

How are fathers presented in the novel "to kill a mockingbird"? essay sample

[Family](#), [Father](#)



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In the novel To Kill a Mockingbird there are five fathers shown and they all are very different from each other. The five different fathers are Atticus, Bob Ewell, Dill's stepfather, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Radley. Atticus is Scout and Jem's father, he is very open minded and is a fair man. Bob Ewell is Mayella's father and he is very rough and uncaring. Dill's stepfather doesn't spend much time with him.

Atticus is a fair and kind character. He doesn't follow what everyone else believes to be right, he sees things differently. He doesn't have a problem with black people which rarely in that time did people think that.

Atticus treats his children with respect and he likes them to make their own decisions and respects the decisions they make. “ Atticus had two yellow pencils for me...Jem told him what happened” (Page 118, chapter 11), this shows he is secretly the praising the children for making the right decision. He gives the children a lot of respect, he sees them as adults. He wants to slowly give them more responsibility, he does it slyly. A quote which supports this idea is “ Not yet son. Do as I tell you. Run now. Take care of Scout you hear?”. He is putting a lot of pressure and responsibility on Jem. He wants Jem to grow up and become more responsible steadily. Throughout the book he gives Jem more and more responsibility, asking him to do the odd thing more and more.

Scout and her father have a close relationship. He meets her half way when Scout has a problem. An example of this is " If you'll concede the necessity of going to school, we'll go on reading every night just as we always have. Is it a bargain?" (Chapter 3, page 35). This shows he does respect his children and wants them to be happy.

He wants to teach his children values by telling people they shouldn't follow what everyone else. Scout asks her dad what a " Nigger lover" is and he says to her " nigger-lover is just one of those terms...ugly term to label somebody" (Page 120, chapter 11). This shows he doesn't want his children to be like everyone else and have mixed values. Anybody could have said a white person who likes black people but he chose to explain what he feels about the word and teach them good values.

Like I said before about Atticus respecting his children, the children respect Atticus in the same way. Jem especially has a lot of respect for Atticus, a quote supporting this is " I- it's like this... keep it that way" (Chapter 6, page 62). This shows Jem doesn't want to lose his fathers respect. It shows they have a close relationship.

Atticus teaches his children its ok to be different. Scout asks her dad if he is a nigger lover and he says " I certainly am. I do my best to love everybody... it doesn't hurt you" (Page 120, chapter 11). Atticus is trying to show Scout what he thinks is right. He wants his children to think for themselves.

Atticus behaves this way because he is a lawyer and sees things differently. He has always been the black sheep of the family whom sees things

differently. His sister doesn't like black people, which suggests their family are against black people, whereas Atticus doesn't mind black people. His sister says " Put my bag in the front room, Calpurnia" (Chapter 12, page 140). This is rude and shows she treats Calpurnia as a servant. Atticus treats her more like a member of the family than a servant. This adds to how open minded and fair Atticus is.

Bob Ewell seems like an uncaring father, his daughter got " raped" and in court he is asked whether he is Mayella's father and he says " Well if I ain't I can't do nothing about it now, her ma's dead" (Chapter 17, page 189). He is making a joke out of something so seriously. If his daughter really did get raped he would be more serious and mad about it all.

Bob seems common and rude by the way he speaks. In part of the description of what happens he says " I seen that black nigger yonder ruttin' on my Mayella"(page 190, chapter 17). Its really a rude thing to say. He comes off aggressive.

Atticus says " What did your father see ... Didn't Bob Ewell beat you up?"(Chapter 18, page 207). This makes you believe he did beat up his daughter and if he did this just shows what type of father he is. It shows he is aggressive and doesn't love his children. You can tell he has a short fuse if he can beat up his daughter like he did, then force her to lie about it all. Tom Robinson says that Mayella said " What her papa do to her don't count"(Chapter 18, page 214) this suggests her father might be raping her.

Tom Robinson says " Mr. Ewell didn't seem to help her none, and neither did the chillin and I know she did not have no nickels to spare" (Page 211, chapter 19). This shows that Bob Ewell is a bad father and spends no time with his children and leaves Mayella to do everything. He seems very selfish that he doesn't do anything in the house instead he just spends all the money on alcohol (suggests this in the book). The children don't get cared well by him. They don't shower and are very rude. They probably get the rudeness from their father. " Aint no snot-nosed slut...me do nothin'!"(Chapter 3, page 30). Calling a teacher a slut for no real reason and waiting for her to cry is very horrible. He is dirty a quote to support this is " please bath yourself before you come back tomorrow"(chapter 3, page 30). This shows no one cares for the children.

Dill's step father isn't mentioned in full detail but Dill's step dad just tries to buy his love. They give him stuff to play with and don't spend any time with him. A quote which supports this is " They buy me everything I want...I-got-you-that-book-so-go-read-it". This shows that Dill hasn't got a good relationship with his step father and they don't talk much.

Dill says his mum and step dad get on better when he is not around, this shows that the step dad must not like him much. A quote which supports this is " The thing is, what I'm trying to say is...they aint mean". His step dad doesn't pay attention to Dill and Dill just wants some attention because he is young.

Clearly Dill's step father doesn't care about Dill much because when Dill ran away no one seemed to notice or come back for him. Also, if they paid proper attention they would have known he was unhappy. He is now staying at the Finches and his mum or step dad haven't even come back to get him to come home, it shows they must not want him home.

Compared to Atticus, Dill's step father is very uncaring. Atticus knows when his children are upset and cares for them when they are. But compared to Bob Ewell he is nicer, Bob Ewell doesn't pay much attention to his children which is similar to Dill's step dad but Dill said that he isn't mean to him he just doesn't pay much attention to him, whereas Bob Ewell is mean to his children.

Mr. Cunningham is overall a nice man but he follows the crowd. He gets a guilty conscious when he is about to hurt Tom Robinson with the gang. He seems stiff and uncomfortable when Scout comes and is about to hurt her father. A quote is " Mr. Cunningham was moved to a faint nod. He did know me after all"(chapter 15, page 169). It's as if he starts to realize what he is doing is wrong.

When Scout mentions Mr. Cunningham's son he softens up because he realizes that she's just a kid and that Atticus hasn't done anything to him. He realizes if he hurt Atticus it would really hurt Scout and its like if someone hurt him and his son got hurt because of it. A quote which shows she softened him up is " He's in my grade... tell him I say hey for me, wont you?"(page 169, chapter 15).

Mr. Cunningham says " I'll tell him you said hey little lady"(page 170, chapter 15). This is when he is about to leave, you can tell he feels guilty. He sounds like a nice guy when he says " little lady" like the real him is coming through.

I think Mr. Cunningham behaves this way because he just follows what people do and doesn't realize the consequence of his actions. He is a lot different than Atticus, Atticus always think about the outcome of what he does unlike Mr. Cunningham. Atticus thinks for himself and Mr. Cunningham does whatever other people do.

Mr. Radley is Boo Radley's father. He seems a little odd and uncaring of his son (Boo) a quote which supports this is " The judge decided to send the boys...Mr. Radley thought it was". If he was a really good parent he would want his child to get help not keep him locked up in the house.

Mr. Radley was shown as a strange and mysterious man, no one really knew really what type of father he was. Everything people heard was hearsay. He never talked to anyone. You never really saw the children because they were always inside the house and the shutters were always closed, a quote which supports this is " The shutters and doors...cold weather only". He did the same thing every day until he died a quote which supports this is " Mr. Radley walked...contained the family groceries" (Chapter 1, page 10)

The best father of them all I think is Atticus because he was the only one who really treated his child well and taught them good manners. He was the only one who didn't follow what everyone else did and just generally cared

about his children. Fathers play a big part in the novel, every father in this book is different. They are presented in this book as the person who makes all the decisions and they are powerful. Mr. Ewell made the decision that Mayella should lie in court and she did it. Mr. Radley made Boo stay in the house instead of go to an asylum.