

**To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee (1960)
Approved for use in Sophomore English**

Summary of the Work:

The novel is set in the 1930's during the Great Depression era and pre-civil rights in the fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama. Atticus Finch is the father figure raising his children, Jem and Scout, in this coming-of-age story. Atticus teaches his children the importance of living by one's own moral code and empathizing with others. He teaches his children to try and see things from others' points of view throughout the novel. One major part of this is Atticus guiding his children to dispel the gossip and rumors about a neighbor, Arthur Radley, who is a kind man wishing to live his reclusive life in privacy. The other central piece of the plot involves a trial in which Atticus is the lawyer defending a black man, Tom Robinson, who is wrongly accused of raping a white woman. Even though this is looked down on by many citizens in Maycomb, Atticus relies on his integrity and honesty.

Rationale:

Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* offers diverse learning opportunities for students. For example, students can engage in open classroom discussion to express their views, participate in role-playing activities, and consider historical research. In addition, *To Kill A Mockingbird* presents literary devices such as symbolism, foreshadowing, and irony to be explored. The plot is well-rounded so students can easily connect different literary devices throughout the beginning, middle, and end. Vocabulary within the novel is nuanced and unfamiliar to most students, which will broaden their knowledge of written and spoken word. Lastly, there is literary merit that teaches students the value of empathy, compassion, and understanding as it pertains to the human experience.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

From Kirkus Reviews: Translated into 40 languages, with sales of some 40 million copies since its publication in 1960, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* has become famous worldwide. Adapted on film, it earned its star, Gregory Peck, an Oscar for his portrayal of Atticus Finch, a role that defined him for the rest of his career. In an affectionate homage, media journalist and Broadway show manager Santopietro (*The Sound of Music Story: How a Beguiling Young Novice, A Handsome Austrian Captain, and Ten Singing von Trapp Children Inspired the Most Beloved Film of All Time*, 2015, etc.) asserts that Lee's novel still sends a relevant message to 21st-century readers. "By wrapping a nostalgic look back at childhood around a clear-eyed gaze at how racism diminishes and damages an entire community," he maintains, Lee offers a way to perceive "America's racial history with a fresh set of eyes." Most of Santopietro's book, though, does not elaborate any more deeply on why Lee's novel matters, or to whom... The author details casting decisions [for the film], especially the search for the perfect girl to play Scout; and the work of designing costumes and constructing sets on the Universal backlot to bring Lee's Alabama town to life. He conveys, as well, critics' reception of the movie and summarizes the major figures' post-*Mockingbird* careers."

Noted Distinction:

- 260 weeks in hardcover on The New York Times Best Seller list and it remained on the paperback nonfiction bestseller list until October 10, 2018, having persisted for 440 weeks.
- Christopher Award
- The American Library Association's Alex Award (2006)
- Books for Better Living Award
- Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners

Readability

- Lexile Score: 1010L

Learning Resources Guidelines

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including works by and about American Indians. RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text,

	<p>including those by and about American Indians, and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, including those of American Indians, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. Craft and Structure RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. RL.9-10.7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two 9 including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or text, including culturally diverse topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. W.9-10.1.d Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. W.9-10.1.e Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. W.9-10.2.c Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. W.9-10.2.d Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic. W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. W.9-10.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. W.9-10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. SL.9-10.1.a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. SL.9-10.1.b Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed. SL.9-10.1.c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively</p>
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	<p>incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions. SL.9-10.1.d Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, with specific attention to culture, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented. L.9-10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, recognizing the role culture plays in the development of language. L.9-10.4.a Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p>
<p>Notes on the Text: <i>(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)</i></p> <p>This book successfully teaches Socratic Seminar discussion skills and formal literary analysis of characterization, symbolism, historical setting, and motif, and vocabulary.</p>	<p>Connection to the Curriculum:</p> <p>This is a classic, award-winning text that achieves all of the above curricular standards and is a required text for all Sophomores in the Helena School District.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Connections: <i>(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)</i></p> <p>The 1962 film adaptation can be used to analyze two medium adaptations of the same text. They have differences in characterization, themes, and tones.</p>	