

KEY IDEA: COURAGE



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.

It was times like these when I thought my father, who hated guns and had never been to any wars, was the bravest man who ever lived.

1. **What is courage?** Follow the steps below to answer.
 - a) Who is one person that you believe is truly courageous?
 - b) What is it about this person that makes him/her courageous?
 - c) Develop your answer from b) into a general statement that defines courage:
'Courage is...

2. The events in the table are from the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* and all relate to courage. Read the information.

CHAPTER	INCIDENT
1	Jem refuses to be known as a 'coward' and fulfils Dill's dare by touching the Radley house. His courage is motivated by bravado.

6	Dill and Jem find the courage to sneak up to the Radley house to peer in the windows. Their courage is caused by curiosity.
6	Jem finds the courage to return to the Radley house to retrieve his pants. His courage is motivated by fear of Atticus finding out about his actions.
9	Cecil Jacobs, a classmate of Scout's, criticizes Atticus. Scout responds by wanting to fight with him. Her courage here is motivated by defending her father. However, Atticus instructs her never to fight with another student again.
9	Scout learns more about the upcoming trial and asks Atticus whether he is likely to win. Atticus responds in the negative but says it is still worth trying. This shows Atticus' moral courage against all odds.
9	Scout is about to start a fight with Cecil Jacobs but instead she remembers Atticus' advice and walks away. Cecil calls her a coward (although Lee is showing the reader that Scout displayed courage.)
9	Scout's cousin Francis criticises Atticus by calling him a 'nigger-lover.' Scout responds by physically attacking him. Again her courage is motivated by defending her father.
10	Atticus shows his children that he is a courageous man when he steps into the street to face a rabid dog. Jem and Scout are proud of Atticus' courage in such a precarious situation. However, shooting is not Atticus' real idea of courage. He views courage as a moral attribute, not as something that can be proved with a weapon. (He explains this to Jem at the end of chapter 11.)
11	Jem shows a certain type of courage by destroying Mrs Dubose' camellias. This courage is motivated by rage due to Mrs Dubose criticising Atticus.
11	Atticus uses Mrs. Dubose as an example of true courage to show Jem that courage is someone who fights for what's right whether he or she wins or not. This foreshadows the kind of courage that Atticus will show in defending Tom Robinson.
15	Atticus shows courage in defending Tom Robinson against the mob outside the jailhouse.

15	The members of the mob that come to lynch Tom Robinson feel they are acting with courage. However, Scout's innocent and well-meaning remarks to Mr Cunningham throw a new light on their actions and make them realize how cowardly they are.
20	Atticus shows immense courage in defending Tom Robinson publicly even though the jury and onlookers believe Robinson to be guilty. Tom Robinson shows courage in stating the truth that Mayella Ewell approached him rather than the other way around. Jem and Scout watch and learn about true courage.
30	Heck Tate shows extreme courage in refusing to prosecute Arthur (Boo) Radley. He does this to protect Arthur from the injustice of the prison system. He courageously lies to bring about justice.

3. From the information in the table (and your own knowledge of the novel) list the various ways that the characters show courage.

Character	What does he/she do that shows courage?	What motivates him/her to show courage?
Scout		
Jem		
Atticus		
Other		

4. Harper Lee creates a **dichotomy** (contrast of two opposites) of two different kinds of courage in the novel. What are these two different types?
5. Which type of courage does Lee suggest to be the best kind? Give reasons for your answer.
6. An **endorsed** character is one whom the novelist most uses to convey his/her messages to the reader. Which character do you believe is most

endorsed by Lee in terms of conveying her ideas of true courage? Provide reasons.

7. What overall message is Lee seeking to communicate to us about the nature of courage?

To answer, you could use the following sentence starters:

- *True courage is shown when an individual...*
- *True and authentic courage is motivated by...*
- *There are many different types of courage, but the most ethical and authentic type is...*
- *An individual is truly courageous when he or she...*