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WORKING WITH THE TEXT

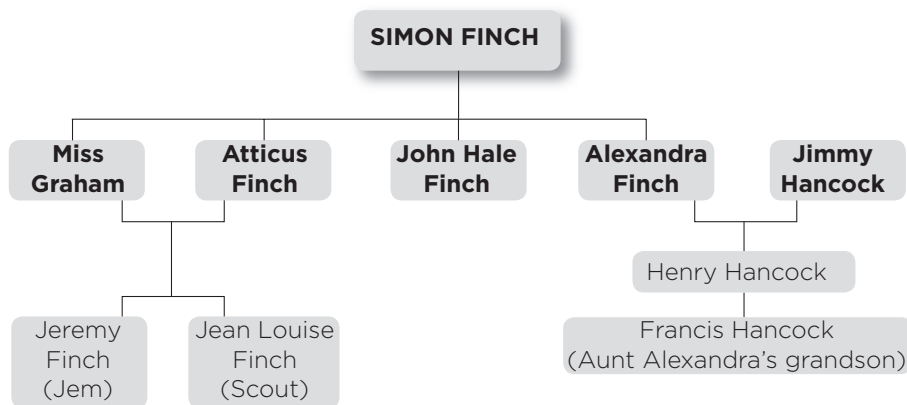
PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE SCENE

The Finch family tree

Here is a diagram of the Finch family tree. It will help you to understand how the members of the family are related to one another.



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Looking at the text

Complete the following cloze exercise:

At the beginning of the novel, Scout (whose real name is 1.____) is 2. ____ years old and her brother 3. ____, is 4. ____ years old. Because their mother 5. ____ when Scout was two, the children are raised by 6. _____. He is helped by 7. _____. Their neighbour is Miss Rachel 8.____. The children had to play within strict boundaries, which consisted of Mrs Henry Lafayette Dubose, two doors to the 9. ____ and 10.____to the south of their house. The story is told by 11.____, who is an adult looking back.

The advantage of having such a narrator is that we will be able to understand the story as told by a child but seen through the eyes and with the insight of an adult.

Plot

The opening sentence of the novel immediately draws the reader into the story. Harper Lee uses a technique called foreshadowing. This allows her to present future events and suggest what is to come. What led to the breaking of Jem's arm is obviously going to be revealed. But Jem and Scout differ as to the reasons that led to Jem's accident. Atticus says they are both right.

Atticus and the children

1. What does the first paragraph tell us about Jem as a teenager?
2. What does *making Boo Radley come out* mean?
3. The children *consult Atticus*. What does this show?

Character

Simon Finch

Simon is the father of Atticus, John and Alexandra. The following is said about him:

- ▶ His *piety* (holiness) is said to be exceeded by his *stinginess* (meanness). We can deduce, therefore, that he wasn't very religious, otherwise he would not have been so mean.
- ▶ He was a pharmacist but made his money practising medicine.
- ▶ Despite knowing it was wrong to own slaves, he purchased three to help him establish a homestead, which he called Finch's Landing.
- ▶ He went deliberately to St Stephens to find a wife. He had many children, mostly daughters. This is referred to as *Simon Finch's industry*.

Atticus, Alexandra and John

Atticus, Alexandra and John are Simon Finch's descendants.

1. What kind of a man did Alexandra marry?
2. Why did Atticus have a *distaste for the practice of criminal law*?
3. Which phrase indicates that Atticus earned little at first?

Calpurnia

Calpurnia has, in many ways, taken the place of Jem and Scout's mother. She has been given the responsibility and authority to look after them on a daily basis. Now read the description of Calpurnia.

1. Why does Scout describe Calpurnia as *something else again*? Is Scout praising her or not? Justify your answer.
2. What is the implication to be drawn from *her hand was as wide as a bed slat and twice as hard*?
3. Why is Calpurnia described as *all angles and bones*?
4. What does the description of Calpurnia tell us about Scout's behaviour? What word does Scout use to show that she thinks she is treated unfairly?