To Kill a Mockingbird

Glossary of terms used in the novel

The words below are defined as they are used in the specific context of the novel. The full meaning of the word, as given in the dictionary, has not been provided here. You may want to check the dictionary for more information on a particular word, including its pronunciation. Although the chapter numbers are accurate, the page numbers may not be, depending on the edition of the novel you are using.

CHAPTER 1
Page#
1  assuaged: to ease or satisfy; make less severe
8  Creeks: a tribe of Indians
Battle of Hastings: (1066) Norman conquest of England
apothecary: druggist; pharmacist
strictures: strict advice
dictum: an authoritative pronouncement
chattel: personal property: slaves
9  taciturn: habitually quiet, uncommunicative
trot-lines: long fishing lines with baited hooks at intervals
unsullied: unsoiled, not dirtied
dispatched: killed
10 Hoover carts: garden carts named after president Herbert Hoover
epic: heroic
11 entity: a thing
collard: a leafy green vegetable
cowlick: a lock of hair on the forehead
12 pocket Merlin: a readily-available wizard or magician
eccentric: odd
repertoire: assortment of skills
vapid: lacking interest; flat
13 eaves: the overhanging edges of a roof
veranda: a long, covered porch along the side of a house
picket: a stick fence
malevolent: evil
"morbid nocturnal events": gruesome and unwholesome nighttime events
predilection: a preference
14 domiciled: housed
beadle: a town constable or minor official
16 canna: tropical plant with showy flowers
"wear us out": spank long and hard
18 terrain: land
foray: a sudden military advance; a venturing out

CHAPTER 2
21  indigenous: native to
22 "wallowing illicitly": rolling about in it unlawfully
covey: a group
25 scrip stamps: charitable loans or food stamps
entailment: an amount of money that is legally set aside for one purpose
smilax: a climbing vine
croker-sack: a cloth sack made of rough material, such as a horse’s feed bag
"the crash": the stock market crash of 1929 which was followed by the Great Depression
26 WPA: Workers Progress Administration—federal jobs program during the Depression
mortification: embarrassment
sojourn: stay
CHAPTER 3
27 free dispensation: an easy and quick giving away of
28 hain't: a spook or a ghost
29 expounding: seriously explaining
30 erratic: uneven, unpredictable
31 iniquities: sins
32 persevere: continue despite difficulties
33 cootie: a louse (plural: lice)
34 horrid: terrible, horrible
35 contemptuous: hateful and disrespectful
36 truant: absent without permission
37 contentious: argumentative
38 expansively: talkatively
39 fraught: filled or charged with something
40 monosyllabic: made up of one syllable
41 amiable: friendly
42 wisteria: a flowering, climbing vine
43 misdemeanor: a minor crime
44 begrudges: unhappily allows
45 disapprobation: disapproval
46 discernible: visible
47 severed: cut off

CHAPTER 4
37 auspicious: marked by success; favorable
39 parched: dry; arid
40 Camellia: a type of flower
42 scuppernongs: sweet, yellow grapes
44 palette: a range of colors, usually of paints on a hand-held mixing board
46 Gothic: grotesque and mysterious in style
48 melancholy: extremely sad
49 quelling: calming down

CHAPTER 5
46 benign: harmless, not evil
48 tacit: unspoken but agreed upon and understood
49 arbor: wooden structure to support vines or other plants
51 chameleon: an animal that changes its skin color to adapt to changing
surroundings
54 magisterial: royal, majestic
56 pestilence: a plague of insects
58 cordiality: friendliness, hospitality
59 benevolence: goodness
60 morbid: psychologically unhealthy
61 "raveling a thread": idly talking; daydreaming
63 "dried up": lost his nerve to speak
65 asinine: stupid
67 edification: spiritual or intellectual improvement
69 gaped: stared with mouth hanging open
70 quibbling: arguing over trivial matters

CHAPTER 6
58 collards: a leafy green vegetable
59 cherub: a baby angel
60 malignant: evil, harmful
CHAPTER 7
62 gnats: tiny flies
64 perpetual: never-ending
   hoo-dooing: voodoo, casting spells
67 vigil: a long time of watching and waiting
68 unfathomable: unknowable; not understandable
   aberrations: departures from the normal or expected
touchous: sensitive, easily irritated

CHAPTER 8
69 bade: (past tense of "bid"): ordered (v.)
71 plaited: braided together
72 "perpetrated a near libel": committed an act of damaging one's reputation
caricature: an exaggerated and comical but recognizable picture of someone
"morphodite" (corrupt form of "hermaphrodite"): a person having both male and
female sexual organs
direst: warning of the most dreadful consequences
73 tousled: disarranged, uncombed
taffeta-like: crisp fabric that makes a rustling sound
spewing: spitting
75 quelled: stopped, ended, put out
cordial: friendly
perplexity: confusion
"right stove up": caved in; unable to function

CHAPTER 9
80 inordinately: exceeding reasonable limits
81 "drew a bead on him": aimed at him
lineaments: shapes, contours, lines
82 induce: to persuade or arouse, to bring about
ingenious: unsophisticated
changelings: children secretly or purposely exchanged
analogous: comparable to; alike in some ways
hookah: a Turkish water pipe
84 jetty: a pier, wharf or projection of land into a body of water
guilelessness: plain, open honesty, without any tricks
85 overseer: man in charge of slaves in the field
trousseau: complete set of wedding garments
86 deportment: conduct, behavior
87 mortify: to embarrass
88 "nome": "no, M'am."
90 obstreperous: noisily defiant
91 "on tenterhooks:" anxiously waiting
92 invective: angry, abusive, complaining language

CHAPTER 10
94 tartly: sharply
95 Providence: God's loving kindness
mausoleum: a house of burial chambers
breastworks: a wall fortified for defense in a battle
"Jew's Harp": a small musical mouth harp with one vibrating fork
97 erratically: unpredictably, irregularly
101 'druthers: form of "I would rather"; preference
102 articulate: speaking clearly
103 jubilantly: joyfully and triumphantly
CHAPTER 11
103 passé: out of fashion
104 CSA: Confederate States of America (the South during the Civil War)
apoplectic: tending to apoplexy, or the loss of muscular control; so angry as to cause apoplexy
livid: extremely angry
105 scuppernong arbor: (you should know! See p. 40 and 46 vocabulary above)
106 camisole: a woman's sleeveless undershirt or slip
philippic: a verbal denunciation characterized by invective
"took umbrage": took offense
107 rectitude: moral properness
interdict: (n.) order forbidding some action
skulked: lurked about, hiding from work or obligations
palliation: a state of making something less severe, less serious
108 relic: very old thing
109 essence: essential part of something
abide: to live, or live with
reconnaissance: exploratory search
calomel: a medicine intended to make one throw up
111 tirade: angry flow of words
cuticles: the skin at the base of the fingernails
nether: lower
undulate: to move in waves
viscous (not vicious!): thick and slow-flowing
112 propensities: inclinations to something
115 escapade: dangerous adventure
cantankerous: cranky and argumentative

CHAPTER 12
117 altercation: argument
118 barnacles: shell-like growths on the side of a ship or boat
119 frivolous: foolish, silly
120 castile: a type of soap
habiliments: clothes
121 asafoetida: a medicinal root with an offensive odor
contemptuously: hatefully
122 contentious: argumentative
122 rotogravure: a process of printing newspaper magazine sections
ecclesiastical: having to do with the church
impedimenta: baggage or objects that get in the way
124 denunciation: verbal condemnation
austere: strict, stern
lapses: falls; failures
126 voile: sheer fabric for dresses
tedious: long and boring

CHAPTER 13
129 enarmored (not enamored!): covered with armor
"traveled in state": like a head of state--majestically
130 corset: a kind of girdle
131 shinny: an alcoholic beverage
tight: slightly drunk
Amanuensis: a person who takes dictation or copies writing down
132 morbid: psychologically unhealthy
obliquely: indirectly and not quite honestly
133 myopic: near-sighted; unable to see things clearly around you
134 dicta (plural of dictum): rules
mandrake: a plant with narcotic roots
elusive: hard to catch

CHAPTER 14
140 gouging: poking or forcing out
142 manacles: handcuffs

CHAPTER 15
147 placid: calm, peaceful
change of venue: change of location of a trial
150 linotype: a newspaper printer's type-setting machine
151 bade (past tense of bid): greet or say good bye
campaigner: an experienced soldier
152 venerable: worthy of respect and honor due to age
hideous: horribly ugly
Gothic: a medieval style of architecture
battlements: defense positions built on top of a wall
flying buttresses: supporting columns protruding from the sides of a building
façade: false front
ecclesiastical: having to do with the church
153: Victorian: ornate British building style of the late 1800's
privy: outhouse
discreet: quietly and purposely unnoticed
154 acquiescence: passive obedience
155 overture: initial attempt to start communication
156 futility: state of hopelessness; impossibility
aggregation: collection or grouping
uncouth: vulgar, without manners
157 encumbered: weighed down

CHAPTER 16
158 profane: vulgar, non-religious
fey: touched, mad, enchanted
161 Mennonites: members of a Protestant religious sect
akimbo: hands on hips, elbows sticking out
command: knowledge
formidable: powerful, dangerous
162 subpoena: a legal document requiring one to appear in court
elucidate: to make clear
164 reminiscent: reminding of
165 Greek revival: modern style of architecture imitating ancient Greek style
sundry: various
solicitor: a type of lawyer
unobtrusive: not noticeable
167: pilot fish: smaller fish that accompany sharks
convened: opened for session
168: litigants: opponents in a law suit
170 terse: short and brief
bunged: bruised
171 gullet: throat
title dispute: disagreement over ownership of something
172: corroborating evidence: evidence that confirms the truth of a statement
bantam cock: a rooster
crepey: wrinkled
congenital: inherited
indigenous: native to, originally present in that region
173 deigned: to condescend; to do something ordinarily beneath one's dignity
cap’n: slang for captain
opposing counsel: the lawyer for the other side
acrimonious: angry and heated
benignly: in a good-natured manner
affirmative: yes
audibly obscene speculations: spoken pornographic thoughts
quelling: calming down
dictum: a command or order
confines: boundaries
genially: in a friendly, pleasant manner
haughty: proud and arrogant
warranted: deserved
immaterial: without substance
card: a clever, humorous fellow
frogsticking without a light: looking for something you can’t find, because you are unprepared
tenet: a rule
ambidextrous: able to use both hands equally well
pantomime: wordless movement and gestures to act something out
counting his chickens...before they hatch!

CHAPTER 18
lavations: washings
mollified: satisfied
chifforobe: portable clothes closet
primly: very properly
tollable: slang for tolerable, acceptable
serenely: calmly
arid: very dry
wrathfully: angrily
tedious: tiring and boring
articulate: able to speak clearly
distilled: boiled down to the pure essence or essential part
exodus: a general exit of people

CHAPTER 19
volition: one's own will
ex cathedra: from the official chair or seat
expunge: delete
effect: (v.) to cause
impudent: rude, contradictory

CHAPTER 20
discreet: careful, prudent
perpetrated: committed illegally
corroborative: supportive, tending to prove true
minute: small, fine
enormity: great seriousness
contraband: illegally held goods
caliber: quality
distaff side: the female or feminine side of the family
pauper: a very poor person with no property

CHAPTER 21
tacit: unspoken
demurred: objected
psychical: having to do with the mind
CHAPTER 22
215 impassive: without facial expression
wallow: lie in the mud
bleakly: unhappily
216 reckon: to think, analyze
217 becoming: (adj.) appropriate, attractive
cynical: always believing the worst
feral: wild, untamed
218 bridgework: false teeth
fatalistic: expecting death
ruefully: sadly
219 heathen: unchristian

CHAPTER 23
220 obscure: hidden, unknown
221 wryly: sarcastically
peace bond: court order requiring one person to stay away from another
credibility: believability
furtive: sneaky, secretive, hidden
222 circumstantial evidence: coincidental evidence that does not prove
223 stolidly: firmly
vehement: strongly and passionately believing/speaking
224 sordid: filthy, dirty; morally foul

CHAPTER 24
230 charlotte: sponge cake with fruit
231 squalid: dirty, poor appearance; morally repulsive
yaws: a tropical skin disease
233 impertinence: rudeness
duress: stress, hardship
234 squalor: condition of being squalid
235 sibilant: hissing "s" sound
bovine: having to do with cows
wool: the curly white hair of the speaker's black servant
236 dreary: boring, empty
brevity: briefness
undelectable: unpleasant, improper
239 background: one's ancestry and social history

CHAPTER 25
243 veneer: a thin layer of polished wood covering up rough wood
244 due process: legal civil right to proper court action

CHAPTER 26
245 remorse: sorrow
246 poise: confidence
spurious: suspicious
247 holy roller: member of a religious sect known for falling down in trances
during worship
govamint'd: slang for "government would"
248 enunciated: pronounced clearly
249 undue: too much
CHAPTER 27
250 WPA: Work Projects Administration: a federal jobs program
industry: diligence, hard work
notoriety: fame; bad reputation
251 savored: enjoyed the taste of
metaphors: figures of speech that compare two unlike things
florid: flowery, heavily decorated
254 ear trumpet: old-fashioned hearing aid horn
Victrola: an old-fashioned record player
purlouined: stolen
255 pageant: a show
grand finale: the final big act of a show
cured: seasoned and dried slowly over time

CHAPTER 28
257 incantations: secret, magic chants or spoken formulas
 mocker: slang for mockingbird
irascible: ill-tempered, bothersome
258 gait: the speed and style of walk of a person
furtive: secretive
259 divinity: a sweet dessert
climbers: people trying to move up the social ladder
261 primeval: from the earliest times
hock: the ankle bone of a pig
265 pinioned: tied down
266 staccato: repeated, short, rapid, distinct sounds
267 boil-prone: likely to have infectious pus-bubbles on the skin
269 steeds: horses
untrammeled: untrampled

CHAPTER 29
273 reprimand: a scolding
garishly: in a harshly bright way

CHAPTER 30
273 blandly: without emotion
275 eluded: avoided capture
277 craw: slang for stomach
278 honed: sharpened
bided: waited

CHAPTER 31
280 raling: breathing with a rattling wheeze
283 acquiescence: willingness to give in