

To Kill a Mockingbird - Vocabulary, Allusions, Idioms

Chapter 1

ambled (vb.): to walk at a slow, leisurely pace.

apothecary (n.): an early form of a pharmacist, apothecaries could also prescribe drugs.

assuaged (vb.): to **assuage** is to lessen or to calm. Therefore, if Jem's fears about being able to play football were **assuaged**, it means that he no longer feared that he wouldn't be able to play the sport.

beadle (n.): a minor city official, lower in rank than either a sheriff or a policeman, whose main duties revolve around preserving order at various civil functions such as trials and town hall meetings.

brethren (n.): in this case, members of a particular church or sect

corsets (n): a **corset** is a ladies undergarment designed to produce a particular effect on the figure. That effect usually results in a slim (or slimmer) waist and larger busts and hips.

dictum (n.): in this case, a formal statement of principle

domiciled (vb.): A **domicile** is a house or a place where a person lives. If you are **domiciled** somewhere, that is where you live. The Finch family lived in the northern part of the county.

eaves (n.): the lower edges of a roof which usually project beyond the side of a building

foray (n.): When you make a **foray**, you go somewhere or do something that is unusual or not normal for you. It was certainly not Jem's usual behaviour to go near the Radley house; thus, doing so was a **foray** for him.

human chattels (n.): slaves

impotent (adj.): powerless. Simon's fury and anger regarding the Civil War would certainly have been **impotent** because there would have been nothing he could have done about it.

impudent (adj.): To be **impudent** is to be shamelessly bold, as if you don't care what anyone thinks about you. Since the Haverfords did something illegal in front of witnesses, Lee rightfully describes them as **impudent**.

malevolent (adj.): evil

Methodists (n): members of a branch of a Protestant Christian denomination

picket (n): a pointed or sharpened pole or stake. Many pickets held together can make a **picket fence**.

piety (n): devotion to religious duties and practices

predilection (n.): a **predilection** is a preference, or a preferred way of doing something. Thus, the Radley's preferred way of spending a Sunday afternoon was to keep the doors closed and not receive visitors

ramrod (adj.): rigid, severe, straight

repertoire was vapid: (n. + adj.): a **repertoire** is all the special skills a person has; **vapid**, in this case, means boring or uninteresting. So, when Scout says that their **repertoire was vapid**, she means that the games they had invented to pass the time had become old and had lost their interest.

scold (n.): A scold is a person who scolds; that is, someone who often finds fault with people or things (and usually lets you know about it under no uncertain terms)

spittoon (n.): a jarlike container to spit into; usually used to spit tobacco juice into.

strictures (n.): conditions or rules

taciturn (adj.): almost always silent. Apparently, Aunt Alexandra's husband was a very quiet man.

unsullied (adj.): something that is **unsullied** has been basically untouched or unused. The fact that Atticus's edition of the Code of Alabama is **unsullied** would, in this case, indicate that he seldom consults this book.

veranda (n): a portico or porch with a roof

Chapter 2

auburn (adj.): reddish-brown

catawba worms (n.): **catawba worms** are actually caterpillars that are highly prized by fishermen in the Southern United States.

condescended (vb.): To **condescend** is to agree to do something that you believe to be beneath your dignity. Jem condescends to take Scout to school, even though, as a fifth-grader, he feels superior to his first-grade sister.

covey (n.): a group

crimson (adj.): blood-red

cunning (adj.): In this case, **cunning** means attractive or cute -- almost too cute

entailment (n.): a legal situation regarding the use of inherited property.

hookworms (n.): a type of parasite. **Hookworms** usually enter the body through bare feet and move through the body to the small intestines where they attach themselves with a series of hooks around their mouths.

immune (adj.): In this case, to be **immune** to something means that it has no effect on you. The story Miss Caroline reads to the class has no effect on them; they don't get it.

indigenous (adj.): belonging to a particular region or country

scrip stamps (n.): paper money of small denominations (less than \$1.00) issued for temporary emergency use. During the **Great Depression**, many local and state government gave out **scrip stamps**, or sometimes tokens, to needy people.

seceded (vb.): To **secede** is to break away. During the **Civil War**, Alabama was one of the states that broke away, or **seceded** from the Union.

smilax (n.): a bright green twinning vine, often used for holiday decorations.

sojourn (n.): a brief visit

subsequent mortification (adj. + n.): Something that is **subsequent** will follow closely after something else. **Mortification** is a feeling of shame or the loss of self respect. If Scout had been able to explain things to Miss Caroline, she could have prevented her teacher from losing self respect of feeling shameful later on.

vexations (n.): To **vex** is to annoy, so a **vexation** is something that causes annoyance or problems.

wallowing illicitly (vb. + adv.): In this case, to **wallow** is to indulge in something (usually an activity) with great enjoyment. **Illicit**, used like this, means unauthorized or improper. After listening to Miss Caroline, Scout feels that, by reading, she has been happily indulging in something which she should not have been doing.

Chapter 3

amiable (adj.): friendly

compromise (n.): an agreement where each person agrees to give up something

contemptuous (adj.): To be **contemptuous** is to have the feeling that someone or something is beneath you; that it or they are worthless. The Ewell boy obviously feels this way about his teacher, Miss Caroline.

contentious (adj.): always ready to argue or fight

cootie (n.): a slang term for a head louse. A louse (plural: lice) is a bloodsucking parasite.

cracklin bread (n.): a type of cornbread mixed with cracklins (bits of fried pork skin).

diminutive (adj.): smaller than ordinary

disapprobation (n.): disapproval

discernible (adj.): understandable

dispensation (n.): a release from an obligation or promise. In this case, by offering friendship to Walter and promising that Scout won't fight with him, Jem **dispenses** her threat to fight with him more.

dose (of) **magnesia** (n. + n.): A **dose** is an exact amount of medicine. **Magnesia** is a medicine used as a laxative and antacid.

eddy (n.): a current of water that moves against the main current; a whirlpool

erratic (adj.): irregular. Calpurnia usually uses good grammar, but when she is angry, her grammar is irregular.

flinty (adj.): **Flint** is a very hard rock. Something that is **flinty** is extremely hard and firm.

fractious (adj.): mean or cross

gravely (adv.): seriously

haint (n.): a ghost or spook; someone or something very scary

irked (v.): to be **irked** is to be annoyed. Scout is annoyed when Jem tells Walter that she won't fight with him (Walter) anymore.

kerosene (n.): a thin oil. **Kerosene** is sometimes used as a solvent or cleaning agent, although its more common use is for fuel or lighting.

lye soap (n.): **Lye** is a very strong alkaline substance used for cleaning. **Lye soap** is very strong, harsh soap that contains **lye**.

monosyllabic (adj.): Mono means "one." A syllable is word or a part of a word which can be pronounced with a single, uninterrupted sound. The name "Atticus," for example, is made up of three syllables: at + ti + cus. Thus, **monosyllabic** literally means "one sound." Scout's **monosyllabic** replies to Atticus's questions about her first day at school might have been made up of one-sound words like "yes" and "no."

mutual concessions (adj. + n.): A concession is an agreement; something that is mutual is done by two or more people. Thus, a **mutual concession** occurs when two or more people agree on something.

onslaught (n.): a violent attack

persevere (v.): to carry on in spite of difficulties

tranquility (n.): peacefulness; serenity

Chapter 4

auspicious (adj.): favourable

melancholy (adj.): sad and gloomy

quelling (of) **nausea**: (v. + n.): To **quell** something is to quiet or pacify it. **Nausea** is the feeling you get when your stomach's upset and you feel as if you're about to vomit. Scout is trying to **quell her nausea**, or make her stomach settle down.

scuppernongs (n.): a sweet table grape, grown chiefly in the Southern United States.

Chapter 5

asinine (adj.): stupid; silly

benevolence (n.): in this case, a generous or thoughtful gift

benign (adj.): kind and gentle

bridgework (n.): Unlike dentures, which replace the upper or lower sets of teeth, bridgework is made up of sections of replacement teeth that can be inserted and removed from one's mouth.

chameleon (adj.) In nature, **chameleons** are tree-dwelling lizards that have the unusual ability to change the color of their skin in order to blend into their surroundings. By calling Miss Maudie a

chameleon lady, Scout points out the fact that her neighbour's appearance was as changeable as one of the lizards.

cordiality (n.): sincere affection and kindness

edification (n.): education; instruction

gaped (vb.): To **gape** at someone is to stare at that person with your mouth open.

inquisitive (adj.): questioning; prying

mimosa (n): Also called a silk tree, a **mimosa** can be either a tree or a shrub.

morbid (adj.): gruesome; horrible

placidly (adv.): calmly; quietly

Protestant (adj.): **Protestant** is the name applied to any number of Christian churches, such as Baptist, Methodist, and Lutheran.

pulpit Gospel (adj. + n.): A **pulpit** is the raised platform or lectern from which a preacher speaks in church. The **Gospel** refers to the teachings of Jesus Christ, specifically the first four books of the New Testament. Scout says that her faith in what she's heard about the teachings of Christ from the **pulpit** (preacher) in her own church has been shaken a bit.

quibbling (vb.): a type of arguing where you avoid the main point by bringing up petty details

tacit (adj.) An agreement, or, in this case, a "treaty" that is tacit is one that has been silently agreed upon. Thus, the children know that they can play on Miss Maudie's front lawn even though she never directly told them that it was all right to do so.

Chapter 6

collards (n.): a type of cabbage with very coarse leaves. It would be difficult to walk quietly through a patch of collards.

dismemberment (n.): To **dismember** someone is to tear or cut that person's limbs (arms and legs) off. Although it is unlikely that anyone would have actually pulled off Dill's arms and legs, Lee uses the word to point out how outraged Miss Rachel must have been to discover that the children had been playing strip poker.

eerily (adv.): weirdly; mysteriously

ensuing (adj.): Something that ensues is something that comes immediately after something else.

Franklin stove (n.): a cast iron heating stove, invented by Benjamin Franklin.

kudzu (n.): a quick-growing vine with large leaves, often found in the Southern United States.

lattice-work (adj.): A **lattice** is an openwork structure of crossed strips or bars, as in a screen. Light that passes through any kind of a **lattice** -work would produce lattice-work shadows.

malignant (adj.): dangerous; evil

proress (n.): superior ability or skill

ramshackle (adj.): loose or rickety; about to fall apart

respiration (n.): breathing

rigid (adj.): stiff

waning (adj.): becoming less bright, intense, or strong. The moonlight is waning because it's getting closer to morning, and the moon is changing its position in the sky.

Chapter 7

cleaved (vb.): stuck

gnats (n.): small, two-winged insects that can bite or sting.

meditative (adj.): To **meditate** is to reflect upon something, or think about it. When Jem give the patch on the tree a **meditative** pat, he does so in a thoughtful manner.

palate (n.): the roof of one's mouth

perpetual embalming (adj. + n.): Something that is **perpetual** lasts forever. **Embalming** is the process of preserving a dead body. As Atticus later says, Jem would do well to get rid of the adjective (**perpetual**) . The Egyptians invented a type of paper (not toilet paper), as well as **embalming** (which, by its very nature, is **perpetual**) .

rendered (her) **speechless**: (vb. + n.): made her unable to speak

vigil (n.): a watch. Jem is waiting and watching for Mr. Nathan to appear.

whittles (vb.): To **whittle** is to use a knife to cut away thin shavings of wood. Sometimes, a whittler may actually end up carving a recognizable object.

Chapter 8

aberrations (n.): an **aberration** is a deviation, or a moving away from, something that is normal. The fact that winter comes so quickly in Maycomb is abnormal, thus, an **aberration**.

azaleas (n.): a colorful and decorative kind of flower.

cannas (n.): a beautiful tropical flower.

caricatures (n.): a representation of a person where certain features of that person are exaggerated or distorted.

cordial (adj.): warm and friendly

flue (n.): a channel in a chimney that allows smoke and flames to pass to the outside

meteorological (adj.): anything to do with meteorology or weather.

morphodite (n.): Scout has misheard Miss Maudie, who would actually have said the word hermaphrodite. Technically, a hermaphrodite is an animal or plant that has both female and male reproductive organs. Of course, the children's snowman is not really a hermaphrodite, but it does have both male and female characteristics.

near libel (adj. + n.): When you commit **libel**, you harm someone's reputation. Atticus tells the children that they have committed a **near libel**; that is, their snowman is almost **libelous** because it so closely represents one of their neighbours and could harm that neighbour's reputation.

perpetrated (vb.): carried out; committed

plaited (vb.): braided

procured (vb.): got

prophets (n.): A prophet is someone able to predict the future.

quelled (vb.): To **quell** is to overwhelm something until it is powerless. The tin roof of Miss Maudie's house **quelled** the flames because tin cannot burn so the fire was eventually stopped.

roomers (n.): persons who rent and live in rooms in a house.

switches (n.): slender twigs or branches

taffeta (n.): a lustrous, stiff fabric, often used for women's dresses, especially formal wear

touchous (adj.) touchy; sensitive

treble (adj.): high

unfathomable (adj.): Something that is unfathomable is something that can not be understood.

Chapter 9

ambrosia (n.): a desert made up of a mixture of fruits, nuts, and coconut.

analogous (adj.): similar; comparable

attire (n.): clothing

bawled (vb.) cried out noisily

bluff (n.): the broad, flat front of a cliff

catwalk (n.): a narrow, elevated walkway

changelings (n.): a child secretly put in the place of another

compensation (n.): To **compensate** means to pay for something or to make up for something. Aunt Alexandra's good cooking skills, in some ways, make up for the fact that, for Scout, spending the holidays with her and Francis is not a lot of fun.

constituted (vb.): made up

crooned (vb.): To **croon** is to sing in a low, gentle tone.

deportment (n.): behaviour

dim (adj.): unclear; not strong

donned (vb): put on

doused (vb.): to **douse** someone is to pour liquid, in this case water, all over that person.

evasion (n.): To **evade** is to avoid doing or answering something directly. Uncle Jack's **evasion** occurs when he doesn't directly answer Scout's question.

fanatical (adj.): A **fanatic** is a person whose extreme enthusiasm, interest, zeal, etc. goes beyond what is reasonable. Aunt Alexandra is **fanatical** about Scout's clothes because, according to Scout, her aunt's interest in this subject goes beyond what is reasonable.

gallantly (adv.): politely; in the manner of a gentleman

gastric (adj.): of, in, or near the stomach. A stomach ache would be a gastric complaint.

gravitated (vb.): Gravity is, of course, the force that pulls you to earth and keeps you from floating into outer space. When you **gravitate** toward something or someone, you find yourself being pulled in the direction of that object or person.

guilelessness (n.): **Guile** is craftiness and cunning in dealing with other. To be **guileless** is to have none of that craftiness. Here, Lee is being ironic since it's obvious that Simon Finch didn't trust his daughters at all, and planned his house accordingly.

harboured (vb.): to hold in the mind

hookah (n): An oriental tobacco pipe with a flexible tube that draws smoke through a bowl of water.

impaired (adj.): damaged; weakened

indecision (n.): When you're **indecisive**, you can't decide what to do. Scout's **indecision** revolves around whether she should obey Uncle Jack or run away from him.

indicative (adj.): Something that is **indicative** of something shows or displays something. The manner in which Simon Finch arranged his house showed something about him.

ingenuous (adj.): simple; innocent

innate (adj.): Something that is **innate** is a natural part of something else. To Scout, cuss words have a natural sort of attraction to them; an **innate** attractiveness. They have value all on their own for her.

inordinately (adv.): **Inordinate** means too great or too many. Cousin Ike Finch is too vain about his beard; **inordinately** vain.

invective (n.): **Invectives** are abusive terms, curses, insults, and/or cuss words

isolate (vb.): set apart from others

jar (vb.): shake up; disturb

jetty (n): a type of wall built out into water to protect a coastline or restrain currents

mishaps (n.): unlucky or unfortunate accidents

mortify (vb.) humiliate; embarrass

nocturnal (adj.): nightly

obsess (vb.): greatly preoccupy

obstreperous (adj.): noisy and unruly

pantry (n.): a small room or closet off the kitchen where foodstuffs and cooking ingredients are stored

porter (n.): a person who carries luggage, etc., in this case, at a railroad station.

provocation (n.): To **provoke** is to excite some sort of feeling; often anger or irritation. Uncle Jack tells Scout that, as far as cuss words are concerned, he doesn't see the use for them unless they are used when one is very angry or **provoked** to use them.

ringworm (n.): a contagious skin disease caused by a fungus.

siblings (n.): brothers and/or sisters

still (n.): an apparatus for making alcoholic liquors. The sort of **still** to which Scout refers would be an illegal one.

subdued (vb.): Someone who has been **subdued** has been soothed or softened and made less intense.

tarried (vb.): delayed; waited

tentatively (adv.): To be **tentative** is to be hesitant or unsure. Francis asks Scout his question **tentatively** because he is unsure as to her reaction and more than a little afraid to face her.

tongs (n.): a device used to grab or lift objects. Tongs generally have two long arms that are hinged together.

trousseau (n.): all the new clothes a bride brings to her marriage

uncompromising lineaments (adj. + n.): **Lineaments** are distinctive features or characteristics. **Uncompromising**, in this instance, means unchanging; firm; set. Alexandra's and Francis's **uncompromising lineaments** are their characteristics that are set and will never change.

wary (adj.): To be **wary** means to be cautious on your guard against something. In this instance, the children were never afraid of or cautious about their uncle's appearance.

widow's walk (n.): a platform with a rail around it, built onto the roof of a house.

Yankees (n.): Northerners; natives of Northern states. During the **Civil War**, the **Yankees** were the enemies of the South.

Chapter 10

alist (adj.): tilted to one side

articulate (adj.): able to speak and express oneself

attributes (n.): characteristics; qualities of a person or thing

bout (n.): fight

corncribs (n.): A corncrib is a small structure used to store corn.

crook (of his arm) (n.): The **crook** of your arm is the inside part of your arm where it bends at the elbow.

erratically (adv.): strangely; differently than normal

feeble (adj.): weak; frail

gingerly (adv.): carefully; cautiously

inconspicuous (adj.) To be conspicuous is to attract attention. To be **inconspicuous** is to do the opposite; to not attract attention. Scout wishes that Atticus would be more **inconspicuous**; that is, he would attract less attention to himself.

Jew's Harp (n): a small musical instrument that is played by plucking a piece of metal while holding the instrument to one's mouth.

mad dog (adj. + n.): a dog infected with a disease, such as rabies, which makes it act in a crazy, dangerous manner

mausoleum (n.): Literally, a mausoleum is a large, imposing tomb (a tomb is a place where dead bodies -- those that aren't buried -- are housed). However, Miss Maudie uses the term in its humorous form. She refers to her old house as a mausoleum because, to her, it was too large and too somber.

peril (n.): danger

Providence (n.): the care of God

rudiments (n.): principles; elements; subjects to be learned

tartly (adv.): sharply

torso (n.): the trunk of a body; that is, the part of the body that does not include the head, legs, or arms

vaguely (adv.): to be vague is to be unclear or not precise

Chapter 11

apoplectic (adj.): **Apoplexy** is a condition of sudden paralysis; a stroke. To be **apoplectic**, in this case, is to behave as if on the verge of having a stroke.

arbor (n.): an outdoor area shaded by trees or, in this case, **scuppernong** vines on a **lattice**.

bedecked (adj.): adorned; covered (with decorations)

calomel (n.): a laxative; often used as a cure for intestinal worms

camellia (n.): a shrub with glossy evergreen leaves and waxy, rose-like flowers.

camisole (n.) a woman's sleeveless undergarment, usually worn under a sheer blouse

commence (vb.): begin

decreed (vb): A **decree** is an official order. As her older brother, Jem **decreed** what he and Scout would do.

degradation (n.): a state of low honour or moral character

dog-trot hall (adj.): a covered passageway between two parts of a building

escapade (n.): reckless prank

essence (n.): fundamental nature; most important quality

infuriated (vb.): angered greatly

interdict (n.): prohibition; restraint

livid (adj.): pale; lead-colored. **Livid** can also mean red, as in the color someone's face gets when that person becomes angry.

oppressive (adj.): overbearing; hard to put up with

palliation (n.): to **palliate** is to lessen the pain, or, in this case, fear and anxiety, of something without actually making the fear and anxiety go away. Calpurnia is not a great source of **palliation**; that is, she doesn't make the children feel any less anxious or fearful.

passé (adj.): old-fashioned

philippic (n.): a bitter verbal attack

plate (n.): dentures; dental plate

propensities (n.): inclinations or tendencies

reconnaissance (n.): examination

rectitude (n.): uprightness of character

relic (n): something of historic interest that has survived from the past. In this case, Scout is referring to a gun that would have been used in the **Civil War**.

skulked (vb.): to move or slink about in a sinister manner. The children are **skulking** in the kitchen because they are fearful of Atticus's reaction when he returns home.

syringe (n.): a device with a rubber bulb on one end and a narrow tube on the other: used to inject or extract fluids from body cavities.

tirade (n.): a long angry speech

tranquil (adj.): calm

umbrage (n.): offense

undulate (vb.): to move in waves or in a wavy manner

viscous (adj.): sticky

Chapter 12

alien (adj.): not natural; strange

appalling (adj.): shocking; horrifying

asafoetida (n.): a strong-smelling (like garlic) substance made from a parsley-like plant; often used in folk medicine to repel illness

austere (adj.): stern and severe

boded (vb.): continued

church (vb.): To **church** someone is to bring a person to church for a special service that revolves around that person's needs or deeds.

clad (vb.): dressed

contemptuously (adv.): To behave or speak **contemptuously** toward someone is to treat that person as if he or she is unworthy or beneath one's dignity.

contentious (adj.) always ready to argue

denunciation (n.): To **denounce** is to strongly disapprove of or condemn something. The **denunciation** of sin in the reverend's sermon indicates his strong disapproval of sin.

diligently (adv.): industriously; in a hard-working manner

dispelled (vb.): driven away

ecclesiastical impedimenta (adj. + n.) items used during a church service

frivolous (adj.): silly; not serious

garish (adj.) showy, very bright or gaudy

habiliments (n.): outfits; clothing

inconsistent (adj.): not in agreement; incompatible

indignantly (adv.): angrily

lilac talcum (adj. + n.): **Lilacs** are a very fragrant flower. **Talcum**, often called talcum powder, is a fine talc, or powder, used for the body or face. **Lilac talcum** is **lilac**-scented **talcum** powder.

rotogravure print (n.): **Rotogravure** is a process of printing pictures; often photographs of pictures. Since **rotogravure prints** often appeared in newspapers, it is possible that the print in the church had been taken from a newspaper.

snuff (n.): a preparation of powdered tobacco, usually sniffed through the nose

tapeworm (n.): a parasite that can live in a person's intestines.

voile (adj.): a thin, cotton-like fabric

Chapter 13

caste system (adj. + n.): class distinctions based on birth, wealth, etc.

curtness (n.): To be **curt** is to be brief and short to the point of being rude.

devoid (adj.): completely without

flighty (adj.): foolish; irresponsible

incestuous (adj.): **Incest** is sexual intercourse between persons too closely related to marry legally. Atticus's comment as to the possibility that the Finches might have an **Incestuous** streak refers to the fact that so many Finches have married their cousins.

irritable (adj.): easily annoyed

mandrake roots (n.): The roots of the mandrake plant were often thought to have magical powers because it was thought that their shape resembled the human body.

myopic (adj.): **Myopia** is an abnormal eye condition, often called shortsightedness. Someone who is **myopic** cannot see objects clearly.

obliquely (adv.): indirectly

prerogative (n.) exclusive right or privilege

shinny (n.) a slang term for liquor; usually whiskey or bourbon.

sluggish (adj.): lacking energy; lazy

soberly (adv.): seriously

spun (v.): To **spin** a tale is to tell a story in a creative, fanciful way.

tactful (adj.): To be **tactful** is to be able to say the right thing to a person without being offensive. Scout realizes that her question about her aunt and uncle was not **tactful** and may have been offensive or, at least, embarrassing.

tight (adj.): drunk

Chapter 14

antagonize (vb.): oppose; make angry

bushel (n.): a unit of dry measure equal to 32 quarts

erosion (n.): a gradual wearing away.

infallible (adj.): never wrong

manacles (n.): handcuffs

neat (adj.): unmixed with anything, such as water or soda; straight

taut (adj.): tightly stretched

Chapter 15

acquiescence (n.): agreement without protest

affliction (n.): in this case, a condition

aggregation (n.): group; gathering

begrudge (vb.): To **begrudge** someone something is to feel resentment or disapproval about the fact that they have something. Atticus says that he doesn't think anyone in the town would resent the fact that he has a client.

ecclesiastical (adj.): church-like

façade (n.): the front of a building; the part facing the street.

futility (n.): feeling of being ineffective; uselessness, hopelessness

impassive (adj.): showing no emotion

linotype (n.): a typesetting machine used in publishing.

ominous (adj.): threatening; sinister

shinnied up (adj.): drunk

stifle (vb.): hold back; suppress

succinct (adj.): clear and brief

uncouth (adj.): crude, unmannerly

venerable (adj.): impressive on account of age or historic associations

venue (n.): the place where a jury is selected and a case is tried

Chapter 16

affirmed (vb.): firmly declared or stated

akimbo (adj.): hands on hips and elbows bent outward.

circuit solicitor (n.): a lawyer who travels to different locations to prosecute in trials

dispel (vb.): drive away

eccentricities (n.): oddities; unconventionalities

elucidate (vb.): explain

fey (adj.): strange; eccentric

formidable (adj.): impressive

inhabitants (n.): residents

khaki (adj.): a strong, twilled cloth of a dull yellowish-brown color

Mennonites (n.): members of an evangelical Protestant Christian sect. Mennonites favour plain dress and plain living.

profane (adj.): not connected with religion or religious matters

ruddy (adj.): reddish

Scripture (n.): The Bible

subpoena (n.): a written legal order directing a person to appear in court to give testimony

subtle (adj.): not openly obvious; quiet

sundry (adj.): various

Chapter 17

acrimonious (adj.): sarcastic; bitter; nasty

affirmative nod (adj. + n.): **Affirmative** means positive. To give an **affirmative nod** would be to **nod** or shake one's head up and down to indicate "yes."

amber (adj.): dark orange yellow

ambidextrous (adj.): able to use both hands with equal ease

amiably (adv.): good-naturedly

audibly (adv.): Anything that is **audible** is capable of being heard. The judge warns the spectators against making any more comments that can be heard.

bantam cock (n.): a small, aggressive rooster.

benignly (adv.): kindly; gently

boiling (n.): angry or unruly group

capacity (n.): ability

cast (n.): To have a **cast** in one's eye means that a particular eye tends to veer or turn off into another direction.

complacently (adv.): in a self-satisfied way

congenital (adj.): a **congenital** condition is one that is in existence at birth. For example, if a child is born with a weak heart, that weakness is **congenital**; as opposed to someone who may acquire the condition later in life.

contempt charges (adj. + n.) **Contempt**, in this case, is open disrespect of a court or judge. A person who acts in such a manner may face a **contempt charge** from a judge.

corroborating evidence (adj. + n.): In legal terms; **corroborating evidence** is evidence which helps to strengthen a position. For example; eyewitness testimony in regards to a crime would be **corroborating evidence** that such a crime had been committed.

corrugated (adj.): formed by a series of alternating ridges and grooves

counsel (n.): lawyers

crepey (adj.): Crepe is a thin, crinkled cloth. Mr. Ewell's crepey neck obviously resembles this fabric; that is, the skin is thin and crinkled.

dictum (n.): official pronouncement

dogged (adj.): stubborn determination

economic fluctuations (adj. + n.): **Economics**, in this case, has to do with the economy; the financial state of the country and its people. To **fluctuate** means to change. As far as the Ewells

are concerned, no matter how the economy of the country might change, their situation was always the same. They were always poor.

edge (n.): sharpness

gardenia (n.): a large, fragrant flower.

genially (adv.): in a friendly manner

geraniums (n.): flowering plants.

gullet (n.): throat; neck

heaved (vb.): lifted

import (n.): importance

infinite (adj.): endless

irrelevant'n'immaterial (adj.): "irrelevant and immaterial" **Irrelevant** means not relative; not related (to something). **Immaterial** means unimportant. The judge is saying that whether or not Mr. Ewell can read and write is not related and unimportant to the case.

load o'kindlin' (n.): "load of kindling." **Kindling** is generally made up of dry twigs, branches, etc.; materials useful for starting a fire

namesake (n.): the person one is named after. In this case, Mr. Ewell's namesake is the leader of the Confederate Army, **Robert E. Lee**.

prosperity (n.): good fortune; wealth

quelling (vb.): quieting; calming

refuse (n.): garbage

ruttin' on (vb.): In this instance, the term is used to indicate that, according to Mr. Ewell, Tom Robinson was having sexual intercourse with his daughter. It should be noted that this term is almost exclusively reserved for use in describing the mating habits of animals, not people.

skewed (adj.): turned

slop jars (n.): large pails usually used to receive waste water from a wash basin or the contents of a chamber pot

smugness (n.): To be **smug** is to be highly self-satisfied; to think a lot of oneself. Mr. Ewell's **smugness**, or appearance of self-satisfaction, shows on his face.

speculations (n.): To **speculate** is to think about or reflect on a subject. **Speculations** are thoughts or reflections.

sulky (adj.): moody and quiet

sullen (adj.): in this case, gloomy and threatening

supplemented (vb.): added to

tenet (n.) a principle or belief generally held to be true

title dispute (n.): a legal fight over the ownership of a particular piece of property

turbulent (adj.): stormy; unruly

varmints (n.): in this case, flies and other flying insects that would be found in and around a garbage dump

warranted (vb.): gave a reason for; indicated the need for

Chapter 18

arid (adj.): dry; without expression

chiffarobe (n.): a large cabinet with drawers and a place for hanging clothes.

constructionalist (n.): a person who interprets aspects of the law in a specified way

dusk (n.): the time just before nightfall

ground-itch (n.): **Ground-itch** is caused by **hookworms**. The parasites usually enter the body through bare feet, causing an itchy, allergic reaction.

grudging (adj.): hostile

lavations (n.): washings

mollified (adj.): soothed; calmed

neutrality (n.): the condition of being **neutral**; not taking part in either side of a controversy.

perpetual (adj.): everlasting; continuous

pilgrimage (n.): in this instance, a long walk

riled (adj.): angry

strenuous (adj.): work or labour that is **strenuous** requires a lot of energy and stamina.

tedious (adj.): boring; tiresome

tollable (adj.): Mayella's way of pronouncing the word "**tolerable**." Someone who is **tolerable** is a person who is fairly good or passable; someone who can be **tolerated** or endured.

wrathfully (adv.): angrily

Chapter 19

candid (adj.): open and honest

ex cathdra remarks (adj. + n.): remarks made with the authority that comes from one's official position

express (adj.): clear; explicit; not just implied

expunge (vb.): remove completely

grimly (adv.): sternly; without humour

impudent (adj.): disrespectful; bold

subtlety (n.): delicacy

thin-hided (adj.): thin-skinned; sensitive

unimpaired (adj.): unhurt; undamaged

volition (n.): will. Scout is saying that someone like Tom would never go into somebody's yard on his own or unless he had been invited to do so, and would never do so of his own will or **volition**.

Chapter 20

aridity (n.): dryness

attentive (adj.): paying attention; observant

calibre (n.): quality

capital charge (adj. + n.): a **charge** for a crime that is punishable by death

corroborative evidence (adj. + n.): To **corroborate** is to strengthen and support. **Corroborative evidence**, in a trial, is **evidence** that makes a case stronger. Atticus is telling the jury that there is no **evidence** to strengthen the case against Tom.

corrupting (vb.): To **corrupt** someone is to bring that person down to a lower moral level. Since it at first appears that Mr. Raymond has given Dill liquor to drink, it would seem that he is **corrupting** him.

cynical confidence (adj.): To be **cynical**, in this case, means to believe that people are only motivated in what they do out of selfishness; that no one truly behaves or does something out of sincerity. Atticus's mention of the witnesses's **cynical confidence** refers to the fact that they are selfish and self-centred enough to think that everyone will believe their story.

detachment (n.): the state of being disinterested or unemotional

discreet (adj.): carefully phrased; cautious

fraud (n.): a lie; a deception

indicted (vb.): formally accused; charged

iota (n.): a very small amount

minute (adj.): exact; precise (pronounced: my - **newt**)

pauper (n.): an extremely poor person

perpetrated (vb.): committed

temerity (n.): foolish or rash boldness

unmitigated (adj.): out-and-out absolute

Chapter 21

acquit (vb.): clear of a charge; find not guilty

charged the jury (vb. + n.): When Judge Taylor **charges the jury**, he gives them instructions in law before they go off to deliberate or decide the case

exhilarated (adj.): cheerful, merry

indignant (adj.): angry

Chapter 22

cynical (adj.): a **cynic** is someone who often belittles or makes fun of someone else. Aunt Alexandra tells Dill that his remarks about his own Aunt's drinking habits are **cynical**, especially since, as a child, Dill should have more respect for his elders.

fatalistic (adj.): To be **fatalistic** about something is to accept the event as though it were inevitable; that is, that nothing could be done to change or alter it.

feral (adj.): wild; savage

heathen (adj.): unenlightened; without religion or morals

ruefully (adv.): regretfully

Chapter 23

commutes (vb.): changes; makes less severe

dry (adj.): clever but subtle

furtive (adj.): sneaky

infantile (adj.): childish

statute (n.): law

vehement (adj.): full of emotion and strong feeling

wary (adj.): cautious

wryly (adv.): humorously; slightly sarcastic

Chapter 24

apprehension (n.): In this case, fear

bellows (n.): a machine that allows air to be pumped through a system; in this case, an organ

bovine (adj.): cow-like

brevity (n.): shortness

charlotte (n.): a desert made with fruit in a mold that is lined with pieces of bread or cake.

devout (adj.): devoted to religion

hypocrites (n.): people who pretend to be something they are not

impertinence (n.): disrespect

largo (adj.): **Largo** is a direction used in music which means "at a very slow tempo. Mrs. Merriweather is apparently speaking to Scout very slowly.

squalid (adj.): miserable; wretched

squalour (n): filth

sulky (adj.): moody

vague (adj.): not clearly felt; somewhat subconscious

yaws (n.): an infectious contagious tropical disease

Chapter 25

roly-poly (n.): a small bug that can roll itself into a ball. Also known as a pillbug, sowbug or wood louse.

scowling (vb.): A **scowl** is a facial expression caused by scrunching up one's forehead and brow; a look of displeasure.

veneer (n.): attractive outer surface

Chapter 26

remorse (n.): a feeling of regret and guilt

recluse (n.): someone who stays away from society and the company of others

spurious (adj.): Something that is **spurious** outwardly resembles something but does not have the genuine qualities of that thing. Miss Gates thinks that The Grit Paper is **spurious** because, although it resembles a newspaper, to her mind, it is far inferior to a publication like The Mobile Register or other newspapers.

Chapter 27

industry (n.): work, especially on a steady basis

notoriety (n.): fame

florid (adj.): very flowery in style; elegant

nondescript (adj.): dull; with no special or interesting qualities

carcass (n.): body

eccentricities (n.): odd behaviour

maiden ladies (adj. + n.): women who have never married

Chapter 28

boil-prone (adj.): A **boil** is an inflamed, pus-filled swelling on the skin, like a pimple only usually bigger. To be **prone** to something is to be inclined to it. If the children had been **boil-prone**, they would have been inclined to have a lot of boils.

climbers (n.): social climbers; people trying to move into a different social class

crap games (n.): a gambling game played with two dice

divinity (n.): a white fudge made from whipped egg whites, sugar, and nuts.

forest primeval (n. + adj.): in this instance, a forest that had been primarily untouched or unchanged by man

furtive (adj.): secret

gait (n.): pace, walk

hock (n.): the joint bending backward in the hind leg of an animal like a pig. Scout is dressed as a ham, and a ham is the upper part of a hog's hind leg, Scout's **hock** would be the part of her costume that resembles the joint of a pig's leg.

irascible (adj.): angry

mock (n.): **mockingbird**

pinioned (adj.): confined; held down

repertoire (n.): accomplishments; skills. The **repertoire** of the **mockingbird** is all the songs it can sing and sounds it can make.

rout (vb.): defeat

smockin' (n.): **Smocking**, decorative stitching used to gather cloth.

staccato (adj.): distinct; sharp and crisp

Chapter 29

reprimand (vb.): scold

Chapter 30

blandly (adv.): smoothly; without excitement

connived (vb.): secretly cooperated or agreed to

wisteria (n.): twinning woody vines with large clusters of flowers.

Chapter 31

railing (adj.): painful

Allusions and Idioms

Chapter 1

Andrew Jackson: 7th President of the United States (1829-1837).

Battle of Hastings: a decisive battle in the Norman Conquests of England in 1066.

Cornwall: a county at the southwest tip of England.

disturbance between the North and the South: The American Civil War (1861-1865)

Dracula: the 1931 film version of the famous vampire story.

flivver: another name for a Model-T Ford car.

Jamaica: an island country in the West Indies, south of Cuba.

John Wesley: (1702-1791) Founder of the Methodist Church.

Meridian, Mississippi: **Meridian** is a city in east **Mississippi**.

Merlin: King Arthur's adviser, prophet and magician.

Mobile: a city in southwest Alabama.

no money to buy it with: an allusion to the Great Depression.

nothing to fear but fear itself: an allusion to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first Inaugural Address.

Pensacola: a city in northwest Florida.

Philadelphia: a city in southeast Pennsylvania.

stumphole whiskey: illegally made and sold whiskey that would be hidden in the holes of tree stumps.

Tuscaloosa: a city in central Alabama.

Chapter 2

Bullfinch: an allusion to *Bulfinch's Mythology*, a famous collection of Greek myths. Jem is kidding, of course, but his reference to *Bulfinch's Mythology* is another indication of how much of a reader Scout has always been.

Dewey Decimal System: A system for organizing books in libraries devised by Melvil Dewey. Contrary to what Jem tells Scout, this Dewey has nothing to do with John Dewey, a theorist of progressive education.

diaries of Lorenzo Dow: Lorenzo Dow, the brother of Brigham Young, was one of the Mormons who made the great 1300 mile journey to Utah.

Here's a quarter: If a quarter (of a dollar) doesn't seem like enough, remember that, during this portion of the Great Depression, a nickel (5 cents) bought a loaf of bread, a movie was a dime (ten cents), and gasoline (petrol) could be had for sixteen cents a gallon.

the crash: the **Stock Market Crash of 1929** which led to the Great Depression..

union suit: a one-piece garment of underwear with a buttoned flap in the back.

Union: one side in the Civil War (the North)

Chapter 3

man who sat on a flagpole: Flagpole sitting was one of the stranger fads of the 1930s.

Chapter 4

Indian-heads: Before the Lincoln penny, there were Indian-head pennies.

One Man's Family: a radio serial (like a soap opera) which began in 1932 and proved to be enormously popular for almost thirty years. By acting out their version of the Radley story, the children are playing in their own version of the drama.

Chapter 5

Old Testament pestilence: **Pestilence** refers to a condition or disease that causes massive damage or death. One example of **pestilence** in the Old Testament of the Bible is a plague of locusts, such as the one described in Exodus 10.

Second Battle of the Marne: a battle in World War I.

Chapter 7

Egyptians walked that way: Jem's assumptions as to how Egyptians would have walked is probably based on pictures of Egyptian art.

Chapter 8

Appomattox: a former village in central Virginia. On April 9, 1865, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at the Appomattox Court House, ending the Civil War.

Bellingraths: Miss Maudie is referring to Walter and Bessie Bellingrath who, in 1932, opened their large, beautiful gardens to the public. The Bellingrath Gardens are located in Mobile, Alabama.

Lane cake: a rich white cake.

Rosetta Stone: Discovered in Egypt in 1799, the **Rosetta Stone** is a large block of basalt inscribed with a report of a decree passed in 196 BC. Written in three languages, the stone gave historians many clues as to the meaning of Egyptian Hieroglyphs.

Chapter 9

Confederate veteran: a veteran of the Civil War who fought for the South.

General Hood: Lieutenant-General John B. Hood, a Confederate officer.

House of Commons: the lower branch of the legislature in Great Britain

Let the cup pass from you: On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prayed to the Lord: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done [Luke 22:42]." By asking the Lord to "take this cup from me" he was praying that he might avoid his fate (in Greek, one of the figurative meanings for "cup" is "fate"). Uncle Jack's comment to Atticus calls upon this reference because he understands that his brother was not looking forward to his fate: having to defend Tom Robinson.

Lord Melbourne: (1779-1848) Queen Victoria's first Prime Minister, Melbourne also had the reputation for being something of a ladies' man.

Missouri Compromise : The **Missouri Compromise** (1820) allowed Missouri to be admitted to the Union as a slave state but stipulated no more slave states would be allowed above the southern border of Missouri.

Mount Everest: The highest known mountain in the world (29,028 feet), *Everest* is part of the Himalayas, on the border of Nepal and Tibet.

Ol' Blue Light: a reference to Stonewall Jackson, a Confederate lieutenant-general.

Prime Minister: the head of a parliamentary government, such as Great Britain's.

Chapter 10

mockingbird: a North American bird known for its vocal imitations.

Chapter 11

Confederate Army: the Southern army in the Civil War.

CSA: Confederate States of America - the Southern side of the Civil War.

Dixie Howell: Millard "Dixie" Howell was a popular University of Alabama football player during the 1930s.

Ivanhoe: a novel written in 1819 by Sir Walter Scott set in the Middle Ages during the time of the Crusades.

Sir Walter Scott: author of *Ivanhoe* .

Chapter 12

Blackstone's *Commentaries* : One of the most important books ever written on British law.

Bootleggers: people who make and/or sell illegal liquor.

bread lines: During the Great Depression, thousands of people relied on charitable organizations for meals and would line up for simple meals often of bread and soup.

Brown's Mule: a brand of chewing tobacco.

castile: a type of soap, originally made in Spain

Garden of Gethsemane: the place where Jesus went to pray on the night before his crucifixion.

Hoyt's Cologne: a strong, lasting cologne, originally made in Germany and popular during the first part of the 20th century.

Hunt's *The Light of the World* : a well-known painting of Jesus Christ.

Octagon soap: a very harsh, strong soap.

Shadrach: One of the three men whom King Nebuchadnezzar threw into a blazing furnace, as told in Daniel 3 of the Bible. Because of their faith in God, all three men escaped unharmed.

sit-down strikes: During the Great Depression, sit-down strikes became a real force in labour relations in the United States. Unlike "regular" strikes, workers in a sit-down strike would literally "sit down on the job;" that is, they would refuse to leave the building until their demands were met. One of the most famous sit-down strikes of this era was the Flint sit-down strike at the General Motors plant in Flint, Michigan.

Chapter 13

Lydia E. Pinkham: a maker and manufacturer of patent medicines in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Most of Pinkham's medical concoctions were aimed at women, and the majority of them contained liberal amounts of alcohol.

Reconstruction: the period of time, roughly between 1867-1877, when the Southern states were reorganized and reestablished after the Civil War.

Rice Christians: Christian converts from third-world nations, especially those in parts of Asia.

War Between the States: the Civil War.

Chapter 15

battlement: a low wall with open spaces built on top of a castle wall or fort.

flying buttress: a buttress (support) connected to a building by an arch.

Gothic: a style of architecture developed in Western Europe between the 12th and 16th century.

Jitney Jungle: a supermarket chain. Supermarkets were still relatively new to America in the 1930s. Most shoppers did business at smaller grocery stores.

snipe hunt: a practical joke. The "victim" is taken on a hunt deep into a forest at night and told to look for and capture "snipes," small, flightless birds that, in actuality, don't exist. While the hunter searches, the rest of the party leaves.

Chapter 16

Braxton Bragg: The commander of the Western Confederate Army during the Civil War, Bragg led a less-than-distinguished career in the military, and his army unit was eventually defeated.

Ethiopia: During the time of the Old Testament, **Ethiopia** was a kingdom in Northeast Africa. Today, **Ethiopia** is a country in Eastern Africa.

Greek revival columns: a form of architectural columns.

straight Prohibition ticket: **Prohibition** was a period in U.S. history (1920-1933) when the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages was against the law. By voting the **straight Prohibition ticket**, Mr. Jones always votes for those political candidates who support Prohibition.

William Jennings Bryan: (1860-1925) **Bryan** was a lawyer, a politician (he ran for the Presidency three times), and a famous orator. His speeches were major events, especially in the South and along the Bible Belt, and would draw huge crowds.

Chapter 17

fountain pen: a pen with a special nib at the end that allowed the pen to be refilled with ink from a bottle.

icebox: Before refrigerators people used **iceboxes**, large wood cabinets kept cold on the inside by blocks of ice that would be delivered to the home.

Model-T Ford (on blocks): The **Model-T** (also known as a "tin Lizzie" or a "flivver") was Henry Ford's first popular success. Originally produced in 1909, it was affordable and relatively reliable. A car is put up **on blocks** for two main reasons: either it no longer has any tires, or the owner can't afford to drive it and putting it on blocks saves the tires from the damage caused by having to carry the weight of the car.

shotgun hall: A hallway that leads directly from the front door to the back door.

Chapter 18

cotton gin: a machine used to separate seed and other debris from cotton.

Mr. Jingle: A character in Charles Dicken's novel *The Pickwick Papers*, Mr. Jingle usually expresses himself in sentence fragments.

Chapter 20

all men are created equal: A phrase from *The Declaration of Independence*.

distaff side of the Executive branch: a reference to Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt (the **Executive branch** is the President, and **distaff**, in this case, means wife). Eleanor Roosevelt often came in for much criticism, especially in the South, for her views on civil rights.

Einstein: Albert Einstein (1879-1955), German-born physicist.

Rockefeller: John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937), one of the richest men in America at the time.

Thomas Jefferson: 3rd President of the United States (1801-1809) and author of *The Declaration of Independence*.

Chapter 24

Birmingham: a city in Central Alabama.

Mrs. Roosevelt: First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962), wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

People up there set 'em free: in other words: the Northerners are responsible for the fact that the slaves were freed

tryin' to sit with 'em: in 1939, Eleanor Roosevelt attended the a meeting for the Southern Conference for Human Welfare in Birmingham, Alabama where she defied state authorities by sitting in the center aisle, between whites and blacks, after police told her she was violating segregation laws by sitting with black people.

Chapter 25

English Channel: The **English Channel** is the waterway that separates Great Britain from France. It is also the avenue by which much trade is carried on between Great Britain and the European continent. According to Scout, Miss Stephanie is the avenue of gossip for much of Maycomb.

Chapter 26

Adolf Hitler has been after all the Jews: a reference to the Nazi anti-Jewish policy.

Adolf Hitler: (1889-1945) Nazi dictator of Germany from 1933 to 1945.

Elmer Davis: a journalist and CBS radio commentator who went on to head the Office of War Information.

holy-roller: a member of a small religious sect that expresses devotion by shouting and moving around during worship services.

Uncle Natchell Story: **Uncle Natchell** (along with his sidekick, Sonny Boy) was the cartoon mascot for a fertilizer product called Natural Chilean Nitrate of Soda. Many of the advertisements for this product were in comic strip or story form. Little Chuck Little has mistaken one of these advertising "stories" for an actual current event.

Chapter 27

Bob Taylor: Robert Love Taylor, late 19th Century orator and politician.

Ad Astra Per Apera: Latin for "To the stars through difficulties"

Cotton Tom Heflin: J. Thomas "Cotton Tom" Heflin was an orator and Republican politician. Heflin was Secretary of State in Alabama at the beginning of the century and served in the U.S. Congress (1905-1920) and the Senate (1921-1931). Heflin's political support was drawn chiefly from rural voters and members of the Ku Klux Klan.

dog Victrolas: a reference to the advertising symbol of RCA/Victor; a dog, known as "Nipper," looking into the horn of a gramophone or Victrola.

Ladies Law: There was no such law in Alabama at the time. It would appear that Link Deas was using it as a made-up threat against Mr. Ewell.

National Recovery Act: better known as the National Recovery Administration or the NRA. The NRA was a series of programmes set up to help the nation, especially the nation's businesses, recover from the effects of the Great Depression. It was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1935.

nine old men: the members of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court declared the NRA unconstitutional in 1935.

NRA-WE DO OUR PART: the motto of the National Recovery Administration (NRA).

Syrians: People from Syria, a country at the northwest part of the Mediterranean region, south of Turkey.

WPA: During the Great Depression, when millions of Americans were out of work, the government instituted the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and employed over eight million people.

Chapter 28

three-corner hats, confederate caps, Spanish-American War hats, and World War helmets: all references to the headgear of various soldiers from different wars.

Idioms

Chapter 5

acid tongue in her head: Acid is very bitter in taste. Someone with an **acid tongue** is someone who tends to speak bitterly or sharply.

get Miss Maudie's goat: To **get one's goat** is to make a person disgusted or angry.

Chapter 7

walked on eggs: To **walk on eggs** is to walk very carefully.

Chapter 9

as sure as eggs: Something that is **as sure as eggs** is a sure thing; it's bound to happen; just as chickens are sure to lay eggs.

bowed to the inevitable: An event or occurrence that is **inevitable** is one that cannot be stopped from occurring. To **bow to the inevitable** is to realize this fact and resist fighting it. Atticus realizes that, sooner or later, Scout and Jem would be given guns and be taught how to shoot, so he doesn't try to fight it.

drew a bead on him: To **draw a bead on** someone is to aim at or focus on that person.

on tenterhooks: To be **on tenterhooks** is to be filled with suspense or anxiety.

set my teeth permanently on edge: To **set one's teeth on edge** is to annoy someone or make them feel nervous the way in which Aunt Alexandra tends to annoy Scout

Chapter 10

break camp: pack up; move on. In Scout's case, Atticus is telling her to put her gun away and quit her game.

tooth and nail: To fight someone **tooth and nail** is to fight that person as fiercely as possible (literally with **teeth** and **fingernails** if necessary).

tribal curse: a family curse or, more aptly, an affliction shared by members of a family. Apparently, many members of the Finch family have had problems with their left eyes.

Chapter 11

'druthers: a contraction of the phrase "I'd rather." Your **'druthers** is your choice or preference; it's what you'd rather do or have.

slow fuse: A person with a **slow fuse** is someone who is not easily upset or angered.

stood as much guff: **Guff** is foolish or brash talk. Jem has had enough of all the foolish, rude talk about Atticus.

when the chips are down: at the most important time. [In gambling games, a person puts chips or money down in front of him to show that he is willing to risk an amount in a bet.]

Chapter 12

to scrape a few barnacles off the ship of state: **Barnacles** are a form of shellfish that attach themselves to stationary items such as ships that have been standing still in the water for a long time. In order to maintain a boat or a ship, the barnacles must be scraped off. **The ship of state**, in this case, refers to the state government. The governor is saying that it is necessary to maintain and update (**scrape a few barnacles off**) the workings of the government (**the ship of state**).

Chapter 13

travelled in state: To travel **in state** is to do so in the position of a person of great wealth and rank.

Chapter 15

he had seen the light: In this case to have **seen the light** means to have become religious.

Chapter 16

blind spots: a prejudice or area of ignorance that someone has but is unaware of. Mr. Cunningham's **blind spot** is his prejudice against Tom Robinson.

Chapter 17

counting his chickens: Scout is referring to the first half of the proverb: "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched," which means "don't be too sure that something will happen before it does." Although Jem seems to be certain that Atticus has won his case, Scout thinks he is **counting his chickens**, that is, he is too sure of something that may not happen.

guests of the county: on public assistance or welfare

Chapter 18

took advantage of me: In this instance, the phrase **to take advantage of** means to have sexual intercourse with.

Chapter 19

looked daggers: A dagger is a type of knife. To **look daggers** at someone is to look sharply at that person.

Chapter 22

give the lie: To **give the lie** to something is to prove that thing to be false or untrue. Scout is saying that the way in which Miss Stephanie and Miss Rachel are acting proves that Dill's statements about them are not untrue.

runner: chicken leg

Chapter 24

blue in the face: angry and upset; excited and emotional

fighting the good fight: In the case of the ladies of the missionary circle, the **good fight** would be their work to aid missionaries around the world in their cause of converting people to Christianity.

their time came: Although this could be a reference to childbirth, it is more likely a reference to a woman's menstrual cycle.

wool: Mrs. Merriweather is referring to her maid's head or, more specifically, her hair. "It's never entered that **wool** of hers" is Mrs. Merriweather's way of saying, "It's never entered that **head** of hers."

Chapter 30

into the limelight: In the theatre, the **limelight** is an intense light thrown on stage in order to highlight an actor, etc. To be **in the limelight** is to be put in a prominent position before the public.