
TKAM, Chapter 9: Maycomb's Usual Disease: Prejudice/Stereotype Journal

GOAL:

- Increase student awareness of the many forms of prejudice
 - Identify inner v. outer qualities of an individual, and why it is important to be aware of both aspects
 - Observe the ways in which Lee explores race & class in 1930s Alabama
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JOURNAL:

How do you see stereotyping & prejudice playing out in your own life (school, friendships, job opportunities, class dynamics, etc.), or in the world at large? Will knowing more about prejudice and its causes change the way you interact with people or interpret situations? (10 minutes)

The theme of prejudice between opposing individuals and groups creates a tension that runs throughout the whole story. There is a tension between males and females, blacks and whites, and different economic and social groups. This theme is relevant today because these prejudices are still with us and have to be resolved. They are not restricted, either to any particular age group or geographic location.

Think about and answer the following questions in your groups (15-20 minutes).

- **GROUP 1:**
 - What is prejudice?
 - What does prejudice look like?
 - What is prejudice in society? in school? in TKAM?
 - Find 5 examples of characters who are victims of prejudice. Name some of their outer appearances which make them susceptible to prejudice, and find some of the inner qualities which are not always apparent upon first reading of the text.
- **GROUP 2:**
 - What are the causes of prejudice?
 - How does prejudice have the power to be destructive?
 - How can prejudice damage a community?
 - List Atticus' reasons for defending Tom. Should he take the case? Why does Atticus take a case that he knows will cause so much dissension in the neighborhood?
- **GROUP 3:**
 - Why are people prejudiced?
 - What are the effects of prejudice?
 - How can you overcome prejudice?
 - Atticus says near the end of chapter 9... *"You know what's going to happen as well as I do, Jack, and I hope and pray I can get Jem and Scout through it without bitterness, and most of all, without catching Maycomb's usual disease. Why reasonable people go start raving mad then anything involving a Negro comes up, is something I don't pretend to understand... I just hope Jem and Scout come to me for their answers instead of listening to the town."* What is the disease Atticus is talking about? How do you think talking would lead to contracting this disease? What do you think this particular excerpt could be hinting toward the reader for the rest of the book?
- **GROUP 4:**
 - How can you recognize prejudice in yourself?
 - How has prejudice affected large numbers of people?
 - Many people in the story influence Scout's values and beliefs. What does each person teach her?
 - Jem
 - Maudie
 - Atticus
 - Calpurnia
 - Mr. Cunningham
 - About defending Tom Robinson, Atticus says, "We were licked a hundred years before we started." Imagine that you are a team of young lawyers helping Atticus prepare his case. What things do you think will help you defend Tom? What things do you think the prosecution will use to try and convict him?