

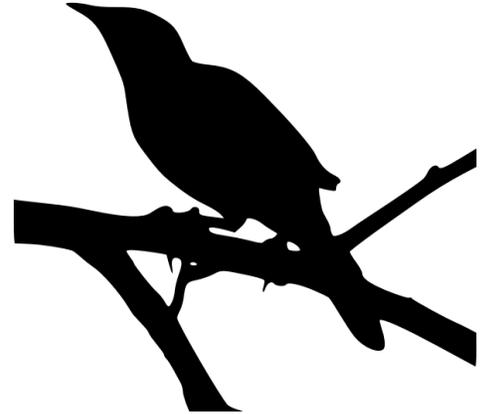
To Kill a Mockingbird Projects and Assignments

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Beyond the Mockingbird: Symbol Presentations

Harper Lee uses symbols like the mockingbird to develop her themes. Choose one symbolic element from *To Kill a Mockingbird* in order to perform analysis and present your findings to the class. Explain how Lee attaches meaning to the symbol and how the symbol develops a theme.



Goals

RL2: Analyze how specific details (symbols) develop a theme.

RL1: Cite strong textual evidence to support ideas.

SL4: (Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas) Organize your ideas and supporting evidence in a clear, logical way.

Instructions:

1) Choose a symbol.

Birds	Tip: Go beyond mockingbirds ; make sure to discuss Finches and robins as well.
Animals (not birds)	Tip: Look for examples focused on turtles , dogs , and insects . Pay attention to the description of Helen Robinson upon receiving the terrible news about her husband.
Flowers	Tip: The flowers of Miss Maudie , Mayella Ewell , and Mrs. Dubose are connected as symbols. What theme or themes do they express?
Buildings	Tip: Lee assigns meaning to the Radley home , the town jail , and the courthouse . The fact that the courthouse and the jail seem out-of-place is important.
Seasons	Tip: Pay special attention to Scout's observations from Boo's porch (toward the very end).
The Radley tree	Tip: Pay attention to the description of the tree's roots.
Scout's overalls	Tip: What does Aunt Alexandra do with them after the attack?
Superstitions	Tip: What do the kids say about "haints" and "hot-steams" later in the novel?

2) Collect textual evidence.

Find the best quotes from the novel that connect to your symbol. Record your findings and make sure to write down the page number.

[ANALYZE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE HANDOUT](#)

3) Reach a conclusion.

Form the main idea of your presentation. What does the symbol represent? How is meaning attached? To what theme (message) does the symbol connect?

It's Complicated (plot diagrams)

To Kill a Mockingbird's structure is complex as there are parallel main plots and episodic subplots. There are the main plots ("Meeting Boo Radley" and "Tom Robinson's Trial") and many plots along the way.

We will work in groups to diagram specific plots. Then we will work as a class to create a massive diagram of how the plots come together.

Goals:

RL5: Analyze the author's use of structure (parallel plots and subplots).

SL1A: Prepare material for collaboration.

SL5: Use media (diagrams) to present and enhance understanding.

Instructions:

1) Choose one plot from *To Kill a Mockingbird* to diagram.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● "Why Jem's Arms Are Uneven" or "Growing Up in Maycomb"● "The Trial of Tom Robinson"● "The Quest to Meet Boo Radley"● "An Unusual Boy" or "Young Boo Radley"● "The Failed Lynching"● "Mrs. Dubose's flowers"● "The Return of One-shot Finch"● "What Happened that Day" or "Tom Robinson's Testimony"● "Jem Loses His Pants"● "Aunt Alexandra Comes to Stay" | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● "Miss Caroline's Bad Day"● "Visiting Calpurnia's Church"● "Dill Harris Runs Away"● "The Confessions of Dolphus Raymond" or "The Drunk Who Didn't Drink"● "Scout Tries to be Lady"● "Scout's Big Scene" or "On Being a Bad Ham"● "Uncle Jack Learns a Lesson"● "The Morphodite" or "Building a Snowman"● "Scout Learns about School" |
|---|---|

2) Create a large plot map for the selection.

3) List the connections (on the back) between this plot and the other plots.

4) Add to the display of all the plots (in chronological order) on the wall.

Note: A wide timeline numbered 1-31 to represent the chapters will help.

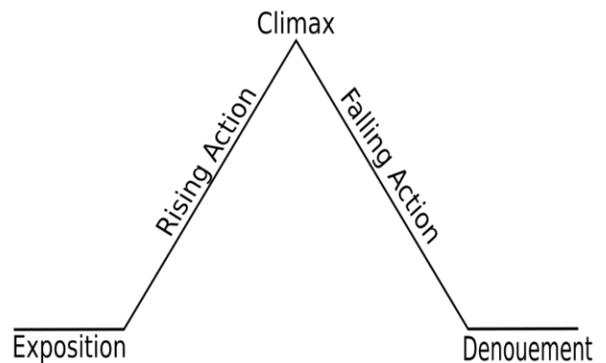
5) Show the plot duration and the plot connections using lines, string, arrows, post-its, check marks, or whatever works for you.

6) Reflect on the results:

What is the overall effect of Lee's complicated structure?

Why does she have all these plots weaving around and through one another?

Which plots connect to themes on growing up?



Hypocrisy in Maycomb: Point of View and Irony

Harper Lee uses Scout's point of view to show the ironies of Maycomb. Through her eyes we see how hypocritical people can be.



Photo by Tom Woodward, Creative Commons

Irony: When the reality is the opposite of what is expected or appropriate.

Hypocrisy: When the behavior of a person or group is contrary to their supposed or stated principles.

Use examples of irony in *To Kill a Mockingbird* to explain how Lee uses the different points of view to express a message (theme). (Whenever someone is hypocritical it is ironic.) Choose three or more examples to examine the irony, the points of view, and the message.

Example:

Hypocrisy	Miss Gates' POV	Scout's POV	Reader POV	Theme
Miss Gates opposes prejudice in Nazi Germany but supports it in Maycomb.	There is no connection between prejudice in Nazi Germany and how people are treated in Maycomb.	I cannot understand why prejudice in Maycomb is accepted.	There is a connection between the forms of prejudice. Miss Gates is being hypocritical.	People are blinded by the prejudices in their own lives.

Goals:

RL6: Analyze how the author uses point of view.

RL2: Analyze how the author develops a theme.

W2E: Write informative compositions with a formal style and objective tone.

Instructions:

1) Choose examples of irony that you might write about in your essay body:

- The celebration of Africa (Egypt) in a segregated, all-white school.
- The justice system (that does not care about justice)
- The teacher who disapproves of reading at home
- The Missionary Society (that supports oppression in their own community)
- White people feeling threatened after the trial
- Dill the clown (who laughs at the audience)
- Atticus' reelection (despite popular disapproval)

Writing Dialogue

Harper Lee is a master of writing dialogue. The way her characters express themselves makes their personalities and motivations come to life. The dialect they use creates a sense of time and place.

Write an original narrative that includes dialogue. Your story could be from your own life or pure imagination. Remember that dialogue is the focus. You also need to demonstrate the writing process.



Pixabay image by StockSnap

Goals:

W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences.

W3B: Use effective narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

W5: Revise compositions using the writing process.

Instructions:

Brainstorm ideas for a story.

(Tip: A story about a man who is mute and is trapped on a desert island is a poor choice.)

Plan your narrative.

Literary elements
Conflict:
Main character(s): (Think about their motivations.)
Plot: Inciting incident: Rising actions: Climax: Falling actions: Resolution:
Point of view: (Who is narrating the story?)
Theme: (What is the message about life?)

Primary Source Gallery

Harper Lee wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird* during the Civil Rights Movement, but her story takes place decades earlier.

To understand the historical context of *To Kill a Mockingbird* one must think about America in the 1930s and in the 1950s-1960s. Choose a topic related to the historical context of the novel and curate a gallery of primary sources.



Public Domain image from Wikimedia

SL2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats.

SL5: Make strategic use of media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding.

W7: Conduct a research project to synthesize multiple sources on the subject and demonstrate understanding of the subject under investigation.

1) Choose an historical context topic to explore.

<u>1930s</u>	<u>1950s-1960s</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jim Crow Laws (1870-1965) ● “Separate but Equal” (1896) ● The 19th Amendment ● Prohibition (1920-1933) ● The Great Depression (1929-1933) ● Women in Pop Culture (1930s) ● The rise of the Nazi Party ● The Scottsboro Affair (1931) ● Senator Hattie Wyatt Caraway (1932) ● Amelia Earhart (1897-1937) ● The New Deal (1933-1939) ● Eleanor Roosevelt ● The Ku Klux Klan (1865-present) ● Other: _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Executive Order 9981 (1948) ● Women in Pop Culture (1950s) ● Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955) ● The Vietnam War (1955-1975) ● The Southern Manifesto (1956) ● The Little Rock Nine (1957) ● Greensboro Sit-ins (1960) ● Freedom Rides (1961) ● Bloody Sunday (1965) ● Working mothers (a huge increase) ● Income Inequality ● The Cold War ● Voting Rights Bill (1965) ● Other: _____

2) Discover primary sources to share.

What is a primary source? A primary source is an artifact, document, recording, or any other source of information that was created at the time under study. Photographs, prints, video, and newspaper clips can all be primary sources if they originate at the time and place being studied.

3) Present a gallery of your primary sources to the class. For each primary source explain...

- What is shown / what can be learned
- The original purpose
- Connections to *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Free Robinson Campaign

Imagine that Tom Robinson is alive and in prison. Create a media campaign to fight for his freedom.

Use various persuasive methods and media to convince leaders and/or the public that justice must be served. You may use biased / unfair approaches also. Make your approach appropriate for the task and audience.

W10: Practice writing for a range of tasks.

SL6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks.

SL5: Make strategic use of media in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.



Promotional photo from Universal Pictures

Instructions:

1) Think about persuasive methods that you might use.

Persuasive appeals:

Logos: A logical appeal. Based on sound and reasonable thought.

Pathos: An appeal to emotions. Anger, sadness, affection, etc. can persuade.

Ethos: Moral expertise and knowledge. Determining right and wrong.

Unfair / biased reasoning:

<input type="checkbox"/> Bandwagon	<input type="checkbox"/> Fear	<input type="checkbox"/> The Slippery slope
<input type="checkbox"/> Testimonial	<input type="checkbox"/> Charged words	<input type="checkbox"/> Circular Reasoning
<input type="checkbox"/> Plain folks	<input type="checkbox"/> Ad hominem	<input type="checkbox"/> Red Herring
<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> The straw man	<input type="checkbox"/> Glittering generalities
<input type="checkbox"/> Name-calling	<input type="checkbox"/> False dichotomy	

2) Outline your campaign.

Purpose			
Audience(s)	(You might address different targets in your campaign.)		
Approach(es)			
Call to action	(What do you want the listener/viewer to do?)		
Media (at least 2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Speech <input type="checkbox"/> Radio spot <input type="checkbox"/> TV spot <input type="checkbox"/> Artwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Article <input type="checkbox"/> Flyer <input type="checkbox"/> Poster <input type="checkbox"/> Protest sign	<input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Social media post <input type="checkbox"/> T-shirt or button <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

3) Create the media for your campaign and be ready to present your proposal.

TKM Artwork (exhibition)

Create an original work of art (sketch, collage, graphic design, painting, sculpture, etc.) inspired by *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Choose one or more elements from the novel (a theme, image, symbol, allusion, character, mood, or event) to explore in art.

You will be graded on your ideas and explanations (not your artistic abilities). Make sure to compare your work to the original novel and use precise language and terminology.

Goals:

RL7: Compare works to analyze interpretation.

W2D: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary.

VA:Re8.1.Ia: Analyze art through specific details.

Instructions:

1) Brainstorm ideas for the subject.

Which elements of the novel will you explore artistically? For example, the artist behind the original movie poster focused on childhood, destruction of innocence, and the character Atticus. The composition appears to be a haphazard collection, much like the structure of the original novel.

2) Consider meaning and treatment.

What medium will you use?

What feelings or themes will you communicate?

How will your composition emphasize or modify the original element or meaning?

Art terms and considerations:

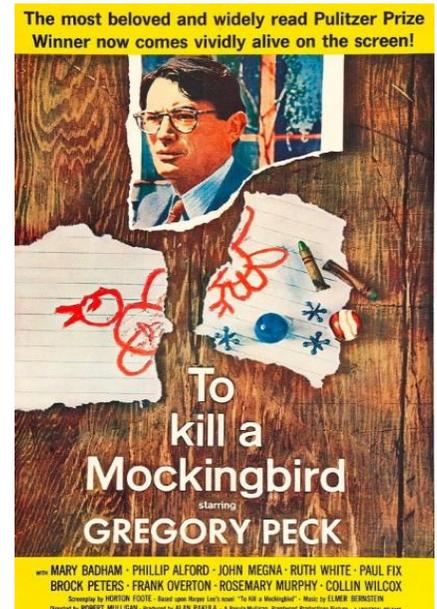
- Subject (what is being portrayed)
- Medium (materials and techniques)
- Emphasis (what aspects are the main foci and how a viewer knows)
- Tone (the artist's attitude toward the subject)
- Mood (the feeling created for the viewer)
- Feeling or theme (what the artist wants to communicate)
- Style (the techniques the artist uses to communicate)
- More art terms: line, shape, value, motion, texture, space, scale, balance, contrast, etc.

3) Create your art.

You might create a painting, sketch, digital graphic design, mixed media, or sculpture.

4) Write your analysis.

- What element(s) of *To Kill a Mockingbird* did you explore in your art?
- Why did this aspect interest you?
- How does your treatment compare to the original novel?
- Make sure to use language arts terms (theme, mood, symbol, etc.) and artistic terms (subject, medium, technique, etc.)



Movie poster from Universal Pictures

Is *To Kill a Mockingbird* Overrated? (class debate)

Many consider *To Kill a Mockingbird* a timeless classic with messages that resonate today. For others, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is overrated, outdated, or even wrong-headed.



Promotional image, Universal Pictures

- [“Let’s Stop Pretending *To Kill a Mockingbird* Is Progressive...”](#) by Millie Davis
- [“Why Are We Still Teaching ‘*To Kill a Mockingbird*’ in Schools?”](#) by Alice Randall
- [“Why *To Kill a Mockingbird* Keeps Getting Banned”](#) by Becky Little

Work with your debate team to argue whether the novel should be included in the curriculum. Think about student engagement, themes, point of view, controversy, and literary merit.

Resolved: *To Kill a Mockingbird* is overrated and/or problematic. It should not be required reading in schools.

Goals:

SL1A: (Comprehension and Collaboration) Prepare material for collaboration.

SL1D: (Comprehension and Collaboration) Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives.

W1L (Argument) Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics.

[DEBATE PLANNING PAGE](#)

Individual stage:

1. Brainstorm the novel’s strengths and weaknesses.
2. Choose one point to argue in a detailed paragraph. Include evidence from the novel.
3. Anticipate an objection that someone might make to your point.
4. How would you respond to this counterargument?
5. Join a side. (If the sides are very uneven, challenge yourself to argue against your first choice. Remember that skilled lawyers can argue both sides.)

Group stage:

6. Collaborate with your group to plan the argument. Decide which points are key to present in the debate. Refine and add to ideas from the individual stage.
 - Organize the argument: claim, reason 1 with evidence, reason 2 with evidence, reason 3 with evidence, address counterclaims, and conclusion.
7. Sides alternate in presenting the parts of their respective arguments.
8. Sides take turns to give rebuttals (responding to counterclaims).
9. Write a reflection and decide which side won the debate. If you feel that the other side argued more effectively, be gracious and recognize their success.

Presentation Plan

Introduction (Grab attention, state the main idea, and preview supporting ideas.)		
Presentation body	Sub-topic or supporting idea	Details and explanations
Body slide 1		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Body slide 2		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Body slide 3		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Body slide 4		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Body slide 5		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Body slide 6		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Note: Use additional paper if you plan for more than 6 body slides.		
Conclusion (Restate main idea, review supporting ideas, and make a connection.)		

Introduction

Topic introduction or interest grabber:
Thesis, claim, or topic statement:
Preview of essay body (supporting ideas and/or subtopics):

Body

Supporting idea / subtopic #1	Supporting idea / subtopic #2	Supporting idea / subtopic #3

Use the back of this page or additional pages if you will have additional sections/paragraphs.

Conclusion

Restate thesis:
Review essay body (supporting ideas and/or subtopics):
Closing thought: What did the reader learn and why does it matter? How does this information connect to the reader's world?