that region
173 deigned: to condescend; to do something ordinarily beneath one's dignity

174 cap'n: slang for captain
opposing counsel: the lawyer for the other side
acrimonious: angry and heated
benignly: in a good-natured manner
affirmative: yes
audibly obscene speculations: spoken pornographic thoughts
175 quelling: calming down
dictum: a command or order
176: confines: boundaries
177: genially: in a friendly, pleasant manner
haughty: proud and arrogant
178 warranted: deserved
179 immaterial: without substance
card: a clever, humorous fellow
frogsticking without a light: looking for something you can't find, because you
are unprepared
tenet: a rule
180 ambidextrous: able to use both hands equally well
pantomime: wordless movement and gestures to act something out
181 counting his chickens...before they hatch!

CHAPTER 18

181 lavations: washings
182: mollified: satisfied
chifforobe: portable clothes closet
183 primly: very properly
186 tollable: slang for tolerable, acceptable
187 serenely: calmly
arid: very dry
188 wrathfully: angrily
tedious: tiring and boring
190 articulate: able to speak clearly
191 distilled: boiled down to the pure essence or essential part
192 exodus: a general exit of people

CHAPTER 19

195 volition: one's own will
198 ex cathedra: from the official chair or seat
expunge: delete
effect: (v.) to cause
201 impudent: rude, contradictory

CHAPTER 20

203 discreet: careful, prudent
perpetrated: committed illegally
204 corroborative: supportive, tending to prove true
205 minute: small, fine
206 enormity: great seriousness
contraband: illegally held goods
207 caliber: quality
distaff side: the female or feminine side of the family
208 pauper: a very poor person with no property

CHAPTER 21

210 tacit: unspoken
211 demurred: objected
212 psychical: having to do with the mind

CHAPTER 22

- 215 impassive: without facial expression
wallow: lie in the mud
bleakly: unhappily
216 reckon: to think, analyze
217 becoming: (adj.) appropriate, attractive
cynical: always believing the worst
feral: wild, untamed
218 bridgework: false teeth
fatalistic: expecting death
ruefully: sadly
219 heathen: unchristian

CHAPTER 23

- 220 obscure: hidden, unknown
221 wryly: sarcastically
peace bond: court order requiring one person to stay away from another
credibility: believability
furtive: sneaky, secretive, hidden
222 circumstantial evidence: coincidental evidence that does not prove
223 stolidly: firmly
vehement: strongly and passionately believing/speaking
224 sordid: filthy, dirty; morally foul

CHAPTER 24

- 230 charlotte: sponge cake with fruit
231 squalid: dirty, poor appearance; morally repulsive
yaws: a tropical skin disease
233 impertinence: rudeness
duress: stress, hardship
234 squalor: condition of being squalid
stately largo: slow, solemn music
235 sibilant: hissing "s" sound
bovine: having to do with cows
wool: the curly white hair of the speaker's black servant
236 dreary: boring, empty
brevity: briefness
undelectable: unpleasant, improper
239 background: one's ancestry and social history

CHAPTER 25

- 243 veneer: a thin layer of polished wood covering up rough wood
244 due process: legal civil right to proper court action

CHAPTER 26

- 245 remorse: sorrow
246 poise: confidence
spurious: suspicious
247: holy roller: member of a religious sect known for falling down in trances
during worship
govamint'd: slang for "government would"
248 enunciated: pronounced clearly
249 undue: too much

CHAPTER 27

- 250 WPA: Work Projects Administration: a federal jobs program
industry: diligence, hard work
notoriety: fame; bad reputation
- 251 savored: enjoyed the taste of
metaphors: figures of speech that compare two unlike things
florid: flowery, heavily decorated
- 254 ear trumpet: old-fashioned hearing aid horn
Victrola: an old-fashioned record player
purloined: stolen
- 255 pageant: a show
grand finale: the final big act of a show
cured: seasoned and dried slowly over time

CHAPTER 28

- 257 incantations: secret, magic chants or spoken formulas
mocker: slang for mockingbird
irascible: ill-tempered, bothersome
- 258 gait: the speed and style of walk of a person
furtive: secretive
- 259 divinity: a sweet dessert
climbers: people trying to move up the social ladder
- 261 primeval: from the earliest times
hock: the ankle bone of a pig
- 265 pinioned: tied down
- 266 staccato: repeated, short, rapid, distinct sounds
- 267 boil-prone: likely to have infectious pus-bubbles on the skin
- 269 steeds: horses
untrammelled: untrampled

CHAPTER 29

- 273 reprimand: a scolding
garishly: in a harshly bright way

CHAPTER 30

- 273 blandly: without emotion
- 275 eluded: avoided capture
- 277 craw: slang for stomach
- 278 honed: sharpened
bided: waited

CHAPTER 31

- 280 raling: breathing with a rattling wheeze
- 283 acquiescence: willingness to give in