

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.¹