

To kill a mockingbird essays essay sample

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To Kill a Mockingbird is a heroic tale filled with demonstrations of leadership and courage by several characters throughout the story, yet there are characters within the novel who display the exact opposite. To Kill a Mockingbird shows courage and the lack of it in many forms. Courage is shown when people step out of their comfort zones and face adversity in any way. Atticus Finch is one character from the novel who displays moral courage when he willingly defends a black man named Tom Robinson during a trial. Another character who displays psychological courage is Mrs. Dubose who quit morphine before she died. Finally, Bob Ewell shows physical cowardice when he attacked Jem and Scout. In conclusion, these characters from the novel all show representation of either courage or cowardice.

Atticus Finch is a major supporting character from the novel who displayed moral courage when he went against the town and willingly defended Tom Robinson, a black man accused of raping a white woman. When Atticus took the case, he was definitely brave to defend a black man in the face of criticism and threats of violence from the town. Even though he knew he wasn't going to win the trial, in order to defend Tom, He had to understand that taking the case would cause him to be ridiculed and that no one would forgive him for taking a black man's words over a white man's. Even his sister had disapproved of his decision, basically saying that he is bringing disgrace to the family. No matter how much his reputation would suffer, he would never change his mind. Standing up for what he believed in was more important than what people thought about him. This shows what kind of heart he had. When Atticus says " The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience" (Lee 140). He means that although

the majority of the people may agree that Tom was guilty, each person knows in their heart what the real truth is. Each person has the responsibility to do the right thing and step up. In conclusion, that is how Atticus showed moral courage in *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

Another character who showed psychological courage is Mrs. Dubose because she decided to conquer her addiction to morphine before she died. For a lot of years, Mrs. Dubose lived alone in illness and sadness. She became so ill that she became addicted to morphine, which was prescribed by her doctor for her arthritis pain. When Mrs. Dubose realised she was near her lifes end, she made a decision to overcome her addiction and to die free from it. Making such a hard decision like that at her age would've been very hard. After her death, Atticus reported that Mrs. Dubose had acheived her goal to break the addiction and that she had died free of it. Atticus goes further to tell Jem why Mrs. Dubose had showed courage throughout her life. " 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." (Lee 112). Mrs. Dubose showed courage when she realised she had a problem with her perscription. Not many people can tell and then admit that they have a problem when they are as sick as she was. For a lot of people, it would be easier to take the easy way out and die with the drugs in their system, but not her. She never let any excuses get in the way of achieving her goal. In

conclusion, that is how Mrs. Dubose showed psychological courage in *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

Finally, Bob Ewell displays physical and psychological cowardice when he attacks Jem Finch, Scout Finch, and Tom Robinson. After Tom Robinson's trial, Bob Ewell tells Atticus that he will get him, but never tells him what he's going to do. After Scout's pageant, she went to walk home with Jem. When they went into the forest, they both thought that Cecil Jacobs was out to trick them again, but it was really Bob Ewell attacking them. Boo Radley saw this happening and came to save them. During the fight, Bob broke Jem's arm. After, Bob is found under a tree. Lee writes " Bob Ewell fell on his knife- he killed himself" (Lee 366). Even though Bob won the trial, he was mad at Atticus for taking the case and spat on him while he was at Tom's house. This shows that even if you're nice to people, sometimes they may take it the wrong way and disagree. In conclusion, this is how Bob Ewell showed physical and psychological cowardice in *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

In full conclusion, Harper Lee was able to show both courage and cowardice by putting the characters in their own situations. One character can show courage by doing something they may find uncomfortable. For example, when Atticus showed moral courage when he took Tom Robinson's trial. He took hate and criticism from the townspeople just for defending a black person over a white person. When Mrs. Dubose displayed psychological courage by quitting morphine before she died. Finally, how Bob Ewell showed physical and psychological cowardice when he attacked Jem, Scout and Tom. Cowardice is the lack of bravery and courage is the ability to do something

that frightens one. Harper Lee believes that if your courageous or cowardice, you might help other people in your life learn something new and help make them a better person.