

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Grade 8 Module 3 Study Guide

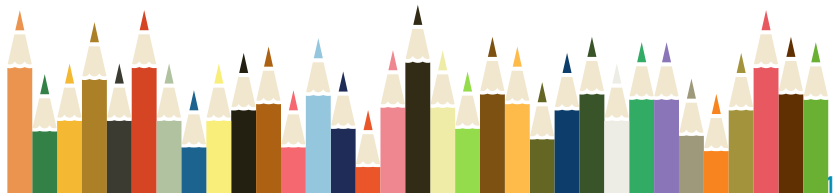
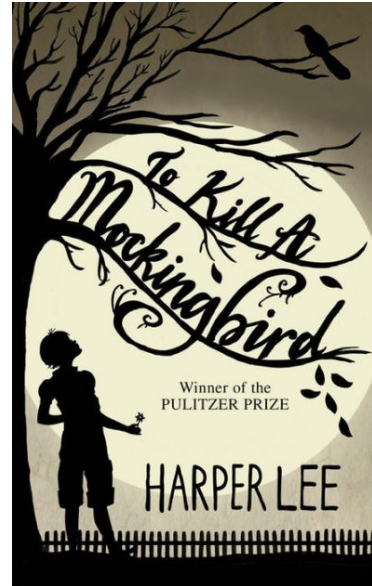
How can works of literature teach us about justice and courage?

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

This Pulitzer-prize winning novel is narrated by Scout, a young girl growing up in 1930s Alabama with her father, lawyer Atticus Finch. Atticus represents a black man, Tom Robinson, wrongly accused of raping a white woman, and the town erupts with fear, anger and prejudice. Tom Robinson is wrongfully convicted, and Atticus is publicly shunned. Scout transforms from an innocent and happy child to a conflicted adolescent with a jaded view of humanity. Readers closely identify with Scout as she reacts to the events of the novel and comes to terms with the injustice perpetuated by people she has felt to be friends. adolescent readers, this informational text relates the epidemic to late-18th century socio-political events and medical practices.

Students begin by reading informational texts about the Jim Crow South and the racial terrorism that existed as a fact of life. This provides a foundation for delving into the classic novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which provides the central focus of close reading. Students also have the opportunity to compare sections of the famous film version of the novel and its screenplay to the written text. Students pause at various points in their reading of *To Kill a*

Mockingbird to read amendments to the U.S. Constitution, a poem by Langston Hughes about the Scottsboro trial that perhaps inspired *To Kill a Mockingbird*, as well as contemporary studies about of inequity in 21st century U.S. courts. These informational texts connect the questions the novel raises about racism, equality, and fairness to both historical and contemporary events. The module ends with texts and debate about the literary and educational value of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a topic that inspires a broad range of opinions. Throughout the module, students read and respond to short quotes from contemporary articles written about various aspects of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, helping them to generate context in which to form their own opinions about the novel.



Skills students learn during this module

- Analyze the impact of dialogue on a narrative
- Analyze the impact of incidents on a Narrative
- Compare and Contrast How Text Structures contribute to meaning and style
- Analyze and Evaluate the Performed production of a written text
- Analyze the use of traditional literary material in modern fiction
- Define words and phrases as used in a text
- Analyze the impact of word choices on meaning and tone
- Write informative texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.



How to Help at Home

Beyond ensuring your student completes any assigned ELA homework, the best way to support your student in ELA is to **discuss the books they are reading in school and at home!**

Your student will be asked to read 2-3 times a week at home. As they read, they should practice naming **who** the text is about, **what happened**, and **why** it happened.

Reading with your student and helping them generate their who, what, and why responses is a great way to support them in class.

Beyond that, you could also:

- Review important vocabulary from the texts (attached)
- Review Comprehension questions with your students (attached)
- Have students practice writing essays at home!

Sample Writing Task

Over the course of this module, students will be practicing writing **narratives**. Below, find a sample task. While students benefit from more opportunities to write, they also learn a great deal from **reflecting** on what they wrote and **reviewing and revising** what they wrote with others.

If you want to support your student's writing, you could have them try this practice task and review their writing together.

Write an essay to explain how police departments have changed in recent years and why. Use details from ["Nashville using city's history to teach police recruits about civil rights,"](#) ["Cleveland will overhaul its police under watchful eye of U.S. officials,"](#) and ["Body cameras ordered for South Carolina town's police after shooting."](#)

New Vocabulary from the texts

As students read the texts, they will encounter many new words. The more opportunities they get to hear, discuss, and think about these terms, the more likely they are to remember and use them in their own speaking and writing. **You can help your student by reviewing vocabulary**

from class!

Term	Definition
<i>subjugate</i>	(p. 6, para. 3): to force into submission or subservience; enslave
<i>solace</i>	(p. 6, para. 6): comfort or consolation in times of sorrow or suffering
<i>offensive</i>	("Jim Crow Laws Debated in Congress," para. 6): causing resentment or anger; insulting; hostile
<i>legacy</i>	("New Report Examines Lynchings and Their Legacy in the United States," para. 2): an enduring result of a past event
<i>assuaged</i>	(p. 3): to make less severe or more bearable; alleviate
<i>morbid</i>	(p. 9): gruesome
<i>sojourn</i>	(p. 24): a brief, temporary stay
<i>inquisitive</i>	(p. 54) given to questioning and inquiring; desirous of learning
<i>invective</i>	(p. 99): strongly abusive or denunciatory speech or language
<i>mortify</i>	(p. 94): to subject (someone) to extreme embarrassment, shame, or humiliation
<i>antagonized</i>	(p. 125): caused someone to feel angry, annoyed, or upset
<i>innate</i>	(p. 137): part of a person's essential nature
<i>ominous</i>	(p. 166): something that indicates an unfortunate or evil future event
<i>futility</i>	(p. 174): a feeling of uselessness
<i>corroborating</i>	(p. 193): supporting, confirming
<i>persecuting</i>	(p. 280): to treat someone in a cruel way because of race, religion, political ideas, or some other difference.
<i>instinctive</i>	(p. 306): having to do with instinct, natural
<i>reprimand</i>	(p. 310): a strong, usually formal statement of disapproval
<i>recluse</i>	(p. 277): a person who lives in voluntary isolation from others
<i>inevitable</i>	("Is <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> a Racist Book?") certain to happen; not able to be avoided
<i>plausible</i>	("Is <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> a Racist Book?") seeming to be true or reasonable; credible
<i>apprehensive</i>	(p. 321): feeling fearful about future events

Questions about the texts

Question

Answer

(be sure to ask students to cite evidence to support their answers :)

Answer this question: How did Jim Crow impact violence against African Americans? Cite several pieces of textual evidence for support.

Jim Crow increased institutionalized and individual violence against African Americans. There were six million members of the Ku Klux Klan and “mob violence was encouraged” (p. 5). Lynchings were a public spectacle and “over 3,700 men and women were reported lynched” between 1889 and 1930

Write a paragraph to answer the questions: What is the difference between Scout’s and Miss Caroline’s points of view about Walter? How does this contrast advance the story? How does it create the mood of Scout’s first day at school? Cite evidence to support your analysis.

Scout knows that Walter is a Cunningham and won’t accept money, but Miss Caroline thinks that Walter is disobeying her. After “impatience crept into Miss Caroline’s voice” because Walter wouldn’t take the money, Scout explains “The Cunninghams never took anything they can’t pay back...They don’t have much, but they get along on it” (p. 22). These contrasting points of view advance the story by helping us better understand the characters. Scout knows a lot about the people in Maycomb while Miss Caroline does not, and the Cunninghams are poor, but proud. They also create a mood of frustration for Scout, whose day at school goes from exciting to annoying because of misunderstandings with Miss Caroline.

In the novel, reread from “There are no clearly defined...” on p. 67 until the end of the page. In the screenplay, reread paragraph 135 on p. 66. How is this scene structured differently in the two texts? How do the structural elements contribute to the meaning and style in similar and different ways? Cite evidence from both texts for support.

In the screenplay, the scene is mostly dialogue, while the novel contains Scout’s narration. In terms of meaning, with Scout’s narration in the novel, we hear her tone of voice and her child’s language. For example, we learn that she is afraid about the tiny figures because she “shrieked and threw them down.” In the screenplay, she just asks if the figures are poison, so it doesn’t show her fear as much. Her language is more ordinary so it doesn’t capture her voice as much. In the novel, we get to see the kids realizing the figures are them through the description of their actions, while in the play, we find out much more quickly through Scout and Jem’s dialogue. This is a style difference.

<p>Question</p>	<p>Answer (be sure to ask students to cite evidence to support their answers :)</p>
<p>On p. 256, Aunt Alexandra says, “Because—he—is —trash, that’s why you can’t play with him.” Write a paragraph analyzing what this line of dialogue reveals about Aunt Alexandra and some of the people in Maycomb. Cite evidence for support and be sure to explain your answer.</p>	<p>Aunt Alexandra’s comment reveals that white people in Maycomb are sometimes prejudiced against other whites. By calling Walter Cunningham “trash” and forbidding Scout from playing with him, Aunt Alexandra shows she believes that the Finches are in a higher class than the Cunninghams and that Scout should not associate with someone from a lower class. Her comment reveals that there is a hierarchy of people in Maycomb, with those like the Aunt Alexandra seeing themselves as better than the working white poor like the Cunninghams, who in turn see themselves as better than the non-working white poor like the Exells.</p>
<p>Write a paragraph to answer this question: Are defendants innocent until proven guilty? Cite the strongest evidence from today’s texts for support.</p>	<p>Officially and according to the law in America, defendants are innocent until proven guilty, but based on how juries rule, defendants of color may sometimes be seen as guilty simply because of their race. In the graphic from “Study: All-White Jury Pools Convict Black Defendants 16 Percent More Often Than Whites,” the data show that all-white juries convict black defendants more often than white defendants, suggesting that race does play a role. As the senior author of the study says, “Simply put, the luck of the draw on the racial composition of the jury pool has a lot to do with whether someone is convicted.” As long as defendants are more likely to be convicted when their race differs from jury members’ races, defendants are not innocent until proven guilty.</p>
<p>Write a brief paragraph to answer these questions: What does Hughes convey through his use of the word mighty in his poem “Scottsboro”? What tone does this word help develop? Cite evidence for support.</p>	<p>Hughes uses mighty to describe the sound of the drums playing as the immortal people march down the street (lines 7–8). Mighty conveys that these people are strong and courageous, which helps create a tone of respect for them.</p>