

***To Kill a Mockingbird* Unit Notes for Discussion**

- Read 3 chapters a night (10 ~~weeks~~)

- Activities Include:

To Examine the Theme of Prejudice: Poster on the causes and effects of prejudice

To Examine Round Characters and the Basic Goodness of all People: Body Map of a Character in TKAM

To Examine Point of View/Unreliable Narrator: A written account of the events of the trial from the point of view of an assigned character.

To Examine the Theme of Seeing from Other People's Perspective: Literary Analysis Essay

Things to Cover:

Allusion

Point of View/Unreliable Narrator

Theme

Consequences & causes of prejudice

Ability of children to see clearly (Innocence)

Social inequality

Basic goodness of all people

Taking a stand against injustice

Bildungsroman

Symbol (Mockingbird)

Tom

Boo

Scout

Atticus

Importance of setting

Flashback

Characterization (Round/Flat, Dynamic vs. Static Characters)

Making Inferences

Foreshadowing

Satire

Chapters 1-3

Chapter 1:

- Establish that the book is a memoir (discuss flashback)

- Establish setting (help students put book in historical/social context)

- Notice allusions (Especially to the Depression and FDR's speech)

- Start a map of Maycomb

- Start a character list (especially include the rumors about Boo)

- Pg 15: Make an inference, who is watching? What might this foreshadow?

Chapter 2:

- Satire of the education system

- What do we learn about Maycomb's ways?

- Classes of people

- Add Cunninghams to the character list
- Indirect characterization (what others say about a character) of Cunninghams and Atticus

Chapter 3:

- Add Calpurnia, Ewells, and Chuck Little to the character list
- Characterize Atticus
- Note key quotes that support theme

Chapter 4-6

Chapter 4:

- Metaphors for summer
- Superstitions
- Make predictions about who is leaving stuff in the tree
- Foreshadowing

Chapter 5:

- Direct/Indirect characterization of Miss. Maudie
- Pg 42: Symbol of nut grass
- Add Miss. Stephanie to character list
- Causes of prejudice
- Idioms (?)
- Pg 46: Quotes about understanding people

Chapter 6:

- Pg 56 – Jem is growing up. What does it mean to grow up?
- Making predictions – Why is Jem shaken when he returns with his pants?

Chapter 7-9

Chapter 7:

- Pg 57: Look for places that show Scout is growing up (Bildungsroman) – She tries to put herself in Jem's shoes/skin
- Pg 58: (Making predictions) – Who might have left the pants? How might that person (Boo) know Jem? What does this tell us about Boo's character?
- Who do you think left the treats in the tree for the children? What does that tell us about his character?
- Why did Mr. Nathan cement the hole? What does that say about his character?

Chapter 8:

- Pg 67: Quote that Jem would always have an idea. What might this foreshadow?
- What's wrong w/ the snow man?
- How does the community pull together to help Miss. Maudie? What does this tell us about Maycomb?
- What else do we discover about Maudie's character (add to our list).
- What does Boo do for the children? What does that tell us about him?

Chapter 9:

- What do we discover about Atticus in this chapter – Who is he defending?
- Closely read pgs 77-78 (Atticus' convo with Scout).
- Why is Atticus defending Tom? Why won't he win?
- What does Scout's encounter with Cecil and Atticus' words foreshadow?
- If you were Atticus, would you do the same thing? Note his actions fall in the theme, "Taking a stand." Scout also takes a stand b/c she walks away from a fight.
- Note that she endures ridicule b/c she loves Atticus. She doesn't understand the trial yet. Does that make her actions more noble?
- What do we find out about Dill from Francis?
- Why do Scout and Francis fight?
- Closely read Scouts convo w/ Jack (pg 86).
 - Talk about POV. She doesn't understand what Francis is talking about. This may make her *unreliable* but does it make her more effective than an adult? Compare to song – "Alyssa Lies."
- Closely read Atticus' convo w/ Jack.
 - What do we find out about the trial?
 - Why does Atticus say adults should tell children the truth?
 - Notice allusions and foreshadowing.
 - What's Maycomb's disease?

Chapters 10-12

Chapter 10:

- Examine quotes on page 90 about mockingbirds.
- Refer back to title and make predictions.
- Close read the mad dog as a symbol for prejudiced society that silences mockingbirds (therefore, what might mockingbirds symbolize?)
- Questions on page 98 about pride.

Chapter 11:

- Characterize Mrs. Dubose. What do the children learn from their experiences with her?
- Why does Atticus make them read to her? Is he preparing them for the trial?
- What else does he teach them about the trial on pg 104-105? Notice key quotes.
- Pg 108 – Discuss the power of words in both a negative and a positive light.
- What is Atticus' definition of bravery?

Chapter 12:

- Where is Cal's church? How do white people treat it differently than black people? How is that ironic?
- What does Jem and Scout's experience at church teach them about prejudice? About the basic goodness of people? Could Cal have gone to the Finch church? (Probably not).
- Notice stereotypes challenged – Zeebo, the garbage collector, is welcoming and can read.
- Pg. 122 Notice how pastors (white and black) are giving the same message.
- What do we find out about Tom and trial?
 - Add Tom & Sikes to character list
- Talk about Calpurnia's code switching and her quote on 126. How are she and Atticus similar?

Chapter 13-15

Chapter 13:

- Characterize Aunt Alexandra.
- What is Alexandra's definition of "fine folks" vs. Scout's definition? Which is better?
- What is the irony of most of the town being related? *You'd think people would not be so quick to judge one another.*
- Analyze Atticus' conversation with Scout and Jem. What was he trying to do? Why did it take a woman to do that job? *He was trying to teach the children the importance of Maycomb to the Finch family so that they would not become disillusioned during the trial. This is a woman's job, b/c women were typically the ones to teach children about family.*

Chapter 14:

- How can we tell that Jem is growing up?
- Pg 141: What does Scout mean when she says Jem "broke the remaining code of our childhood"?

Chapter 15:

- Who comes to visit Atticus? What are they discussing?
 - Add Link Deas, Heck Tate, and Braxton Underwood to the character list
 - Especially note Deas' comment that he doesn't know why Atticus took the job. We'll see he's a dynamic character when he defends Helen.
- Add to our Maycomb map when the kids go downtown to visit Atticus.
- Who are the men that approach Atticus at the jail? What do they mean when they say that Heck is on a snipe hunt? *Idiom.
- What is the mood when Scout and Jem approach Atticus? How is it more clear w/ Scout narrating? *She doesn't understand the danger. Her trusting, innocent nature is juxtaposed to the malicious intentions of the men. This is another example of the benefit of her point of view.*
- Why does Jem refuse to go home?
- Characterize the men.
- How does Scout diffuse the situation?
- What do we find out about Mr. Underwood? Add more info to our character list.
- How does this scene remind us of the theme that all people are basically good? When are people not so good? *In groups – under the influence of one another.*
- * Discuss how many of Lee's characters are round. Most books do not have so many round characters. Why do you think she does?

Chapter 16-18

Chapter 16:

- What else do we find out about Underwood in this chapter? *He despises "Negros." Point this out to kids b/c he will be a dynamic character.*
- Pg 157: What does Atticus mean when he says, "A mob's always made up of people."
- Why is significant that a child stopped the mob? *Theme: Ability of children to see clearly.*
- Pg 158: Why does Atticus not want Jem and Scout to hold a grudge? How could holding a grudge cause the children to become prejudiced toward other people?
- What is the day of the trial like?
- Why won't Miss. Maudie go? What does that tell us about her character?

- Add Mr. Dolphus Raymond to our character list.
- Pg 162: Note the irony that people don't know for sure whether they are completely white or not.
- Pg 163: Why did Atticus not tell Scout and Jem that he was assigned to Tom's case?
- Why is it significant that Scout and Jem watch the trial with the blacks? Are they learning to be less prejudiced?
- Characterize Judge Taylor (Add to list).

Chapter 17:

- What happened the night of Mayella's "attack" according to Tate and Ewell?
- Characterize Bob Ewell and add him to our character list.
- Pg 173: Notice Syke's concern for the children. How does this episode contrast him to Bob Ewell?
- What do you think Judge Taylor means when he says, "People generally see what they look for, and hear what they listen for." How is it significant to this book?
- Pg 175: What is the irony of Bob Ewell saying that the black neighborhood devalues his property?
- What is the significance of Ewell being left handed? How is it significant that Scout recognizes the importance and he doesn't? Also, notice how she is more cautious in her estimation than Jem. This indicates that she is growing up.

Chapter 18:

- Characterize Mayella Ewell (Add to list).
- Pg 182: How do we see that Scout is growing up? *She is able to put herself in Mayella's shoes.*
- Pg 183: What is the significance of Tom being crippled?
- Pg 188: Why do you think Atticus takes no pleasure in questioning Mayella?

Chapter 19-21

Chapter 19:

- Characterize Tom Robinson (add traits to our list).
- Contrast Tom to Ewell.
- Notice Deas' outburst on pg 195. How has he changed since his conversation with Atticus? Remember that this outburst is just as dangerous to his reputation as Atticus representing Tom.
- Why is it bad for Tom to say he felt sorry for Mayella? Why can he not accuse her of lying?
- Theme (Children's ability to see clearly) when Dill cries at the trial. Why can children spot social injustice and adults ignore it?

Chapter 20:

- Add information about Raymond to the character list. Notice again how people are not what they seem.
- Why does Raymond pretend to be drunk? Note that it is the same reason Calpurnia code switches. Is this an effective strategy?
- What are the main points of Atticus' speech? Why should court be the ultimate leveler?

Chapter 21:

- Why is it encouraging that the jury stays out for a long time?

- Note the quote: "The feeling grew until the atmosphere in the courtroom was exactly the same as a cold February morning, when the mockingbirds were still." How does this sentence foreshadow the verdict? How does this scene in the courtroom compare to the afternoon of the mad dog? *Prejudice is one again taking over the people.*
- Why do the blacks stand for Atticus even though the verdict is "guilty"?
- Why was the verdict "guilty"?

Chapters 22-24

Chapter 22:

- Notice that Jem cries. Why can children cry over something that adults take for granted? The kids were the only ones who wondered what the verdict might be. Everyone else assumed Tom would be found guilty.
- Why do you think Atticus allowed the kids to go to court even though Alexandra thought it was a bad idea?
- Why do you think the black community brings Atticus gifts? Remember that this is even more significant given that it is the Depression and the people are very poor.
- Why is Jem upset about the trial? How has he lost his innocence?
- What does Miss. Maudie tell Jem about the trial? Who else tried to help Tom Robinson?
- What did Bob Ewell do to Atticus? Why do you think he did this? What might it foreshadow?

Chapter 23:

- Pg 218: How does Atticus encourage Jem to stand in Bob Ewell's shoes? Notice our theme: The basic goodness of all people.
- What are things that Jem thinks might be wrong with the judicial system? What is he failing to see? *That a human institution is only as good as the people who make it up. No system is perfect.*
- Pg 220: What is the "Something in the world that makes men lose their heads"?
- Pg 222: How does serving on a jury make a man make up his mind and declare himself about something? Why is that unpleasant? Think about how hard this would be. Have you ever had to raise your hand to vote for class officers, for example. It is hard to publicly go against the majority. However, what do you think of people who are willing to stand against the majority?
- Who was the one man on the jury that fought for Tom? Why is that ironic? Does it show that people (like Scout) can make a difference?
- Pg 224: Notice how family pride breeds prejudice when Aunt Alexandra refuses to let Scout go to Calpurnia's or play with Walter Cunningham. Does this happen in our world today? People may be considered ok to be kind to, but not ok to befriend.
- Pg 226-227: Satire: The social structure of the world makes perfect sense to adults, but is confusing to children.

Chapter 24:

- Satire: Women's society and their discussion about the Murnaus. Why do they care about these people and not the poor people in their community? Do we do the same thing? How is it easier to care about people far away and not the people in our own town?
- Where can you find irony? Where are the women hypocritical?
- Pg 223: How does Maudie put the women in their place? *She defends Atticus when the other women are discussing how his actions simply encouraged "sulky" behavior in their black help.*

- What happens to Tom? Why do you think he tries to escape? It is likely a suicide. Why?
- How do Maudie and Alexandra respond to the news?
- What is Maudie's definition of "background"? How does it differ from other's definitions?
- What does Scout learn about being a lady from this incident? Notice that this book encourages the acceptance and kind treatment of all people – even this hypocritical women.
- Add information about Maudie and Alexandra to our character list.

Chapter 25-27

Chapter 25:

- People thought that Tom had no plan and that Atticus could have gotten him off free. Do you think that Tom really had no plan? In light of the trial, do you think Atticus could have gotten him freed? In a way, did Tom find freedom?
- What did Mr. Underwood write in his paper? How is he a dynamic character?
- Why is Tom's death like killing a mockingbird? Tom is a symbol for a mockingbird. Who else is a symbol for a mockingbird? Who else sings and makes music for others to hear?
- What was "Tom a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed"?
- What does Mr. Ewell's comment foreshadow? Who might be the two to which he refers?

Chapter 26:

- Although people criticize Atticus, they reelect him to the state legislature. What does that tell us about people? What does Scout think about this?
- Compare the events in WWII Germany to the events in Maycomb Georgia. Does being a democracy really prevent people from persecuting one another? What is being satirized? Where do we see irony?
- Why don't the Germans just lock up the maniac Hitler (pg 246)? Remember that prejudice is a disease that quickly spreads. Also, it takes immense courage to take a stand against injustice.
- What discrepancies does Scout see between Miss. Gates' words and actions? Theme: Ability of children to see clearly.

Chapter 27:

- What are the odd things that Bob Ewell does around town? What might they foreshadow?
- How does Link Deas stand up for Helen? Notice that he has changed from his first comment to Atticus. How is he a dynamic character? Did Atticus' stand make a difference in Deas' actions?
- How does Atticus explain Ewell's actions?
- Allusions to WPA and NRA are ways to keep the novel in historical context.
- There is more talk of the Murnas in this chapter. The women pity these people, but how is their life appealing?
- What does Aunt Alexandra feel when Scout is practicing for her pageant? What does this feeling foreshadow?
- What do you think Scout means when she says, "Thus began the longest journey of our lives together"? How does this quote also remind us that she is now a grown woman?

Chapter 28-31

Chapter 28:

- Who scares the children on their way to school? What does this foreshadow?
- Why is Scout embarrassed after the pageant?

- What happens to Scout and Jem on their way home?
- What saves Scout's life?
- What happened to Mr. Ewell?

Chapter 29:

- Who is the other man in the room?
- Why do you think he is there?

Chapter 30:

- What do Heck Tate and Atticus argue about?
- Why do they argue?
- What conclusion do they reach?
- Why do they reach this conclusion?
- Why does Scout compare it to killing a mockingbird? Therefore, who becomes another symbol for a mockingbird in this book?
- Contrast the way Heck handles this crime with the previous one w/ Tom. Do you think he learned from Atticus taking a stand? Did Atticus' actions inspire him to take his own stand? Who are some other people who also took a stand? In what ways does that make them mockingbirds?

Chapter 31:

- How is Boo different than Scout first imagined him? Are most people different than we first imagine?
- How are Scout and Jem Boo's children?
- At the end of the book, Atticus says most people are nice when you finally see them. Based on the book, is this true? Remember – all the round characters were basically nice. The only one who was completely bad was Bob Ewell (and he couldn't be considered a round character). Do you think the same is true of people in our society? How can we learn to "really see" people?