

Name:

Fall 2013



TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

EESL

Study Guide



To Kill a Mockingbird

EESL
Secondary 4
Fall 2013

SOPHIE BAILLARGEON

Some interesting websites about... *To Kill a Mockingbird*

http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Belmont_HS/tkm/

-List of vocabulary, idioms, and summaries

-The student survival kit

<http://www.novelguide.com/tokillamockingbird/index.html>

-A comprehensive book analysis of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

<http://www.homework-online.com/to-kill-a-mockingbird/index.html>

-Study guide with chapter summaries, character profiles and identification of theme

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/>

-Video, analysis & summary

<http://www.shmoop.com/to-kill-a-mockingbird/summary.html>

- Summary, analysis, & quotes

Objectives (IB Profile)

- ⇒ Investigate
- ⇒ Be informed and educated
- ⇒ Be communicator
- ⇒ Upstanding
- ⇒ Open-minded
- ⇒ Altruistic
- ⇒ Audacious
- ⇒ Balanced
- ⇒ Thoughtful

Activities

Reading circles, oral presentations (position paper, character identification), Vocabulary search, literature terms, book analysis, debates, historical figures, etc.

Evaluation

Competency 1: Interact orally in English

Competency 2: Reinvest understanding of text

Competency 3: Write and produce texts

Materials

Book (TKM)

Other Resources

Dictionaries

Online resources

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Nelle Harper Lee

Nelle Harper Lee was born on April 28 1926 in Monroeville Alabama, a city of about 7,000 people in Monroe County, which has about 24,000 people. Monroeville is in southwest Alabama, about halfway between Montgomery and Mobile. She is the youngest of four children of Amasa Coleman Lee and Frances Finch Lee. Harper Lee attended Huntingdon College 1944-45, studied law at University of Alabama 1945-49, and studied one year at Oxford University. In the 1950s she worked as a reservation clerk with Eastern Air Lines and BOAC in New York City.

In order to concentrate on writing Harper Lee gave up her position with the airline and moved into a cold-water apartment with makeshift furniture. Her father's sudden illness forced her to divide her time between New York and Monroeville, a practice she has continued.

In 1957 Miss Lee submitted the manuscript of her novel to the J. B. Lippincott Company. She was told that her novel consisted of a series of short stories strung together, and she was urged to rewrite it. For the next two and a half years she re-worked the manuscript with the help of her editor, Tayehoff, and in 1960 *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published, her only published book. On May 29 1961 the Alabama Legislature passed a [resolution](#) to congratulate Miss Lee on her success. That year she had two articles published: [Love--In Other Words](#) in *Vogue*, and [Christmas To Me](#) in *McCalls*. "Christmas To Me" is the story of Harper Lee receiving the gift of a year's time for writing from friends. [When Children Discover America](#) was published in 1965.

In June of 1966, Harper Lee was one of two persons named by President Johnson to the National Council of Arts. Also named to the 26 member council was artist Richard Diebenkorn Jr. In the same year, on November 28th, Truman Capote held his fabulous and flawless Black and White Dance in honor of Katherine Graham. *In Cold Blood* had been published in January with its dedication to Jack Dunphy and Harper Lee. The 480 invitations included one to her. Miss Lee attended the 1983 Alabama History and Heritage Festival in Eufaula, Alabama. She presented the essay [Romance and High Adventure](#). Most of what has been published on the doings of Miss Lee in the last many years is speculation. Apparently she still plays golf, and there are various stories of her writing her memoirs. An article in the *Standard Times* reported that Miss Lee was working on a book about the Reverend Maxwell of Alexander City, Alabama. He was a local black preacher who murdered several family members in order to collect their life insurance, and who was murdered at the funeral of his last victim.

In his book *Lost Friends*, Donald Windham reported that in 1984 Miss Lee attended a dinner at his place after the memorial for Truman Capote. She came with Alvin and Marie Dewey, who she had met when in Kansas with Capote to do research for *In Cold Blood*. Windham cooked chicken breasts in butter. He reported that Miss Lee said that it had been fifteen years since she and Capote had been in touch.

Miss Lee has received a number of honorary doctorates, perhaps four. In 1990 she was one of five recipients at the University of Alabama. She did not speak or give an interview. In 1997 she was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters at Spring Hill College in Mobile Alabama. Professor Margaret Davis told Miss Lee she was being honored for her "lyrical elegance, her portrayal of human strength, and wisdom." Miss Lee did not speak to the cheering and applauding audience; Colman McCarthy, another degree recipient did. A photograph of a radiant Miss Lee appeared in the *Mobile Register* on May 12, 1997.

Background

The basic setting is in the South during the early 20th century (1930's). Due to the Great Depression poverty is a subject that affects many. Prejudice of every sort runs rampant throughout the town.

In the Southern United States, before the 1960's Blacks were segregated from Whites. Not only did Blacks live in different areas than Whites, but by law they were not permitted to go to the same restaurants, use the same public restrooms or drink in the same water fountains. These laws were unconstitutional and have now been changed.

When a person is convinced of a crime he must be given "due process of law", which includes the right to a lawyer. If the defendant is poor and cannot afford to hire a lawyer, the state must provide a lawyer for him. Lynching is an execution usually by hanging, a punishment for a crime or offense for which the person lynched has not been convicted in a court of law. Often, people who are lynched have committed no crime at all. Before the Civil War, white opponents of slavery were subjected to lynching in the South. After the Civil War, lynching by white mobs became a favorite method of intimidating the Black. Beginning in 1886, there were more Blacks than Whites lynched. Since 1882, more than 4700 people have been lynched in the U.S. Civil Rights workers in the South in the 1950's and the 1960's were sometimes lynched.

The setting is a small town called Maycomb, in Alabama, in the 1930's.

The narrator Scout Finch is a 5-year-old white girl who describes her family history and her own town. She and her brother Jem are introduced to Dill (Charles Baker Harris) and the children share fantasies and stories about the mystery white man Boo Radley who lives near by.

Their father, the main character of the book is a poor lawyer who is called on to defend Tom Robinson, a Negro, who is accused of raping a white woman. Most people in the town expect that it will be a token defense. With the subplot of the mentally retarded man, and the trial, Scout will take us through three summers in her youth, three summers where she will learn and mature.

There are three major themes in the book:

PREJUDICE: There is a lot of prejudice in the town of Maycomb. The town has prejudice against Blacks. There is also prejudice against Boo. No one bothers to find out about the real Arthur. He is ridiculed by the town and they hunt him. All the children have been raised to fear him as the town freak.

MATURITY: The characters of the book show different degrees of maturity.

Atticus: Although an adult, he shows his mature views in the courtroom and in the way he treats his children.

Scout: She shows a maturity level that is advanced for her age. This is due to her intelligent approach to experiences and from the teaching of Atticus. She constantly asks questions and cares about issues such as

racism.

FRIENDSHIP:

Dill: The friendship with the boys opens Scout and Dill, up to a new world. He talks of experiences outside of their small community. He also introduces them to the stories of Boo.

Atticus and the children: They call him Atticus.

Boo and the children: It's not really a friendship, but a sort of friendly understanding, and it gave them the ability to oversee the stereotypes set on him.

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The Author and the Book

Nelle Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, had many childhood experiences, which are similar to those of her narrator, Scout Finch.

Nelle Harper Lee's Childhood	Scout Finch's Childhood
Grew up in 1930's – rural southern Alabama of Monroeville	Grew up in the 1930's – rural southern town of Maycomb
Father – Amasa Lee – attorney who served in the state of legislature of Alabama	Father – Atticus Finch – attorney who served in the state of legislature of Alabama
Older brother and young neighbour (Truman Capote) are playmates	Older brother and young neighbour (Dill) are playmates
Harper Lee – an avid reader	Scout reads before she enters school? reads Mobile Register newspaper in first grade
Six years old when Scottsboro trials were meticulously covered in state and local newspaper	Six years old when the trial of Tom Robinson takes place

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About *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Author: Nelle Harper Lee

- She grew up in Monroeville, Alabama, in the 1930's.
- She was born on April 28th, 1926,
- Best friend: Truman Capote.
- Her father was Amasa Coleman Lee, a descendant of General E. Lee, a lawyer and state legislator.

Setting (Time and Place)

- Small town in rural Alabama called Maycomb.
- Set in the early 1930's.
- During the Great Depression.
 - **Facts about the Great Depression:**
 - At the start of the Great Depression, half of the African American population lived in the South.
 - Millions of Americans lost their jobs, homes, land, and their dignity.
 - Those people who had lost it all lined up in stacks and stood in lines to receive government handouts of food.
 - With few jobs available, Blacks often found themselves edged out by Whites, even for the poorest paying jobs.
 - Racial tensions, which had existed since the end of the Civil War, increased.
 - Mob actions by Whites that led to the hanging of African Americans and those who sympathized with them continued throughout the South.
 - In Alabama, as in the other Southern states, segregation was a way of life in the 1930's.
 - Ex: Schools, restaurants, churches, courtrooms, hospitals and all other public places had separate facilities for African Americans.
 - In some courts, Blacks were asked to swear on separate bibles.
 - The Ku Klux Klan, a Southern terrorist group, preached white supremacy and engaged in violence against African Americans.
 - Blacks and Whites did not socialize, also there were different levels within the black and white society.
 - Ex: **White Society**
 - Top: Large landowners or educated professionals = the Finch family.
 - Middle Class citizens: Sheriff Tate and Mr. Underwood (editor of the local newspaper)
 - Poor Whites: The Cunningham and the Ewell family.
 - Black Society:**
 - Higher level: Calpurnia (the Finch's maid) has more formal education than other Blacks.
 - Poor Blacks: Tom Robinson (the Farm worker who goes on trial)

Point of View

- The novel is told in the first person point of view
ex: narrator (Scout Finch) uses **I** and **Me**.
Scout Finch is looking back to her childhood, narrating what she saw and felt at that time.

Facts about the Scottsboro Trials

- Took place in the 1930's in the Northern Alabama.
- It began with a charge of rape made by white women against African American men.
- The poor white status of the accusers was a critical issue.
- A central figure was heroic judge, James E. Horton, a member of the Alabama Bar who overturned a guilty verdict against African American men.
- This judge went against public sentiment in trying to protect the rights of the African American defendants.
- The first juries failed to include any African Americans, a situation which caused the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the guilty verdict.
- The Jury ignored evidence; for example, that women suffered no injuries.
- Attitudes about Southern women and poor Whites complicated the trial.

You should find out additional information about:

- a) Civil War
- b) Great Depression
- c) New Deal
- d) World War II
- e) Scottsboro Trials
- f) Dust Bowls

For some website, see page 1.