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## STUDENT MODEL

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### The Real Atticus Finch

“How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong -- because someday you will have been all of these,” George Washington Carver once stated. In the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee Atticus Finch, a father of Jem and Scout and a lawyer in Maycomb County, is tender, compassionate, sympathetic and tolerant with everyone he comes in contact with. He does not care about age, appearance, or even skin color. Atticus Finch is not afraid to be himself and he is the same inside the house as he is on the street. As the novel progresses, Atticus presents himself as wise, calm, and kind-- all qualities which make him an admirable leader of Maycomb. **↑ THESIS STATEMENT ↑**

THESIS

Atticus is a wise person because he is able to use the knowledge he receives from his lifelong experiences to enlighten others in distinct ways. When Mrs. Dubose-- the Finch’s elderly neighbor—dies, Atticus uses her death as an opportunity to teach Jem and Scout. She was a morphine addict who was dying of old age. Mrs. Dubose wanted to die clean of any drugs even though the withdraw process caused her much pain. Atticus believes her decision shows true courage. He explains to his children, “I want you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It’s when you know you’re licked before you even begin but you begin anyways and you see it through no matter what” (Lee 149). Atticus respects Mrs. Dubose for her courage and stresses that shooting the rabid dog Tim

Here is a quote to support thesis.

Johnson does not make him brave. Additionally, Atticus' wisdom never subsides during the trial. During his closing statement Atticus says to the jury, “. . . A court is only as sound as its jury, and a jury is only as sound as the men who make it up. I am confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you have heard, come to a decision, and restore this defendant to his family. In the name of God do your duty” (Lee 274-5). Reminding the jury that Tom is a human being with a family is a wise way for Atticus to end his defense tactics at the trial because his statement leads the jury to deliberate for hours rather than minutes.

Here is a quote to support the thesis.

Calm is another way to describe Atticus Finch. He never overreacts under pressure, and he presents himself as though nothing out of the ordinary happened. The day Atticus hears that Tom Robinson was shot was a horrible day for him but he knew what he had to do. He had to stay calm and tell Helen, Tom's wife, what had happened. Atticus explains the tragedy to Calpurnia, his cook, by saying, “Depends on how you look at it. What was one Negro, more or less, among two hundred of 'em? He wasn't Tom to them, he was an escaping prisoner” (Lee 315). Atticus could have become furious with the guards, but instead he takes the time to see Tom's death from the guards' point of view. Staying calm is important, especially when dealing with someone who is unreasonable. Bob Ewell, the father who accused Tom of raping his daughter Mayella, is one of the meanest men anyone could come in contact with. Instead of being mature and talking to Atticus when he is upset, Bob decides to take his anger out on Atticus and spits on his face. Atticus simply wipes his face and walks away. He could have become mad but he maintains his composure. Atticus stays calm, even in the most difficult situations.

Here is a quote to support the thesis.

Atticus proves that he is one of the kindest men in Maycomb. He does not yell or swear and treats everyone with respect. One day, when Scout comes home from school, she tells

Atticus that her teacher Miss Caroline does not want her father to teach her how to read anymore. She loves to read with Atticus and does not want to stop, so she explains to him that she would like to quit school. In order to encourage Scout to attend class, he makes a compromise with her and says that they can keep reading together as long as she stays in school. Rather than threatening to punish his daughter, Atticus speaks respectfully to Scout. Atticus always wants his children to come to him for advice so that they grow up being kind and compassionate towards one another. Atticus also displays kindness when he tries to make Dill, the children's neighbor friend, feel better. After running away from home, Dill hides under Scout's bed, cold and hungry, and Atticus decides to help him. Instead of telling Dill to go home without food, he talks to Scout. He says, "Scout, we can do better than a pan of cold corn bread, can't we? You fill this fellow up and when I get back we'll see what we can see" (Lee 188). Atticus realizes that Dill has a difficult home life and, with his typical kindness, looks out for him as if he was his own child.

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Throughout the novel, Atticus shows that being wise, calm, and kind is the best way anyone can live his life. He approaches the worst times with caution and thoughtfulness while simultaneously parenting his children. Scout and Jem learn through their father that everyone makes mistakes and that resolving the problems takes skill and patience. Atticus's experiences serve as important life-lessons for his children rather than obstacles too challenging to hurdle. His reminder to walk in someone's skin rather than judging him teaches his children that all people can be misunderstood just as easily as they can be appreciated.