

# What do jem and scout discover about atticus in chapter 10 essay sample

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In Chapter 10, Jem and Scout go through a phase where they're ashamed of their father, as everyone else's fathers are achievers, while Atticus has no attribute with which the children can show off at school with. So the children, especially Scout, feel that when their father is insulted in school, in connection with the Robinson case, they can't help by standing up for him, as they don't think that he has anything creditable to his name.

The first thing that the children learn about Atticus is that he's very old. He says he "got started late", and is old compared to her classmates' parents that Scout sees at school. This means that the children don't see their father as special, and that he is just ordinary, and they can't boast about him in school either, 'there was nothing Jem or I could say about him when our classmates said, "My father..."'. He can't play football with Jem as he's "feeble", and refuses to play for the Methodists or the Baptists in a game of touch football, as he would "break his neck".

We can see that Atticus doesn't really have any experience in raising girls so far, as his wife died, so he has no-one to show him how to. So he raises Scout as a boy. He allows Scout to wear pants, treats her the same as Jem (when he gets them both guns) etc. But we see that this has encouraged Scout to behave even more like a boy, as if to prove that she is one, instead of a girl. She fights, uses bad language, does everything that Jem does, and resents being called a girl, as if it was an insult. She resents having to conform with pre-set conventions (wearing dresses, being seen and not heard), and clashes more than once with Aunt Alexandra about the issue. This issue of prejudice against women, and the view of the "traditional" role of a woman

as a housewife and mother, also exhibits Maycomb County's discrimination against different parts of society.

Jem and Scout realise that their father isn't interesting enough for their schoolmates, because he didn't have an interesting job as a sheriff or a dump-truck driver or " anything that could possibly arouse the admiration of anyone". So they want to keep him out of sight, so as not to cause embarrassment for them. And their attitudes are confirmed when Atticus refuses to teach them to shoot. Both are interested in guns, so both are affected. The reason they are given is that Atticus isn't interested in guns. And he also tells Jem that it's a sin to kill a mockingbird. Apparently the first time the children are warned of sin, they, especially Scout, are surprised. This shows the innocence of childhood and the hypocrisy of the Maycomb society, who, despite being outwardly religious, are unwilling to talk about sin and the obvious presence of it in Maycomb, in the form of the Ewells.

Scout is also stunned to find that her father can beat anybody in Maycomb at checkers, when she and her brother beat him all the time, until she's told that Atticus lets her win. She finds that all the new discoveries that she makes about Atticus still make her ashamed about it: " This modest accomplishment (playing the Jew's Harp) served to make me even more ashamed of him". Scout wishes that her father were more interesting so much that she doesn't care if he were a " devil from hell".

The most pivotal part of the chapter is the one with ' One-Shot' Finch and Tim Johnson, the rabid dog. Jem and Scout know that their father can't see

very well, so wears glasses. So when he's called up to shoot a rabid dog that's coming down the street, the children both have doubts, but the other adults have complete confidence in him. Atticus manages to shoot the dog between the eyes from a long distance away, after raising his glasses so as to lean closer to the gun's sights. We find that Atticus is the best shot in town, and called ' One-Shot' Finch by the town's populace. But in addition to this, we find that Atticus is extremely modest, and doesn't want the children to boast about him in school, even though Scout says, " Ain't everybody's daddy the deadeast shot in Maycomb County". Jem explains that he isn't proud of having a gift or talent, so doesn't tell his own children.

Chapter 10 is full of revelations for the children, especially Scout, who, being young, has seen less of Atticus than Jem, and is naturally more innocent. We can see that Atticus is modest, not even telling his children his own accomplishments. As Jem says, " Atticus is a gentleman, just like me!"