

Name _____

Period _____

To Kill a Mockingbird—Allegory

Read, follow directions, and answer all questions

Definition of Allegory

There are two parts to this definition. You will need to know these definitions by heart.

1. a work in which characters, actions, and settings represent moral qualities;
2. figurative treatment of one subject under the guise of another

Question: What does the word “guise” mean in the definition above?

Chapter 10 doesn't seem to advance the plot of the novel. Some argue its importance is strictly symbolic, or allegorical. After re-reading Chapter 10, do the following:

1. At the end of Chapter 9 (page 117), Atticus refers to “Maycomb’s usual disease.” Read that paragraph and answer the following:
 - a. How does Atticus describe this disease? What words does he use to characterize it?
 - b. What disease is central to Chapter 10?
 - c. What do this disease and “Maycomb’s usual disease” have in common?
2. Now read from Chapter 21 (pg. 281-282) beginning with “But I must have been reasonably awake . . .” and ending with “. . . as if each ‘guilty’ was a separate stab between them.” Then answer the following:
 - a. What words, phrases, and descriptions do you see in this passage that directly reflect the events of Chapter 10?
 - b. Obviously, Harper Lee wants us to see a connection between “Maycomb’s usual disease,” the events of Chapter 10, and the verdict passage in Chapter 21. This connection is central to the allegory of Chapter 10. Using this connection and the definitions of allegory above, explain how Chapter 10 is an allegory. Think of symbolism: what do the characters, events, actions represent?

c. Now try to state the allegory as simply as possible:

In chapter 10, the author treats (or talks about) _____

under the guise of _____.

3. Interpret the following quotations as they are used allegorically (what might they represent or suggest in the allegory)?

a. "Tim was a liver-colored bird dog, the pet of Maycomb."

b. "Tim Johnson was not much more than a speck in the distance, but he was closer to us."
(Think about what Tim Johnson represents and who "us" refers to)

c. "Nothing is more deadly than a deserted, waiting street."