



Summer Reading – Incoming 9th Graders Pompano Beach High School - 2022/2023

Required Novel: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

For your summer reading assignment, you will read the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee and write ten reader response journals. The journals are due the first week of school and the details are on the back of this handout. The Pre-AP English 1 teachers will also discuss and assign an in-class essay assessment on the novel in September. The journals and essay will be assessed by your Pre-AP English 1 teacher and grades for summer reading will be entered quarter 1.



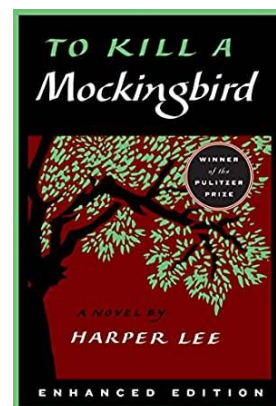
Meet the Author:*

[A Writer] should write about what he knows and write truthfully. - Harper Lee

Harper Lee has followed her own advice in writing about what she knows. In fact, critics have noted many parallels between the novel and Lee's early life. Maycomb, the setting for the novel, bears a striking resemblance to the small town of Monroeville, Alabama, where Lee grew up in the 1930s. Like Scout, the narrator of the novel, Lee's family has deep roots in Alabama. Her father, Amasa Coleman Lee, was a descendant of General Robert E. Lee. A lawyer and state legislator, Lee's father likely served as the model for Atticus Finch, Scout's father in the novel.

About the Novel:*

Harper Lee's novel, originally published in 1960, opens with an adult Scout Finch reminiscing about her childhood. Through Scout's memories, the reader is transported into the world of a small southern town in the 1930s. Using a literary technique called flashback, Lee interrupts Scout's chronological narrative to reach back in time and enhance as well as amplify the story with prior events. Throughout her childhood, Scout develops and expands her values and ideas as she encounters characters who come from all levels of Maycomb's society. While other novels have explored similar themes as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, few have done so in such a rich and enduring way. Scout learns about justice and injustice by watching the trial of an African American man. She witnesses the divisions of class and race in her small town. She discovers courage, both in herself and in those around her, and she comes to respect the diversity of the people in her community. There is rarely a situation in which Scout does not learn something new about education, superstition, bravery, or cowardice. The story Lee tells evolves in a world where children lose their innocence as they grow up and encounter the harsh realities of adult life. Yet Lee's story is also about accepting people for who they are.



**Information based on The Glencoe Literature Library guide*

Online Resources to Deepen Understanding

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/book-reviews/to-kill-a-mockingbird>

<https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/scottsboro-boys>

<https://www.loc.gov/>

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

Note about Sensitive Content

Since its publication in 1960, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been studied in high schools across the United States and has made several lists of the most important American novels. Please know that, while the English Department has deemed this material to be age and grade appropriate for students, there may be instances within the content that may be considered controversial. Specifically, these can include the author's portrayal of characters' attitudes and language about race. Though not excessive in nature, it is prudent that we share this information prior to the students' reading of the novel. The Pre-AP English 1 teachers will be guiding students through the content of the novel and engaging them in appropriate conversation about the characters, plot, and theme during quarter 1.

As the parent/guardian, you have the right to opt out of your child reading this specific novel. If you choose to do so, an alternate novel/assignment that stays within the theme(s) being discussed will be assigned as a replacement. Please contact the PBHS Literacy Coach for more information: ann.wayland.cook@browardschools.com

Reader Response Journal Topics and Information

Responses should be between 100-200 words each (typed or handwritten) and fully address all aspects of the prompts. We recommend that you read the novel in chunks and then pause at the end of each section to think about and respond to the question(s) specific to that section.

Note about how to write a Reader Response Journal – This is *not* formal, essay writing. The journals should reflect your thoughts and feelings about the novel. There is no definitive “correct” answer to the topics; they are prompts to help you think about the characters, setting, events, and themes so that you are prepared to have rich discussions in the Pre-AP English classroom. These ideas will also help you better understand the in-class essay you will write in September.

Pre-Reading Topics:

1. Examine the outside cover and the back cover. Then look inside the book. What inferences can you make about the plot? What do you think you should look for as you begin the book?
2. Research **one** of the historical events that is mentioned or impactful in the novel. Explain what effect you think it will have on the story based on the novel summary on the front of this handout. *Historical Events to consider: The Great Depression, World War II, Jim Crow Laws, The Scottsboro Boys Trial (Alabama 1931), The Dust Bowl, Stock Market Crash (1929), President Roosevelt & the New Deal (1933)*

Section 1 Topics: Chapters 1-6

Note: **Characterization** is the way an author lets you know what the characters think or feel. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the writer almost never tells you directly what a character thinks or feels. You must judge for yourself from what the character says or does or from what others say about the character. This method is called *indirect characterization*.

3. Meeting the narrator, Scout Finch. Explain how Harper Lee's use of Scout as the narrator affects our understanding of the events in the novel.
4. What have you learned about Atticus in these chapters? Why does Miss Maudie Atkinson admire him? What kind of father is he to Scout and Jem? What do you learn about him from the way he speaks about Boo Radley, the Cunninghams, and the Ewells?
5. What is the physical description of Maycomb that Scout provides? What is the emotional impression you get from her description of her hometown?

Section 2 Topic: Chapters 7-11

6. Consider Mrs. Dubose's attitude toward others and where it comes from. Analyze her age, background (geographically and personally) and her physical condition. Why does Atticus say at the end of Chapter 11 that Mrs. Dubose “was the bravest person I ever knew”? Do you agree with his reason? Why?

Section 3 Topics: Chapters 12-21

7. What is the physical description of the Ewell house and property? What is the emotional impression you get from the description? What do Mayella's red geranium flowers imply about her in this setting?
8. Write an objective news report of Tom Robinson's trial. Keep the 5W-How questions in mind: who, what, where, when, why, and how. Describe the trial thoroughly, accurately, and objectively. At the same time, use descriptive details to try to make your readers feel they are part of the scene.

Section 4 Topic: Chapters 22-end

9. Contrast Boo Radley's characterization by the end of the novel with Scout's first impression: How has Scout changed as shown by her interactions with Boo at the end?

Post Reading Topic:

10. What does it mean to “put yourself in another person's shoes”? What personal qualities are necessary to be able to see things as someone else does? In what way can you apply this lesson to your upcoming freshman year of high school?
"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view-- . . . --until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." – Atticus, chapter 3

Plagiarism is not only a violation of the Pompano Beach High school honor code but it is also a disservice to you. Presenting others work as your own will result in an “F” for the assignment and parent contact will be made.