Vocabulary for To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

Condensed from http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Belmont_HS/tkm/

Chapter 1 - Vocabulary

**apothecary** (n.): an early form of a pharmacist, apothecaries could also prescribe drugs.

**assuaged** (vb.): to **assuage** is to lessen or to calm. Therefore, if Jem's fears about being able to play football were **assuaged**, it means that he no longer feared that he wouldn't be able to play the sport.

**beadle** (n.): a minor city official, lower in rank than either a sheriff or a policeman, whose main duties revolve around preserving order at various civil functions such as trials and town hall meetings.

**corsets** (n): a **corset** is a ladies undergarment designed to produce a particular effect on the figure. That effect usually results in a slim (or slimmer) waist and larger busts and hips, like the [woman in this picture.](http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Belmont_HS/tkm/)

**impudent** (adj.): To be **impudent** is to be shamelessly bold, as if you don't care what anyone thinks about you. Since the Haverfords did something illegal in front of witnesses, Lee rightfully describes them as **impudent**.

**malevolent** (adj.): evil

**piety** (n): devotion to religious duties and practices

**predilection** (n.): a **predilection** is a preference, or a preferred way of doing something. Thus, the Radley's preferred way of spending a Sunday afternoon was to keep the doors closed and not receive visitors

**ramrod** (adj.): rigid, severe, straight

**repertoire was vapid**: (n. + adj.): a **repertoire** is all the special skills a person has; **vapid**, in this case, means boring or uninteresting. So, when Scout says that their **repertoire was vapid**, she means that the games they had invented to pass the time had become old and had lost their interest.

**spittoon** (n.): a jarlike container to spit into; usually used to spit tobacco juice into. See a picture of a spittoon.

**strictures** (n.): conditions or rules

Chapter 2 - Vocabulary
**catawba worms** (n.): *catawba worms* are actually caterpillars that are highly prized by fishermen in the Southern United States.

**condescended** (vb.): To *condescend* is to agree to do something that you believe to be beneath your dignity. Jem condescends to take Scout to school, even though, as a fifth-grader, he feels superior to his first-grade sister.

**entailment** (n.): a legal situation regarding the use of inherited property.

**hookworms** (n.): a type of parasite. *Hookworms* usually enter the body through bare feet and move through the body to the small intestines where they attach themselves with a series of hooks around their mouths. See a [picture of a hookworm].

**scrip stamps** (n.): paper money of small denominations (less than $1.00) issued for temporary emergency use. During the *Great Depression*, many local and state government gave out *scrip stamps*, or sometimes tokens, to needy people.

**smilax** (n.): a bright green twinning vine, often used for holiday decorations. See a [picture of smilax].

**sojourn** (n.): a brief visit

---

**Chapter 3 - Vocabulary**

**cootie** (n.): a slang term for a head louse. A louse (plural: lice) is a bloodsucking parasite. See a [picture of a head louse].

**cracklin bread** (n.): a type of cornbread mixed with cracklins (bits of fried pork skin). Want to make some? Here's a [recipe for cracklin’ bread].

**disapprobation** (n.): disapproval

**flinty** (adj.): Flint is a very hard rock. Something that is *flinty* is extremely hard and firm.

**haint** (n.): a ghost or spook; someone or something very scary

---

**Chapter 4 - Vocabulary**

**auspicious** (adj.): favorable

**melancholy** (adj.): sad and gloomy

**scuppernongs** (n.): a sweet table grape, grown chiefly in the Southern United States. See a [picture of scuppernongs].
Chapter 5 - Vocabulary

mimosa (n): Also called a silk tree, a mimosa can be either a tree or a shrub. Look at a picture of a mimosa flower.

morbid (adj.): gruesome; horrible

placidly (adv.): calmly; quietly

tacit (adj.) An agreement, or, in this case, a "treaty" that is tacit is one that has been silently agreed upon. Thus, the children know that they can play on Miss Maudie's front lawn even though she never directly told them that it was all right to do so.

Chapter 6 - Vocabulary

collards (n.): a type of cabbage with very coarse leaves. It would be difficult to walk quietly through a patch of collards. See a picture of a collard patch.

Franklin stove (n.): a cast iron heating stove, invented by Benjamin Franklin. See a picture of a Franklin stove.

kudzu (n.): a quick-growing vine with large leaves, often found in the Southern United States. See a picture of kudzu.

lattice-work (adj.): A lattice is an openwork structure of crossed strips or bars, as in a screen. (See a picture of a lattice screen.) Light that passes through any kind of a lattice-work would produce lattice-work shadows.

malignant (adj.): dangerous; evil

Chapter 7 - Vocabulary

cleaved (vb.): stuck

gnats (n.): small, two-winged insects that can bite or sting. [Pronounced: NAT] See a picture of a gnat.

meditative (adj.): To meditate is to reflect upon something, or think about it. When Jem give the patch on the tree a meditative pat, he does so in a thoughtful manner.

palate (n.): the roof of one's mouth

Chapter 8 - Vocabulary
aberrations (n.): an aberration is a deviation, or a moving away from, something that is normal. The fact that winter comes so quickly in Maycomb is abnormal, thus, an aberration.

azaleas (n.): a colorful and decorative kind of flower. See some pictures of azaleas.

cannas (n.): a beautiful tropical flower. See a pictures of cannas.

caricatures (n.): a representation of a person where certain features of that person are exaggerated or distorted. See a caricature of Elvis Presley

cordial (adj.): warm and friendly

do (n.): a channel in a chimney that allows smoke and flames to pass to the outside

morphodite (n.): Scout has misheard Miss Maudie, who would actually have said the word hermaphrodite. Technically, a hermaphrodite is an animal or plant that has both female and male reproductive organs. Of course, the children's snowman is not really a hermaphrodite, but it does have both male and female characteristics.

plaited (vb.): braided

procured (vb): got

taffeta (n.): a lustrous, stiff fabric, often used for women's dresses, especially formal wear

touchous (adj.) touchy; sensitive

Chapter 9 - Vocabulary

ambrosia (n): a desert made up of a mixture of fruits, nuts, and coconut. Get a recipe for ambrosia.

catwalk (n.): a narrow, elevated walkway

changelings (n.): a child secretly put in the place of another

guilelessness (n.): Guile is craftiness and cunning in dealing with other. To be guileless is to have none of that craftiness. Here, Lee is being ironic since its obvious that Simon Finch didn't trust his daughters at all, and planned his house accordingly.

hookah (n): An oriental tobacco pipe with a flexible tube that draws smoke through a bowl of water. See a picture of a hookah.

invective (n.): Invectives are abusive terms, curses, insults, and/or cuss words

jetty (n): a type of wall built out into water to protect a coastline or restrain currents

nocturnal (adj.): nightly
obstreperous (adj.): noisy and unruly

ringworm (n.): a contagious skin disease caused by a fungus.

siblings (n.): brothers and/or sisters

trousseau (n.): all the new clothes a bride brings to her marriage

widow's walk (n.): a platform with a rail around it, built onto the roof of a house. See a picture of a house with a widow's walk.

Chapter 10 - Vocabulary

alist (adj.): tilted to one side

corncribs (n.): A corncrib is a small structure used to store corn. See a picture of a corncrib.

Jew's Harp (n): a small musical instrument that is played by plucking a piece of metal while holding the instrument to one's mouth. See a picture of some Jew's harps.

mausoleum (n.): Literally, a mausoleum is a large, imposing tomb (a tomb is a place where dead bodies -- those that aren't buried -- are housed). However, Miss Maudie uses the term in its humorous form. She refers to her old house as a mausoleum because, to her, it was too large and too somber. See a picture of a real mausoleum

Chapter 11 - Vocabulary

apoplectic (adj.): Apoplexy is a condition of sudden paralysis; a stroke. To be apoplectic, in this case, is to behave as if on the verge of having a stroke.

arbor (n): an outdoor area shaded by trees or, in this case, scuppernong vines on a lattice. See a picture of an arbor.

calomel (n.): a laxative; often used as a cure for intestinal worms

camellia (n.): a shrub with glossy evergreen leaves and waxy, rose-like flowers. Find out more about camellias and see a picture of a camellia.

camisole (n.): a woman's sleeveless undergarment, usually worn under a sheer blouse

dog-trot hall (adj.): a covered passageway between two parts of a building

interdict (n.): prohibition; restraint
**palliation** (n.): to **palliate** is to lessen the pain, or, in this case, fear and anxiety, of something without actually making the fear and anxiety go away. Calpurnia is not a great source of **palliation**; that is, she doesn't make the children feel any less anxious or fearful.

**rectitude** (n.): uprightness of character

**tirade** (n.): a long angry speech

**viscous** (adj.): sticky

---

**Chapter 12 - Vocabulary**

**asafoetida** (n.): a strong-smelling (like garlic) substance made from a parsley-like plant; often used in folk medicine to repel illness

**church** (vb.): To **church** someone is ban that person (usually temporarily) from church for any variety of misdeeds.

**habiliments** (n.): outfits; clothing

**lilac talcum** (adj. + n.): **Lilacs** are a very fragrant flower (See a [picture of lilacs](#)). **Talcum**, often called talcum powder, is a fine talc, or powder, used for the body or face. **Lilac talcum** is lilac-scented **talcum** powder.

**rotogravure print** (n.): **Rotogravure** is a process of printing pictures; often photographs of pictures. Since **rotogravure prints** often appeared in newspapers, it is possible that the print in the church had been taken from a newspaper.

**snuff** (n.): a preparation of powdered tobacco, usually sniffed through the nose

**tapeworm** (n.): a parasite that can live in a person's intestines. Find out more about [tapeworms](#) and see some [pictures of tapeworms](#).

**voile** (adj.): a thin, cotton-like fabric

---

**Chapter 13 - Vocabulary**

**caste system** (adj. + n.): class distinctions based on birth, wealth, etc.

**incestuous** (adj.): **Incest** is sexual intercourse between persons too closely related to marry legally. Atticus's comment as to the possibility that the Finches might have an **Incestuous** streak refers to the fact that so many Finches have married their cousins.

**mandrake roots** (n.): The roots of the mandrake plant were often thought to have magical powers because it was thought that their shape resembled the human body. The mandrake root appears in many poems
myopic (adj): Myopia is an abnormal eye condition, often called nearsightedness. Someone who is myopic cannot see objects clearly.

obliquely (adv.): indirectly

prerogative (n.) exclusive right or privilege

shinny (n.) a slang term for liquor; usually whiskey or bourbon. Bourbon is a main ingredient in the recipe for a Lane cake.

tight (adj.): drunk

---

Chapter 14 - Vocabulary

bushel (n.): a unit of dry measure equal to 32 quarts. See a picture of a bushel of corn.

manacles (n.): handcuffs

neat (adj.): unmixed with anything, such as water or soda; straight

---

Chapter 15 - Vocabulary

acquiescence (n.): agreement without protest

aggregation (n.): group; gathering

begrudge (vb.): To begrudge someone something is to feel resentment or disapproval about the fact that they have something. Atticus says that he doesn't think anyone in the town would resent the fact that he has a client.

ecclesiastical (adj.): church-like

façade (n.): the front of a building; the part facing the street (pronounced: "fah - SAWED")

linotype (n.): a typesetting machine used in publishing. Find out more about Linotype machines.

---

Chapter 16 - Vocabulary

akimbo (adj.): hands on hips and elbows bent outward. See a picture of a man with his arms akimbo.

circuit solicitor (n.): a lawyer who travels to different locations to prosecute in trials
fey (adj.): strange; eccentric

sundry (adj.): various

Chapter 17 - Vocabulary

acrimonious (adj.): sarcastic; bitter; nasty

ambidextrous (adj.): able to use both hands with equal ease

bantam cock (n.): a small, aggressive rooster. See a picture of a bantam cock.

congenital (adj.): a congenital condition is one that is in existence at birth. For example, if a child is born with a weak heart, that weakness is congenital; as opposed to someone who may acquire the condition later in life.

contempt charges (adj. + n.) Contempt, in this case, is open disrespect of a court or judge. A person who acts in such a manner may face a contempt charge from a judge.

corrugated (adj.): formed by a series of alternating ridges and grooves

crepey (adj.): Crepe is a thin, crinkled cloth. Mr. Ewell's crepey neck obviously resembles this fabric; that is, the skin is thin and crinkled.

dictum (n.): official pronouncement

gardenia (n.): a large, fragrant flower. See a picture of gardenias.

geraniums (n.): flowering plants. See a picture of geraniums.

gullet (n.): throat; neck

heaved (vb.): lifted

ruttin' on (vb.): In this instance, the term is used to indicate that, according to Mr. Ewell, Tom Robinson was having sexual intercourse with his daughter. It should be noted that this term is almost exclusively reserved for use in describing the mating habits of animals, not people.

slop jars (n.): large pails usually used to receive waste water from a wash basin or the contents of a chamber pot

title dispute (n.): a legal fight over the ownership of a particular piece of property
Chapter 18 - Vocabulary

chiffarobe (n.): a large cabinet with drawers and a place for hanging clothes. See a picture of a chiffarobe.

constructionalist (n.): a person who interprets aspects of the law in a specified way

ground-itch (n.): Ground-itch is caused by hookworms. The parasites usually enter the body through bare feet, causing an itchy, allergic reaction.

lavations (n.): washings

tollable (adj.): Mayella's way of pronouncing the word "tolerable." Someone who is tollable is a person who is fairly good or passable; someone who can be tolerated or endured.

Chapter 19 - Vocabulary

ex cathdra remarks (adj. + n.): remarks made with the authority that comes from one's official position

expunge (vb.): remove completely

Chapter 20 - Vocabulary

capital charge (adj. + n.): a charge for a crime that is punishable by death

cynical confidence (adj.): To be cynical, in this case, means to believe that

perpetrated (vb.): committed

temery (n.): foolish or rash boldness

unmitigated (adj.): out-and-out absolute

Chapter 21 - Vocabulary

acquit (vb.): clear of a charge; find not guilty

charged the jury (vb. + n.): When Judge Taylor charges the jury, he gives them instructions in law before they go off to deliberate or decide the case

Chapter 22 - Vocabulary
cynical (adj.): a cynic is someone who often belittles or makes fun of someone else. Aunt Alexandra tells Dill that his remarks about his own aunt's drinking habits are cynical, especially since, as a child, Dill should have more respect for his elders.

fatalistic (adj.): To be fatalistic about something is to accept the event as though it were inevitable; that is, that nothing could be done to change or alter it.

feral (adj.): wild; savage

heathen (adj.): unenlightened; without religion or morals

ruefully (adv.): regretfully

Chapter 23 - Vocabulary

commutes (vb.): changes; makes less severe

dry (adj.): clever but subtle

furtive (adj.): sneaky

Chapter 24 - Vocabulary

bellows (n.): a machine that allows air to be pumped through a system; in this case, an organ

bovine (adj.): cow-like

charlotte (n.): a desert made with fruit in a mold that is lined with pieces of bread or cake. Read a recipe for charlotte.

devout (adj.): devoted to religion

earworms (n.): See a picture of an earworm.

hypocrites (n.): people who pretend to be something they are not

impertinence (n.): disrespect

largo (adj.): Largo is a direction used in music which means "at a very slow tempo." Mrs. Merriweather is apparently speaking to Scout very slowly.

squalid (adj.): miserable; wretched

squalor (n): filth

yaws (n.): an infectious contagious tropical disease.
Chapter 25 - Vocabulary

**roly-poly** (n.): a small bug that can roll itself into a ball. Also known as a pillbug, sowbug or wood louse. See a picture of a roly-poly.

**scowling** (vb.): A scowl is a facial expression caused by scrunching up one's forehead and brow; a look of displeasure. See a young man scowling.

**veneer** (n.): attractive outer surface

Chapter 26 - Vocabulary

**recluse** (n.): someone who stays away from society and the company of others

**spurious** (adj.): Something that is spurious outwardly resembles something but does not have the genuine qualities of that thing. Miss Gates thinks that *The Grit Paper* is spurious because, although it resembles a newspaper, to her mind, it is far inferior to a publication like *The Mobile Register* or other newspapers.

Chapter 27 - Vocabulary

**industry** (n.): work, especially on a steady basis

**notoriety** (n.): fame

**florid** (adj.): very flowery in style; elegant

**maiden ladies** (adj. + n.): women who have never married

Chapter 28 - Vocabulary

**boil-prone** (adj.): A boil is an inflamed, pus-filled swelling on the skin, like a pimple only usually bigger. To be prone to something is to be inclined to it. If the children had been boil-prone, they would have been inclined to have a lot of boils. Find out more about boils and see a picture of one.

**climbers** (n.): social climbers; people trying to move into a different, and higher, social class

**divinity** (n.): a white fudge made from whipped egg whites, sugar, and nuts. Read a recipe for divinity.
forest primeval (n. + adj.): in this instance, a forest that had been primarily untouched or unchanged by man

hock (n.): the joint bending backward in the hind leg of an animal like a pig. Scout is dressed as a ham, and a ham is the upper part of a hog's hind leg, Scout's hock would be the part of her costume that resembles the joint of a pig's leg. Take a look at a bunch of hams hanging by their hocks.

mocker (n.): mockingbird

repertoire (n.): accomplishments; skills. The repertoire of the mockingbird is all the songs it can sing and sounds it can make.

rout (vb.): defeat

smockin' (n.): Smocking, decorative stitching used to gather cloth. See a picture of a dress with smocking.

staccato (adj.): distinct; sharp and crisp

Chapter 29 - Vocabulary

reprimand (vb.): scold

Chapter 30 - Vocabulary

blandly (adv.): smoothly; without excitement

connived (vb.): secretly cooperated or agreed to

wisteria (n.): twinning woody vines with large clusters of flowers. See a picture of wisteria.

Chapter 31

railing (adj.): painful