

School

Huck Finn attended school for a short time while he was living with the Widow Douglas. This is what he had to say about school.

“...I had been to school most all the time and could spell and read and write just a little, and could say the multiplication table up to six times seven is thirty-five, and I don’t reckon I could ever get any further than that if I was to live forever. I don’t take no stock in mathematics, anyway.”

Scout Finch describes what she thinks of school on her first day of first grade.

“I’m just trying to tell you the new way they’re teachin’ the first grade, stubborn. It’s the Dewey Decimal System.”

Having never questioned Jem’s pronouncements, I saw no reason to begin now. The Dewey Decimal System consisted, in part, of Miss Caroline waving cards at us on which were printed ‘the,’ ‘cat,’ ‘rat,’ ‘man,’ and ‘you.’ No comment seemed to be expected of us, and the class received these impressionistic revelations in silence. I was bored, so I began to write a letter to Dill. Miss Caroline caught me writing and told me to tell my father to stop teaching me. ‘Besides,’ she said. ‘We don’t write in first grade, we print. You won’t learn to write until you’re in the third grade.’”

Think about your own experience in school. How are Huck’s and Scout’s ideas about school different from your own opinion of school?