

To Kill a Mockingbird
Literary Analysis

Tone

Very often, scenes and characters in books are described in a way that reflects the author's attitude toward the person or scene described. Read the following descriptive passages. Identify the author's attitude toward the scene/people described as either positive or negative. Then list the words or phrases that reveal the author's attitude.

1. Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it. In rainy weather, the streets turned to red slop; grass grew on the sidewalks, the courthouse sagged in the square.

_____ Positive Attitude

_____ Negative Attitude

2. Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches; when I said I could do nothing in a dress, she said I wasn't supposed to be doing things that required pants. Aunt Alexandra's vision of my deportment involved playing with small stoves, tea sets, and wearing the Add-A-Pearl necklace she gave me when I was born; furthermore, I should be a ray of sunshine in my father's lonely life. I suggested that one could be a ray of sunshine in pants just as well, but Auntie said that one had to behave like a sunbeam, that I was born good but had grown progressively worse each year.

_____ Positive Attitude

_____ Negative Attitude

3. A little bantam cock of a man rose and strutted to the stand, the back of his neck reddening at the sound of his name. When he turned around to take the oath, we saw that his face was as red as his neck. . . . A shock of wispy new-washed hair stood up from his forehead; his nose was thin, pointed, and shiny; he had no chin to speak of—it seemed to be part of his crepey neck.

_____ Positive Attitude

_____ Negative Attitude

4. Tom was a black-velvet Negro, not shiny, but soft black velvet. The whites of his eyes shone in his face, and when he spoke we saw flashes of his teeth. If he had been whole, he would have been a fine specimen of a man.

_____ Positive Attitude

_____ Negative Attitude