

Vocabulary Study
***To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee**

Note: The words, definitions, and quotations in the first section are given in the order as they appear in the 1982 Warner Books edition.

Chapters 1–5

assuage
auspicious
benign
contentious
disapprobation

edification
erratic
indigenous
onslaught
persevere

1. **assuage** (uh-SWEYJ, uh-SWEYZ) *v.* to lessen or to calm

derivatives: assuaging, assuagement, assuager

“... Jem’s fears of never being able to play football were **assuaged** . . .” (7).

2. **indigenous** (in-DIJ-uh-nuh s) *adj.* belonging to a particular region or country

“The class murmured apprehensively, should she prove to harbor her share of the peculiarities **indigenous** to that region” (21).

3. **onslaught** (ON-slawt, AWN-) *n.* a violent attack

“His fists were half cocked, as if expecting an **onslaught** from both of us” (27).

4. **erratic** (ih-RAT-ik) *adj.* irregular

derivative: erratically

“She was furious, and when she was furious Calpurnia’s grammar became **erratic**” (29).

5. **persevere** (PUR-suh-veer) *v.* to carry on in spite of difficulties

derivatives: perseverance, persevering

“Apparently she had revived enough to **persevere** in her profession” (30).

6. **contentious** (kuh n-TEN-shuh s) *adj.* always ready to argue or fight

“‘Ain’t got no mother,’ was the answer, ‘and their paw’s right **contentious**” (32).

7. **disapprobation** (DIS-ap-ruh-BEY-shuh n) *n.* disapproval

derivative: approbation

“‘I’m afraid our activities would be received with considerable **disapprobation** by the more learned authorities’” (36).

8. **auspicious** (aw-SPISH-uh s) *adj.* favorable

derivatives: auspiciously, inauspicious

“The remainder of my schooldays were no more **auspicious** than the first” (37).

9. **benign** (bih-NAHYN) *adj.* kind and gentle

derivatives: benignantly, benignly

“... she was only another lady in the neighborhood, but a relatively **benign** presence” (46).

10. **edification** (ED-uh-fi-KEY-shuh n) *n.* education; instruction

derivatives: edify, edifying

“‘No,’ said Atticus, ‘putting his life’s history on display for the **edification** of the neighborhood’” (54).

Chapters 6–10

aberration
caricature
compensation
inconspicuous
ingenuous

malignant
provocation
prowess
unfathomable
vigil

1. prowess (PROU-is) *n.* superior ability or skill

“ . . .the ensuing contest to determine relative distances and respective **prowess** only made me feel left out again. . . .”(55).

2. malignant (muh-LIG-nuh nt) *adj.* dangerous; evil

derivative: malignantly

“ . . . the chinaberry trees were **malignant**, hovering, alive” (60).

3. vigil (VIJ-uhl) *n.* a watch.

derivatives: vigilant, vigilance

“Next day Jem repeated his **vigil** and was rewarded” (67).

4. unfathomable (ŭn-FATH-ə-mə-bəl) *adj.* something that can not be understood

derivatives: fathomable, fathomer, unfathomable, unfathomableness, unfathomed

“For reasons **unfathomable** to the most experienced prophets in Maycomb county, autumn turned to winter that year” (68).

5. aberrations (ab-uh-REY-shuh n) *n.* a deviation, or a moving away from, something that is normal

derivatives: aberrant, aberrational

“Jem and I were burdened with the guilt of contributing to the **aberrations** of nature . . .” (68).

6. caricatures (KAR-i-kuh-CHER, -choor) *n.* a representation of a person where certain features of that person are exaggerated or distorted

derivatives: caricaturable, caricatural, caricaturist, self-caricature

“‘You can’t go around making **caricatures** of the neighbors” (72).

7. compensation (KOM-puh n-SEY-shuh n) *n.* to pay for something or to make up for something

derivatives: compensate, compensated, compensating

“The fact that Auntie was a good cook was some **compensation** for being forced to spend a religious holiday with Francis Hancock” (82).

8. ingenuous (in-JEN-yoo-uhs) *adj.* simple; innocent

derivatives: ingenuously, ingenuousness

“... he enjoyed everything I disapproved of, and disliked my **ingenuous** diversions” (82).

9. provocation (prov-uh-KEY-shuh n) *n.* to excite some sort of feeling; often anger or irritation.

derivatives: provoke, provoking

“‘Well, I don’t,” said Uncle Jack, “Well not unless there’s extreme **provocation** connected with ‘em” (83).

10. inconspicuous (in-kuh n-SPIK-yoo-uhs) *adj.* To be conspicuous is to attract attention. To be **inconspicuous** is to do the opposite; to not attract attention.

derivatives: inconspicuously, inconspicuousness

“With these attributes, however, he would not remain as **inconspicuous** as we wished him to. . . .”(94).

Chapters 11–15

acquiescence
aggregation
degradation
indignantly
infallible

ominous
reconnaissance
stifle
umbrage
venerable

1. degradation (DEG-ruh-DEY-shuh n) *n.* a state of low honor or moral character

derivatives: degrading, degradational, degradative

“ . . . we were followed up the street by a philippic on our family’s moral **degradation**. . . .”
(106).

2. umbrage (UHM-brij) *n.* offense

“ . . . but I took **umbrage** at Mrs. Dubose’s assessment of the family’s mental hygiene”
(106).

3. reconnaissance (ri-KON-uh-SUHNS, -ZUHNS) *n.* examination

derivative: reconnoitering

“He set me on my feet, and I made a secret **reconnaissance** of Jem” (109).

4. indignantly (in-DIG-nənt ly) *adv.* angrily

derivative: indignant

“ . . . but the roses on her hat trembled **indignantly**” (121).

5. infallible (in-FAL-uh-buhl) *adj.* never wrong

derivatives: infallibility, infallibleness, infallibly

“ . . . his **infallible** sense of direction told him he was in Abbott County. . . .”(142).

6. ominous (OM-uh-nuh s) *adj.* threatening; sinister

derivatives: ominously, ominousness

“There was a murmur among the group of men, made more **ominous** when Atticus moved back. . . .”(148).

7. stifle (STAHY-fuh l) *v.* hold back; suppress

derivatives: stifler, unstifled

“Atticus tried to **stifle** a smile but didn’t make it” (149).

8. venerable (VEN-er-uh-buh l) *adj.* impressive on account of age or historic associations

derivatives: venerability, venerably

“The Maycomb jail was the most **venerable** and hideous of the county’s buildings” (152).

9. acquiescence (AK-wee-ES-uh ns) *n.* agreement without protest

derivative: acquiesce

“We were accustomed to prompt, if not always cheerful **acquiescence** to Atticus’s instructions. . . .”(154).

10. aggregation (AG-ri-GEY-shuh n) *n.* group; gathering

derivatives: aggregated, aggregating, aggregates, aggregately, aggregative, aggregator

“ . . . I slowly awoke to the fact that I was addressing the entire **aggregation**” (156).

Chapters 16–20

acrimonious
congenital
discreet
elucidate
formidable

perpetual
prosperity
strenuous
temerity
volition

1. formidable (fawr-MI-duh-buh1]) *adj.* impressive

derivatives: formidableness, formidability, formidably

“ . . . Miss Maudie’s command of Scripture was **formidable**” (161).

2. elucidate (ih-LOO-si-deyt) *v.* explain

derivatives: elucidation, elucidative, elucidator

“We asked Miss Maudie to **elucidate**. . . .” (162).

3. congenital (kuh n-JEN-i-tl) *adj.* a condition that is in existence at birth

derivative: congenitally

“ . . . no public health officer could free them from **congenital** defects. . . .” (172).

4. prosperity (pro-SPER-i-tee) *n.* good fortune; wealth

derivative: prosperous

“ . . . the Ewells lived as guests of the county in **prosperity** as well as in the depths of a depression (172).”

5. acrimonious (AK-ruh-MOH-nee-uh s) *adj.* sarcastic; bitter; nasty

derivatives: acrimoniously, acrimoniousness

“We could tell, however, when the debate became more **acrimonious** than professional. . . .” (174).

6. strenuous (STREN-yoo-uh s) *adj.* work or labor that is **strenuous** requires a lot of energy and stamina.

derivatives: strenuously, strenuousness, strenuousity

“She seemed somehow fragile-looking, but when she sat facing us in the witness chair she became what she was, a thick-bodied girl accustomed to **strenuous** labor” (181).

7. perpetual (per-PECH-oo-uh l) *adj.* everlasting; continuous

derivatives: perpetuality, perpetually

“...the younger children had **perpetual** colds and suffered from chronic ground-itch. ...”(185).

8. volition (voh-LISH-uh n, vuh-) *n.* the act of willing, choosing, or resolving; exercise of willing

derivatives: volitional, volitionary

“...a respectable Negro would never go up into somebody’s yard of his own **volition**” (195).

9. discreet (dih-SKREET) *adj.* carefully phrased; cautious

derivatives: discretion, discreetly, discreetness

“Mr. Raymond chuckled, not at all offended, and I tried to frame a **discreet** question. ...” (203).

10. temerity (tuh-MER-i-tee) *n.* foolish or rash boldness

“‘...And so a quiet, respectable, humble Negro who had the unmitigated **temerity** to ‘feel sorry’ for a white woman as had to put his word against two white people’s.’”(207).

Chapters 21–26

acquit
cynical
exhilarated
impertinence
infantile

recluse
remorse
spurious
squalor
vehement

1. acquit (uh-KWIT) *v.* clear of a charge; find not guilty

derivatives: acquitted, acquitting

““You think they’ll **acquit** him that fast”” (210).

2. exhilarated (ig-ZIL-uh-REYT-ed) *adj.* cheerful, merry

derivatives: exhilarate, exhilarating

“I was **exhilarated**” (210).

3. cynical (SIN-i-kuhl) *adj.* someone who often belittles or makes fun of someone else

derivatives: cynic, cynically

““It’s not becoming to a child. It’s—**cynical**”” (217).

4. vehement (VEE-uh-muhnt) *adj.* full of emotion and strong feeling

derivative: vehemently

“I looked up and his face was **vehement**” (223).

5. infantile (IN-fuh n-tahyl, -til) *adj.* childish

derivative: infantility

“Jem waved my question away as being **infantile**” (229).

6. impertinence (im-PUR-tn-uh ns) *n.* disrespect

derivative: impertinent

“Miss Stephanie eyed me suspiciously, decided that I meant no **impertinence**. . .”(233).

7. squalor (SKWOL-er, SKWAW-er) *n.* filth

““Out there in J. Grimes Everett’s land there’s nothing but sin and **squalor**”” (234).

8. remorse (ri-MAWRS) *n.* a feeling of regret and guilt

derivative: remorseful

“I sometimes felt a twinge of **remorse**, when passing by the old place . . .”(245).

9. recluse (REK-loos, ri-KLOOS) *n.* someone who stays away from society and the company of others

derivative: reclusive

“ . . .what reasonable **recluse** wants children peeping through his shutters . . .”(245).

10. spurious (SPYOOR-ee-uh s) *adj.* outwardly resembles something but does not have the genuine qualities of that thing.

derivatives: spuriously, spuriousness

“The rural children who could, usually brought clippings from what they called The Grit Paper, a publication **spurious** in the eyes of Miss Gates, our teacher” (246).

Chapters 27–31

bland
carcass
eccentricities
florid
irascible

nondescript
notoriety
repertoire
reprimand
staccato

1. notoriety (noh-tuh-RAHY-i-tee) *n.* fame

derivative: notorious

“I suppose his brief burst of fame brought on a briefer burst of industry, but his job lasted only as long as his **notoriety**. . . .”(250)

2. florid (FLAWR-id, FLOR-) *adj.* very flowery in style; elegant

derivative: floridly

“One Sunday night, lost in fruity metaphors and **florid** diction, Judge Taylor’s attention was wrenched from the page . . .”(251).

3. nondescript (NON-di-SKRIPT) *adj.* dull; with no special or interesting qualities

““Hush,”” he said to Ann Taylor, his fat **nondescript** dog” (251).

4. carcass (KAHR-kuh s) *n.* body

““First thing you can do, Ewell, is get your stinkin’ **carcass** off my property”” (252).

5. eccentricities (EK-suh n-TRIS-i-tee, EK-sen-) *n.* odd behavior

derivative: eccentric

“. . . our classmates mercifully let us forget our father’s **eccentricities**” (253).

6. repertoire (REP-er-twahr, -twawr, rep-uh-) *n.* accomplishments; skills.

derivative: repertory

“High above us in the darkness a solitary mocker poured out his **repertoire**. . . . (257).

7. irascible (ih-RAS-uh-buhl) *adj.* angry

derivatives: irascibility, irascibleness, irascibly

“High above us in the darkness . . . [we heard] . . . the **irascible** qua-ack of a bluejay. . . .”(257).

8. staccato (stuh-KAH'-toh) *adj.* distinct; sharp and crisp

“The man was walking with the **staccato** steps of someone carrying a load too heavy for him” (266).

9. reprimand (REP-ruh-mand, -mahnd, REP-ruh-mand, -mahnd) *v.* scold

derivatives: reprimander, reprimandingly

“. . . I pointed to the man in the corner, but brought my arm down quickly lest Atticus **reprimand** me for pointing” (273).

10. blandly (BLAND-ly) *adv.* smoothly; without excitement

derivatives: blander, blindest

“If Atticus could **blandly** introduce me to Boo Radley at a time like this. . . .” (273).

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Fill-in-the-Blank Activity
To Kill a Mockingbird

Using the SAT words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once. The answers may or may not be used in the same plot context as in the quotations given with the definitions.

Chapters 1–5

assuage
auspicious
benign
contentious
disapprobation

edification
erratic
indigenous
onslaught
persevere

1. Scout's teacher believes the girl is being _____ because she is always ready to fight about wanting and knowing how to read.
2. Calpurnia usually uses good grammar, but when she is angry, her grammar is _____.
3. Because Scout already knows how to read, her teacher has an air of _____ and thinks that the little girl needs to stop reading with her father.
4. The children feel that a friendship with the strange man on their block is _____ rather than dangerous.
5. Foot-washing Baptists are _____ to Maycomb and had been a part of the area for generations.
6. Dill holds up his hands in defense, perhaps thinking the other two children plan an _____.
7. While Jem likes school and learning, Scout does not have a very _____ beginning.
8. For the _____ of his daughter, Atticus suggests to Scout that they continue to read at home, but that she allow the teacher to work with her too.
9. Scout's teacher has to _____ in her attempt to rid Scout of bad reading habits.
10. Because Jem's arm was twisted a little, Atticus tries to _____ his fears of never being able to play football again.

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity
To Kill a Mockingbird

Using the SAT words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once. The answers may or may not be used in the same plot context as in the quotations given with the definitions.

Chapters 6–10

aberration
caricature
compensation
inconspicuous
ingenuous

malignant
provocation
prowess
unfathomable
vigil

1. Because the children know almost all the neighbors in Maycomb, the reasons Boo never comes out are _____ to them.
2. The children try to prove their _____ when they sneak out to spy on Boo Radley.
3. Scout wishes that Atticus would remain _____, but the children learn that, although they think he is old and feeble, he possesses many talents.
4. Uncle Jack warns Scout that she should avoid using cuss words because they are useless, unless she gets very angry or finds herself under extreme _____.
5. The attitude of the town takes a _____ turn when some call Atticus a name for defending a black man.
6. Although her behavior seems _____, Scout often earns the consternation of her father.
7. Jem keeps a close _____ on the comings and goings of the Radley house, just to get a peek of Boo.
8. Winter comes quickly to Maycomb, which is an _____ of nature and something they do not readily understand.
9. Although the children do not like spending time with their cousin Francis, there is some _____ in that they see their father and uncle in a special setting.
10. In making up stories about Boo Radley, the children create a _____ of the real person.

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity
To Kill a Mockingbird

Using the SAT words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once. The answers may or may not be used in the same plot context as in the quotations given with the definitions.

Chapters 11–15

acquiescence
aggregation
degradation
indignantly
infallible

ominous
reconnaissance
stifle
umbrage
venerable

1. When Dill shows up underneath Scout's bed, she is surprised at his unwavering and _____ sense of their friendship.
2. Lula is _____ when Calpurnia brings Scout and Jem to her church.
3. The children do not always comply with immediate _____ when told to do something by an adult.
4. Atticus must use common sense when he is faced with an _____ of angry Maycomb citizens who believe Tom Robinson is guilty.
5. After insulting Walter Cunningham about drowning his lunch syrup, Scout's _____ is complete when Calpurnia sends her to the kitchen to finish her lunch.
6. Jem, Scout, and Dill take a quick _____ of the courthouse before entering the doors.
7. The children take _____ when their classmates taunt them about their father's newest court case.
8. Both Mrs. Dubose and the courthouse could be viewed as being _____ since they are both old and historic.
9. Atticus stands guard outside the courthouse as an _____ mob of men comes to take Tom away.
10. Many adults such as Aunt Alexandra and Mrs. Dubose try to _____ the children's behavior in favor of what they considered more appropriate social skills.

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity
To Kill a Mockingbird

Using the SAT words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once. The answers may or may not be used in the same plot context as in the quotations given with the definitions.

Chapters 16–20

acrimonious
congenital
discreet
elucidate
formidable

perpetual
prosperity
strenuous
temerity
volition

1. Aunt Alexandra uses her own _____ as a weapon against those less fortunate .
2. The idea of Atticus going against the entire town when he chooses to defend Tom Robinson is a _____ concept for the children.
3. Dill is thought to have a _____ weakness which resulted in his short stature.
4. Heck Tate takes the stand of his own _____, trusting in Atticus's knowledge of the law to find the truth.
5. Mayella Ewell convinces Tom Robinson to help her, even though she clearly is capable of _____ work.
6. Jem and Scout get to know Dolphus Raymond, showing the kind of _____ that often gets them into trouble.
7. Without a doubt, the people of Maycomb are often _____ to those who are different from them.
8. One of the beliefs Jem and Scout know about Atticus is his _____ quest for the truth and the goodness he believes everyone possesses.
9. The children try to be _____ when they sneak into the courtroom against their father's wishes.
10. Atticus asks Mr. Ewell to _____ the events that are the foundation for the trial.

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity
To Kill a Mockingbird

Using the SAT words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once. The answers may or may not be used in the same plot context as in the quotations given with the definitions.

Chapters 21–26

acquit
cynical
exhilarated
impertinence
infantile

recluse
remorse
spurious
squalor
vehement

1. Miss Gates thinks that *The Grit Paper* is _____ and far inferior to a publication like *The Mobile Register* or other newspapers.
2. During a missionary meeting, Aunt Alexander talks about the _____ of the African tribe while ignoring the communities close to home that need help.
3. The children are hopeful that Atticus's powerful closing speech can convince the jury to _____ Tom Robinson.
4. Scout eventually understands that a person who wants to be a _____ and not be bothered by visitors should be respected and not ridiculed.
5. Aunt Alexandra tells Dill that his remarks about his own aunt's drinking habits are _____ and believes he should have more respect for his elders.
6. As Atticus leaves the courtroom, a quiet yet _____ crowd on the balcony has high hopes for the trial's outcome.
7. After a classroom discussion of Adolf Hitler and his treatment of the Jews, Scout is full of _____ for the way she has treated Walter Cunningham and Boo Radley.
8. As Jem grows older, many times he disregards Scout's actions as _____ behavior.
9. In her discussion with Aunt Alexandra following the trial, Scout becomes _____ in her defense of Walter Cunningham's situation.

10. During one of Aunt Alexandra's missionary circle meetings, Scout does her very best to avoid showing _____ toward the women who attend.

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity
To Kill a Mockingbird

Using the SAT words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once. The answers may or may not be used in the same plot context as in the quotations given with the definitions.

Chapters 27–31

bland
carcass
eccentricities
florid
irascible

nondescript
notoriety
repertoire
reprimand
staccato

1. After the trial, Bob Ewell feels a bit of _____ and thinks he can get his revenge on the judge and some of Macomb's citizens.
2. In Scout's mind, sometimes the events in the small town are _____ and downright boring.
3. Scout learns that although everyone has his own _____, having odd behavior is not necessarily bad.
4. The _____ mutter of an unknown attacker splits the night, and Jem is attacked.
5. Waiting for Jem to wake up after he is brutally attacked, Scout wants to avoid Atticus's _____ because she is not asleep.
6. By the end of Halloween night, Scout and Jem could look _____ at the Radley house and understand the meaning of friendship.
7. The children hear a sharp, _____ noise, a scuffle in the darkness, and then deep silence.
8. Scout learns that the _____ of the mockingbird is all the songs it can sing and sounds it can make.
9. The farmers of the town would often leave a dead _____ on the doorstep as payment for Atticus's services.
10. Despite their seeming lack of education, Helen Robinson and the Negro community offer _____ praise of Atticus's sincere attempt to help Tom.

Multiple Choice Test

1. agreement without protest
 - a. condescend
 - b. contentious
 - c. acquiescence
 - d. provocation
 - e. compensation
2. a state of low honor or moral character
 - a. degradation
 - b. vigil
 - c. eccentricity
 - d. prosperity
 - e. recluse
3. oddities; unconventionality
 - a. recluse
 - b. florid
 - c. carcass
 - d. eccentricities
 - e. repertoire
4. not attracting attention
 - a. inconspicuous
 - b. auspicious
 - c. malignant
 - d. unfathomable
 - e. infallible
5. something that resembles something but does not have the general qualities of that thing
 - a. aberration
 - b. florid
 - c. indigenous
 - d. spurious
 - e. reconnaissance
6. superior ability or skill
 - a. compensation
 - b. prowess
 - c. ingenuous
 - d. congenital
 - e. spurious
7. impressive
 - a. erratic
 - b. venerable
 - c. nondescript
 - d. irascible
 - e. formidable
8. to carry on in spite of difficulties
 - a. strenuous
 - b. formidable
 - c. discreet
 - d. persevere
 - e. remorseful
9. simple, innocent
 - a. infantile
 - b. nondescript
 - c. repertoire
 - d. contentious
 - e. ingenuous
10. explain
 - a. edification
 - b. volition
 - c. elucidate
 - d. reprimand
 - e. provocation
11. belittling or making fun of someone
 - a. cynical
 - b. persevere
 - c. contentious
 - d. acquit
 - e. reprimand
12. favorable
 - a. auspicious
 - b. infantile
 - c. temerity
 - d. erratic
 - e. indignant

13. foolish or rash boldness
 - a. assuage
 - b. venerable
 - c. temerity
 - d. strenuous
 - e. congenital
14. impressive because of age or historic associations
 - a. venerable
 - b. florid
 - c. irascible
 - d. vehement
 - e. ingenuous
15. angry
 - a. ominous
 - b. volition
 - c. formidable
 - d. irascible
 - e. nondescript
16. disapproval
 - a. contentious
 - b. onslaught
 - c. squalor
 - d. reconnaissance
 - e. disapprobation
17. calm
 - a. assuage
 - b. stifle
 - c. reprimand
 - d. acquit
 - e. elucidate
18. learning; education
 - a. erratic
 - b. discreet
 - c. aggregation
 - d. edification
 - e. compensation
19. disrespect
 - a. indigenous
 - b. caricature
 - c. aberration
 - d. notoriety
 - e. impertinence
20. belonging to a particular region or country
 - a. congenital
 - b. indigenous
 - c. perpetual
 - d. discreet
 - e. blandly
21. threatening; sinister
 - a. unfathomable
 - b. malignant
 - c. spurious
 - d. ominous
 - e. indignant
22. kind and gentle
 - a. condescend
 - b. malignant
 - c. persevere
 - d. exhilarate
 - e. benign
23. everlasting; continuous
 - a. erratic
 - b. contentious
 - c. perpetual
 - d. vehement
 - e. unfathomable
24. deviation from something normal
 - a. degradation
 - b. disapprobation
 - c. malignant
 - d. onslaught
 - e. aberration

25. fame
- a. reprimand
 - b. notoriety
 - c. florid
 - d. infallible
 - e. umbrage

Writing Activity
To Kill a Mockingbird

Read the following passage from Chapter 10 of the novel. In this scene, the children are faced with a rabid dog, and Atticus must make a decision that will change Scout's and Jem's perception of him for the rest of the story. Discuss how the author uses this incident to show the integrity and strength of Atticus and to reflect the theme of the novel.

I thought mad dogs foamed at the mouth, galloped, leaped and lunged at throats, and I thought they did it in August. Had Tim Johnson behaved thus, I would have been less frightened.

Nothing is more deadly than a deserted, waiting street. The trees were still, the mockingbirds were silent, the carpenters at Miss Maudie's house had vanished. I heard Mr. Tate sniff, then blow his nose. I saw him shift his gun to the crook of his arm. I saw Miss Stephanie Crawford's face framed in the glass window of her front door. Miss Maudie appeared and stood beside her. Atticus put his foot on the rung of a chair and rubbed his hand slowly down the side of his thigh.

"There he is," he said softly.

Tim Johnson came into sight, walking dazedly in the inner rim of the curve parallel to the Radley house.

"Look at him," whispered Jem. "Mr. Heck said they walked in a straight line. He can't even stay in the road." . . .

. . . Tim Johnson reached the side street that ran in front of the Radley Place, and what remained of his poor mind made him pause and seem to consider which road he would take. He made a few hesitant steps and stopped in front of the Radley gate; then he tried to turn around, but was having difficulty.

Atticus said, "He's within range, Heck. You better get him before he goes down the side street—Lord knows who's around the corner. Go inside, Cal."

Calpurnia opened the screen door, latched it behind her, then unlatched it and held onto the hook. She tried to block Jem and me with her body, but we looked out from beneath her arms.

"Take him, Mr. Finch." Mr. Tate handed the rifle to Atticus; Jem and I nearly fainted.

"Don't waste time, Heck," said Atticus. "Go on."

"Mr. Finch, this is a one-shot job."

Atticus shook his head vehemently: "Don't just stand there, Heck! He won't wait all day for you—"

"For God's sake, Mr. Finch, look where he is! Miss and you'll go straight into the Radley house! I can't shoot that well, and you know it!"

"I haven't shot a gun in thirty years—"

Mr. Tate almost threw the rifle at Atticus. "I'd feel mighty comfortable if you did now," he said.

In a fog, Jem and I watched our father take the gun and walk out into the middle of the street. He walked quickly, but I thought he moved like an underwater swimmer: time had slowed to a nauseating crawl.

When Atticus raised his glasses Calpurnia murmured, "Sweet Jesus help him," and put her hands to her cheeks.

Atticus pushed his glasses to his forehead; they slipped down, and he dropped them in the street. In the silence, I heard them crack. Atticus rubbed his eyes and chin; we saw him blink hard.

In front of the Radley gate, Tim Johnson had made up what was left of his mind. He had finally turned himself around, to pursue his original course up our street. He made two steps forward, then stopped and raised his head. We saw his body go rigid.

With movements so swift they seemed simultaneous, Atticus's hand yanked a ball-tipped lever as he brought the gun to his shoulder.

The rifle cracked. Tim Johnson leaped, flopped over and crumpled on the sidewalk in a brown-and-white heap. He didn't know what hit him. . . .

Jem became vaguely articulate: “’d you see him, Scout? ’d you see him just standin’ there? . . . ’n’ all of a sudden he just relaxed all over, an’ it looked like that gun was a part of him . . . an’ he did it so quick, like . . . I hafta aim for ten minutes ’fore I can hit somethin’ . . .”

Miss Maudie grinned wickedly. “Well now, Miss Jean Louise,” she said, “still think your father can’t do anything?”

“Nome,” I said meekly.

“Forgot to tell you the other day that besides playing the Jew’s Harp, Atticus Finch was the deadeast shot in Maycomb County in his time.”

Writing Activity
To Kill a Mockingbird

Bravery takes many forms; sometimes showing bravery or courage means that a person faces the unpleasant or the critical without turning away. Many people feel that bravery means fighting violence when they see it. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus surprises Scout and Jem by believing a person should withhold violence and suggests that bravery means more than carrying a gun. In a well-written essay, show how Harper Lee uses character development to provide social commentary of the times concerning bravery.