

# Is atticus in your opinion a good father? essay sample

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



In *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, Atticus Finch is the father of Jem and Scout, Jean-Louise, Finch. Throughout the novel he is portrayed as a good father. Although being a single parent, Atticus has an extremely busy schedule, including defending Tom Robinson, his prime concern is for Jem and Scout.

Atticus is a good father to Jem and Scout, but he has to gain their respect. In their eyes they see him as an ageing man who has little or no value to them, because of this; Jem and Scout don't see him as a role model until a string of events puts it into perspective. Atticus Finch is used to convey Harper Lee's feelings about race, society as a mass, and morals. Atticus teaches the children in three simple ways which are; the use of examples, verbal statements, and learning through experience. Atticus uses these techniques to help his children to become upholding members of the local society. Jem and Scout are subjected to a sharp learning curve; at the start of the novel they have an innocence about them and are naive as to what is happening between blacks and whites. They play and act like regular children, until the court case against Tom Robinson.

There is a sharp contrast between Scout and Jem at the start of the novel compared to the end where they convey maturity and a feeling of self-pride, which appears to be installed into them by Atticus' dealings throughout the proceedings. Atticus Finch uses examples to teach Scout and Jem, he lets Calpurnia, who is black, eat with them, something that is frowned upon in their town. Also he treats everyone with the courtesy they deserve, despite their colour. A good example of this is when Mr Ewell spits in Atticus' face he

stays calm and wipes off the saliva and does not react. This shows to Jem how he could stay calm even if provoked through an attack or hurt by someone. Atticus makes it a common practice to live his life, as he would like his children to live theirs, by doing this he is honest, respectable and a kind man. Atticus proves his character by defending Tom Robinson, a black man on trial for the rape of a white woman. Throughout the trial process, Atticus shows Jem and Scout that true courage is standing up for what you believe in, and all humans deserve respect, despite their colour or race. Atticus also tries to be a perfect southern gentleman, again, teaching Jem and Scout to care for all people.

Also when Mrs. Dubose insulted Atticus to Jem by saying 'Your father's no better than the niggers and trash he works for.' This made Jem furious and he reacted very irrationally, cutting the tops off of every single camellia in her garden. Atticus agreed to the punishment Mrs. Dubose gave him, reading aloud to her for two hours every afternoon for a month. This showed Jem that he should not react irrationally, and what ever he does that is wrong, he should be willing to pay the price. Atticus treats Mrs. Dubose with respect even though she is being harsh to him and his children, he still manages to treat her in the kindest manner. He compliments her appearance, also helps her into her chair. He understands the children's impressionability, and realises the learning value of such an experience. Not only do the children leave "the Mrs. Dubose situation" with a better understanding of death and the importance of companionship, Jem and Scout lay down foundations for their own belief system in regards to respect and courage. After Mrs.

Dubose's death, Atticus takes his parenting role to a verbal level and states his reaction to what the children have learned.

"I told you that if you hadn't lost your head I'd have made you go read to her. I wanted you to see something about her; 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." By stating this, Atticus reinforces the main themes of the novel, courage and respect. Atticus Finch chooses to fight against the tradition of Maycomb with traditions of his own. Atticus is able to honourably defend Tom Robinson and promote new traditions for himself and his children. Respect, dignity, and equality form the backbone of Atticus' belief system, a belief system containing qualities that are often overlooked in the traditional South. By doing this Atticus thinks he can give his children a real chance in life and he knows they can overlook the racial tension in the air. Overall I believe Atticus is a good father as he is an ideal role-model as he seems to meet all the qualities of a good father. He believes all life can be a useful lesson to his children. He is a loyal trustful member of Maycomb and very respectful. He lives his life the way he wishes his children to live their lives, courteous and polite.

Atticus buys Jem and Scout a gun when he thinks they are responsible enough to look after it he gives them one piece of advice, "Shoot all the blue jays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird," I believe he is referring to the notion that a mockingbird is a harmless creature, and does nothing but sing and bring happiness to the world. This advice given by Atticus could be seen as his way to explain the

treatment of Boo Radley and Tom Robinson. Both Boo Radley and Tom Robinson are treated with little respect in the town, and are sinfully destroyed or neglected by the people. They could be seen as “mockingbirds”.

Since Atticus possesses a strong trusting relationship with Jem and Scout, his words become valuable to them. Therefore, the statement of his beliefs is a highly effective way of communicating with the children. Early in the novel, Scout overhears Atticus having a discussion with Uncle Jack. She discovers some of his hopes for Jem and herself when Atticus states “ Well, most folks seem to think they’re right and you’re wrong...” “ They’re certainly entitled to think that, and they’re entitled to full respect for their opinions,” said Atticus, “ but before I can live with other folks I’ve got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn’t abide by majority rule is a person’s conscience.”

Atticus believes that a person’s courage stems from their soul. He also implies that courage can be found in those that hold on to their values and not get influenced by other people’s thoughts; this thought is strongly pressed by Atticus all the way through the novel. He teaches Jem and Scout that an open mind is necessary to form true opinions of someone; also opinions of others should be respected. Atticus uses two of the most effective forms of teaching to demonstrate his beliefs for his children. The first being the simple statement of what he believes...” but before I can live with other folks I’ve got to live with myself.” The other method of teaching he uses is trial and error.