

Example by StudyDriver

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Examples of Courage in to Kill a Mockingbird Example

The book *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is about a family who lives in the fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama during the 1930s. The story is narrated by Scout Finch, she takes you through her childhood life in Maycomb, her father Atticus is a lawyer. Her brother is Jem Finch, he is four years older than Scout. Arthur Radley also is called Boo Radley, he is the Finch's neighbor, he is this mysterious man who stays all cooped up in his house but only comes out during the night. Mrs. Dubose is an elderly, unwell, racist woman who lives near the Finches. All these characters say the theme of courage. In the book, there are many themes and one of the recurring themes is courage. Harper Lee uses characters such as Scout, Jem, Atticus, and Mrs. Dubose to define courage, something interesting is seeing Scout and Jem's understanding of courage throughout the book, and what separates characters who are courageous from characters who are cowards.

Mrs. Dubose showed her act of courage when she decided to fight her addiction to morphine before she died. Atticus made Jem read to Mrs. Dubose to not think of the pain after he destroyed her flowers, Atticus did this to show him the meaning of courage. Atticus reveals her morphine addiction to Jem after she dies, it shows Jem that courage is not masculinity and being able to hold a gun, but it's being persistent through difficult times. In chapter

11, Atticus defines courage to Jem and he states "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 see it through no matter what"(Lee 149). Before Jem thought Mrs. Dubose was simply some mean old lady who lashed out at anyone who offended her, only after her death Jem realized Mrs. Dubose is a brave person because of her heroic struggle with morphine. Mrs. Dubose died as a free woman with no addictions to be known with.

Scout and Jem displayed courage many times throughout the book. At the end of chapter 1, Jem shows courage towards his friends when he was dared by Dill to touch the side Radley house. This shows courage because he is doing something he dreads and proving he can do it. Another time was in chapter 15. Jem, Scout, and Dill went to the jailhouse to see Atticus, Jem showed courage to his family by staying after Atticus asks him to leave. Jem was scared of the crowd but stayed to protect Atticus from the crowd. At the end of chapter 3, Atticus, and Scout make a compromise of if she goes to school, then Atticus would continue reading to her before she went to bed. This shows courage because Scout is going against her teacher's instructions. Another example of when Scout showed courage was in chapter 9, Scout when she was asked by Atticus to not fight anymore. At school when Cecil Jacobs said some rude things about her father, Scout refuses to fight him. This shows courage because since used to fight much, she kept her promise to Atticus, and didn't fight Cecil Jacobs.

Arthur Radley has shown courage in a quietly throughout the book. In chapter 7, Arthur gives gifts to Scout and Jem by leaving the gifts in a tree hole outside the Radley yard. This is brave of him because if he gets caught, he would get punished by Nathan Radley for it. Another time, he was sneaky and courageous was in chapter 8, when Miss Maudie's house was on fire and the children were waiting outside and secretly Arthur put a blanket over them. This is another case of if Arthur is seen interacting with the kids Nathan Radley would punish him for it. Finally, in chapter 28, Jem, and Scout were walking home after a play, until suddenly Bob Ewell attacks them. Arthur comes out of the house to save the kids, he grabbed Bob and stabbed him with a kitchen knife. This is courageous because if he gets caught with the kids, then Arthur will get severely punished again. At the end of chapter 31, Scout states "Neighbors bring food with death and flowers with sickness and little things in between.

Boo was our neighbor. He gave us two soap dolls, a broken watch and chain, a pair of good-luck pennies, and our lives" (Lee 373). Arthur acts like Scout and Jem's guardian angel. Throughout the book, he is doing these kinda courageous acts with Scout and Jem having no clue he is actually there, which is why he has courage in a quiet way. Arthur watches over them and is there when they need help.

Atticus is one of the bravest characters in the book. He has shown courage many times throughout the book. Atticus shows moral courage. An example of this is when Atticus agrees to defend Tom Robinson, who is a black man accused of raping a white woman named Mayella Ewell. Although he and his family would be harassed by racial slurs and verbal abuse, he takes the case even though it's putting his family in danger. The night before the trial begins, Tom is placed in a local jail. An angry mob of white men approaches trying to get to Tom. Atticus is staying outside the jail with a chair and book to protect Tom. When the mob comes, Atticus confronts them. Jem, Scout, and Dill sneak out of the house and join Atticus. The kids are exposed to the horrible racist community, the town. At the trial, Atticus has clearly proven Tom Robinson innocent and the victim Mayella and her father are lying. But despite all the facts, the whole white jury declares Tom as guilty, sadly Tom gets shot by prison guards after an attempt to run away. Another time, Atticus shows courage was earlier in the story when Atticus had to shoot down a dog with rabies. This shows courage because he stands strong with no fears and gets the job done. The diseased dog also called mad dog symbolizes madness which foreshadows the Tom Robinson trial, that the community goes mad racist over and only say Tom is guilty because he is black. All these examples show you how courageous Atticus is throughout the book.

All in all, any of these characters define courage. Each character shows courage in a unique way. Atticus explains courage as "when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what" (Lee 149). Most characters throughout the book, show courage with their actions. Atticus shows courage by going against society and defend equal racial rights. What contrasts Courage from cowardness is that courage in *To Kill a Mockingbird* means to do what is right whether you win or lose, instead of using your gut reaction. Harper Lee uses the Ewell family to define cowardness. Cowardness is someone who lacks courage and let's fear to prevent them from doing what is right. Bob Ewell is a coward. Bob Ewell lies and charges an innocent man of

rape. This man, Tom Robinson eventually gets shot after he tries to run away from the prison guards. The book likes to think courage is protecting the good or the innocent. Mockingbirds are depicted as innocent because all they do is make music for us. Miss Maudie states "Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a Mockingbird" (Lee 119). Tom Robinson represents a mockingbird. He is getting protected by Atticus but is eventually killed by Bob Ewell. These examples not only define courage but separate the good from the evil or the act of being courageous and the act of being a coward.