

To kill a mockingbird  
loss of innocence  
essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

To Kill a Mockingbird To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee is a story of national magnitude that contains complex characters. Harper Lee deals with the emotions and spirits of the characters insightfully. A few of these characters display courage at one point or another in the story. These flashes of courage come during turbulent times of the story, and often led to success.

Atticus Finch displayed courage on numerous occasions. Without his wife he had to raise Jem and Scout alone for most of their lives. Because he knew he had to set an example for his children to follow, Atticus tried never to let his emotions get the best of him. He stated on several occasions that he would not be able to tell his children one thing and do another. He believed in teaching by example, and his methods worked. Scout views her father as the bravest person she ever knew when he was cordial to Mrs. Dubose, despite her gibes. In front of the jail, Atticus was reading to Tom Robinson, a Negro he was defending in a rape case. The black versus white mentality was like a wildfire through almost all of Maycombs white residents during this case. As he was reading Atticus was approached by a group of men wanting to get at Tom. He in there, Mr. Finch? He is and hes asleep. Dont wake him up.

You know what we want. Get aside from the door, Mr. Finch You can turn around and go home again, Walter.(151) Atticus stood strong against an entire mob due to his strong values. He would not budge, even though he was outnumbered. His voice was cool and collected throughout the entire encounter, proving once more his courage. Atticus was also courageous when he aimed to defend Tom Robinson instead of just allowing the guilty verdict. Lemme tell you somethin now, Billy, you know the court appointed him to defend this nigger.

Yeah but Atticus aims to defend him. Thats what I dont like about it.(163) In those times many lawyers did not attempt to defend black men against white men. They were biased against their own clients. But Atticus, however, would not do such a thing. He stuck to his beliefs and continued the trial even though he knew that he could never win with a biased jury. To use his own words for him, Atticus was licked before he began but he began anyway and saw it through to the end. Jem is another character that displays great courage. His actions as he matures display his courageous spirit. He and his sister live pretty interesting lives despite the depression. To live during this time must have taken great courage in itself, even though Jem was just a boy. His father instills great values in Jem. That is where he gets his courage. One obvious way that Jem showed courage was when he stood with Atticus in front of the jail. He would not leave his father when Atticus was in trouble. A group of men were threatening Atticus and Tom Robinson in front of the county jail. Atticus said, Go home, Jem. Take Scout and Dill home. We were accustomed to prompt, if not always cheerful acquiescence to Atticuss instructions, but from the way he stood Jem was not thinking of budging.(Lee 152) Jem stood strong with his father, ready to take on all opposition that night. He knew the severity of the situation and was ready to defend his father. Another way Jem showed courage was defending Scout and himself towards the end of the book against Bob Ewell. Jem fought valiantly against the bigger, stronger man who held a grudge against his father. We were near to the road when I felt Jems hand leave me, felt him jerk backwards to the ground. More scuffling and there came a dull crunching sound and Jem screamed.(262) Jem was clearly overpowered by Ewell as Bob twisted Jems

arm so hard it snapped. Jem would not give up though. His courage wouldnt let him.

Boo Radley shows a lot of courage. Boo is a thirty-six year old that lives inside his house and very rarely comes out. When he was a child he got in trouble with the law, so his father (and later his brother) made him stay inside the basement and never go outside so as not to disrespect the family name. Boo is the one that saves Jem and Scouts lives the night Bob Ewell attacked. We were nearly to the road when I felt Jems hand leave me, felt him jerk backwards and flung on the ground, almost carrying me with him. (262) Scouts vague recollection of the events of that night give a clear view that Boo Radley killed Bob Ewell to save the kids. To further prove this, Mr. Heck Tate, the sheriff, says to Atticus I never heard tell that its against the law for a citizen to do his utmost to prevent a crime from being committed, which is exactly what he did, but maybe youll say its my duty to tell the town all about it and not hush it up. Know whatd happen then? All the ladies in Maycomb includin my wifed be knocking on his door bringing angel food cakes. To my way of thinkin, Mr. Finch, taking the one man whos done you and this town a great service an draggin him with his sh ways into the limelight-to me, thats a sin. Its a sin and Im not about to have it on my head. If it was any other man itd be different. But not this man Mr. Finch. Atticus then realizes the truth and says Thank you for my children, Arthur. Boo is almost never outside and is very nervous around other people. Yet he has the courage to defend the two children who he enjoys watching. Boo Radleys sheltered existence only made his actions on the night of the Ewell attack even more courageous.

Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose is a character who shows great courage. At first she seems to be only a decrepit old witch who screams and squawks at passersby. But when Jem reacted in a malignant manner towards her remarks one day by cutting the tops off of every camellia bush Mrs. Dubose owned. As repayment she asked Jem to go over to her house after school and on Saturdays and read to her for two hours for a month. When Jem is over her house she would go into fits and not respond to his reading. Then an alarm clock would sound and Jem and Scout would be shooed away by Mrs. Duboses maid Jessie. Mrs. Dubose was a morphine addict. She took it as a pain-killer for years. The doctor put her on it. She had spent the rest of her life on it and died without much agony, but she was too contrary. She said she was going to leave this world beholden to nothing and nobody. She said she meant to break herself of it before she died, and that's what she did. I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do. Mrs. Dubose won, all ninety-eight pounds of her. According to her views, she died beholden to nothing and nobody. She was the bravest person I ever knew. (112) Atticus would have made Jem read to her anyway just to realize how courageous she really was. Mrs. Dubose knew that she would be in great pain but stuck to her ideals and came out on top. She was very old and sickly yet still conquered her morphine addiction. As Atticus said, she possessed real courage.