*To Kill a Mockingbird* Introduction Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_



When To Kill a Mockingbird was published in 1960, it brought its young first-time author, Harper Lee, a startling amount of attention and notoriety. The novel replays three key years in the life of Scout Finch, the young daughter of an Alabama town's principled lawyer. The work was an instant sensation, becoming a bestseller and winning the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Scout's narrative relates how she and her older brother Jem learn about fighting prejudice and upholding human dignity through the example of their father. Atticus Finch has taken on the legal defense of a black man who has been falsely charged with raping a white woman. Lee's story of the events surrounding the trial has been admired for its portrayal of Southern life during the 1930s, not only for its piercing examination of the causes and effects of racism, but because it created a model of tolerance and courage in the character of Atticus Finch. A regional novel dealing with universal themes of tolerance, courage, compassion, and justice, To Kill a Mockingbird combined popular appeal with literary excellence to ensure itself an enduring place in modern American literature.

Who are the main characters of the story? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When does the story take place? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ When was the novel written? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Where does the story take place? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What is the main conflict of the story? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Why is the story still popular today? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**“Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird.”**

Given this quotation from the novel, consider the metaphor of the mockingbird. In this story, there will be at least TWO figurative mockingbirds. Your purpose for reading is to identify who they are and why they are “mockingbirds.”

In 1991 the Library of Congress conducted a survey of book readers. Readers were asked to cite books that had made a difference in their lives. One of the books most often cited was Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The only book ranked higher by readers was the Bible.

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 and 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 own 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, people such as Tom Robinson and Boo Radley. There is rarely a situation in which Scout does not learn something new about education, superstition, bravery, or cowardice. The novel is filled with Scout’s memories of growing up, getting picked on, treating people fairly, being a tomboy, being a young lady, having a crush, fighting, witnessing disrespect, being punished, observing racism, overhearing gossip, being attacked, being rescued, and learning what bravery is.

Words or phrases that describe a hero include

Words or phrases that describe the “perfect” or “ideal” family include

If I lived next door to someone mysterious, I would…

One of the most important lessons I learned before I turned 10 was…

If a person is wrongfully accused of a crime and taken to court, he or she has the best chance of avoiding punishment if…

Racism before 1960 included lynch mobs and lawful segregation. Racism now includes…

One reason growing up in America before 1960 was better than it is now is…

If I felt that I would be hated by everyone for doing “the right thing,” I would…

http://resources.mhs.vic.edu.au/mockingbird/compques.htm