

# To kill a mocking bird - atticus finch

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



To Kill A Mocking Bird - Atticus Finch As one of the most prominent citizens in Maycomb during the Great Depression, Atticus is relatively well off in a time of widespread poverty. Because of his penetrating intelligence, calm wisdom, and exemplary behavior, Atticus is respected by everyone, including the very poor. He functions as the moral backbone of Maycomb, a person to whom others turn in times of doubt and trouble. But the conscience that makes him so admirable ultimately causes his falling out with the people of Maycomb. Unable to abide the town's comfortable ingrained racial prejudice, he agrees to defend Tom Robinson, a black man. Atticus's action makes him the object of scorn in Maycomb, but he is simply too impressive a figure to be scorned for long. After the trial, he seems destined to be held in the same high regard as before. Atticus practices the ethic of sympathy and understanding that he preaches to Scout and Jem and never holds a grudge against the people of Maycomb. Despite their callous indifference to racial inequality, Atticus sees much to admire in them. He recognizes that people have both good and bad qualities, and he is determined to admire the good while understanding and forgiving the bad. Atticus passes this great moral lesson on to Scout-this perspective protects the innocent from being destroyed by contact with evil. Ironically, though Atticus is a heroic figure in the novel and a respected man in Maycomb, neither Jem nor Scout consciously idolizes him at the beginning of the novel. Both are embarrassed that he is older than other fathers and that he doesn't hunt or fish. But Atticus's wise parenting, which he sums up in Chapter 30 by saying, " Before Jem looks at anyone else he looks at me, and I've tried to live so I can look squarely back at him, " ultimately wins their respect. By the end of the novel, Jem, in particular, is

fiercely devoted to Atticus (Scout, still a little girl, loves him uncritically). Though his children's attitude toward him evolves, Atticus is characterized throughout the book by his absolute consistency. He stands rigidly committed to justice and thoughtfully willing to view matters from the perspectives of others. He does not develop in the novel but retains these qualities in equal measure, making him the novel's moral guide and voice of conscience.