

Chapters Five and Six

Standards Focus: Dialect and Slang

Ever heard of *gnarly*, *radical*, *awesome*, *tubular*, *gag me with a spoon*, *moded*, or *grody to the max*? These are expressions of **slang**, fleeting terms of pop culture, which began in California's San Fernando Valley, but eventually moved into mainstream language across the country in the 1980s. **Dialect** refers to the distinctive speech patterns of a particular region, class, or race. Unlike slang, dialect has a distinct system of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, and has usually been in existence for a long time.

Scout, Jem, Atticus, Calpurnia, Miss Maudie and even Miss Caroline all use their own slang within their Southern dialect.

*Directions: Below are quotes containing words used by the characters in **To Kill a Mockingbird**. Rewrite the underlined selection using a more updated or familiar expression that has the same meaning as the underlined word or phrase.*

1. "You look right puny for going on seven." _____

2. "Don't have any picture shows here, except Jesus ones in the courthouse sometimes."

3. "Pleased to know you, Dill." _____
4. "Well, for one thing, he has a boy named Boo that he keeps chained to a bed in the house over yonder." _____
5. "Atticus ain't never whipped me since I can remember and I plan to keep it that way."

6. "Mr. Radley must have scared them out of their wits." _____

7. "I think your dress is mighty becoming, honey." _____
8. "I reckon they make music for us to enjoy, and they just sing their hearts out for us."

9. "No need to be afraid of him son, since he's all bluff." _____

10. "Atticus promised me he would wear me out if he ever heard of me fighting anymore."

Name _____ Period _____

11. "There's been some high talk around town to the effect that I shouldn't do much about this man." _____

12. "Hush your mouth! Don't matter who they are, anybody sets foot in this house's yo'comp'ny, and don't you let me catch you remarkin' on their ways like you was so high and mighty."

13. "I was on the verge of leavin'—I done done my time for this year." _____

14. "Good evening, Mrs. Dubose! You look like a picture this evening." _____

15. "When summer comes you'll have to keep your head about far worse things..."

16. "Don't you fret." _____

17. "She's a troublemaker from way back, got fancy ideas an' haughty ways" _____

18. "Nome, he doesn't usually get back till late afternoon." _____

19. "Let's leave it at this: you mind Jem whenever he can make you. Fair enough?" _____

20. "Of course, I'd rather she'd have said it to me than to either of you, but we can't always have our 'druthers." _____