

To Kill a Mockingbird Webquest

“Kill all the bluejays you want, if you can hit ‘em,
but remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird.” --Atticus Finch

You are about to read the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The story is set in the sleepy town of Maycomb, Alabama. Harper Lee explores the irrationality of adult attitudes toward race and class in the Deep South of the 1930’s. The consciousness of a town steeped in prejudice, violence, and hypocrisy is pricked by the quiet heroism of one man’s struggle for justice. To best understand the lessons of this great novel, background study of the author, the times, and the place in which the story is set must be will be explored through this webquest.

Goals: Examining the historical background of the times and information about the author and her work, you should be able to:

- Identify elements of living during the Great Depression
- Identify the sources of prejudice, stereotypes, and racism within the 1930’s Southern society
- Explain why Harper Lee wrote about these topics

Your Task: Visit various websites to learn the needed background information before starting the novel. This webquest will give you an understanding of the 1930’s and of the historical content of the novel; therefore, you will be much more equipped to understand the development of the novel. You will become the expert regarding your topic/s.

- Some websites will be listed. You MUST NOT use Wikipedia. Use these websites first, then expand if needed.
- You will be teaching your classmates everything you know about your assigned topic/s.

The Process: Per group, all questions should be answered thoroughly.

- Turned in assignment: all names must be listed in the heading with the job they were assigned within the group. Number and bubble your answers.
- Presentation: all members of the group must present their assigned section of the group. Each presentation must include:
 - ✓ 2 images/photographs
 - ✓ A guided outline so the audience can follow as they take notes (I will explain)
 - ✓ Make a copy of your questions for the class so they can follow along.4th has 21 students; 5th has 20 students.

Evaluation: The turned in assignment will be graded for accuracy. The presentation will be graded both for accuracy and for deliverance and the presenter’s knowledge of the material.

Group I: Harper Lee // TKAM

1. When and where was Harper Lee born? What was her legal name?
2. What was her family like? Who were her parents? Siblings?
3. Who was her childhood best friend? Who did this friend grow-up to become? Did their friendship continue?
4. Tell of her education. What did she study in college? Did she participate in any extra-curricular activities? Why might this be important to consider with TKAM?
5. How did her decision to move to New York make TKAM a reality?

6. What year was TKAM published? When was it adapted to screen? Did she publish any other novels? Explain when written/ when published / relationship to TKAM.
7. Was Harper Lee honored in any way following the publication of TKAM? Why was Harper Lee awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom?
8. Harper Lee's real life influenced many of the characters and events in TKAM. Given what you have learned about her life (including personality traits, friends, family, experiences), make a prediction about what kinds of issues might surface in the book.

<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/harperle.htm>

<http://www.biography.com/articles/Harper-Lee-9377021>

<http://www.biography.com/people/harper-lee-9377021>

<http://www.duluth.lib.mn.us/Programs/Mockingbird/LeeBio.html>

<http://neabigread.org/books/mockingbird/mockingbird04.php>

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/awards-and-prizes/article/14666-harper-lee-wins-presidential-medal-of-freedom.html>

Group 2: Jim Crow Laws // Jim Crow & Plessy vs Ferguson // The Civil Rights Movement

1. What are Jim Crow Laws? Where did the term come from? How is the origin of this term offensive (give 3 ways). Give some examples of these laws.
2. How did Jim Crow laws affect the American image abroad? How did our foreign policy impact racial equality at home?
3. Most laws are meant to promote the general welfare or protect society from an evil. Did Jim Crow laws serve these purposes? If so, how? If not, what was their purpose?
4. Under Jim Crow, black facilities were often of far poorer quality than those reserved for whites. Separate rarely meant equal. If blacks and whites had received equal treatment, would Jim Crow laws have been fair?
5. Who was Booker T. Washington? What did he believe was the best way for southern African-Americans to survive the South?
6. Who was W.E.B. DuBois? What did he believe was the best way for southern African-Americans to survive in the South?
7. Read the 14th Amendment. Give a short summary. Give a brief summary of the Brown decision and of the Plessy vs Ferguson case. Explain how the Supreme Court used it to disallow segregation in the Brown decision. Why didn't the Court use it for the same purpose in Plessy vs Ferguson? How did the Plessy vs Ferguson case (1896) uphold Jim Crow laws? What effect did this case have on the lives (transportation, education, social implications, etc) of southern blacks?
8. What role might the Jim Crow laws play in TKAM? Knowing that the father character in the story is a lawyer, how might this come into play as well?

<http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/history/overview.htm>

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/jimcrow/who.htm>

<http://www.crf-usa.org/black-history-month/a-brief-history-of-jim-crow#.UVs9CpNQFK0>

http://www.nps.gov/malu/forteachers/jim_crow_laws.htm

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/>

Group 3: Scottsboro Case // Trials of the Scottsboro Boys // NAACP

1. Who were the Scottsboro Boys? Their background and ages. How did they get into so much trouble?

2. Where and when did the Scottsboro Boy's original trial take place? Did this location affect the outcome of their trial?
3. What does the NAACP acronym stand for? Why did the NAACP decide not to help the Scottsboro Boys?
4. The Communist Party came to the aid of the Scottsboro Boys. How did the South perceive the Communist Party, and how was it similar to the perception of blacks? What was the Communist Party's hidden agenda in providing aid to the Scottsboro Boys?
5. The Scottsboro Boys were not provided with adequate defense lawyers. Discuss at least 3 ways in which the defense lawyers were inadequate.
6. Describe the trials. Were they fair or unfair? Include at least 3 supporting facts to back up your description.
7. Were the Scottsboro Boys ever pardoned of their convictions?
8. The Scottsboro Boys trial took place during the childhood of Harper Lee. Make a prediction about how this trial might be an important impetus for the book.

http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/FTrials/scottsboro/SB_acct.html

http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scottsboro/sb_acct.html

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12111/scottsboro/scottsbo.htm>

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scottsboro/newspapr.htm>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/scottsboro/index.html>

Pictures of the Scottsboro Boys:

http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/FTrials/scottsboro/SB_imag.html

Group 4: Growing up Black in the 1930's // Growing up White in the 1930's

Growing up Black: Read the interview and relate the questions. Remember, the class has not read the interview. Interview found on my website.

Mrs. Peacolia Barge, born in 1923, lived as a small child in an area called McCulley's Quarters and grew up in Bessemer just outside Birmingham, Alabama. Mrs. Barge completed her college degree after her marriage and then began a long career in teaching. Her grandparents were slaves in Alabama, and her three children are college-educated, professional men and women. She defies all stereotypes, just as Calpurnia does in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The interview that follows was conducted in 1993 and is excerpted from Claudia Durt Johnson's *Understanding to Kill a Mockingbird* to help support your understanding of stereotyping in the novel.

1. What does Mrs. Barge know about her ancestry? How does she talk about her family?
2. What were her and her family's living conditions like?
3. When was the first time she noticed a difference between the lives of black people and the lives of white people? From Mrs. Barge's account, what is the most astounding difference?
4. What was school like for Mrs. Barge?
5. What kind of jobs were available to black people in the South?
6. Were black people allowed to vote?
7. Mrs. Barge clearly has a different opinion of white people than her father does. What does she say that proves this? How does her perception of white people differ from her father's? Why is that?
8. Given what you learned about growing up black, how would you generalize the overall life of a black child growing up in TKAM?

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12111/mculley.html>

Growing up White: Read the interview and relate the questions. Remember, the class has not read the interview. Interview found on my website.

Like Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the three women in this interview (excerpted from *Understanding to Kill a Mockingbird*) grew up in the Deep South of the 1930s. All three were members of what could be described as prominent Southern families. The three women discuss many of the issues raised in *To Kill a Mockingbird*: how they defined a "good family"

1. What do these three ladies have in common about their ancestry? How do they talk about their families?
2. What were the three ladies living conditions?
3. What were these ladies' first experiences with black people?
4. Did these white ladies ever play with their black peers?
5. Given what you learned about growing up white, how would you generalize the overall life of a white child growing up in TKAM?

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12111/girl.html?tqskip1=1&tqtime=0227>

Compare Mrs. Barge and the three ladies:

1. How do the three white ladies' background differ from Mrs. Barge's background?
2. The three white ladies' talk about what made a "good family" in the South. What do they say makes a "good family"? Compare this to Mrs. Barge's opinion?
3. Compare and contrast the three ladies' families to Mrs. Barge's family, explain the similarities and the differences. Based on your explanation, would Mrs. Barge's family be considered a "good family"? Why or why not?
4. Describe the occupations available to black women in the South in the 1930's according to Mrs. Barge. How did these occupations influence Mrs. Barge's perception of white people? How did these occupations influence the perception of black people according to the three ladies' accounts?
5. Mrs. Barge ends her interview on a positive note by saying "you shouldn't put people into categories." Make a prediction based on these interview about the lives of the white community and the black community from TKAM.

Group 5: The Depression // The Dust Bowl

1. What is "Black Thursday" and why does it mark the beginning of the Great Depression? (Date)
2. Many believe that WWII marked the end of the Great Depression. How did the war affect the economy?
3. What president was inaugurated in 1933? What were some of the changes made by this administration?
4. What was the New Deal? How did the New Deal affect American citizens?
5. What is the Dust Bowl? How did the Dust Bowl affect the Southern Plains?
6. What affect did the Dust Bowl have on agriculture? How would this affect farmers and their employers?
7. Given what you learned about the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, make a prediction about the setting of TKAM. What will the houses look like? What will be characters be wearing? How will the characters act towards each other? How does the rich/middle class act towards the poor, in general?
8. What were sharecroppers or tenant farmers? Especially after the Great Depression, what problems did sharecroppers have and leave as a "legacy"?
9. What is the difference between cash renters and sharecroppers?

<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Memories+of+the+dust+bowl:+for+people+of+the+Southern+Plains,+the+...-a0144296833>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/dustbowl-great-depression/>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/timeline/rails-timeline/>

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/articles/20090308-NEWS-903080344>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/05/faces-of-the-great-depression_n_1943543.html#slide=1608620

<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1613>

Pictures from the Great Depression:

<http://history1900s.about.com/od/photographs/tp/greatdepressionpictures.htm>