To Kill a Mockingbird

Tuesday, April 28, 2015
9:45 AM
Dear Educator,

Welcome to Class Acts at Sangamon Auditorium, UIS! We hope this guide will help you expand on concepts from this particular performance and incorporate them into your classroom teaching, both before and after the performance. We want students to think of the arts as an integral part of their lives, not just a one-time isolated event.

Before arriving at the Auditorium, you can prepare your students by helping them understand the story or by sharing basic information about the performing art form they are going to see. We also ask you to review the theater etiquette information with your students (found on pages 2-3 of this guide) to help prepare them for attending a live performance.

After the performance you can talk to your students about their experience. Did they like the performance? What did they learn? How was the performance different than what they expected? We hope the information and activity ideas included in this guide will help your students gain a deeper understanding of the performance they see.

We look forward to seeing you! If you have any questions about these materials, please feel free to contact me at 217.206.6150 or azepp2@uis.edu.

Amy Zepp
Audience Development Coordinator

Youth programming in the Class Acts series and in conjunction with other Sangamon Auditorium events is supported in part by the Helen Hamilton Performing Arts Endowment for Youth Fund, gifts from Elizabeth and Robert Staley, and a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.
Going to a live theatrical performance is different than watching a movie or TV show – the members of the audience are very important, and the way they behave will affect the performance. Therefore, theaters have their own special rules about behavior.

- **Ask the ushers if you need help with anything** – The people who wear red coats are volunteer ushers, and they want to make sure everyone is able to enjoy the performance. They will guide you to your seat, and they can help you find a restroom. In any emergency situation, the ushers will help guide your class to safety. There may be as many as 1700 people coming to see the performance. Please follow the instructions of the ushers at all times.

- **Turn off and put away cell phones, iPods, electronic games, beeping watches, or anything else that can light up or make noise** – These can be very distracting to the performers and your fellow audience members.

- **Do not eat, drink, or chew gum in the auditorium** – Even the quietest chewers and slurpers make a great deal of noise in the auditorium! The noise is very distracting to the performers and to the other people around you. Also, even if you are very careful, food and drinks can sometimes make a mess in the auditorium. We try to keep the auditorium as clean as possible so that it will be just as nice for the next audience.

- **Never throw anything in the auditorium** – This is distracting and dangerous for the performers and people in the audience.

- **Do not put your feet on the back of the seat in front of you**

- **Please do not wear a hat inside the auditorium** – It is difficult for the people behind you to see the stage if you’re wearing a hat.

- **Use the restroom before the performance begins** – As soon as your class arrives and is seated in the auditorium, your teacher can arrange visits to the restroom before the performance begins. The ushers will help you find the closest restroom. Of course, if you must use the restroom during the performance, please be as quiet as possible about leaving your seat. Once you get to the aisle, an usher will help you find the way.

- **When the lights begin to dim, the performance is beginning** – This tells the audience to stop conversations, get settled in their seats, and focus their attention on the stage. A person will come out and make an announcement before the performance begins. Pay close attention to the announcement because it might include special instructions that you will need to remember.
• **Remember that the overture is part of the performance** – If the performance has music in it, there might be an opening piece of music called an overture before any actors appear on stage. Give this piece of music the same respect you give the performers by being silent and attentive while the overture is played.

• **Do not take pictures or recordings during the performance** – The flashes can be distracting to performers, and it is against the law to take pictures or recordings of many performances.

• **Refrain from talking, whispering, singing along, or tapping in time to the music during the performance** – Remember that live performers can see and hear you from the stage. It is very distracting to the performers and the other audience members if you talk during the performance. After all, the audience came to hear the professionals perform, not you! Save your singing for the ride home.

• **It’s ok to react to the performance** – Spontaneous laughter, applause, and gasps of surprise are welcome as part of the special connection between the performers and the audience during a live show. However, shouts, loud comments, and other inappropriate noises are rude and distracting to the actors and your fellow audience members.

• **Clap at the appropriate times** – If you are enjoying the performance, you can let the performers know by clapping for them. During a play or musical, you can clap between scenes (during a blackout) or after songs. During a music concert or dance performance you can clap after each piece is performed. In a jazz music concert it is ok to clap in the middle of a song when a musician has finished a solo. If a music ensemble plays a piece with several sections, called movements, the audience will usually only clap at the very end of all the movements.

• **The performers will bow when the performance ends** – This is called a curtain call. You should applaud to thank the performers for their hard work, but you should not move around or begin to leave the auditorium until the curtain call is over and the lights become brighter. If you really enjoyed the performance, you are welcome to give a standing ovation while you applaud. This is reserved for performances you feel are **truly outstanding**!

• **Respect the hard work of the performers** – You may not enjoy every performance you see, but I hope you will recognize that each performance requires a tremendous amount of dedication on the part of the performers and those who work backstage. It is polite to keep any negative comments to yourself until you have left the building.
Class Acts and Common Core

Attendance at any Class Acts event can help teachers meet Common Core Standards. The clearest example can be found in the Standard for Speaking and Listening, #2:

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

The experience of attending a live performance is a unique format that can greatly enhance a student’s understanding of an important topic or theme.

Additionally, in the Common Core Standards for Reading, the definition of the word “text” can be expanded to include non-printed works such as dance, music, theater, and visual arts. This makes the arts an important part of all standards in the Reading category, at every grade level.

Write to Us!

We would love to hear from you and your students! If your students write about the performance they saw or create artwork related to it, you are welcome to send it to us via email to azepp2@uis.edu or through the mail to

Class Acts
Sangamon Auditorium, UIS
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Springfield, IL 62703-5407

We love sharing student work with our Class Acts sponsors, so they can see the impact of their donations.
to kill a mockingbird

TEACHER TOOL KIT
Tour 66, 2014–15
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HOW to use this guide

SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Our materials have been written and designed with the new Common Core Standards for English Language Arts in mind. Built to accommodate a variety of classroom goals and subjects, our Tool Kit includes text excerpts for close reading and thematic analysis, companion texts to compare and contrast with the play, and activities geared toward the speaking and listening skills inherent in theatrical work. We believe that studying the arts, performance in particular, is a necessary part of a balanced education; we also understand, however, that curriculum requirements and time limitations make arts integration a challenge for many classrooms. To that end, many of our materials are presented through a historical and/or ELA-based lens in an effort to make this Tool Kit as flexible and connective as possible.

This Tool Kit includes:

- **Essential background information on Harper Lee’s novel**, including a biography of the author and insight into the book’s resounding cultural impact.

- **Historical context**, with insight into the political, social, and cultural atmosphere of the world of the play. This section prepares students to thematically engage with the play and make connections between the play’s world and their own.

- **Primary resources and critical readings** that provide thematic, historical, literary, and social lenses through which the students can engage with the play.

- **Selected excerpts from the play** that relate to primary sources and historical context and guide students through the theatrical process.

- **Interviews with theater artists** to provide insight into how this National Players production was developed.

- **Post-show questions and activities, or “Theater in Action” sections**, that can be used in conjunction with or separate from National Player workshops. Artistic responses to the Civil Rights Movement are included as examples of how writing, theater, and visual art might be used to make social and political commentaries; students are encouraged to respond to the Players’ performance as well.

- **Additional resources**, many of which were referenced in the creation of this guide and production of the show.

- **Photos, illustrations, and other images** that provide nuanced, visual insight into different interpretations of the play. High-resolution versions of these images are also available on the National Players website.

ENGAGE WITH THE PLAYERS

National Players has a 66-year legacy of making classic works relevant and exciting for young audiences. In an effort to foster this educational mission, we are always looking for the latest ways to engage with students and audiences with whom we come in contact. We aim to make our educational and artistic work as accessible and relevant as possible, from the thematic underpinnings of the texts we present to the process of creating and maintaining a national theatrical tour. With this mission as our starting point, we invite you to engage with us in any way you feel best serves your students.

You are welcome to interact with National Players using the forums listed above. Your students are welcome to contact the Players before or after their visits; they can track the Players’ travels, share relevant classroom materials, or post questions and comments. We also offer the opportunity to chat with the Players about their performances and life on the road. If you are interested in setting up a time to engage with the Players either before or after their visit via Facebook, Twitter, video or some other method, please contact our Education Coordinator Adam Turck at Adam.T@NationalPlayers.org, and he will be happy to discuss some options with you. Please send any general education or workshop questions to NationalPlayers@OlneyTheatre.org.
WHO are National Players?

HISTORY

Now celebrating its 66th season, National Players is America’s longest-running touring company and has earned a distinct place in American theater by bringing innovative and accessible productions to audiences across the country.

Founded in 1949 by Father Gilbert Hartke, a prominent arts educator and Catholic priest, National Players has performed in theaters, gymnasiums, opera houses, and outdoor playing spaces all around the country. Hartke’s mission—to stimulate young people’s higher thinking skills and imaginations by presenting classic plays in engaging and accessible ways—is as urgent and vital today as it was more than 60 years ago.

Since 1952, Olney Theatre Center has been the artistic home of National Players and has broadened its outreach to engage all learners, regardless of age, background, or location. Through the years, Players has been privileged to perform on 10 USO tours, at five White House visits, in the Arctic Circle, and throughout 42 states and territories.

Having performed for over 2.8 million audience members, National Players is proud to continue collaborating with audiences around the world today. Committed to excellence on and off the stage, more than 700 artists have been proud Players, and continue to promote good work in New York, Hollywood, and other communities across the country.

TOUR 66

National Players offers an exemplary lesson in collaboration and teamwork-in-action: the actors not only play multiple roles onstage, but they also serve as stage managers, teaching artists, and technicians. This year, the Players consist of 10 actors, traveling across the country and visiting schools and art centers. A self-contained company, National Players carries its own sets, lights, costumes, and sound, meaning that the actors rebuild the set and hang lights for more than 90 performances a year. They also memorize lines for three different plays—this year, The Tempest, As You Like It, and To Kill a Mockingbird—often performing more than one each day. It is a lot of work, but the Players are dedicated to celebrating and teaching literature and performance to as many audiences as possible.

“`The supreme reward is in the powerful storytelling. Attention to clarity of word and action, as well as passionate characterizations, reaps the benefit of capturing the audience’s imagination and uniting them in story.'
—Carole Lehan, Glenelg Country School, Ellicott City, MD

Image 1: National Players usually performs two Shakespeare plays and one classic play per year. Classics have included Animal Farm, Of Mice and Men, 1984, and The Odyssey (pictured here).
A year on the ROAD

Jacob Mundell and Adam Turck are returning to National Players for Tour 66 after completing a year on the road with Tour 65. In this interview, they reflect on the entire experience of life as a Player—from rehearsals and meeting their fellow company members to taking each show on the road. Along with a general timeline of the production process, this section includes jobs descriptions of each offstage role that the Players fill while on the road.

STAGE MANAGER
Runs read-throughs and rehearsals, maintains the script and blocking notes, and calls many of the lighting and sound cues during performance.

Tour 66 for Mockingbird:
M.K. Smith

COMPANY MANAGER
Communicates with the company’s General Manager, schedules regular company meetings, handles any emergencies on the road, and serves as the point of contact for venues.

Tour 66: Jacob Mundell

PROPERTIES COORDINATOR
Sets up properties tables at each venue, oversees handling and storage for properties, reports damages to the stage manager.

Tour 66: Ian Geers

TREASURER
Distributes housing stipends, maintains possession of Players bank card, logs incidental costs, submits weekly petty cash reports.

Tour 66: Dallas Millholand

AUDITIONS
Auditions for National Players were held January through March. More than 1,000 young actors vyed for a place in the company, auditioning in Maryland, Washington DC, Tennessee, Boston, Georgia, Alabama, and New York City.

“Working as an actor for a year and the travel opportunities are great, but what really sold me on National Players was the feel of the audition room. Auditions can be really scary, they can be this terrifying thing where everybody has to prove something to everybody else—but the General Manager and Artistic Director were so friendly, so inviting, so playful and so positive, that all the anxiety just went away the minute they opened their mouths.” — Adam

MEETING THE GROUP
All ten players live in residency at the Olney Theater Center in Maryland for the first part of their contract, where they rehearse, get to know each other, and prepare for life on the road.

“It’s really strange, because on day one when you meet everybody, you look at these people and you think, “We are going to spend the next year of our lives together.” And there’s a great weight in that, and there’s a great expectation of having to get along, so everyone is typically very friendly.” — Adam

“Olney is preparation for the road, because you’re living more intimately on the road than families do in their houses. So the residency is somewhere in between working to live and living to work.” — Jacob

REHEARSALS
The Players spend approximately three to four weeks with each director, analyzing the text, staging, and incorporating design elements on the Olney stage.

“I like to have a working, functional knowledge of all three plays before we start. I walk in with just a functional artistic knowledge of the world of the play, and I read everything I can about it—I read essays, I read different versions of it, I watch adaptations, I just kind of fill my head with this play—and then just kind of see what happens.” — Adam
OFFSTAGE ROLES
Along with their acting roles, each Player takes on at least one offstage job in support of the company, based on his or her skill sets and areas of interest.

“Work hard. And if you think you’re working hard enough, you’re not; there’s always more work to do.” —Jacob

TRAVELING
The Players take turns driving the company’s three vehicles: a truck for their stage equipment, a van, and a car. Last year, they visited 19 states and 44 cities. In one case, they performed five shows in four days in three different states.

“I do audiobooks while driving, specifically radio plays.” —Adam

“Sometimes the only thing you can do to pass time is make yourself unconscious for as long as possible.” —Jacob

LIVING ON THE ROAD
Each Player is allowed to bring one large bag and one small bag for their personal belongings. Without regular access to a refrigerator or gym, taking care of themselves on the road is especially challenging.

“I love practicing frugality because A) it helps you save money when you’re not buying stuff everywhere, B) it makes you a more efficient Player when can pack up out of the hotel and get into the van with all your stuff in like 10 minutes, compared to someone who needs a half hour to get their life together.” —Jacob

“Working out isn’t always easy, but if you have 20 minutes you can spend them doing calisthenics or jumping rope or doing push-ups. It’s the diet, not being able to cook for yourself, that’s really hard. The only way to really be healthy is to buy pretty expensive stuff, so you can’t always be both frugal and healthy.” —Adam
1. Introduction

BEING A TEAM

Working together for an entire year means that, despite long hours and challenging load-ins, all ten Players need to work as a cohesive team.

“A Player from Tour 65 once said that “Expectations are a really bad thing to have with this job because everything is a curve ball, we’re thrown them every day, so you have to approach everything with a spirit of adventure at all times.””—Adam

WORKSHOPS

Along with performing, the Players host educational workshops for many of their audiences. Workshops include improvisation, text analysis, stage combat, and more.

“Sometimes, if we taught a workshop before a performance, it served as a great warm up, because every workshop had some kind of an exercise to help the students get out of their minds and into their bodies, that would shake us up too.”—Jacob

KEEPING IT “FRESH”

After presenting three plays dozens of times for dozens of audiences, the Players work hard to keep their performances exciting and authentic.

“I find it hard not to keep each show fresh, because every space is different and every audience is different. As a company, we have rehearsals on the road, and sometimes when we do read-throughs of the script we’ll put a little bit of a spin on it.”—Adam

“I struggle with keeping my performances fresh because after I figure out how I want to tell the story, my choices get old. It’s a mind game of awareness. Breathing is a big part of that. When I breathe, I am able to react honestly, even in a way that I didn’t plan for.”—Jacob

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Supervises load-in of scenery at each venue and performs upkeep on the road.
Tour 66: James Hesse

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

Maintains the Players’ public presence, through online outlets (Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr) as well as promotional materials.
Tour 66: MK Smith, Ian Geers & Jacob Mundell

MASTER ELECTRICIAN

Installs and maintains all lighting equipment, determines position for lighting equipment and cables, executes focusing.
Tour 66: Hannah McKechnie

ACCOMMODATIONS MANAGER

Books hotel rooms for the company based on preferred accommodations, optimal pricing, and check-in dates.
Tour 66: James Hesse

SOUND ENGINEER

Ensures proper placement, upkeep, and maintenance of sound equipment, sets and checks sound levels and microphone cues.
Tour 66: Anthony Golden Jr.
Born and raised in the small town of Monroeville, Alabama, Nelle Harper Lee (1926—) spent her childhood soaking in the sights, sounds, and experiences of the Deep South during the Great Depression—memories that later inspired one of the seminal American books of the 20th century.

Lee’s father, Amassa Coleman (A.C.) Lee, was the son of a Civil War veteran and the product of a disciplined Methodist upbringing, which instilled in him an altruistic, generous attitude and lifelong devotion to helping the less fortunate. He circled through various careers, including country school teacher, bookkeeper, newspaper editor, and, most notably, lawyer. Lauded by his peers as a man of character and good judgment, he once defended two black men accused of murdering a white storekeeper. Both clients, a father and son, were hanged.

Nelle’s mother, Frances Cunningham Finch, was born into a prosperous family. She was intellectually brilliant, a gifted pianist, and attended one of the finest private schools for girls in the South. At 19, Frances married A.C. Lee, 30, and together they had four children: Alice, Frances Louise, Edwin, and finally, Nelle. Frances suffered from a “nervous disorder,” most likely undiagnosed manic depression. By the time Nelle was born, Frances’ mental illness rendered her emotionally inaccessible to Nelle. A.C. was the most present parent in Nelle’s life and she adored him, later recalling that he spoke to children as adults and listened to them with respect and attention.

An unashamed tomboy, Nelle hardly fit the description of a proper Southern lady. At the age of five, she met Truman Parsons, a small, spoiled, tantrum-prone neighbor boy, and the two became inseparable, lifelong friends. The two shared a love for reading, and a keen intellect and imagination which made them somewhat different from other children their age. They also shared a childhood hurt of parental abandonment, with Truman’s parents leaving him in the care of his relations, and Nelle’s mother constantly fighting her battle with mental illness. In the mid ‘30s, Truman’s mother sent for him to join her and her new husband in New York City, but the friendship continued through the years. When he began his writing career, he changed his name to Truman Capote. Nelle was the person he invited to be his research assistant for his landmark book of nonfiction, *In Cold Blood.*

After deciding against a law career, Nelle transferred from Huntington Women’s College to the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, where she became the editor for the *Rammer Jammer,* a college publication with a satirical slant that encouraged creative expression. Nelle, who was unconcerned with fashion, never wore make-up, smoked a pipe, and frequently cursed, was considered by some to be an eccentric and reclusive.

After eight years working odd jobs in New York City and three years of rewrites, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960. Within a few weeks it hit the bestseller lists of the *The New York Times* and *The Chicago Tribune* and sold more than 500,000 copies, and the next year, it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize.

A 1962 film adaptation of the book starring Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch also garnered critical and popular acclaim; it won three Oscars—Best Actor for Gregory Peck, Best Art Direction, and Best Screenplay (adaptation)—and was nominated for five more, including Best Actress in a Supporting Role for Mary Badham as Scout. Lee was delighted with the film, calling it “a work of art.”
2. About the Book

AN AMERICAN LEGACY CON’T

Although it is frequently described as one of, if not the, seminal books of the 20th century, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has not been without its share of criticism. Now one of the most frequently banned books in the country, its history of censorship began in 1966, when libraries in Hanover, Virginia objected to its portrayal of rape, calling it “improper for our children to read.” Today, most proponents of censorship object to the book’s use of racial slurs.

Some readers also disapprove of Lee’s portrayal of African-American characters, touting them as stereotyped and one-dimensional. One critic described Tom Robinson as “a satisfied, subservient Black...abused by congenitally and incorrigibly evil white trash, only to be rescued by a rusticating, classics-reading, glasses-wearing but (literally) straight-shooting father-knows-best.” Although many credit Atticus as one of American literature’s most memorable heroes—one author writes that he has “become something of a folk hero in legal circles and is treated almost as if he were an actual person”—he has received a certain degree of backlash as well. Monroe Freedman, for example, argued in 1992 that Atticus is less than admirable; as a legislator, he makes no direct move to change the system of racial injustice, and even seems to condone the actions of his bigoted fellow Southerners, Freedman insisted.

The book remains, however, an overwhelming American favorite. As of 2013, it has sold more than 750,000 copies a year, and approximately four-fifths of American students read the novel in school.

LEE’S ALABAMA

Lee’s childhood provided a rich backdrop off which to base her groundbreaking novel. Maycomb County mirrors Lee’s hometown of Monroeville, Alabama in many respects, and some of the landmarks from the book—the famous courthouse and Boo Radley’s dilapidated home—are now popular tourist attractions. Below is a brief profile of Lee’s Monroeville in 1930.

TOTAL POPULATION: 2,382

POPULATION BY RACE: (the 1930 Alabama census used three categories: Native White, Foreign-born White and Negro.)

- **White:** 47.8%
- **Foreign-born White:** 0.1%
- **Negro:** 52.5%

EDUCATION (those attending any form of schooling)

- **Ages 7–13:** 88.9%
- **Ages 14–15:** 85.1%
- **Ages 16–17:** 59.5%
- **Ages 18–20:** 21.4%

ILLITERACY (percent over the age of ten who could not read or write)

- **Total population:** 14.8%
- **White population:** 8%
- **Negro population:** 25.8%

“She sang the great song. She did the great work. If she never writes another word she’s done enough. She’s bared her soul for all of us. And so there’s nothing else to say.”

—Author James McBride on the 50th anniversary of *To Kill a Mockingbird*
When did you first become interested in writing?

That would be hard to say. I can’t remember, because I think I’ve been writing as long as I’ve been able to form words. I never wrote with an idea of publishing anything, of course, until I began working on Mockingbird. I think that what went before may have been a rather subconscious form of learning how to write, of training myself. You see, more than a simple matter of putting down words, writing is a process of self-discipline you must learn before you can call yourself a writer. There are people who write, but I think they’re quite different from people who must write.

I know this is almost an impossible thing to do, but could you bare any of the roots of the novel? Of where it began in your own mind, and how it grew?

You’re right, this is very hard to do. In one sense, I think that Mockingbird was a natural for me, at any rate, for my first effort. In its inception it was sort of like Topsy—it just grew, but the actual mechanics of the work itself were quite different.

Naturally, you don’t sit down in “white hot inspiration” and write with a burning flame in front of you. But since I knew I could never be happy being anything but a writer, and Mockingbird put itself together for me so accommodatingly, I kept at it because I knew it had to be my first novel, for better or for worse.

What was your reaction to the novel’s enormous success?

Well, I can’t say that it was one of surprise. It was one of sheer numbness. It was like being hit over the head and knocked cold. You see, I never expected any sort of success with Mockingbird. I didn’t expect the book to sell in the first place. I was hoping for a quick and merciful death at the time I saw him in Hollywood when they were doing wardrobe tests for the film. They put the actors in their costumes and slam them in front of the camera to see if they photograph correctly.

They did Mr. Peck’s test on the lot on the little street where the big set had been erected, and the first glimpse I had of him was when he came out of his dressing room in his Atticus suit. It was the most amazing transformation I had ever seen. A middle-aged man came out. He looked bigger, he looked thicker through the middle. He didn’t have an ounce of makeup, just a 1933-type suit with a collar and a vest and a watch and chain. The minute I saw him I knew everything was going to be all right because he was Atticus.

A quick transition from Hollywood to your home country—why is it that such a disproportionate share of our sensitive and enduring fiction springs from writers born and reared in the South?

Well, first of all you have to consider who Southerners are. We run high to Celtic blood and influence. We are mostly Irish, Scottish, English, Welsh. We grew up in a society that was primarily agricultural. It was not industrial, though it is becoming so, for better or worse. I think we are a region of natural storytellers, just from tribal instinct. We did not have the pleasure of the theater, the dance, of motion pictures when they came along. We simply entertained each other by talking. It’s quite a thing, if you’ve never been in or known a small southern town. The people are not particularly sophisticated, naturally. They’re not worldly wise in any way. But they tell you a story whenever they see you. We’re oral types—we talk.

To Kill a Mockingbird was turned into a film with what I felt to be an unusual degree of integrity. How did you feel about it?

I felt the very same way. As a matter of fact, I have nothing but gratitude for the people who made the film. It was a most unusual experience. I’m no judge, and the only film I’ve ever seen made was Mockingbird, but there seemed to be an aura of good feeling on the set. I went out and looked at them filming a little of it, and there seemed to be such a general kindness, perhaps even respect, for the material they were working with. I was delighted, touched, happy, and exceedingly grateful. I think this kindness and respect permeated everyone who had anything to do with the film, from the producer and the director down to the man who designed the sets, from Greg Peck to the peripheral charac-

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rather than do. We work hard, of course, but we do it in a different way. We work in order not to work. Any time spent on business is time more or less wasted, but you have to do it in order to be able to hunt and fish and gossip.

This was my childhood: If I went to a film once a month it was pretty good for me, and for all children like me. We had to use our own devices in our play, for our entertainment. We didn’t have much money. Nobody had any money. We didn’t have toys, nothing was done for us, so the result was that we lived in our imagination most of the time. We devised things; we were readers, and we would transfer everything we had seen on the printed page to the backyard in the form of high drama. Did you never play Tarzan when you were a child? Did you never tramp through the jungle or refight the battle of Gettysburg in some form or fashion? We did. Did you never live in a tree house and find the whole world in the branches of a chinaberry tree? We did.

I think that kind of life naturally produces more writers than, say, an environment like 82nd Street in New York. In small town life and in rural life you know your neighbors. Not only do you know everything about your neighbors, but you know everything about them from the time they came to the country.

Here’s another large order. When you look at American writing today, perhaps American theater too, what do you find that you most admire? And, conversely, what do you most deplore?

Let me see if I can take that backward and work into it. I think the thing that I most deplore about American writing, and especially in the American theater, is a lack of craftsmanship. It comes right down to this—the lack of absolute love for language, the lack of sitting down and working a good idea into a gem of an idea. It takes time and patience and effort to turn out a work of art, and few people seem willing to go all the way. I see a great deal of sloppiness and I deplore it. I suppose the reason I’m so down on it is because I see tendencies in myself to be sloppy, to be satisfied with something that’s not quite good enough. I think writers today are too easily pleased with their work. This is sad. I think the sloppiness and haste carry over into painting. The search, such as it is, is on canvas, not in the mind.

But back to writing. There’s no substitute for the love of language, for the beauty of an English sentence. There’s no substitute for struggling, if a struggle is needed, to make an English sentence as beautiful as it should be.

Now, as to what I think is good about writing. I think that right now, especially in the United States, we’re having a renaissance of the novel. I think that the novel has come into its own, that it has been pushed into its own American writers. They have widened the scope of the art form. They have more or less opened it up.

Now, if you were to give advice to the talented youngster who wants to carve a career as a creative writer, what would that advice be?

Well, the first advice I would give is this: hope for the best and expect nothing. Then you won’t be disappointed. You must come to terms with yourself about your writing. You must not write “for” something; you must not write with definite hopes of reward.

Young people today, especially the college kids, scare me to death. They say they are going to be writers. Their attitude is, “I’m going to write it, and because I write it, it’s going to be great, it’s going to be published and make me great.”

Well, I’ve got news for them. (You must think I regard writing as something like the medieval priesthood—and sometimes I wish our government could see its way clear to support our writers on bread and water and shut them up in a monastery somewhere.) People who write for reward by way of recognition or monetary gain don’t know what they’re doing. They’re in the category of those who write; they are not writers.

Writing is simply something you must do. It’s rather like virtue in that it is its own reward. Writing is selfish and contradictory in its terms. First of all, you’re writing for an audience of one, you must please the one person you’re writing for. I don’t believe this business of “No, I don’t write for myself, I write for the public.” That’s nonsense. Any writer worth his salt writes to please himself. He writes not to communicate with other people, but to communicate more assuredly with himself. It’s a self-exploratory operation that is endless. An exorcism of not necessarily his demon, but of his divine discontent.

Another way they fool themselves is when they study to be writers. They are training themselves, in colleges, to be writers. Well, my dear young people, writing is something you’ll never learn in any university or at any school. It’s something that is within you, and if it isn’t there, nothing can put it there. But if you are really serious about writing, if you really feel you must write, I would suggest that you follow the advice the Reverend John Keble gave a friend who asked him how to get his faith back. “By holy living.”

How would you define your own objectives as a writer?

Well, my objectives are very limited. I want to do the best I can with the talent God gave me. I hope to goodness that every novel I do gets better and better, not worse and worse. I would like, however, to do one thing, and I’ve never spoken much about it because it’s such a personal thing. I would like to leave some record of the kind of life that existed in a very small world. I hope to do this in several novels to chronicle something that seems to be very quickly going down the drain. This is small-town middle-class southern life as opposed to the Gothic, as opposed to Tobacco Road, as opposed to plantation life.

As you know, the South is still made up of thousands of tiny towns. There is a very definite social pattern in these towns that fascinates me. I think it is a rich social pattern. I would simply like to put down all I know about this because I believe that there is something universal in this little world, something decent to be said for it, and something to lament in its passing. In other words, all I want to be is the Jane Austen of south Alabama.
In 1954, when James (Big Jim) Folsom was running for a second term as governor of Alabama, he drove to Clayton to meet a powerful circuit-court judge. This was in the heart of the Deep South, at a time when Jim Crow was in full effect. In Barbour County, the races did not mix, and white men were expected to uphold the privileges of their gender and color. But when his car pulled up to the curb, where the judge was waiting, Folsom spotted two black men on the sidewalk. He jumped out, shook their hands heartily, and only then turned to the stunned judge. “All men are just alike,” Folsom liked to say. He worked to extend the vote to disenfranchised blacks. He wanted to equalize salaries between white and black schoolteachers. He routinely commuted the death sentences of blacks convicted in what he believed were less than fair trials. He made no attempt to segregate the crowd at his inaugural address. “Ya’ll come,” he would say to one and all, making a proud and lonely stand for racial justice.

...Folsom was not a civil-rights activist. Activists were interested in using the full, impersonal force of the law to compel equality. The Supreme Court’s landmark desegregation ruling in Brown v. Board of Education ended Folsom’s career, because the racial backlash that it created drove moderates off the political stage. Historian Michael Klarman writes, “Virtually no southern politician could survive in this political environment without toeing the massive resistance line, and in most states politicians competed to occupy the most extreme position on the racial spectrum.” Folsom lost his job to the segregationist John Patterson, who then gave way to the radical George Wallace. In Birmingham, which was quietly liberalizing through the early nineteen-fifties, Bull Connor (who notoriously set police dogs on civil-rights marchers in the nineteen-sixties) had been in political exile. In 1963, he took over, giving the Klan a good scolding.

On what side was Harper Lee’s Atticus Finch? Finch defended Tom Robinson, the black man falsely accused of what in nineteen-thirties Alabama was the gravest of sins, the rape of a white woman. In the years since, he has become a role model for the legal profession. But he’s much closer to Folsom’s side of the race question than he is to the civil-rights activists who were arriving in the South as Lee wrote her novel.

Think about the scene that serves as the book’s centerpiece. Finch is at the front of the courtroom with Robinson. The jury files in. In the balcony, the book’s narrator—Finch’s daughter, Jean Louise, or Scout, as she’s known—shuts her eyes. “Guilty,” the first of the jurors says. “Guilty,” the second says, and down the line: “guilty, guilty, guilty.” Finch gathers his papers into his briefcase. He says a quiet word to his client, gathers his coat off the back of his chair, and walks, head bowed, out of the courtroom.

...If Finch were a civil-rights hero, he would be brimming with rage at the unjust verdict. But he isn’t. He’s not Thurgood Marshall looking for racial salvation through the law. He’s Jim Folsom, looking for racial salvation through hearts and minds.

“If you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you’ll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks,” Finch tells his daughter. “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” He is never anything but gracious to his neighbor Mrs. Dubose, even though she considers him a “nigger-lover.” He forgives the townsfolk of Maycomb for the same reason. They are suffering from a “sickness,” he tells Scout—the inability to see a black man as a real person. All men, he believes, are just alike.

Here is where the criticism of Finch begins, because the hearts-and-minds approach is about accommodation, not reform. At one point, Scout asks him if it is okay to hate Hitler. Finch answers, firmly, that it is not okay to hate anyone. Really? Not even Hitler? When his children bring up the subject of the Ku Klux Klan’s presence in Maycomb, he shrugs: “Way back about 1920 there was a Klan, but it was a political organization more than anything. Besides, they couldn’t find anyone to scare. They paraded by Mr. Sam Levy’s house one night, but Sam just stood on his porch and told ‘em things had come to a pretty pass... Sam made ‘em so ashamed of themselves they went away.” Someone in Finch’s historical position would surely have been aware of the lynching of Leo Frank in Marietta, Georgia, in 1915. Frank was convicted, on dubious evidence, of murdering a thirteen-year-old girl, Mary Phagan. The prosecutor in the case compared Frank to Judas Iscariot, and the crowd outside the courthouse shouted, “Hang the Jew!” Anti-Semitism of the most virulent kind was embedded in the social fabric of the Old South. But Finch does not want to deal with the existence of anti-Semitism. He wants to believe in the fantasy of Sam Levy, down the street, giving the Klan a good scolding.

In the middle of the novel, after Tom Robinson’s arrest, Finch spends the night in front of the Maycomb jail, concerned that a mob might come down and try to take matters into its own hands. Sure enough, one does, led by a poor white farmer, Walter Cunningham. The mob eventually scatters, and the next morning Finch tries to explain the night’s events to Scout. Here again is a test for Finch’s high-minded equanimity. He likes Walter Cunningham. Cunningham is, to his mind, the right sort of poor white farmer: a man who refuses a WPA handout and who scrupulously repays Finch for legal work with a load of stove wood, a sack of hickory corn.
Continued from page 13

nuts and a crate of smilax and holly. Against this, Finch must weigh the fact that Cunningham also leads lynching mobs against black people. So what does he do? Once again, he puts personal ties first. Cunningham, Finch tells his daughter, is “basically a good man,” who “just has his blind spots along with the rest of us.” Blind spots? As the legal scholar Monroe Freedman has written, “It just happens that Cunningham’s blind spot (along with the rest of us?) is a homicidal hatred of black people.” Finch will stand up to racists. He’ll use his moral authority to shame them into silence. He will leave the judge standing on the sidewalk while he shakes hands with Negroes. What he will not do is look at the problem of racism outside the immediate context of Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Levy, and the island community of Maycomb, Alabama.

One of Atticus Finch’s strongest critics has been the legal scholar Steven Lubet, and Lubet’s arguments are a good example of how badly the brand of Southern populism Finch represents has aged over the past fifty years. Lubet’s focus is the main event of “To Kill a Mockingbird”—Finch’s defense of Tom Robinson. In “Reconstructing Atticus Finch,” in the Michigan Law Review, Lubet points out that Finch does not have a strong case. The putative rape victim, Mayella Ewell, has bruises on her face, and the supporting testimony of her father, Robert E. Lee Ewell. Robinson concedes that he was inside the Ewell house, and that some kind of sexual activity took place. The only potentially exculpatory evidence Finch can come up with is that Mayella’s bruises are on the right side of her face while Robinson’s left arm, owing to a childhood injury, is useless. Finch presents this fact with great fanfare. But, as Lubet argues, it’s not exactly clear why a strong right-handed man can’t hit a much smaller woman on the right side of her face. Couldn’t she have turned her head? Couldn’t he have hit her with a backhanded motion? Given the situation, Finch designs his defense, Lubet says, “to exploit a virtual catalog of misconceptions and fallacies about rape, each one calculated to heighten mistrust of the female complainant.”

Here is the crucial moment of Robinson’s testimony. Under Finch’s patient prodding, he has described how he was walking by the Ewell property when Mayella asked him to come inside, to help her dismantle a piece of furniture.

...“She reached up an’ kissed me ‘side of th’ face. She says she never kissed a grown man before an’ she might as well kiss a nigger. She says what her papa do to her don’t count. She says, ‘Kiss me back nigger’.”

...“She knew full well the enormity of her offense,” Finch tells the jury, in his summation, “but because her desires were stronger than the code she was breaking, she persisted in breaking it.” For a woman to be portrayed as a sexual aggressor in the Jim Crow South was a devastating charge. Lubet writes: “The ‘she wanted it’ defense in this case was particularly harsh. Here is what it said about Mayella: She was so starved for sex that she spent an entire year scheming for a way to make it happen. She was desperate for a man, any man. She repeatedly grabbed at Tom and wouldn’t let him go, barring the door when he respectfully tried to disentangle himself. And in case Mayella had any dignity left after all that, it had to be insinuated that she had sex with her father.”

It is useful, once again, to consider Finch’s conduct in the light of the historical South of his time. The scholar Lisa Lindquist Dorr has examined 288 cases of black-on-white rape that occurred in Virginia between 1900 and 1960. Seventeen of the accused were killed through “extra legal violence”—that is to say, lynched. Fifty were executed. Forty-eight were given the maximum sentence. Fifty-two were sentenced to prison terms of five years or less, on charges ranging from rape and murder to robbery, assault and battery, or “annoying a white woman.” Thirty-five either were acquitted or had their charges dismissed. A not inconsiderable number had their sentences commuted by the governor.

Justice was administered unequally in the South: Dorr points out that of the dozens of rapists in Virginia who were sentenced to death between 1908 and 1963 (Virginia being one of the few states where both rape and attempted rape were capital crimes) none were white. Nonetheless, those statistics suggest that race was not always the overriding consideration in rape trials. “White men did not always automatically leap to the defense of white women,” Dorr writes. “Some white men reluctantly sided with black men against white women whose class or sexual history they found suspect. Sometimes whites trusted the word of black men whose families they had known for generations over the sworn testimony of white women whose backgrounds were unknown or (even worse) known and despised. White women retained their status as innocent victim only as long as they followed the dictates of middle-class morality.”

We are back in the embrace of Folsomism. Finch wants his white, male jurors to do the right thing. But as a good Jim Crow liberal he dare not challenge the foundations of their privilege. Instead, Finch does what lawyers for black men did in those days. He encourages them to swap one of their prejudices for another.

Finch’s moral test comes at the end of To Kill a Mockingbird. Bob Ewell has been humiliated by the Robinson trial. In revenge, he attacks Scout and her brother on Halloween night. Boo Radley, the reclusive neighbor of the Finches, comes to the children’s defense, and in the scuffle Radley kills Ewell. Sheriff Tate brings the news to Finch, and persuades him to lie about what actually happened; the story will be that Ewell inadvertently stabbed himself in the scuffle.

“No!,” Finch says to his daughter, after he and Sheriff Tate have cut their little side deal. “Mr. Ewell fell on his knife. Can you possibly understand?”

Understand what? That her father and the Sheriff have decided to obstruct justice in the name of saving their beloved neighbor the burden of angel-food cake? Atticus Finch is faced with jurors who have one set of standards for white people like the Ewells and another set for black folk like Tom Robinson. His response is to adopt one set of standards for respectable whites like Boo Radley and another for white trash like Bob Ewell. A book that we thought instructed us about the world tells us, instead, about the limitations of Jim Crow liberalism in Maycomb, Alabama.
2. About the Book

Fifty years ago Sunday, a novel hit America’s bookshelves that changed the way millions thought about race and the inexplicable South. Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by some estimates the most-read book in American schools, has grown old enough to have become slightly dotty in the minds of fresher readers, many of whom have only a textbook understanding of the way things were.

Indeed, it is fashionable to dis, as we now say, the great and humble Lee, a writer so without vanity that she has declined all attention to herself since the publication of her novel in 1960 and continues to live quietly in her home town of Monroeville, Ala.

As a heroine, she deserves to live out her days without having to hear the din of critics wielding hindsight as virtue. Yet lately, Lee’s famous and only novel has earned special scorn as critics opine about the way things should have been, not only in real life but also in the artistic treatment of the era.

Writing a story in the Jim Crow South about a white lawyer who defended a black man against a charge of raping a white woman was an act of courage, make no mistake. And though Atticus Finch, the protagonist-lawyer, might seem bland by today’s standards, it is unfair to label him a paternalistic defender of the status quo, as Malcolm Gladwell did last year in the *New Yorker*.

Gladwell, who marvelously describes culture in ways that cause us to blink in recognition of tipping points and to wish to be outliers all—not to mention forcing us to embrace a newly coined vocabulary without which we are helpless to address the zeitgeist—is perhaps less attuned to the ways of fiction. With all due respect.

For *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a story—a parable designed to move hearts and minds—and not a manifesto for radical action. Yet this is what Gladwell and others would have preferred. Gladwell, who finds common cause with George Orwell’s criticism of Charles Dickens, wishes that the author had made Finch a man sufficiently outraged by racial injustice to seek systemic change, rather than merely be a decent sort willing to defend a black man wrongly accused.

Orwell similarly criticized Dickens, who, he complained, never offered solutions to the problems he illuminated. (This has a familiar ring.) But isn’t it a lot to ask that the artist, in addition to exposing societal disease, also cure it? Walker Percy, another Southern novelist and my muse in such matters, said that the artist’s job is to be a diagnostician—“to give the sickness a name, to render the unspeakable speakable.” That “art is making; morality is doing.”

“This is not to say that art, fiction, is not moral in the most radical sense—if it is made right. But if you write a novel with the goal of trying to make somebody do right, you’re writing a tract—which may be an admirable enterprise, but it is not literature.”

In July 2010, we might be more comfortable with an Atticus Finch who was less compassionate toward his racist neighbors. In explaining people and events to his young daughter, Scout, Finch noted that these were not bad people (even though some did want to commit violence against blacks), just misguided.

From where we sit today, this attitude is both ludicrous and offensive. One can’t distill “not bad” from what is clearly bad. But, then, who is to say that Lee thought otherwise? Sometimes truth is better received through a reflex of recognition than by a blow to the head. Remember, too, Finch was trying to explain a hateful world to a child in terms familiar in the church-going South: Hate the sin, love the sinner.

My own recollection of the book, which I first read as a child, was that it was full of hard and ugly truths. The story, because it was revealed through the eyes of another child, caused me to understand injustice as no textbook or lecture ever could. Such is the power and mystery of literature.

To kill a mockingbird is a sin, Finch told his children, because it brings no harm to others. “They don’t do one thing but sing their hearts out for us,” a neighbor further explained.

Likewise, trying to kill a great book because a 50-year-old literary character doesn’t measure up to modern critics’ idea of heroism is a sin. All Harper Lee ever did, after all, was sing her heart out for us.

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“Revisionist fire at author Harper Lee should be dampened” by Kathleen Parker, 2010

Parker’s *Washington Post* article was composed as a response to Gladwell’s controversial piece, as well as other critical responses that appeared amid 50th anniversary celebrations.
ATTICUS: [still at his table, speaking to the jury] Gentlemen, this case is not a difficult one; it requires no minute sifting of complicated facts. This case is as simple as black and white. The State has not produced one iota of evidence that the crime Tom Robinson is charged with ever took place. It has relied instead upon the testimony of two witnesses—witnesses whose testimony has not only been called into serious question on cross-examination, but has been flatly contradicted by the defendant. [ATTICUS looks back at MAYELLA] I have nothing but pity in my heart for the chief witness for the state, but my pity does not extend to her putting a man’s life at stake. And this is what she’s done—done it in an effort to get rid of her guilt! I say guilt, because it was guilt that motivated her. She committed no crime, but she broke a rigid code of our society, a code so severe that whoever breaks it is hounded from our midst as unfit to live with. She’s the victim of cruel poverty and ignorance, but she knew full well the enormity of her offense and she persisted in it. She persisted and her subsequent reaction is something every child has done—she tried to put the evidence of her offense away, out of sight. What was the evidence? Not a stolen toy to be hidden. The evidence that must be destroyed is Tom Robinson, a human being. Tom Robinson, a daily reminder of what she did. She tempted a Negro. She did something that in our society is unspeakable. She’s white and she tempted a Negro. Not an old uncle, but a strong, young black man. No code mattered to her before she broke it—but it came crashing down on her afterwards! Her father saw what happened. And what did he do? [ATTICUS looks at EWEEL] There is circumstantial evidence to the effect the Mayella Ewell was beaten savagely by someone who led almost exclusively with his left hand. [EWEEL rises, fists clenched]

BOB EWEEL: Damn you ta—-[JUDGE TAYLOR raps sharply for order, and HECK TATE motions EWEEL down while ATTICUS watches, unimpressed]

ATTICUS: Then Mr. Ewell swore out a warrant, no doubt signing it with his left hand, and Tom Robinson now sits before you, having taken the oath with the only good hand he possesses—his right hand!

BOB EWEEL: You trickin’ lyin’—

JUDGE TAYLOR: [rapping hard] Shut your mouth, sir, or you’ll be fined for contempt! [EWEEL is forced back into his seat by HECK TATE]

ATTICUS: So a quiet, respectable Negro man who had the unmitigated temerity to feel sorry for a white woman is on trial for his life. He’s had to put his words against his two white accusers. I need not remind you of their conduct here in court—their cynical confidence that you gentleman would go along with them on the assumption—the evil assumption—that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral, an assumption one associates with minds of their caliber. However, you know the truth—and the truth is, some Negroes lie, and some Negro men are not to be trusted around women—black or white. And so with some white men. This is a truth that applies to the entire human race, and to no particular race. [ATTICUS pauses to clean his glasses with his handkerchief] In this year of grace, 1935, we’re beginning to hear more and more references to Thomas Jefferson’s phrase about all men being created equal. But we know that all men are not created equal—in the sense that some men are smarter than others, some have more opportunity because they’re born with it, some men make more money, some ladies make better cakes, some people are born gifted beyond the normal scope—but there’s one way in which all men are created equal. There’s one human institution that makes the pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal to Einstein. That institution, gentlemen, is a court of law. In our courts—all men are created equal. I’m no idealist to believe so firmly in the integrity of our courts and in the jury system—that’s no ideal to me, it is a living, working reality. But a court is only as sound as its jury, and a jury is only as sound as the men who make it up. I’m confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you’ve heard, come to a decision, and restore this defendant to his family. In the name of God, do your duty!

[ATTICUS continues to look out front for a moment, then turns, walks back, and sits at the table with TOM ROBINSON. Nothing else happens on the stage until ATTICUS is seated.]

SEE MORE: Watch a rehearsal of National Players performing this scene at the following YouTube link: http://youtu.be/YKtXDbvm6k
DEBATING ATTICUS

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to analyze critical writing. Students will be able to form arguments and rebuttals based on existing writing.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Primary sources, writing utensils, separate paper for notes, access to other resources (optional)

1. Distribute the two primary source documents from “Mockingbird’s Legacy” having to do with Atticus (“The Courthouse Ring” by Malcolm Gladwell, and “Revisionist fire at author Harper Lee should be dampened” by Kathleen Parker).

2. Tell students that we will be using a debate format to discuss these two articles. They will be arguing before their teacher over the Atticus’ image and the nature of change in regards to racism. Divide them into two groups, and assign one to be Pro and one to be Con.

3. Have each group read and break down their primary sources, looking to formulate three or four basic points they will rely on to defend their position in debate. They should look for the thrust of their arguments and try to summarize them in ways that make sense to them. They can also look at the opposing side’s source materials to find what they think their arguments might be and how they might counter those arguments. If desired, they can search for further resources available to them.

4. Have groups determine in which order they want to present their arguments, and who will be primary speaker for each of those arguments. As many students as possible should have a chance to speak, but some may work as scribes to try to write things down for those arguing, or as researchers to pull things from the Primary Sources (or other sources, if they have been allowed to do further research) as the arguments develop.

5. Flip a coin or determine who goes first through some other method. The opening group has two minutes to frame their first opinion. The next group has one minute to respond, then the initial group can respond to the rebuttal for one minute. The next group will then make their first argument, and the debate carries on until the time allotted has run out or the groups feel they have exhausted their arguments.

6. The teacher can decide if one of the groups argued more persuasively, or if there isn’t a clear decision to be made.

7. Dissolve groups and have discussion about what the process was like. What did if feel like to argue from a predetermined perspective? Did students feel they had adequate material to fully make their point? Do they think the decision that the teacher made was fair? What do they really think about the place of Atticus as a character in literature?
OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to recognize the creative process. Students will be able to understand the relationship between inspiration and fiction. Students will be able to know the context of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Worksheet (see appendix), paper, writing utensils

1. Share information from Harper Lee’s biography (pg. 9) and the interview with Harper Lee (pg. 11) and hold discussion about how the character of Scout was loosely based on Harper Lee. What does the phrase “loosely based” suggest? Can you think of other examples of characters who are very similar to real life figures?

2. Talk about some of the other aspects of *To Kill a Mockingbird* that are inspired by real life, such as Atticus/Harper Lee’s father and Dill/Truman Capote, or the events of the Scottsboro trial (pg. 31) that has parallels to the trial of Tom Robinson. Does this change their view of the novel or the play? What does this say about the ways a writer can create something like a novel or a play?

3. Ask students to think of some people and events from their world from which they might be able to take inspiration. Have them brainstorm a list of at least two or three people and one event around which they could build a short story, pulling aspects from real life but still writing in the category of fiction.

4. Distribute “Loosely Based on Worksheet” (see appendix) and ask students to clarify the event they will build their stories around and who will take part in it. It is important to emphasize that this is not journalism or non-fiction: the way things happen should be different, the people who take part are not necessarily the people who took part in real life, characters can have many details changed (job/education/expertise, physical ability, relationship with others) in order to better suit the story.

5. After students have finished the worksheet, they can work on drafting their story (in whatever form appropriate: bullet points, prose, drama, comic book, etc.). After their draft is finished, students should share with peers or the teacher and get feedback. How do all the elements fit together? Do all the characters seem realistic?

6. When the entire process is finished, ask students how it felt to draw upon real life in their creative work. Did they find it easy to know their characters? How much did their work end up staying true to life? What did they find to be important, and what felt less important when working in this style?
WRITING YOUR OWN ADAPTATION

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to partake in the process of adaptation. Students will be able to compare and contrast artistic work. Students will be able to identify important aspects of To Kill a Mockingbird.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Material to adapt (found in Tool Kit or independently), writing utensils, paper

1. Discuss the idea of adaptation with students. What do they know about it? What sorts of things have they seen adapted from one form to another? What tends to happen to things when they are adapted?

2. Share information about Harper Lee’s sources and inspiration, as well as the adaptations of the novel (movie and play). Talk about the differences required in content, length, and structure. Discuss why these differences are necessary and how a director or playwright might make those decisions.

3. Choose a scene from the novel version of Mockingbird to analyze and adapt as a class (the scene from Chapter 2 on page 27, for example). Work with students to understand and analyze the essence of the work: Who is present? What happens? What is the sequence of events? Where does the scene take place, and what does that environment look like? What is the tone or mood of the scene?

4. Once students answer these questions, tell them they are going to form their own adaptation of this work. To do this, they must select what elements of the work are essential and what can be altered or removed.

5. Divide students into groups or work as a class. They can rewrite the original work in a totally different format, make it into a performance piece or represent artistically. Encourage students to be creative and loose with their adaptations, adding characters or changing the time period or setting.

6. If students are working in groups, they can share their concepts with each other and exchange feedback. Ask students to identify commonalities among their adaptations and observe which elements have been adjusted and which tend to stay the same.

7. Follow through on the concepts and create a first draft of the adaptation, in part or in full, and revisit the issue of commonalities and changes.
The Great Depression

CAUSES AND EFFECTS

Although the U.S. stock market crash of October 1929 is often seen as the beginning of the Great Depression, in Alabama and elsewhere, the crash exacerbated an already existing decline in agriculture that had begun much earlier in the decade. The Depression’s impact on Alabama lasted throughout the 1930s and, in some cases, into the early 1940s, longer than the impact on the nation as a whole.

American agriculture had been struggling as early as 1921, when commodity prices fell steadily from post-World War I highs. In Alabama, cotton prices dropped to the lowest levels since the 1880s. By 1929, industries, the backbone of prosperity in the “Roaring Twenties,” experienced a decline in consumption as farmers could no longer afford to buy consumer goods and the overall market for goods had become fairly saturated. As industries scaled back production, they fired workers, leading to increased unemployment. Alabama’s farm families experienced the first pangs of the Depression when cotton prices plummeted. The commodity began its fall in early 1921, from a high of 35 cents per pound to less than 5 cents per pound by 1932. Unable to make a living on cotton, some farmers left to find work in cities, while others fell deeper into debt and tenancy. Between 1920 and 1930, the number of landowners fell from around 96,000 to 75,000.

Many farm families lived on the brink of starvation and bankruptcy during good years, so the Depression forced those on the land to focus on long-term survival. Farmers ate less meat and more filling and inexpensive starchy foods, like beans and corn, and wore clothes made out of burlap feed and fertilizer sacks. Tenants and sharecroppers moved to find better contracts and traveled farther and more often as the Depression worsened. Having less food, fewer clothes, and little money, many rural Alabamians ceased going to school, church, and other social functions.

RELIEF EFFORTS

At first, state leaders struggled to address the rapidly declining economy. Without a federal directive to provide assistance, or precedent for such hardship, and with rapidly declining government funds, state and local governments relied largely on relief administered by religious and charity organizations. Across the state, church groups established food pantries, clothing distribution programs, and job-referral services, though the latter failed when officials were unable to find work for applicants. Relief payments were more prevalent among urban families, who were more likely to live in proximity to privately run or church-affiliated aid centers and less likely to be as self-sufficient in terms of food or clothing as rural inhabitants. Throughout the state, cities and counties often paid teachers and other government workers in IOUs and “warrants,” slips of paper that were supposed to be redeemable for cash once the economy improved. Many doctors, lawyers, and other professionals were paid with food, goods, and labor.

Following Herbert Hoover’s largely unpopular resolution policies, President
Franklin D. Roosevelt started his 1933 presidential term with a series of direct relief efforts, collectively known as the New Deal. This initiative encompassed a variety of different efforts to alleviate citizens’ financial struggles. These efforts included the Works Progress Administration, which employed millions of people to carry out public works projects, such as the construction of public buildings and roads. New Deal money made its way to Alabama with state-run public relief agency known as the Alabama Relief Administration (ARA), the aim of which was to provide direct financial support to those in need. Despite these efforts, the benefits of state relief were limited in the early 1930s; the ARA often favored non-union, skilled laborers and disregarded working-class and poor white and black Alabamians as undeserving of funds. These people, in turn, sought relief among their families and communities and, increasingly, from the federal government, particularly the provisions of New Deal agencies.

Although economic hardships were rampant nationwide, no group was harder hit than African Americans. By 1932, approximately half of black Americans were out of work. In some cities, whites called for blacks to be fired from any jobs as long as there were whites out of work. Circumstances were particularly difficult for rural blacks; although falling land prices enabled more blacks to purchase farms, and land ownership actually increased among that demographic during the Depression, their properties were significantly smaller and less profitable. Racial violence surged during this period, especially in the South, where lynching increased to 28 cases in 1933 from eight in 1932.

Although most African Americans traditionally voted Republican, the election of President Franklin Roosevelt began to change voting patterns. Roosevelt entertained African-American visitors at the White House and was known to have a number of black advisors. According to one historian, many African Americans were excited by the energy with which Roosevelt began tackling the problems of the Depression and gained “a sense of belonging they had never experienced before” from his fireside chats. Still, discrimination occurred in New Deal housing and employment projects, and President Roosevelt, for political reasons, did not back all of the legislation favored by such groups as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). When the U.S. entered World War II, labor leader A. Philip Randolph threatened to organize a march on Washington to protest job discrimination in the military and other defense-related activities. In response, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, stating that all persons, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin, would be allowed to participate fully in the defense of the United States.

“"My daddy taught me more times than once: just because you want it, that don’t mean you’re going to get it or need it. Anything that you need, or got to have, you provide for it.”
— Owen Hassett, age 89, remembering his childhood in Alabama

3. The World of the Play

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELIEF EFFORTS CON’T</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>STATISTICS</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRICE OF COTTON</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921: 35 cents per pound</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932: Less than 5 cents per pound</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF WHITE LANDOWNERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920: 96,000</td>
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<td>1930: 75,000</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE FARM SIZE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920: 75 acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930: 68 acres</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FARM VALUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920: $3,803</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930: $2,375</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNEMPLOYMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933: 24%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL ANNUAL INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1929: $311</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935: $194</td>
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Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address, March 3, 1933

Roosevelt began his first term as President in the wake of his landslide victory over Republican incumbent Herbert Hoover in the 1932 election. With the nation in the grips of the Great Depression, the new president’s inaugural speech was awaited with great anticipation. Broadcast nationwide on several radio networks, the speech was heard by tens of millions of Americans and set the stage for Roosevelt’s urgent efforts to respond to the crisis.

This is a day of national consecration. And I am certain that on this day my fellow Americans expect that on my induction into the Presidency I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our people impels. This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.

In such a spirit on my part and on yours we face our common difficulties. They concern, thank God, only material things. Values have shrunken to fantastic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen; government of all kinds is faced by serious curtailment of income; the means of exchange are frozen in the currents of trade; the withered leaves of industrial enterprise lie on every side; farmers find no markets for their produce; the savings of many years in thousands of families are gone.

More important, a host of unemployed citizens face the grim problem of existence, and an equally great number toil with little return. Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment. Yet our distress comes from no failure of substance. We are stricken by no plague of locusts. Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered because they believed and were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for. Nature still offers her bounty and human efforts have multiplied it. Plenty is at our doorstep, but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply.

...Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. The joy and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits. These dark days will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men.

...Our greatest primary task is to put people to work. This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously. It can be accomplished in part by direct recruiting by the Government itself, treating the task as we would treat the emergency of a war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of our natural resources. Hand in hand with this we must frankly recognize the overbalance of population in our industrial centers and, by engaging on a national scale in a redistribution, endeavor to provide a better use of the land for those best fitted for the land. The task can be helped by definite efforts to raise the values of agricultural products and with this the power to purchase the output of our cities. It can be helped by preventing realistically the tragedy of the growing loss through foreclosure of our small homes and our farms. It can be helped by insistence that the Federal, State, and local governments act forthwith on the demand that their cost be drastically reduced. It can be helped by the unifying of relief activities which today are often scattered, uneconomical, and unequal. It can be helped by national planning for and supervision of all forms of transportation and of communications and other utilities which have a definitely public character. There are many ways in which it can be helped, but it can never be helped merely by talking about it. We must act and act quickly.

...If I read the temper of our people correctly, we now realize as we have never realized before our interdependence on each other; that we cannot merely take but we must give as well; that if we are to go forward, we must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline, because without such discipline no progress is made, no leadership becomes effective. We are, I know, ready and willing to submit our lives and property to such discipline, because it makes possible a leadership which aims at a larger good. This I propose to offer, pledging that the larger purposes will bind upon us all as a sacred obligation with a unity of duty hitherto evoked only in time of armed strife.

...We face the arduous days that lie before us in the warm courage of national unity; with the clear consciousness of seeking old and precious moral values; with the clean satisfaction that comes from the stern performance of duty by old and young alike. We aim at the assurance of a rounded and permanent national life.

We do not distrust the future of essential democracy. The people of the United States have not failed. In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct, vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it.

In this dedication of a Nation we humbly ask the blessing of God. May He protect each and every one of us. May He guide me in the days to come.
As tensions rose under the economic pressures of the early 1930s, frustrated Americans expressed their concerns in print publications. Political cartoons were popular mediums for criticizing the government’s responses to the Depression and commenting on the dire national circumstances. (Images 5 through 10 pictured here)
“Scuse me, Buddy, is this the bread-line or a run on a bank?”
Vernon Johnson was the child of a white sharecropper in Louisiana. After the death of his father, his family moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where he graduated from high school and enlisted in military service during World War II. His memoir reflects on his childhood during the Great Depression.

I was born in 1921 in rural Louisiana, the youngest of four children of Lola and James Franklin Johnson. My mother and father were peripatetic farmers, renting or working on shares—on small bits of land that we did not own and that we generally left after a season or two.

There were three phases of our life together as a family: (1) We were tenant farmers—as long as my father lived, and then for a while beyond, living with our grandparents; (2) then we lived in a small one-man town, a mill village where my mother worked as a school janitor; (3) and at last, when my mother was fired (for a whim—because she was a woman), and when necessity demanded, we moved to the city: we joined the great flood tide of farmers and ex-farmers to the Big City—to Nashville; and there we remained.

The life of a sharecropper was a hard one. The land my father farmed was never much; whatever you could handle in the evenings, we amused ourselves with songs and read-

A Memoir: Growing Up Poor and White in the South
By Vernon Johnson, 1996

Because he was illiterate, he did not own property, and moved around from place to place, law which were enacted to keep blacks and poor whites disenfranchised kept him from voting or serving on juries, which were made from voting lists. In short, he would not have been able to participate in the government in any way.

My mother was 18 when she married my father and he was probably around 32. She was a tall woman with a sharp, strong face and blue-gray eyes. She had to quit school in the eighth grade to work full time, but she was extremely quick and an excellent student. She also learned to play the piano and organ, and sometimes played, as a substitute, in the churches that we attended. Because of her superior education, in our family, and despite her youth and the fact that she was a woman, she handled all the business and monetary affairs for our family, such as they were, all the contracts. And the landlords often resented this, sometimes with open insults.

...The farming system by which my father made a living worked in two ways. You could rent a farm and plant both a vegetable garden, for the family to live on, and a cash crop (always cotton) to sell; or you could farm on shares, a system in which you would concentrate on cash crops and split the profit down the middle with the owner. We did both, always managing to have a vegetable garden. The entire family, including the children, helped in this. My earliest memory in fact is of picking cotton, all together, in open fields, under the autumn sun. You picked it, stored it, then hauled it away to be processed and baled. It was a hard life, but for us it was always special.

By the 1930s the land was worn out and poor in the South. But even in the good days it was already diminished. Landlords spent nothing, expenses rose, and prices fell; sometimes you spent more than you ever made. (And in the great boom of the 1920s, the farmer was forgotten and ignored) You could expect to produce about half a bale of cotton an acre in Scott County, Mississippi, where my father and mother first started out. There was also the continuous problem of diet. My mother remembered buying a cow, on credit, to provide milk for the family. With the farm we rented or worked for a season on shares, there came a tiny, four-room house made of wood, with a tin roof.

At times, with other sharecroppers, my father had to supplement family income with other jobs. In the late fall or in between farms he would work as a logger for the sawmills. And as the land became poorer and poorer, he anticipated selling his farm equipment and working full-time in the sawmills.

We lived a happy hard life. We played in the dirt yard, often made up our own games. In the house in bad weather or in the evenings, we amused ourselves with songs and read-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26
The World of the Play

ing and word games. My sister remembers most pleasantly that in good weather, especially in the fall after crops were harvested, my grandfather would gather the older girls and their friends and take them on hayrides—a horse and a wagon, filled with kids, out across the fields and along small dirt lanes, sometimes under a golden autumn moon. “That,” she remembered, “was the greatest.”

The constant moving meant that there was always the horror of a new school for the children, and the unfailing challenge from a sea of hostile faces. My sister, remembering those constant challenges, noted, “I felt like a chicken in a bunch of wolves.”

The poor people we knew were much like us. They were devout church-goers and devoted family members. Most were intelligent and believed in working hard, living upright lives, and keeping meticulously clean, even if their clothes were made of flour sacks (which was often the case), and even if they owned no property and spoke “ungrammatically” and with an accent that grated on upper-class ears.

We knew even then that not all poor people were like us. Some had never received a modicum of education, were totally ignorant even of the world around them, dirty, diseased, immoral, destitute. My mother remembered one family that only had one plate and who anticipated with some joy the death of any of its numerous family members so that the food they had would go farther. She remembered another family so ignorant that they thought their daughter who had moved across the Mississippi River had actually moved across the Atlantic Ocean.

The death of my father was the end of a poor but curiously Edenic way of life for us. After that, as my mother tried to support her four children and a widowed mother, we not only became more keenly aware of hardships, we became more aware of the limitations and humiliations of being poor.

My brother remembered a time when my grandfather, Sim Rasberry, had saved a young black man from a lynch mob. A girl, it seemed, had been molested by somebody, and this man was blamed. A violent mob was on his trail. When the man appeared, frightened beyond reason and panting, Grandpa permitted him to hide. Then he directed the man off in one direction, and when the mob appeared, directed them off in another. My brother watched all this from the front yard; Grandpa was quite calm, he said, and never twitched a muscle.

My grandmother and mother believed that all people are equal before God. They may not be on this earth—no sharecropper ever failed to perceive that—but they were all the same before God; and when you got to Judgment Day, God would not ask you what color you were, or what clothes you wore, or what your grandfather possessed. He would ask: What did you do? For my grandmother—and mother—all relationships, and all real human values had to stem from this. This is not to say that my family were advanced political thinkers or human reformers, for they were not: Negroes lived in one world and we in another (and both virtually at the bottom). It was a rather basic human fact.

The Enemy that we knew wore a white face, not a black one; and he drove a fine buggy, or as the years passed, a fine late car, and he wore a white shirt and tie. He was the “Preacher” who cheated my grandfather; the confidence man who bilked his “congregation” out of money; the landlord who tried illegally to kick my mother and her family out onto the road at Christmas time; the man who owned the little lumber town; the Principal, the “educator” who fired her, for a whim; the rich farmer’s wife who tried to get my mother to forge my father’s signature; the traveling salesman, to whom she had to take a shotgun, threatening to shoot him through the screen, to get him to leave.

...Our economic poverty was often far more intense in the city than it had been on the land. Many times, during the Depression, we almost starved or froze to death. As we attended city schools and churches, we became more keenly aware of economic and class differences. My brothers and sisters could never complete high school because they had to go to work. The city was cold and cruel, its harsh realities keenly suffered, but it always brought opportunity and a wider world. There were libraries, the YMCA, and church and community organizations designed to support the poor. And eventually there were more opportunities for work. For my mother’s children, at least, the city would finally be the way out of the grinding poverty of the poor, rural South.
“Everybody who goes home to lunch hold up your hands,” said Miss Caroline.

The town children did so, and she looked us over.

“Everybody who brings his lunch put it on top of his desk.”

Molasses buckets appeared from nowhere, and the ceiling danced with metallic light. Miss Caroline walked up and down the rows peering and poking into lunch containers, nodding if the contents pleased her, frowning a little at others. She stopped at Walter Cunningham’s desk. “Where’s yours?” she asked.

Walter Cunningham’s face told everybody in the first grade he had hookworms.

His absence of shoes told us how he got them. People caught hookworms going barefooted in barnyards and hog wallows. If Walter had owned any shoes he would have worn them the first day of school and then discarded them until mid-winter. He did have on a clean shirt and neatly mended overalls.

“Did you forget your lunch this morning?” asked Miss Caroline.

Walter looked straight ahead. I saw a muscle jump in his skinny jaw.

“Did you forget it this morning?” asked Miss Caroline. Walter’s jaw twitched again.

“Yeb’m,” he finally mumbled.

Miss Caroline went to her desk and opened her purse.

“Here’s a quarter,” she said to Walter. “Go and eat downtown today. You can pay me back tomorrow.” Walter shook his head. “Nome thank you ma’am,” he drawled softly.

Impatience crept into Miss Caroline’s voice: “Here Walter, come get it.”

Walter shook his head again.

When Walter shook his head a third time someone whispered, “Go on and tell her, Scout.”

I turned around and saw most of the town people and the entire bus delegation looking at me. Miss Caroline and I had conferred twice already, and they were looking at me in the innocent assurance that familiarity breeds understanding.

I rose graciously on Walter’s behalf: “Ah—Miss Caroline?”

“What is it, Jean Louise?”

“Miss Caroline, he’s a Cunningham.”

I sat back down.

“What, Jean Louise?”

I thought I had made things sufficiently clear. It was clear enough to the rest of us: Walter Cunningham was sitting there lying his head off. He didn’t forget his lunch, he didn’t have any. He had none today nor would he have any tomorrow or the next day. He had probably never seen three quarters together at the same time in his life.

I tried again: “Walter’s one of the Cunninghams, Miss Caroline.”

“I beg your pardon, Jean Louise?”

“That’s okay, ma’am, you’ll get to know all the county folks after a while. The Cunninghams never took anything they can’t pay back—no church baskets and no scrip stamps. They never took anything off of anybody, they get along on what they have. They don’t have much, but they get along on it.”

My special knowledge of the Cunningham tribe—one branch, that is—was gained from events of last winter. Walter’s father was one of Atticus’s clients. After a dreary conversation in our living room one night about his entailment, before Mr. Cunningham left he said, “Mr. Finch, I don’t know when I’ll ever be able to pay you.”

“Let that be the least of your worries, Walter,” Atticus said. When I asked Jem what entailment was, and Jem described it as a condition of having your tail in a crack, I asked Atticus if Mr. Cunningham would ever pay us.

“Not in money,” Atticus said, “but before the year’s out I’ll have been paid. You watch.”

We watched. One morning Jem and I found a load of stove-wood in the back yard. Later, a sack of hickory nuts appeared on the back steps. With Christmas came a crate of smilax and holly. That spring when we found a crokersack full of turnip greens, Atticus said Mr. Cunningham had more than paid him.

“Why does he pay you like that?” I asked.

“Because that’s the only way he can pay me. He has no money.”

“Are we poor, Atticus?”

Atticus nodded. “We are indeed.”

Jem’s nose wrinkled. “Are we as poor as the Cunninghams?”

“Not exactly. The Cunninghams are country folks, farmers, and the crash hit them hardest.”

Atticus said professional people were poor because the farmers were poor. As Maycomb County was farm country, nickels and dimes were hard to come by for doctors and dentists and lawyers. Entailment was only a part of Mr. Cunningham’s vexations. The acres not entailed were mortgaged to the hilt, and the little cash he made went to interest. If
he held his mouth right, Mr. Cunningham could get a Works Progress Administration job, but his land would go to ruin if he left it, and he was willing to go hungry to keep his land and vote as he pleased. Mr. Cunningham, said Atticus, came from a set breed of men.

As the Cunninghams had no money to pay a lawyer, they simply paid us with what they had. “Did you know,” said Atticus, “that Dr. Reynolds works the same way? He charges some folks a bushel of potatoes for delivery of a baby. Miss Scout, if you give me your attention I’ll tell you what entailment is. Jem’s definitions are very nearly accurate sometimes.”

If I could have explained these things to Miss Caroline, I would have saved myself some inconvenience and Miss Caroline subsequent mortification, but it was beyond my ability to explain things as well as Atticus, so I said, “You’re shamin’ him, Miss Caroline. Walter hasn’t got a quarter at home to bring you, and you can’t use any stovewood.”

Miss Caroline stood stock still, then grabbed me by the collar and hauled me back to her desk. “Jean Louise, I’ve had about enough of you this morning,” she said. “You’re starting off on the wrong foot in every way, my dear. Hold out your hand.”

I thought she was going to spit in it, which was the only reason anybody in Maycomb held out his hand: it was a time-honored method of sealing oral contracts. Wondering what bargain we had made, I turned to the class for an answer, but the class looked back at me in puzzlement. Miss Caroline picked up her ruler, gave me half a dozen quick little pats, then told me to stand in the corner. A storm of laughter broke loose when it finally occurred to the class that Miss Caroline had whipped me.
OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to understand several aspects of the Great Depression. Students will be able to understand the setting of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Students will be able to work collaboratively to learn from each other’s observations of primary and secondary source documents.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Material from “Great Depression” section, worksheet (see appendix) or poster paper for responses

1. Ask students what they know about the Great Depression. What images do they think of? Where do they think it hit the hardest? How do they think it manifested in the rural South, in particular?

2. Spread the seven subsections from the section of the Teacher Tool Kit around the space. Either distribute the worksheet from the appendix or place large poster paper with each item for students to fill in responses.

3. Split students into eight groups, and have each group start at one of the sections. Have them respond to the questions and have discussions within their groups prompted by the document.

4. After a few minutes, have them rotate to the next document and continue the conversation there, answering the prompts based on the new document. If it is being done with posters, they should also be encouraged to respond to what the previous group has written.

5. Repeat this until all groups have visited every document. After this has finished, have every student look at what other students have written, and then ask students what they notice trending across the responses and what is the “big picture” they get of the Great Depression. What was it like to live in the rural South under these conditions?
As a comprehensive legal and social policy, segregation was not fully institutionalized in Alabama until the beginning of the 20th century, but had its roots in struggles over how to deal with the realities of emancipation, federal legislation, and constitutional change that gave blacks full citizenship. While many Alabamians informally and incompletely enforced separate living and working arrangements during slavery, the state’s role in formalizing and codifying separation was a postwar development. Formal and informal policies of repression, such as separate public accommodations, limited access to suffrage, and strict control over black labor, were put into place between the 1870s and the 1890s, and Alabama’s 1901 constitution rested upon white supremacy as a basic element of governance.

At the end of the Civil War, Alabama had to reconstitute its state legislature, and the result largely perpetuated pre-war notions of race. Alabama’s 1868 constitution included an equal-protection guarantee and secured suffrage rights for men over 21 regardless of race, but it did little else to provide formal legal protection for African Americans. Even these fairly modest reforms provoked outrage among many Democrats and conservatives, and the broader politics of Reconstruction contributed to the formation of the Ku Klux Klan, especially in Alabama, a center of Klan activity during Reconstruction. Klansmen directly targeted African Americans and their white allies who sought to enforce guarantees of equal political and social rights.

Despite some attempts at racial equality through the courts, segregation was most famously and legally implemented in 1896 with the U.S. Supreme Court case of Plessy v. Ferguson. When mixed-race plaintiff Homer Plessy challenged Louisiana’s 1890 law mandating separate accommodations for black and white passengers in railway cars, the court ruled in favor of the state and established the principle that separate accommodations were acceptable as long as they were equal. This ruling granted wide latitude to the Southern states to separate their citizens along racial lines across multiple aspects of life without triggering federal intervention, and most Southern states, including Alabama, were not slow to take up the invitation. A wave of constitutional reform spread through the South to authorize harsh local control over African Americans.

Jim Crow laws—the name given to the series of racial segregation laws enacted between 1876 and 1965—perpetrated “Separate but equal” on a legislative level. These laws systematized the various disadvantages that blacks already faced, and ranged from segregation of public facilities to prohibiting mixed-race marriages. Some examples of Jim Crow laws in Alabama include:

**Nurses:** No person or corporation shall require any white female nurse to nurse in wards or rooms in hospitals, either public or private, in which negro men are placed.

**Buses:** All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31
**JIM CROW LAWS CONT’D**

**Railroads:** The conductor of each passenger train is authorized and required to assign each passenger to the car or the division of the car, when it is divided by a partition, designated for the race to which such passenger belongs.

**Restaurants:** It shall be unlawful to conduct a restaurant or other place for the serving of food in the city, at which white and colored people are served in the same room, unless such white and colored persons are effectually separated by a solid partition extending from the floor upward to a distance of seven feet or higher, and unless a separate entrance from the street is provided for each compartment.

**Toilet Facilities, Male:** Every employer of white or negro males shall provide for such white or negro males reasonably accessible and separate toilet facilities.

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**THE SCOTTSBORO TRIALS**

Often cited as one of Lee’s most direct creative influences, the infamous Scottsboro trials held the nation’s attention throughout much of the 1930s. The case centered on nine black youths falsely charged with raping two white women in Alabama. It began on March 25, 1931, when a number of white and black men were riding on a freight train seeking work. A fight broke out between a group of black and white hobos, and the whites were thrown off the train. They reported the incident to a stationmaster, who wired ahead for officials to stop the train at a town called Paint Rock. Dozens of armed men rounded up nine black youths and took them to jail. They were about to be charged with assault when two white women, dressed in boys clothing, were discovered hiding on the train. The women, who had had sexual relations with some of the white men, were thrown off the train and, fearing prosecution for their sexual activity, agreed to testify against the black youths. Although there was no evidence connecting the men to the crime, the nine youths were charged with raping the women. The subsequent trial was held in the town of Scottsboro, Alabama. The all-white jury convicted the nine, and all but the youngest, who was 12 years old, were sentenced to death.

The announcement of the verdict and sentences ignited a roar of protest in the North. The Communist Party USA took charge of the case and carried out a two-fold battle—in the courts and on the streets. In 1932, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the convictions (Powell v. Alabama) on the grounds that the defendants had not received adequate legal counsel in a capital case. The state of Alabama then retried one of the accused, Haywood Patterson, and once again convicted him. The trial judge, James Horton, set aside the verdict on the grounds that he did not believe the defendant committed the crime. That decision caused him to be defeated in the next election. The state then retried Clarence Norris to see if the Supreme Court would again intervene. Norris was sentenced to death, but a 1935 decision (Norris v. Alabama) overturned this conviction, ruling that the state had excluded blacks from juries. Alabama again tried and convicted Haywood Patterson, this time sentencing him to 75 years in prison. Further trials of the rest of the defendants resulted in more convictions and appeals until, after persistent pressure from both Northern and Southern groups, Alabama freed the four youngest defendants (who had already served six years in jail) and later paroled all but Patterson. Patterson escaped in 1948 and fled to Michigan, where, three years later, he was convicted of manslaughter and died in prison. The last known surviving member of the group, Clarence Norris, fled after his parole in 1946 and was granted a full pardon by the governor of Alabama in 1976.

*Image 12: The Scottsboro Boys, with attorney Samuel Leibowitz, under guard by the state militia, 1932*

“The courtroom was one big smiling white face.”  
—Haywood Patterson

“I was scared before, but it wasn’t nothing to how I felt now. I knew if a white woman accused a black man of rape, he was as good as dead.”  
—Clarence Norris
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. She completed her college degree after her marriage then began a long career in teaching.

Tell me about your background and ancestry.  

BARGE: My mother grew up on the Morrisette Plantation in Alabama. We know that my grandmother was a servant there in 1880. My grandmother had more privileges than other servants because she worked in the house rather than the fields. And she never lived in the slave quarters. When the overseer left the plantation, she and her family were allowed to move into his house. Her father was owned by one Alexander Bryant from Kentucky, and he willed his slaves to his children. From his will, we found that my family was worth $385. All of my great-grandfather’s and great-grandmother’s children were born in slavery. When I was growing up, I knew nothing about this. Anything related to slavery, we didn’t want to hear it. I don’t think any blacks wanted to hear anything about slavery. My mother grew up on the Morrisette Plantation and came to Birmingham when she was 21. My father’s people came from the area near Panola, Alabama. This may shock you, but the plantation owner had seven or eight children by two of his slaves. One of those offspring was my father’s father.

How was town life near Birmingham different from rural life?  

BATES: My father seemed to think living near Birmingham was a great improvement over the country. He said he left the country because he hated to be told what to do and he could be more independent in the city. He always said he would refuse to be treated like a boy. I’ve been trying to understand my father’s rebelliousness. There were times when he would rebuke people who said certain things to him, because he thought everything had something to do with race. Nobody could ever tell him he couldn’t have a thing or do a thing. He carried the Bessemer Housing Authority to court in 1954 to keep them from taking his property for a housing project. No black person ever challenged Authority. He didn’t win, of course—he knew he wouldn’t win. But my father would challenge anybody. I think it went back to his early environment. He felt that he and other young men were being dealt a raw deal by the overseers of the land. The workers were being cheated out of their profits. Mother moved to the Birmingham area to get away from a bad personal situation. But many people moved off the land because of crop failures. The land was just worn out and the South as suffering from terrible droughts. People got deep into debt—debts that were kept on the books, even when they had been paid off. It was hard to challenge the records kept by landowners. Through the ‘20s and ‘30s, many black people hoboed away from the South because they realized that on the farms the more you worked the more you owed. So you would describe yourself as a small-town girl, growing up just outside Birmingham? And you’re writing a history of that area?  

BATES: Yes. McCulley’s Quarters was a place where poor, working-class black people like my parents lived until they could afford a bigger house.

What were the houses like? The living conditions?  

BATES: They were all shotgun places. No electricity, of course. The thing we hated most about no electricity was no radio. We didn’t get a radio until 1940.

How did a typical little girl spend the day when you were about six years old?  

BATES: Oh, I led a sheltered life. Mother always kept me dressed in the dresses she made, and I was kept close around the house. I visited neighbors and played house and read.

As a child, did you have contacts with white people? That is, did you have a sense of yourself as black and without certain opportunities?  

BATES: Except for a few white people who lived in the Quarters, as a child I didn’t know many white people or have a sense of being discriminated against. It wasn’t until I started going to school that I became aware that I couldn’t go to certain parks, couldn’t swim in certain places. During the ‘30s my mother began taking in washing and ironing for white people, so I began to see the white people she worked for. Then later I came to realize the differences. For example, there were no hospitals for black people. The one or two hospitals that would take black people put them in the basement. And of course the black doctor, who had been taking care of you, would not be allowed to attend you while you were in the white hospital.

Did your family have any contact with white people in a similar economic situation to yours—people whom we might call “poor whites?”  

BATES: My mother didn’t, but my father did at his work. I remember him talking particularly about the woman who worked as a nurse at the factory who always abused any black workers she had to treat who were injured on the job. Many workers would just try to treat their own wounds rather than go to her to help them. Some would pull their own teeth rather than be treated by some white dentist. A few of the men my father worked with were white and poor. Many years later I learned that he had once gotten into an argument with a white worker, hit him over the head with his lunch bucket, and knocked him out. I never knew what the argument was about, but my father thought he had killed...
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

the man so he left and went back to Aliceville, Alabama. He stayed for a few days until the foreman sent him a message through my mother that the man wasn’t really hurt and they wanted him to come back to work.

Were conditions rougher in the 1930s during the Depression, or was it about the same?

BATES: We were always poor, but the Depression was definitely worse. People who had had jobs lost them or, like my father, were laid off for periods of time. And if you worked, the pay was often something like three or four dollars a week. What my mother always said was that people used the old plantation skills to survive; growing gardens, canning, making absolutely everything and buying almost nothing.

What was education like for African Americans in Alabama at the time?

BATES: My mother, growing up on the plantation, was well educated. Churches maintained schools in the country, and children who showed promise as good students were sought out and sent to those schools, if their parents would pay. My mother was sent for a time to Snow Hill Institute. Her parents scraped and picked cotton so she could attend, but she didn’t finish. The last year crops were so bad, she couldn’t go. Most, of course, were not educated. My father attended school through the third grade only. In my generation, most children I knew attended school, though many left at an early age to work. I believe that compulsory schooling until the age of 16 did not come until about 1941.

What occupations were open to African Americans as you were growing up?

BATES: For women, aside from domestic work and labor like laundering, the only professions or trades were nursing and teaching. Of course, you only nursed or taught black people. Many women worked as cooks in private homes and restaurants, as maids in private homes and businesses. There were no black sales clerks in stores. Men worked in the mines, factories, as delivery boys, carpenters, and bricklayers. They could operate elevators, but they couldn’t become firemen or policemen or salesmen. Some black men worked as tailors. Those who went into professions became doctors or dentists or principals or preachers within the black community.

What about your father?

BATES: My father worked first in the mines, then the mills in the area making pipes. It was extremely hard work. The heat was so intense that few people could endure pouring the hot metal to shape the pipes. There were, of course, no black foremen. My father said that the white owners and managers assumed that all black men had inexhaustible physical strength. They were ordered to do physically back-breaking jobs over and over and over again. Work in the mills broke the health of many men long before they could retire. My father finally quit because he said the foremen couldn’t get it through their heads that black men didn’t have endless strength.

What were the legal barriers that African Americans faced?

BATES: Well, of course, we weren’t allowed to register to vote. Even though I was a schoolteacher for 20 years, I didn’t register to vote until the late ’60s. There were a few black attorneys who would take on cases, but at least in Birmingham in the ’30s and ’40s, black attorneys couldn’t practice in the courthouse. Their very presence in the courtroom was bitterly resented by many people.

What was the feeling in the black community about the Montgomery bus boycott?

BATES: We were always given the same treatment on buses throughout the South that Rosa Parks received. Most of us had to ride the buses. We bought our tickets at the front of the bus and then went around to the back door to get in. If the white section filled and more white people got on, you were ordered out of your seats and the driver would move the sign back to make the white section bigger. It was a terrible humiliation as well as being terribly uncomfortable. We would be jammed together in the back like sardines. Even worse was when some of the whites would get off and some drivers would refuse to move the sign back up so that we could have more room for a few black people to sit down.

Mrs. Barge, despite the difficulties and humiliations you have lived with in the South, you don’t seem to put all white people into the same category.

BATES: No, you shouldn’t put people into categories. Many treated us badly. We disliked them and made fun of them behind their backs. But some of them were good men who were polite and considerate and would even hold the bus for us when they knew we were late. No, not all black people are the same and not all white people are the same.
Testimony of Ruby Bates
April 7, 1933

April 6, 1931 marked the beginning of the trial for the “Scottsboro Boys,” eight of whom were sentenced to death. On November 7, 1932, the US Supreme Court ordered new trials for the Scottsboro defendants because they had not received adequate representation. This transcript is from the 1933 appeal. In it, Ruby Bates, one of the two accusers, claims that she was raped, despite a letter in which she confesses to a friend that she was lying. Samuel Lebowitz, the defense attorney for the nine young men, questions her.

LEBOWITZ: When did you first start taking up with Victoria Price [the other accuser]—when did you first start to become friendly with her, going out with her?
BATES: After I went to work at the mill.
LEBOWITZ: Were you a good girl before you met her, a good decent girl before you met that girl?
MR. KNIGHT [Prosecuting Attorney]: We object.
LEBOWITZ: You were a worker in the mill before you met her?
BATES: Yes sir.
LEBOWITZ: Were you a good girl before you met her?
BATES: Well, yes.
LEBOWITZ: After you started taking up with her did you continue to go around with her in Huntsville?
BATES: Yes sir.

LEBOWITZ: Did any negro attack you that day [March 25]?
BATES: Not that I know of.
LEBOWITZ: Did any negro attack Victoria Price that day?
BATES: I couldn’t say.
LEBOWITZ: Did you see any negro attack Victoria that day?
BATES: No sir.
LEBOWITZ: Where was Victoria Price?
BATES: She was in the gondola where I was.
LEBOWITZ: Did you stay in the same gondola until you got to Paint Rock?
BATES: Yes sir.
LEBOWITZ: When you got to Paint Rock the train stopped, didn’t it?
BATES: Yes sir.

LEBOWITZ: What happened when the train stopped, what happened to you girls?
BATES: Well, we got off the train, then Victoria was unconscious and they carried her out there to a store.
LEBOWITZ: Then what happened?
BATES: They arrested them.
LEBOWITZ: Arrested all the negroes?
BATES: Yes sir.
LEBOWITZ: Were you in jail with Victoria at Scottsboro?
BATES: Yes sir.
LEBOWITZ: You testified at the trial, did you not; each one of those cases in Scottsboro, you took the witness stand?
BATES: Yes sir.
LEBOWITZ: You told the story that you had seen six negroes rape Victoria Price and six negroes raped you; you told a story like that?
BATES: I told you before, but I was excited.
LEBOWITZ: You testified at Scottsboro that six negroes raped you and six negroes raped her, and one had a knife on your throat; what happened to her was exactly the same thing that happened to you. Who coached you to say that?
BATES: She told it and I told it just like she told it.
LEBOWITZ: Who told you to tell that story?
BATES: I told it like she told it.
LEBOWITZ: Who told you to do that, who coached you to do that?
BATES: She did.
LEBOWITZ: Did she tell you what would happen to you if you didn’t follow her story?
BATES: She said we might have to lay out a sentence in jail.
The Court will now present the evidence which will show:

Let us consider the rich field from which such corroboration may be gleaned. A case out of the whole evidence, a conviction cannot stand. The defendant and his witnesses, unless the State can make of her being raped. No matter how reliable the testimony of the defendant, Victoria Price must have sworn truly to the fact of necessity consider in detail the evidence of the chief prosecutrix, Victoria Price, to determine if her evidence is reliable, or whether it is corroborated or contradicted by the other evidence of the case. In order to convict his prosecutrix, Victoria Price, to determine if her evidence is reliable, or whether it is corroborated or contradicted by the other evidence of the case. In order to convict his defendant, Victoria Price must have sworn truly to the fact of her being raped. No matter how reliable the testimony of the defendant and his witnesses, unless the State can make a case out of the whole evidence, a conviction cannot stand. Let us consider the rich field from which such corroboration may be gleaned.

1. Seven boys on the gondola at the beginning of the fight, and Orville Gilley, the white boy, who remained on the train, and saw the whole performance.
2. The wound inflicted on the side of Victoria Price’s head by the butt end of a pistol from which the blood did flow.
3. The lacerated and bleeding back of the body, a part of which was stripped of clothing and lay on jagged sharp rock, which body two physicians carefully examined for injuries shortly after the occurrence.
...6. Two doctors who could testify to the wretched condition of the women, their wild eyes, dilated pupils, fast breathing, and rapid pulse.
...8. The presence of live spermatozoa, the active principle of semen.
The Court will now present the evidence which will show:

That none of the seven white boys, or Orville Gilley, who remained on the train were put on the stand, except Lester Carter;
That neither Dr. Bridges nor Dr. Lynch saw the wound inflicted on the head by the pistol, the lacerated or bleeding back which lay on jagged rocks;
That the semen they found was of small amount or dead;
That they saw no bleeding;
That these doctors testified that when brought to the office that day neither woman was hysterical or nervous about it at all, and that their respiration and pulse were normal.

Taking up these points in order, what does the record show? None of the seven white boys were put on the stand, except Lester Carer, and he contradicted her.

...That is the State’s evidence. It corroborates Victoria Price, slightly, if at all, and her evidence is so contradictory to the evidence of the doctors who examined her that it has been impossible for the Court to reconcile their evidence with hers.

...Rape is a crime usually committed in secrecy. A secluded place or a place where one ordinarily would not be observed is the natural selection for the scene of such a crime. The time and place and stage of this alleged act are such to make one wonder and question did such an act occur under such circumstances. The day is a sunny day, the latter part in March; the time of day is shortly after the noon hour. The place is upon a gondola or car without a top. The whole performance necessarily being in plain view of any one observing the train as it passed.

..Price’s manner of testifying and demeanor on the stand militate against her. Her testimony was contradictory, often evasive, and time again she refused to answer pertinent questions. The gravity of the offense and the importance of her testimony demanded candor and sincerity. In addition to this the proof tends strongly to show that she knowingly testified falsely in many material aspects of the case.

...These women are shown, by the great weight of the evidence, on this very day before leaving Chattanooga, to have falsely accused to negroes of insulting them, and of almost precipitating a fight between one of the white boys and these two negroes. This tendency on the part of the women shows that they are predisposed to make false accusations upon any occasion whereby their selfish ends may be granted. It is therefore ordered and adjudged by the Court that the motion be granted; that the verdict of the jury in this case and the judgment of the Court sentencing this defendant to death be, and the same hereby is, set aside and that a new trial be and the same is hereby ordered.

Further Reading

Judge James E. Horton’s Opinion
June 22, 1933

On April 9, 1933, Haywood Patterson, the first of the Scottsboro defendants to be tried a second time, was found guilty and sentenced to be executed. The execution was stayed on appeal as the defense attorney asked for a new trial. On June 22, 1933, Judge Horton responded, stunning the state of Alabama with an unprecedented action. In the excerpt below, he “set[s] aside” the jury’s guilty verdict on the grounds that the evidence did not warrant conviction:

This case is now submitted for hearing on a motion of a new trial. As human life is at stake, not only of this defendant, but of eight others, the Court does and should approach consideration of this motion with a feeling of deep responsibility, and shall endeavor to give it that thought and study it deserves.

Social order is based on law, and its perpetuity on its fair and impartial administration. Deliberate injustice is more fatal to the one who imposes than to the one on whom it is imposed. The victim may die quickly and his suffering cease, but the teachings of Christianity and the uniform lessons of all history illustrate without exception that its perpetrators not only pay the penalty themselves, but their children through endless generations.

...Is there sufficient evidence upon which to base a verdict? Let us now turn to the facts of the case. The Court will of necessity consider in detail the evidence of the chief prosecutrix, Victoria Price, to determine if her evidence is reliable, or whether it is corroborated or contradicted by the other evidence of the case. In order to convict his defendant, Victoria Price must have sworn truly to the fact of her being raped. No matter how reliable the testimony of the defendant and his witnesses, unless the State can make a case out of the whole evidence, a conviction cannot stand. Let us consider the rich field from which such corroboration may be gleaned.

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Mayella’s testimony
Act I of To Kill a Mockingbird

MR. GILMER. [calling] Mayella Violet Ewell. [COURT CLERK administers the oath]

CLERK: Swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

MAYELLA: Yes. [MAYELLA sits]

MR. GILMER: Please tell the jury in your own words what happened on the evening of November 21. [MAYELLA does not reply] Where were you at dusk on that evening?

MAYELLA: On the porch.

MR. GILMER: What were you doing on the porch? [MAYELLA hesitates]

JUDGE TAYLOR: Just tell us what happened. You can do that, can’t you? What are you scared of? [MAYELLA whispers something to from behind her hand] What was that?

MAYELLA: [pointing to ATTICUS] Him. Don’t want him doin’ me like done Papa, makin’ him out to be left-handed.

JUDGE TAYLOR: I see. Well, Mr. Finch has no idea of scaring you and if he did, I’m here to stop him. Now sit up straight and tell us what happened.

MAYELLA: Well—I was on the porch and—he came along and, you see, there was this old chiffarobe in the yard Papa’d brought in to chop up for kindlin’. Papa told me to do it while he was off in the woods, but I wasn’t feelin’ strong enough then, so he came by—

MR. GILMER: Who is ‘he’?

MAYELLA: That’n yonder. Robinson.

MR. GILMER: Then what happened?

MAYELLA: I said, ‘Come here, boy, and bust up this chiffarobe for me, I gotta nickel for you.’ So he came in the yard an’ I went in the house to him the nickel. An’ ’fore I knew it, he was on me. He got me ‘round the neck. I fought but he hit me agin and agin.

MR. GILMER: Go on.

MAYELLA: An’ he took advantage of me.

MR. GILMER: Did you scream and fight back?

MAYELLA: Kicked and hollered loud as I could.

MR. GILMER: Then what happened?

MAYELLA: Don’t remember too good, but Papa come in the room and was hollerin’ who done it? Then I sorta fainted, an’ the next thing I knew, Mr. Tate was helpin’ me over to the water bucket.

MR. GILMER: You fought Robinson hard as you could—tooth and nail?

MAYELLA: I positively did.

MR. GILMER: You are positive he took full advantage of you?

MAYELLA: [holding back a sob] I already told ya. He done what he was after.

SEE MORE: Watch a rehearsal of National Players performing this scene at the following YouTube link: http://youtu.be/zQY2_Z3ESfU

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37
MR. GILMER: That’s all for now. But stay here. I expect big, bad Mr. Finch has some questions.

JUDGE TAYLOR: (primly) State will not prejudice the witness against the counsel for the defense.

ATTICUS: Miss Mayella, I won’t try to scare you for a while, not yet. Let’s get acquainted.

... 

MAYELLA: Won’t answer a word as long as you keep on mocking me.

ATTICUS: (startled) Ma’am?

MAYELLA: Long as you call me ‘ma’am’ and say ‘Miss Mayella.’ [To JUDGE TAYLOR] I don’t have to take his sass.

JUDGE TAYLOR: That’s just Mr. Finch’s way. We’ve done business in this court for years and Mr. Finch is always courteous. Atticus, let’s get on—and let the record show that the witness had not been sassed.

...

ATTICUS: Do you love your father, Miss Mayella?

MAYELLA: Love him, watcha mean?

ATTICUS: Is he good to you, is he easy to get along with?

MAYELLA: He does toll’able ‘cept when—

ATTICUS: Except when he’s drinking? [MAYELLA nods] When he’s riled—has he ever beaten you?

JUDGE TAYLOR: Answer the question, Miss Mayella.

MAYELLA: My paw’s never touched a hair o’ my head—

ATTICUS: We’ve had a good visit, Miss Mayella. Now we’d better get to the case. You say you asked Tom Robinson to come chop up a—what was it?

MAYELLA: A chiffarobe, an old dresser.

ATTICUS: Was Tom Robinson well known to you?

MAYELLA: Whaddya mean?

ATTICUS: Did you know who he was, where he lived?

MAYELLA: I knowed who he was. He passed the house every day.

ATTICUS: Was this the first time you asked him to come inside the fence?

MAYELLA: Yes it was.

... 

ATTICUS: Now to what happened. You said Tom Robinson got you around the neck—is that right?

MAYELLA: Yes.

ATTICUS: You say—’he caught me and choked me and took advantage of me’—is that right?

MAYELLA: That’s what I said.
ATTICUS: Do you remember him beating you about the face? [MAYELLA hesitates] You’re sure enough he choked you. All this time you were fighting back, remember? You kicked and holler. Do you remember him beating you about the face? It’s an easy question, Miss Mayella, so I’ll try again. Do you remember him beating you about the face?

MAYELLA: No, I don’t recollect if he hit me. I mean, yes, I do, he hit me.

ATTICUS: Was your last sentence your answer?

MAYELLA: Yes he hit—I just don’t remember—it all happened so quick!

JUDGE TAYLOR: Don’t you cry young woman.

ATTICUS: Let her cry, if she wants to, Judge. We’ve got all the time in the world.

MAYELLA: Get me up here an’ mock me, will you? I’ll answer any question you got.

ATTICUS: That’s fine. There’s only a few more....Miss Mayella, you’ve testified the defendant choked and beat you. You didn’t say he sneaked up being you and knocked you cold. Do you wish to reconsider any of your testimony?

MAYELLA: You want me to say something that didn’t happen?

ATTICUS: No ma’am. I want you to say something that did happen.

MAYELLA: I already told ya.

ATTICUS: He hit you? He blackened your right eye with his right fist?

MAYELLA: I ducked and it—it glanced it off. That’s what I did.

ATTICUS: You’re a strong girl. Why didn’t you run?

MAYELLA: Tried to—

ATTICUS: And you were screaming all the time?

MAYELLA: I certainly was.

ATTICUS: Why didn’t the other children hear you? Where were they? [MAYELLA makes no reply]

Why didn’t your screams make them come running? Or didn’t you scream until you saw your father in the window? You didn’t scream till then, did you? Did you scream at your father instead of Tom Robinson? Is that it? Who beat you up? Tom Robinson or your father? MAYELLA makes no reply Miss Mayella—what did your father really see in that window? [MAYELLA covers her mouth with her hands] Why don’t you tell the truth, child—didn’t Bob Ewell beat you up?

MAYELLA: I—I got somethin’ to say.

ATTICUS: Do you want to tell us what happened?

MAYELLA: I got somethin’ to say an’ then I ain’t gonna say no more. That man yonder took advantage of me an’ if you fine fancy gentlemen don’t wanna do nothin’ about it then you’re all yellow stink’ cowards, stinkin’ cowards, the lot of you. Your fancy airs don’t come to nothin’—your ma’amin’ and Miss Mayellarin’ don’t come to nothin’, Mr. Finch, [MAYELLA covers her face with her hands to hold back her sobs]

MR. GILMER: That’s all. You can step down now. Sir—the State rests.
STEP INSIDE ANOTHER’S SKIN

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to think from the perspective of a different person. Students will be able to create their own characters. Students will be able to understand the conditions surrounding the events and world of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 9 - 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Character Creation Worksheet (see appendix), Peacolia Barge interview (see pg. 32), trial scene from *To Kill a Mockingbird* (see pg. 36–8) or materials surrounding Scottsboro trials (pg. 31), access to outside resources.

1. Discuss racial segregation and Jim Crow conditions in the South around the time of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Share information from “Separate but Equal” information in Tool Kit (see pg. 30). Ask students to think about what it was like to live in that world. How did the fact that segregation and unfair treatment was a part of everyday life affect people’s actions and attitudes?

2. Tell students that they are going to develop a character who is a part of that world, someone who deals with these structures every day and who is a spectator for an important trial.

3. Read the interview with Peacolia Barge, and ask students what they can understand about her life from what she says. What would she think about proceedings like the trial? What is her background?

4. Distribute either documents from Scottsboro trial (Ruby Bates testimony and Judge James E. Horton’s Opinion) or Mayella’s testimony from Act I of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Have students read these documents, and imagine what it would be like to witness the event.

5. Distribute Character Creation Worksheet (see appendix) and ask students (but do not have them fill in) what the answers to those questions might be if they were to answer them for Peacolia Barge. Ask them to think of their own character, and encourage students to choose many different backgrounds. Have them research the time period and find other information about the types of people who might have heard news about the trial at the time, if possible, then have them fill out the worksheet for their own unique character.

6. After students have created their character, have them conduct an imaginary interview with that character, writing questions similar to the questions asked to Peacolia Barge and questions about viewing the trial and making up their answers.

7. If there is enough time, have students read out their interviews, and talk about the community that the class has created, what divisions and combinations of people exist, and what they think has changed in the world since that time and why.
### Meet the Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jean Louise “Scout” Finch</td>
<td>An curious, temperamental, and an unabashed tomboy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atticus Finch</td>
<td>Scout and Jem’s father, also the lawyer appointed to defend Tom Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Robinson</td>
<td>A man with a wife and children, accused by the Ewells of raping Mayella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Sykes</td>
<td>The head of Tom Robinson and Calpurnia’s church, determined to help Tom and his family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jem Finch</td>
<td>Scout’s older brother. Although he loves his father, he wishes Atticus was younger and more active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calpurnia</td>
<td>The Finch family’s housekeeper, also a surrogate mother to Scout and Jem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Gilmer</td>
<td>The prosecuting lawyer in the case against Tom Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dill</td>
<td>A boy who arrives in Maycomb on holiday and becomes fast friends with the Finch siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Ewell</td>
<td>A poor farmer who, along with his daughter Mayella, accuses Tom Robinson of rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maude Atkinson</td>
<td>An elderly neighbor and close friend of the Finches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Stephanie</td>
<td>A gossiping, nosy resident of Maycomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Dubose</td>
<td>An elderly neighbor, constantly berating Jem and Scout for “running wild”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Ewell</td>
<td>A poor farmer who, along with his daughter Mayella, accuses Tom Robinson of rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Cunningham</td>
<td>A farmer whose family was hit hard by the Depression, has a son the same age as Scout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan Radley</td>
<td>Boo Radley’s older brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge Taylor</td>
<td>The fair-minded judge presiding over Tom Robinson’s case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Dubose</td>
<td>An elderly neighbor, constantly berating Jem and Scout for “running wild”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayella</td>
<td>The eldest of seven children and the main accuser of Tom Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heck Tate</td>
<td>The sheriff of Maycomb and a supporter of Tom and Atticus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan Radley</td>
<td>Boo Radley’s older brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Cunningham</td>
<td>A farmer whose family was hit hard by the Depression, has a son the same age as Scout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boo Radley</td>
<td>The reclusive, mysterious neighbor who lives next door to the Finches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shirley Serotsky is the director of To Kill a Mockingbird. She received her BFA, North Carolina School of the Arts. Along with freelance directing at various regional theaters, she serves as the Associate Artistic Director of Theater J in Washington, DC.

What is your previous experience with To Kill A Mockingbird?
Like many people, I read the book in school. I don’t remember exactly when—maybe middle school?

What do you think To Kill A Mockingbird gains by being presented theatrically?
Hearing Harper Lee’s words spoken out loud allows us to further connect with these wonderful characters. And in doing so, we bring them into the contemporary world.

How do you approach the racial issues inherent in the book and play?
We’ve had a lot of conversations in rehearsals about the themes in the play and how they resonate for us today. Most of that has been about the play, but some of it has been pulled from our personal lives as well. It’s not easy, looking at this history and some of the language that is used honestly and unflinchingly, but I think we have to do that to do the story justice.

Do you have any hopes or expectations for what people will take away from the experience of seeing the show? What sort of action would you like to see it provoke?
I would love it if people go home talking about how the story relates to current events. I don’t think we can see this merely as history.

What’s it like trying to tell this story with only 10 actors?
Challenging. We’ve had to be very creative with how we handle the doubling, and I am trying to keep a constant eye on clarity of storytelling.

How do you personally connect with the story?
I have always loved that this most important and beloved of all American novels is a story told through the lens of a young girl. Scout is such a wonderful protagonist, and she was in so many ways ahead of her time. As a young person who also felt a bit on the outside growing up, I very much identified with her.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42
CONTINUED—
A DIRECTOR’S PERSPECTIVE

What did you discover during the rehearsal process that surprised you?
That even the most “unlikable” characters can evoke some sympathy, some understand- ing. I’m thinking mostly of Mayella Ewell. She’s a victim of her circumstances as well. While our hearts are fully with Tom Robinson, I think they do go out to Mayella at moments as well.

What is it like directing a play that has such an iconic film version?
Seems to be my thing lately. I directed a version of The Jungle Book in the spring, and just finished directing the stage version of Yentl. I’ve not watched the movie, so it hasn’t affected me much. This one I think I should watch. I’ll probably do it after we open.

Why is this story important to tell right now?
I think as long as our country continues to witness events like the Trayvon Martin shooting and the Michael Brown shooting, this story will remain painfully relevant. We need to find balance in the way we value life on this planet, and we’re far from reaching that now.

“Even the most ‘unlikeable’ characters can evoke some sympathy, some understanding. I’m thinking mostly of Mayella Ewell. She’s a victim of her circumstances as well. While our hearts are fully with Tom Robinson, I think they do go out to Mayella at moments as well.”
—Shirley Serotsky
4. Before the Show

**Hannah McKechnie is from West Friendship, Maryland and received her BFA in acting from Boston University. Her onstage roles for Tour 66 include Audrey and Hyman in As You Like It, Antonio in The Tempest, and Scout in To Kill a Mockingbird. Offstage, she serves as stage manager for As You Like It and Master Electrician.**

What is your previous experience with To Kill a Mockingbird?

I read the novel in sixth grade, and I remember liking it. But, this summer after listening to the book on tape, narrated by Sissy Spacek, I realized how important of a story it is. Its message of empathy is something every person, no matter what age, no matter what race, needs to be reminded of.

To get a little more technical, how do you approach a character who is so young?

Dialects are a really helpful way for me to unlock characters, so defining her Alabama accent was the first step. I am also using a much higher vocal range. Physically, I’m just trying to find as much freedom in my body as possible. Kids don’t have many inhibitions physically: when they have an itch, they scratch it, or a wedgie, they pick it; when they get excited, they jump and scream; when they get sad, they cry. They haven’t built their emotional walls yet. Scout especially has no concept of what it’s like to act like a lady, and I think she overcompensates for being a girl and not taken seriously by the boys at school, so there’s a real earthiness, roughness and fearlessness to her. Overall, it is more helpful for me to focus on her spirit and energy than her age.

What is Scout’s attitude towards the world?

She has been taught that there are three classes in Maycomb: the white middle class, the white lower class, and the black community, and within those classes, everyone knows their place. She knows that certain people act certain ways: the Ewells live one way, the Cunninghams another. People act according to how she expects they should. The funny part is, I don’t think she really understands her own place as a young lady. Without a mother figure in her life, Jem has become her role model, and he has taught her that girls are sissies—and the last thing she wants to be is a sissy, so she fights to get respect from the boys at school. I think this is why she finds an understanding with people who are seen as outsiders, like Dill, Tom and Boo. She relates to them because she knows what it is like to be prejudiced against based on what she looks like.

What does Scout learn throughout the play?

Scout learns the meaning of prejudice. She sees a kind, generous, innocent black man put to death for nothing but the color of his skin. For the first time, all of the stereotypes she had been taught to trust begin to unravel and she sees that the world isn’t as simple as she thought. In witnessing the tragedy of Tom Robinson, she is awakened to her own faults and prejudices she has put on others. She realizes she’s done the exact same thing to her father and Boo Radley. She assumed that her father was just a boring old nobody because he couldn’t do any fun activities that all her friends’ fathers did, only to learn that he is actually one of the most important and impressive people in Maycomb. She assumed Boo Radley was an awful, evil man, only to learn that he is in fact a very sweet person, just terribly shy. From the events she experiences in this story, I like to think she grows into a wise, empathetic, and patient young woman.

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4. Before the Show

CONTINUED—AN ACTOR’S PERSPECTIVE

“Morality is a different thing than law and what society expects; there is an internal right and wrong, and then there’s a societal right and wrong. Scout is trying to put those two worlds together.”
—Hannah McKechnie, Tour 66

Can you talk about the challenge of presenting a story that’s already so iconic? Because so many people have read the book or seen the movie, they’ve already imagined the story perfectly in their heads, so it will be challenging to play against that. Like with Harry Potter, I had such a strong vision of all the characters’ appearances before I saw the movie, and then when I saw them on screen they looked wrong. There may be people who stick their noses up at our play because it’s not how they imagined it, but we can’t control how the audience will perceive us. We just have to fill the play with our own imaginations of what this world and these characters are like, as with any play. This play is awesome because it boils the story down to the main events, so some plot points or details will be missed, but it’s our job as actors to take all those details that are described in the book and embody them onstage as fully as possible.

What’s the most challenging aspect of taking on this role?
The physical practice of the role. Scout is involved in almost every moment that happens onstage and she goes through so much and learns a lot about herself and the world around her in two hours. It’s exhausting. The play is very emotionally demanding and draining for all of us, I think. We all sit onstage for the entire play, even when not involved in a scene, and that demands a constant presence and awareness of every moment.

How do you personally relate to Scout?
I relate to most things about her: her strong desire and commitment to fighting for what she believes in, her practical way of thinking, her blatant honesty and her frustration with unwarranted cruelty, her growing up with only one parent and the kind of independence that warrants, and not being taken seriously because of her age and gender.

What is it like, both for you and the whole company, having to create a world that can be so ugly and cruel?
At the beginning of rehearsals, we discussed the ugliness that this play blatantly addresses quite in depth. It was important for everyone to get their opinions and stories out on the table, so that our awareness of this play’s power couldn’t be overlooked. If we as actors hadn’t talked about the implications of the play with each other, it would have been ignorant and hypocritical of us to perform it. Knowing where everyone was coming from made us free to each play our particular role. It will be difficult to carry this play on our backs for a year, but it is such an important message to be told, and we will all be there for each other when someone needs a little support. It is important to know that we are in this together.

What conversations do you hope to have with students?
I’m curious to know about what students learn about themselves as they watch the play, what the play makes them think about, and how they relate to the story or any of the characters.
John Traub is the set designer for all three Tour 66 shows. He received his BA from Colorado College and MFA from Boston University. Along with set designing for various regional theaters, he currently serves as Professor of Production Management and Technology at The George Washington University.

How would you describe the National Players’ aesthetic?
One of the things that makes the National Players so unique is the manner in which they approach their art. They possess such a strong workmanlike ethos—no matter the task, they take to it passionately and with gusto. It’s inspiring to be a part of. Everything they need is essentially packed in a large rolling box—and every night, they get to open that box and share their particular brand of magic with the world.

What was the most challenging space to try to create for the play?
The Players will travel to a variety of locations, all of which are different and have their various quirks. The challenge lies in creating believable, functional spaces that are flexible enough to accommodate those locations. We all have our parts to play, but at the end of the day our job is to tell stories. Part of our responsibility is making sure they have the tools they need to succeed at doing just that.

How is the collaborative nature of National Players unique?
It’s incredible. It’s so rare to find a company where every individual is working in tandem towards a common goal. It’s an ideal scenario to create theater—every idea is focused into a metaphorical melting pot that energizes our work.

What sort of research did you do to prepare for your design process?
I always begin by reading the play several times—the first time, I read just for enjoyment. After, I begin to dive in for details: Who are the characters? What are their motivations? What kind of locations are present in the play? How does the story and pacing flow? I usually follow with visual research, sparks that help support our big ideas. While all of this is going on, I’m collaborating with the directors on their respective productions—making sure their vision is realized and can become a reality. I’m a very tactile designer—I think better in a physical space—so I’ll usually make a rough scale model and start working with it early on. It’s a great way to see how things actually look in space.

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CONTINUED—
A DESIGNER’S PERSPECTIVE

“We all have our parts to play, but at the end of the day our job is to tell stories. Part of our responsibility is making sure they have the tools they need to succeed at doing just that.”
—John Traub, set designer for To Kill a Mockingbird

Can you walk us through a brief timeline of your design process? What were early conversations with the director like, and how did your designs evolve throughout the pre-production and rehearsal process?

Early conversations usually revolve around the big ideas—themes, motifs, the mythos of the worlds we’re inhabiting—and are refined over time. We threw a lot of proverbial paint on the wall to see what would stick. There was a fair amount of evolution in regards to mechanics—how scenery functioned, transitions between scenes—but the core concepts remained the same throughout. It’s expected that there will be some evolution during rehearsals—that’s a good thing. An organic process is a valuable tool for polishing a show. Getting locked into ideas too early can be detrimental to the artistic process.

What is it like seeing your design realize itself onstage?

It’s a great feeling—it’s a mixture of happiness, pride and relief, with a small dose of wistful sadness. Happy and proud of the results, relieved we successfully made it, and sad the process is over.

John Traub created multiple design renderings for To Kill A Mockingbird, including: Image 17, a three-dimensional model; and Image 18, a black-and-white front elevation drawing.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A DIRECTOR’S PERSPECTIVE

1. Shirley speaks a lot about ensuring they do justice to source and the text. What things would you find most important to making sure that happens?

2. How does this interview affect your expectations for seeing the show? Have your expectations changed after reading it?

3. What impression do you get of Shirley’s priorities from this interview? Would they be your own priorities if you were tasked with presenting this play?

4. Do you see the current event connections referenced in the interview? How do those connections influence your viewing of the story?

AN ACTOR’S PERSPECTIVE

1. What in Hannah’s answers surprises you about her approach to portraying Scout?

2. How closely do you identify with Scout? How does your identification compare with what Hannah describes?

3. How would you deal with having to live in the world of To Kill A Mockingbird the way Hannah and the Players do?

4. Keeping her last answer in mind, what sort of things would you talk about with Hannah if you had the chance?

A DESIGNER’S PERSPECTIVE

1. What impact do you think the set can have on the experience of seeing To Kill A Mockingbird?

2. What do you know about the venue you are seeing the show in? How do you think the set as you understand it will fit into the venue where you are seeing the show?

3. How does the way John describes his process strike you? What process might you use to design a set?

4. How do you think the set comes apart and travels? What sort of creativity do you think is required when dealing with those constraints?
National Players tours all over the country, performing its three productions on dozens of stages. How does this photograph (Image 19) of Tour 66’s first venue compare with your performance space?

Take notice of the two columns. What does their arrangement suggest? How do you think they will be implemented? What locations might they suggest?

What do you notice on the middle of the stage? What do you think it represents, and how do you predict it will be utilized?

What do you observe about the set’s design elements? What do they make you think of? What do they suggest about the world that the Players are going to create?
BEFORE you watch

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Coming to the theater involves a more active form of participation than do other types of entertainment, such as film or television. Theater is a two-way art form; the performers and audience feed off each other, so the more energy coming from the spectators, the greater the experience will be for everyone. That said, a certain degree of respect and decorum is necessary for the actors to perform their very best. This list of etiquette rules is designed to help you enjoy this artistic experience as much as possible, whether you are a regular theater-goer or a first-timer:

**DO** respond to the onstage action with applause and laughter. Performers feed off your energy, so feel free to engage with them as much as possible.

**DON’T** speak aloud or whisper to your neighbor during the show; there will be plenty of time for discussion after the performance, and you run the risk of distracting the actors from their work.

**DO** turn off your cell phone and other devices that might make noise **before** the performance begins.

**DON’T** check your phone during the performance. Even if you have your device on silent, the bright light can be a distraction for the performers.

**DO** use the restroom **before** the performance. If you must leave the theater in the middle of the show, be as quiet and respectful as possible.

**DO** take notes. Jot down ideas, connections, and opinions that come to you during the performance. If you are attending a talkback, brainstorm some questions you have for the actors, either about the play itself or about the experience of being a National Player.

**LANGUAGE**

*To Kill a Mockingbird* was written by Harper Lee during the 1950s and depicts Alabama in the 1930s. At that time, there was a great amount of injustice and prejudice in American society of a sort that does not often exist in the same way today. Lee’s novel and Christopher Sergel’s stage adaptation do not try to hide some of the ugly sides of the world, and instead deal head-on with these injustices and prejudices. As such, there are several instances where the characters use hateful speech and language and express harmful attitudes in an aggressive way. We have not shied away from these moments—to do otherwise would be pretending our history is much cleaner and happier than it was—and we hope our audiences understand that these actions and attitudes were wrong and harmful then and now. We encourage students and teachers to be prepared to hear and see these attitudes depicted on stage, and to engage in conversation about what progress has and has not been made in the interim.
1. What do you notice about (circle the elements that your teacher wants you to focus on and explain in the space provided):

   - The story
   - The set (scenery, how the stage looks without actors)
   - Transitions (how the scenes and playing space change)
   - Language (the dialogue and the characters’ style of speech)
   - Lighting
   - Blocking/staging (where the actors stand and navigate the space)
   - Physical acting (how the actors move/embODY their characters)
   - Sound and music
   - Vocal acting (how the actors sound/speak like their characters)

2. What questions would you like to ask the performers?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

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Show Encounter Survey (please return to the Players)

Show: To Kill a Mockingbird
Date: ____________________________

Grade: ____________________________
School: ____________________________

1. I enjoyed the performance:    VERY MUCH    SOMEWHAT    A LITTLE    NOT AT ALL

2. The play makes me think about:  ________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________

3. How did this production connect with themes/subjects you are learning in school?
   ________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________

4. Is this the first live theater production you have seen?   YES   NO
Thirty years after the Scottsboro case and Tom Robinson’s fictional trial, segregation retained a strong foothold in America, especially in the South. The 1940s and ‘50s did, however, begin to usher in seeds of change which would be more fully realized in the late ‘60s with the Civil Rights Movement. Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird was published in 1960, amidst a turbulent political climate, which likely informed her writing as well as her readers’ interpretations.

The “separate but equal” philosophy that permeated Scout’s world continued through the 1960s. Blacks were treated by separate doctors, sat in segregated areas at most public facilities, faced hiring discrimination, and were rarely eligible to vote. World War II marked a slight turning point in race relations, as African Americans who served in the military performed many jobs that white soldiers performed, and also fought, sustained wounds, and died for their country. Military service allowed many to see a world outside of the South—even outside of the United States—for the first time in their lives. Outside of the South, segregation and discrimination were not nearly as pronounced as within it. Many historians credit this return home after the war as a tremendous impetus for change.

1954 was a landmark in the history of civil rights. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, that racial segregation of public schools was illegal and inherently unequal. The decision inspired more blacks, and many whites, to accelerate the fight against segregation. It also provoked those in favor of segregation to institute more restrictive laws and resort, in some cases, to violence.

1955 was a landmark in the history of civil rights. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, an African-American seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama, boarded a nearly-full city bus on her way home from work. When a white man boarded, the African-American passengers were ordered to give up their seats and stand; all but Parks obeyed. Mere hours after her arrest, a boycott against city buses began to take shape. Starting on December 6, black citizens refused to ride the system’s buses until a “first-come, first-serve” policy was enacted. The boycott led to increased rates, job losses, and arrests, but it sparked nationwide support for the fledgling movement. At about the same time, a young black woman was admitted to the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Autherine Lucy’s matriculation into the university’s graduate program ignited outrage from segregation supporters. Violence erupted on campus, including cross burnings, property damage, and attacks on black citizens.

These civil rights endeavors were met with resistance from segregationists. Although mob violence and terrorism from the Ku Klux Klan increased, no amount of violent counteraction managed to stifle the momentum that was rapidly taking hold among civil rights supporters. As Harper Lee worked diligently on her novel, the movement continued to make strides: in 1957, African-American leaders unsuccessfully tried to integrate Birmingham schools; in the same year, federal troops were sent to Little Rock, Arkansas to enforce court-ordered school segregation; in 1960, the same year that To Kill a Mockingbird was published, students in Greensboro, North Carolina attempted to integrate lunch counters in the city; in 1961, anti-segregationists calling themselves Freedom Riders tested segregation laws in the South, leading to violent retaliators and the deployment of federal troops; and the most violently devastating attack against the civil rights movement took place in 1963, when a bomb at a Birmingham church killed four young girls.
We march today for jobs and freedom, but we have nothing to be proud of. For hundreds and thousands of our brothers are not here. For they are receiving starvation wages, or no wages at all. While we stand here, there are sharecroppers in the Delta of Mississippi who are out in the fields working for less than three dollars a day, 12 hours a day. While we stand here there are students in jail on trumped-up charges. Our brother James Farmer, along with many others, is also in jail. We come here today with a great sense of misgiving.

It is true that we support the administration’s civil rights bill. We support it with great reservations, however. Unless Title III is put in this bill, there is nothing to protect the young children and old women who must face police dogs and fire hoses in the South while they engage in peaceful demonstrations. In its present form, this bill will not protect the citizens of Danville, Virginia, who must live in constant fear of a police state. It will not protect the hundreds and thousands of people that have been arrested on trumped charges. What about the three young men, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee field secretaries in Americus, Georgia, who face the death penalty for engaging in peaceful protest?

As it stands now, the voting section of this bill will not help the thousands of black people who want to vote. It will not help the citizens of Mississippi, of Alabama and Georgia, who are qualified to vote, but lack a sixth-grade education. “One man, one vote” is the African cry. It is ours too. It must be ours!

We must have legislation that will protect the Mississippi sharecropper who is put off of his farm because he dares to register to vote. We need a bill that will provide for the homeless and starving people of this nation. We need a bill that will ensure the equality of a maid who earns five dollars a week in a home of a family whose total income is $100,000 a year. We must have a good Fair Employment Practices Commission bill.

My friends, let us not forget that we are involved in a serious social revolution. By and large, American politics is dominated by politicians who build their careers on immoral compromises and ally themselves with open forms of political, economic, and social exploitation. There are exceptions, of course. We salute those. But what political leader can stand up and say, “My party is the party of principles”? For the party of Kennedy is also the party of Eastland. The party of Javits is also the party of Goldwater. Where is our party?

Where is the political party that will make it unnecessary to march on Washington?

Where is the political party that will make it unnecessary to march in the streets of Birmingham? Where is the political party that will protect the citizens of Albany, Georgia? Do you know that in Albany, Georgia, nine of our leaders have been indicted, not by the Dixiecrats, but by the federal government for peaceful protest? But what did the federal government do when Albany’s deputy sheriff beat Attorney C.B. King and left him half-dead? What did the federal government do when local police officials kicked and assaulted the pregnant wife of Slater King, and she lost her baby?

To those who have said, “Be patient and wait,” we have long said that we cannot be patient. We do not want our freedom gradually, but we want to be free now! We are tired. We are tired of being beaten by policemen. We are tired of seeing our people locked up in jail over and over again. And then you holler, “Be patient.” How long can we be patient? We want our freedom and we want it now. We do not want to go to jail. But we will go to jail if this is the price we must pay for love, brotherhood, and true peace.

I appeal to all of you to get into this great revolution that is sweeping this nation. Get in and stay in the streets of every city, every village and hamlet of this nation until true freedom comes, until the revolution of 1776 is complete. We must get in this revolution and complete the revolution. For in the Delta in Mississippi, in southwest Georgia, in the Black Belt of Alabama, in Harlem, in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and all over this nation, the black masses are on the march for jobs and freedom.

They’re talking about slow down and stop. We will not stop. All of the forces of Eastland, Barnett, Wallace, and Thurmond will not stop this revolution. If we do not get meaningful legislation out of this Congress, the time will come when we will not confine our marching to Washington. We will march through the South; through the streets of Jackson, through the streets of Danville, through the streets of Cambridge, through the streets of Birmingham. But we will march with the spirit of love and with the spirit of dignity that we have shown here today. By the force of our demands, our determination, and our numbers, we shall splinter the segregated South into a thousand pieces and put them together in the image of God and democracy. We must say: “Wake up America! Wake up!” For we cannot stop, and we will not and cannot be patient.
Fifty years after Dr. King made his “I have a dream” speech alongside other leaders of the civil rights movement, Americans gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial to commemorate the African-American civil rights movement. Now the long-time congressman for Georgia and the one member of the Big Six still living, Representative John Lewis reflected on how far America has come since his original speech and where it still needs to grow.

We are standing here in the shadow of Abraham Lincoln 150 years after he issued the Emancipation Proclamation and only 50 years after the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. We have come a great distance in this country in the 50 years, but we still have a great distance to go before we fulfill the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sometimes I hear people saying nothing has changed, but for someone to grow up the way I grew up in the cotton fields of Alabama to now be serving in the US Congress makes me want to tell them come and walk in my shoes. Come walk in the shoes of those who were attacked by police dogs, fire hoses and nightsticks, arrested and taken to jail.

I first came to Washington in the same year that President Barack Obama was born, to participate in a Freedom Ride, but we never made it to New Orleans. Over 400 of us were arrested and jailed in Mississippi during the Freedom Rides. A bus was set on fire in Anniston, Alabama. We were beaten and arrested and jailed, but we helped bring an end to segregation in public transportation.

I came back here again in June of 1963 with the Big Six as the new chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. We met with President Kennedy who said the fires of frustration were burning throughout America. In 1963, we could not register to vote simply because of the color of our skin. We had to pay a poll tax, pass a so-called literacy test, count the number of bubbles in a bar of soap or the number of jelly beans in a jar. Hundreds and thousands of people were arrested and jailed throughout the South for trying to participate in the democratic process. Medgar Evers had been killed in Mississippi. And that's why we told President Kennedy we intended to march on Washington, to demonstrate the need for equal justice and equal opportunity in America.

On August 28, 1963, the nation’s capital was in a state of emergency. Thousands of troops surrounded the city. Workers was told to stay home that day, liquor stores were closed, but the march was so orderly, so peaceful, it was filled with dignity and self-respect because we believe in the way of peace, the way of love, the way of nonviolence. People came that day to that march just like they were on their way to religious service. We truly believed that in every human being, even those who—violent—were violent toward us, there was a spark of the divine. And no person had the right to scar or destroy that spark. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us the way of peace, the way of love, the way of nonviolence. He taught us to have the power to forgive, the capacity to be reconciled. He taught us to stand up, to speak up, to speak out, to find a way to get in the way.

People were inspired by that vision of justice and equality, and they were willing to put their bodies on the line for a greater cause greater than themselves. Not one incident of violence was reported that day. A spirit had engulfed the leadership of the movement and all of its participants.

The spirit of Dr. King's words captured the hearts of people not just around America but around the world. On that day, Martin Luther King, Jr. made a speech, but he also delivered a sermon. He transformed these marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial into a modern day pulpit. He changed us forever.

After the ceremony was over, President Kennedy invited us back down to the White House. He met us, standing in the door of the Oval Office, and he was beaming like a proud father. As he shook the hands of each one of us, he said, you did a good job, you did a good job. And he said to Dr. King, and you had a dream.

Fifty years later we can ride anywhere we want to ride, we can stay where we want to stay. Those signs that said "white" and "colored" are gone. And you won't see them anymore except in a museum, in a book, on a video.

But there are still invisible signs buried in the hearts in humankind that form a gulf between us. Too many of us still believe our differences define us instead of the divine spark that runs through all of human creation. The scars and stains of racism still remain deeply embedded in American society, whether it is stop and frisk in New York or injustice in Trayvon Martin case in Florida, the mass incarceration of millions of Americans, immigrants hiding in fear in the shadow of our society, unemployment, homelessness, poverty, hunger or the renewed struggle for voting rights.

So I say to each of us today, we must never, ever give up. We must never, ever give in. We must keep the faith and keep our eyes on the prize.

We did go to jail, but we got the Civil Rights Act. We got the Voting Rights Act. We got the Fair Housing Act. But we must continue to push. We must continue to work, as the late A. Philip Randolph said to organizers for the march in 1963.

And the dean of the civil rights movement once said, we may have come here on different ships, but we all are in the same boat now. So it doesn't matter whether they’re black or white, Latino, Asian-American or Native American, whether we or gay or straight—we are one people, we are one family, we are all living in the same house—not just the American house, but the world house.

And when we finally accept these truths, then we will be able to fulfill Dr. King’s dream to build a beloved community, a nation and a world at peace with itself.
ARTISTIC RESPONSES

Harper Lee’s novel was one of many artistic responses to and about the civil rights movement in the 1950s and early ‘60s. Writers, poets, visual artists, musicians, performers, and more used their skills to communicate their perspectives on current events. These pages include responses from VARIOUS artists, some of which are in dialogue with specific civil rights moments, and others with the larger concepts that the movement embodied. (Images 21 through 24 pictured here)


6. After the Show


Let America be America again.  
Let it be the dream it used to be.  
Let it be the pioneer on the plain  
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love  
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme  
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty  
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,  
But opportunity is real, and life is free,  
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There’s never been equality for me,  
Nor freedom in this “homeland of the free.”)

Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?  
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,  
I am the Negro bearing slavery’s scars.  
I am the red man driven from the land,  
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—  
And finding only the same old stupid plan  
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,  
Tangled in that ancient endless chain  
Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!  
Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!  
Of work the men! Of take the pay!  
Of owning everything for one’s own greed!  
...

Yet I’m the one who dreamt our basic dream  
In the Old World while still a serf of kings,  
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,  
That even yet its mighty daring sings  
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned  
That’s made America the land it has become.  
O, I’m the man who sailed those early seas

In search of what I meant to be my home—  
For I’m the one who left dark Ireland’s shore,  
And Poland’s plain, and England’s grassy lea,  
And torn from Black Africa’s strand I came  
To build a “homeland of the free.”

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?  
Surely not me? The millions on relief today?  
The millions shot down when we strike?  
The millions who have nothing for our pay?  
For all the dreams we’ve dreamed  
And all the songs we’ve sung  
And all the hopes we’ve held  
And all the flags we’ve hung,  
The millions who have nothing for our pay—  
Except the dream that’s almost dead today.

O, let America be America again—  
The land that never has been yet—  
And yet must be—the land where every man is free.  
The land that’s mine—the poor man’s, Indian’s, Negro’s,  
ME—  
Who made America,  
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,  
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,  
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose—  
The steel of freedom does not stain.  
From those who live like leeches on the people’s lives,  
We must take back our land again,  
America!

O, yes,  
I say it plain,  
America never was America to me,  
And yet I swear this oath—  
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,  
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,  
We, the people, must redeem  
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.  
The mountains and the endless plain—  
All, all the stretch of these great green states—  
And make America again!
“STILL I RISE”
By Maya Angelou, 1978

Hailed as a global renaissance woman, Maya Angelou (1928–2014) was a celebrated poet, memoirist, novelist, educator, dramatist, producer, actress, historian, filmmaker, and civil rights activist. She is perhaps best known for her series of six autobiographical volumes, which focus on her childhood and early adult experiences, including *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969).

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I’ll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
’Cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I’ll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don’t you take it awful hard
’Cause I laugh like I’ve got gold mines
Diggin’ in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I’ll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I’ve got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history’s shame
I rise
Up from a past that’s rooted in pain
I rise
I’m a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.
HEADINGINES OF THE TIME

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to explain some of the events of the Civil Rights Movement. Students will be able to articulate some of the methods of sharing news events throughout history. Students will be able to understand the backdrop of the release of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Access to research materials for Civil Rights news events, writing center to create mock newspaper articles

1. Discuss the Civil Rights Movement and the newsworthiness of such a political and social movement. How do students think such events are reported? What happens when change is happening over a long period of time?

2. Have students work in groups or individually. Select one event of the Civil Rights movement, and research headlines and new reports from the time. How did people talk and write about it? What was known and what was unknown? How were the people portrayed? Do we think differently about them now?

3. After finishing research, have students write their own news article about that event, from the perspective of the time. What do the people need to know? What is known and what is unknown about the event? What does this seem to indicate will happen next. Make sure the headline is attention-grabbing.

4. When all students have finished their articles, combine them to create a group of press clippings, and arrange them in chronological order to see the progress being made throughout the country and as a part of the movement.

5. Talk about any parallels they see to movements today. What is changing in our country now? How do we talk about it? What gets reported and what does not? Does that seem fair? Why or why not? What are some ways to make change, if necessary?

6. Ask about the fact that *To Kill a Mockingbird* was being released when much of these news events were happening. What does that say about the world that was reading the book? What does it say about the audience Harper Lee was trying to reach?

LEARN MORE: A great starting point for finding news headlines is the Civil Rights Digital Library at http://crdl.usg.edu/collections/?Welcome
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

JOHN LEWIS’ “GREAT MARCH ON WASHINGTON” SPEECH, JULY 1963

1. What does Lewis’ invocation of American history lend to the speech?
2. Do you see the idea of compromise in this speech? Do you think a compromise should be required?
3. How would you describe the split between specific anecdotes and large ideas in this speech?

REP. JOHN LEWIS’ 50TH-ANNIVERSARY SPEECH

1. What are the indicators of progress Lewis speaks about in this speech? Where does he speak about progress still needing to be made?
2. What are some of the ways Lewis juxtaposes his personal history with the larger historical events?
3. Does this speech make you want to take any kind of action? What kind of action might it move you to take?

“THE CONFEDERACY: ALABAMA”

1. What historical events might this painting be alluding to?
2. How do the color choices contribute to the impression the painting gives?
3. Why do you think this painting was created in 1965?

“THE DOOR (ADMISSIONS OFFICE)”

1. What do you think this artwork is symbolizing?
2. What are some of the details you notice from the sculpture?
3. What images do you see within the sculpture?

“SOLDIERS AND STUDENTS”

1. What are some of the differences in the depictions of people in this painting?
2. What do the colors used in this painting suggest?
3. What do you think the “story” in this painting is?

“NEW KIDS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD (NEGRO IN THE SUBURBS)”

1. What body language do you see depicted in this painting?
2. What are the material things that show the differences between the different figures in the painting?
3. What do you think the “story” in this painting is?

“LET AMERICA BE AMERICA AGAIN,” by Langston Hughes, 1935

1. Who would you say are some of the characters in this poem?
2. Is this an optimistic poem? Why or why not?
3. What is the timeline in this poem? What sorts of images and scenes are created that take place in different places and times?

“STILL I RISE,” by Maya Angelou, 1978

1. What is the speaker of this poem’s attitude to those listening?
2. What changes or shifts do you notice in this poem?
3. How does the speaker of this poem view the past? What does he/she think about the future?
ACTIVITIES AND PROMPTS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Summarize *To Kill a Mockingbird* in three sentences.
2. What elements from the show stood out to you?
3. Why do you think Scout and Jem were so interested in Boo Radley?
4. What was the most interesting relationship in the play? How would you characterize that relationship?
5. How did the music impact your viewing of the play?
6. Was there a specific moment when you identified with one of the characters? What was it that made you feel that way?
7. Do you think Atticus made the right decision about what to share with his children and what to keep from them?
8. Who do you think had the most power in the play? Can you name a specific moment when he/she utilized power? What about when he/she lost it?
9. What surprised you about the way the characters acted in the play?
10. What is your reaction to the discrimination presented in the play? How do you think things have and have not changed since the time period depicted?

TAKE ACTION

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is still, in many ways, reflective of the way we operate today in American society. Many aspects of life depicted in the book and the play are not too far from what we see in the news and in real life. It is, in short, a work that demands to be talked about and acted upon. National Players is committed to ensuring that the conversation does not end when the Players take their bow, and that our audiences can respond to the work and take action based on the responses it creates. The use of any of the following activities or prompts can be the first step on the road to making those responses, and we strongly encourage you to share any and all work created with us to help us create a yearlong dialogue responding to the play. Please visit our Facebook page (Facebook.com/NationalPlayers), use #Tour66 and #TKAM with @NationalPlayers on Twitter, submit on our Tumblr (NationalPlayers.tumblr.com/submit), or email us at NationalPlayers@OlneyTheatre.org, and help us make the most of this powerful story.

DRAW PARALLELS

The characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* face problems on both a personal level and a societal level, and they take many approaches to face those problems, with varying degrees of success. Think about some of the problems faced in the play that still exist in some form today, and think about how you might respond to those problems in the modern world. Would political action, such as protesting, gathering signatures on a petition, or writing to politicians help solve these problems? What about finding and supporting organizations dedicated to facing them? Or raising general awareness of the problems through contacts and social media? Take some action and share your plan with us at the methods listed above, we’d love to see how you are taking on problems like Atticus, Scout, and Jem.

GET INSPIRED

Oftentimes, when directors are preparing for a show, they look for outside inspiration to guide them. Find another work of art (painting, picture, song, poem, novel, TV show/episode, movie) or person, place, or theme that you think represents this play well. Write about the connections you see between your inspiration piece and the play. If you were directing your own production, how would you use this inspiration piece to guide your team toward your own vision of the final product?
ACTIVITIES AND PROMPTS

WRITE A REVIEW

Critical analysis is an important part of the theater world; reviews give artists insight into how well their work comes across to patrons, and they allow audiences to respond to their experiences in a professional manner. Most shows are reviewed in some form, whether by professionals in newspapers or amateurs posting on Facebook. Write your own review of your experience seeing our show. You can even share these reviews by emailing them to nationalplayers@olneytheatre.org or posting them online and then sharing them with us on Facebook (Facebook.com/NationalPlayers) or Twitter (@NationalPlayers).

Some guidelines on how to approach writing a review:

• The best reviews first identify what the production was attempting to achieve. Consider the director’s intended vision and what you think the production wanted to portray, as well as the intended effect of individual elements. From there, base your review on how well the show achieved those goals.

• “I didn’t like it” or “It was cool” are not useful critiques. Be specific, identifying why things did or did not work.

• Remember your intended reader: other prospective audience members. Think about who the ideal audience member for this show might be, and think about what that person would or would not like.

• Do not forget that there are many separate elements within the show, and many different people contributed to the final product. Try to attribute elements to the different people who worked on the show whenever possible (reference the program for a full list of the artists who contributed to the production, from acting and directing to lighting and sound design).

• Some plot summary is useful for providing context, but a review is not meant to just describe what happens. If there are things that are particularly surprising and work best that way, avoid revealing them in your review.

WHAT ELSE HAPPENS?

Think about where the show leaves all of the characters at the end. What do you think would happen to them in the future? Write a speculative scene featuring some of the characters at some point down the road. What are they doing? How do they feel about it? How have they changed? What other characters do they still interact with? How have those relationships changed? You don’t have to write it in dramatic format, it can be a short story or even a comic book style telling. Alternatively, can you think of any scenes within the play that are referenced or described that you didn’t get to see? Create a “fill in the gaps” scene in the same way, filling in things before or during that play that are not depicted in the script.

THEMATIC ESSAY

Think about some of the themes of the play (listed below) and write an exploration of how you see the play treat that topic. Think of other works you’ve read in school, or other movies or TV shows you’ve seen, that deal with this topic and compare what you saw in the play with what those other works have.

Race
Justice
Poverty
Forgiveness
Power
Class/Social Hierarchy
Growing Up
The following pages include companion worksheets for Tool Kit activities, as well as a comprehensive list of further print and online resources. You are welcome to make copies of these pages and use them in your classroom, either alongside other Tool Kit resources or in other capacities.
For each document respond to the following prompts:
1. What does this document suggest about life in the Great Depression?
2. What questions does this document provoke for you?

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LOOSELY BASED ON...WORKSHEET

ORIGINAL EVENT INSPIRATION: _______________________________________________________

SETTING (TIME AND PLACE) _______________________________________________________

DETAILS TO STAY THE SAME: ___________________________________________________

DETALS TO CHANGE: _____________________________________________________________

CHARACTER 1 NAME: _____________________________________________________________

IMPORTANT CHARACTER TRAITS: _________________________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

CHARACTER’S ROLE/JOB: _________________________________________________________

____________________________________

CHARACTER 2 NAME: _____________________________________________________________

IMPORTANT CHARACTER TRAITS: _________________________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

CHARACTER’S ROLE/JOB: _________________________________________________________

____________________________________

CHARACTER 3 NAME: _____________________________________________________________

IMPORTANT CHARACTER TRAITS: _________________________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

CHARACTER’S ROLE/JOB: _________________________________________________________

____________________________________
RESOURCES

Further RESOURCES

READING COMPANIONS

Bernanke, Ben S. Essays on the Great Depression. 
A collection of essays that provide a uniquely coherent view of the economic causes and worldwide propagation of the Depression.

Johnson, Claudia Durst. Understanding To Kill a Mockingbird: A Student Casebook. 
A collection of documents and commentary illuminating Southern life in the 1950s, the Civil Rights Movement, and the influence of Lee’s novel.

A unique compendium of primary resources and documents relating to the people, events, and images surrounding the Great Depression.

Meyer, Michael J. Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird: New Essays. 
A compendium of essays that approach the novel from educational, legal, social, and thematic perspectives.

Cross-curricular lessons to accompany the novel, including sample lesson plans, vocabulary lists, quizzes, cooperative learning activities, and book report ideas.

An evocative portrait of the development of Lee’s novel, her dream, and the place and people whom she immortalized.

Sorensen, Lita. The Scottsboro Boys Trial: A Primary Source Account. 
A comprehensive examination of the historic American court case, including commentary and an array of primary documents.

ONLINE RESOURCES

“The Encyclopedia of Alabama.”
www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Home.jsp 
An illuminating resource into the history and culture of Alabama, with articles on the Great Depression, segregation, and agriculture.

www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/great-depression/students.html 
Includes links to valuable outside resources, primary documents, and sample lesson plans.

“Manuscripts from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936-1940.”
www.loc.gov/collection/federal-writers-project/about-this-collection 
More than 2,900 transcripts of interviews, recorded during the Great Depression through the U.S. Works Progress Administration.

“Photo Essay on the Great Depression.”
www.english.illinois.edu/maps/depression/photoessay.htm 
A collection of images of people and places during the 1930s.

“The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow.”
www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/index.html 
An exploration of the “Separate But Equal” phase of American history, including a timeline of events, an interactive map, and oral histories.

“Scottsboro: An American Tragedy.”
www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/scottsboro/index.html 
An interactive companion to the PBS documentary, with maps, a timeline, and a teacher’s guide.