

To Kill a Mockingbird



By

Harper Lee

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

To Kill a Mockingbird

By Harper Lee



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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and is comprised of the following activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include the exploration of the moral nature of people, racism and prejudice, justice and nobility, social inequality, family and friendship, loyalty, personal growth, coming of age.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. Create a collage
2. Design a cover for the novel

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Synopsis

The unforgettable novel of childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it, *To Kill a Mockingbird* became an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win a Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic.

Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, *To Kill a Mockingbird* takes readers to the roots of human behavior – to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty – to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humor and pathos. Now with over 18 million copies in print and translated into ten languages, this regional story by a young Alabama woman claims universal appeal. Harper Lee always considered her book to be a simple love story. Today it is regarded as a masterpiece of American literature. [Biography Courtesy of the publisher]

Author Biography

Harper Lee

Famed author Nelle Harper Lee was born on April 28, 1926, in Monroeville, Alabama. Lee is best known for writing the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960). The youngest of four children, she grew up as a tomboy in a small town. Her father was a lawyer, a member of the Alabama state legislature and also owned part of the local newspaper. For most of Lee's life, her mother suffered from mental illness, rarely leaving the house. It is believed that she may have had bipolar disorder. (Courtesy of biography.com)



To Kill a Mockingbird



By Harper Lee

Name: _____

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Chapters 1-2



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is Scout Finch, an enterprising young girl living in Maycomb, Alabama during the 1930s. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

taciturn	tyrannical	predilection	malevolent	nebulous
illicit	indigenous	morbid	repertoire	vapid

1. Everyone would soon see that evil Prince John's intentions were purely _____.
2. The Ojibway people were _____ to this region of northern Ontario.
3. The Radleys kept to themselves, a _____ unforgivable in Maycomb.
4. The brewing of _____ corn whiskey landed my uncle in jail.
5. Everyone was happier when the _____ presence of Esther was removed.
6. “I think it is _____ to be constantly speaking of zombies,” Ella stated.
7. Gordon Lightfoot has a vast _____ of songs he has written and recorded.
8. The boat was _____ with oars, life jackets and fishing tackle.
9. Your eyes are as _____ as the glass eyes of your stuffed wolverine.
10. My dad was so _____ by nature, one seldom heard him express an opinion.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

b. Think of one thing you would enjoy about living in this setting (both time and place), and one thing you would not enjoy.

Enjoy	
Not so much	

2. Why had Scout never felt the absence of her mother?

3. **Investigate:** In Chapter One it mentions that *the boys backed around the square in a borrowed flivver*. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet find out what a **flivver** is and record the meaning below.

4. The author uses a number of unusual expressions in this novel. Put the following expression in your own words so that the meanings are clearer.

a.	Atticus told us he'd wear us out if we made any noise in the yard	
b.	Jem said Mr. Nathan Radley "Bought cotton" too	
c.	... the flour-sacked first graders... were immune to imaginative literature	

5. As the story opens, Scout was almost ____ years old and Jem was nearly ____.
6. What was your impression of Miss Caroline as a teacher? On what did you base this impression?

7. Match each character from these chapters with the most accurate description.

a	Atticus Finch		1	The Finch's neighbor.
b	Walter Cunningham		2	A cook.
c	Boo Radley		3	Never took anything he couldn't pay back.
d	Miss Caroline		4	Loathe to refuse a dare.
e	Calpurnia		5	The novel's narrator.
f	Dill		6	Proponent of the Dewey Decimal System.
g	Jem Finch		7	A neighborhood scold.
h	Rachel Haverford		8	Supposedly dined on raw squirrels.
i	Scout Finch		9	Attorney at law.
j	Stephanie Crawford		10	Charles Baker Harris.

Check out Harper Lee's Biography

<https://www.biography.com/people/harper-lee-9377021>

Language Activities



A. What a Character

A number of historical characters are referenced in the first few chapters. These included **General Andrew Jackson, John Wesley, Oliver Optic, Victor Appleton, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Lorenzo Dow, John Dewey, General Joseph Wheeler**. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research one of these individuals and then record three pertinent facts about him below.

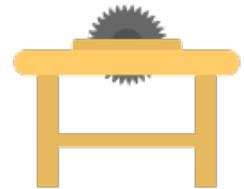


Historical Figure: _____

1.	
2.	
3.	

B. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first two chapters of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
senior		Made more raucous.
remain		Pilots.
heart		Globe.
instead		Keeps behind.
slate		Smallest in significance.
wonder		A depressant.

Good to Know ~ Hookworms

Hookworms, like those that afflicted poor Walter Cunningham, are small intestinal parasites, which can indeed be spread by walking barefoot in barnyards or other places where sanitation is poor. They can also be spread by eating contaminated food. People afflicted by many of these worms may experience abdominal pain, diarrhea, weight loss and a feeling of tiredness.

Deworming cats and dogs can also effectively prevent the spread of these parasites. If infected, there are drugs which are effective in eliminating this problem in pets and people.



C. A Quatrain Featuring Scout's Home State.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain feature the first four lines of the famous song, **Oh Susannah**, written by the famous song writer, Stephen Foster.

I came from Alabama,
With my banjo on my knee,
I'm going to Louisiana,
My true love for to see



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - C - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first three chapters of our novel.

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

D. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following example is taken from Chapter 1: *The remains of a picket drunkenly guarded the front yard...*

Describe how the picket is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

E. A simile is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: *Ladies bathed before noon, after their three-o'clock naps, and by nightfall were like soft teacakes...*



What is being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a moonlit night

b) the cry of a hungry baby

F. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in these chapters. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.

