

Recommendation:

To Kill a Mockingbird is an adult novel about childhood. Therefore, it should be read by older students, for they can easily relate to the situations the main characters face. Harper Lee's skill as a storyteller is to be admired as she captures a child's struggle to understand a mysterious adult world. It is through the strong characters that the reader understands the need to live a worthy life in spite of the difficulties of every day life.

"Atticus said to Jem one day, "I'd rather you shot at tin cans in the backyard, but I know you'll go after birds. Shoot all the blue jays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird." That was the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something, and I asked Miss Maudie about it. "Your father's right," she said. "Mockingbirds don't do one thing except make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corn cribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

Harper Lee ~*To Kill a Mockingbird*



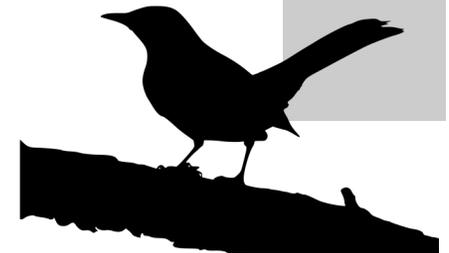
Sources:

TEXT:
BIOGRAPHY.COM
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IMAGES:
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To Kill a Mockingbird

Harper Lee



Your Name
Junior High Language Arts
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Plot:

To Kill a Mockingbird takes place in Maycomb, Alabama, in the 1930s. The main character, Scout Finch, is also the narrator of the story.

Scout, her brother Jem, and their friend Dill spend much of their summers trying to attract the attention of Boo Radley, the Finches' reclusive neighbor. However, when Scout's father, Atticus Finch, agrees to defend an African-American man who is falsely accused of an unthinkable crime, the children are swept into the racism and prejudice that permeates the town of Maycomb. Boo Radley no longer is the focus of their attention as they attempt to deal with the fallout associated with Atticus's decision.

The peaceful setting of this small Alabama town is suddenly shattered. Justice is ignored and lives are changed forever. From this experience, Scout learns the importance of human compassion and understanding.



Themes:

- ◇ **Growing Up:** Both Scout and her brother Jem leave their innocent childhoods behind as they realize they live in a flawed society. At the same time, they develop an intellectual integrity and an emotional maturity that helps them see people and events with clear eyes.
- ◇ **Class:** There is a definite caste system in Maycomb. The Finch family is at the top of the social hierarchy and thus have a "position" to uphold. Other families like the Cunninghams are poor yet respectable. Although they refuse to accept charity, they are considered to be decent folk. The Ewells are at the bottom of society and are an eyesore to the community. This division is simply the way it has always been, and it is the way Maycomb's residents want it to stay.
- ◇ **Courage:** Throughout the novel, Atticus Finch displays a moral courage that is admirable. His defense of Tom Robinson illustrates his quiet determination and strength to see that justice is done.

Character Analysis:

Jean Louise Finch, better known as Scout, is the narrator of the story. She is an open-minded child who accepts the people around her at face value. Scout is intelligent, confident, thoughtful,

and usually good, for she always acts with the best intentions. Scout is also a tomboy which causes some conflict with the prim and proper Southern town in which she lives.

Scout is who she is because of the way her father, Atticus, raised her. He has nurtured her mind, conscience, and individuality while ignoring the expectations of society. Thus, Scout wears overalls and climbs trees instead of wearing fancy dresses and acting like a little lady.

As the novel progresses, Scout learns that not everything in the world is good and that evil does exist. However, evil can be overcome if one approaches others with sympathy and understanding.

The novel ends with Scout, still a child, able to appreciate human goodness and a capability to step into another's shoes to see the world from a different point of view.

AUTHOR FACTS—HARPER LEE

Born on April 28, 1926
Raised in Monroeville, Alabama
Youngest of four children
Closet friend was Truman Capote, another famous author
Dropped out of law school to pursue a career in writing
Awarded the Pulitzer Prize
Published *Go Set a Watchman* in 2015
Died on February 19, 2016 at age 89