

Attitudes towards Education

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn was written about a time during the middle of the 1800s when many people were not able to get a formal education. Huck's father told Huck what he thought about school learning.

"...And looky here – you drop that school, you hear? I'll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better'n what he is. You lemme catch you fooling around that school again, you hear? Your mother couldn't read, and she couldn't write, nuther, before she died. None of the family couldn't before they died. I can't; and here you're a-swelling yourself up like this. I ain't the man to stand it – you hear?..."

Eighty years later *To Kill a Mockingbird* was written about the 1930s. Like Huckleberry Finn's father, Scout's father Atticus Finch did not go to school.

"I suppose she chose me because she knew my name; as I read the alphabet a faint line appeared between her eyebrows, and after making me read most of My First Reader and the stock market quotations from The Mobile Register aloud, she discovered that I was literate and looked at me with more than faint distaste. Miss Caroline told me to tell my father not to teach me any more, it would interfere with my reading.

"'Teach me?' I said in surprise. 'He hasn't taught me anything. Miss Caroline. Atticus ain't got time to teach me anything,' I added, when Miss Caroline smiled and shook her head. 'Why, he's so tired at night he just sits in the livingroom and reads.'"

Compare the two selections. How do the opinions of these two men differ about reading and education?