

# To Kill A Mockingbird: Scene Analysis

## TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD: SEEING THE FILM THROUGH THE LENS OF MEDIA LITERACY

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### SCENE ANALYSIS

In order for students to effectively study or analyze a scene from the film, they will need some guidance and practice. Be sure to review the [LANGUAGE OF FILM](#) and [CAMERA SHOTS](#) in this guide. In analyzing a scene, it is important to watch it more than once. Different students might be assigned to be on the lookout for different elements. Those elements might include: camera angles, camera movement, music, sound effects, lighting, wardrobe, setting, expressions, etc.

**Confrontation at the jail**  
**The Lynch Mob 1:01:33**

**DVD Chapter 21**



The scene begins with Jem,  
Scout  
and Dill in the bushes,  
looking from  
a distance, at their father  
who sits  
alone outside the jail the  
night  
before the trial is to begin.  
Atticus  
expects trouble, and sure  
enough a  
number of cars pull up and men  
with  
guns get out. The men, one of  
whom is Walter Cunningham,  
intend  
to lynch Tom Robinson. (Notice  
how  
calm Atticus is in the face of  
the  
threats.) The children quickly  
make  
their way to the front of the  
mob.  
Atticus, surprised to see  
them, tells  
them to go home, but Jem  
refuses.  
A brief scuffle ensues, after  
which  
the children move from the  
crowd  
up to the area where Atticus  
is.  
It's at that moment that Scout  
recognizes Mr. Cunningham and  
engages in a polite  
conversation  
which quickly defuses the  
incident.

## Analysis of this Scene:

There is an **establishing shot** in the dead of night in which Atticus reads a book under a lamp. Here Atticus sits surrounded by darkness and engulfed by the lone light of his lamp. It gives a **metaphoric** impression that he is a man protecting the light of truth in a dark and hostile environment. Many of the camera angles used for Atticus are **low angle** shots. This fact seems important for two reasons. First, we see Atticus the same way the children would see him. In other words we are forced to look up at him in the same way Scout or Jem would. Second, the angle enhances the sense of stability we feel from Atticus and helps support the fundamental strength of his ideas.<sup>1</sup>