

To Kill a Mockingbird

12 New EMC Approaches



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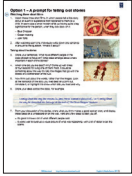
Stop! Read me!

1. What does this EMCdownload publication include?

This EMCdownload publication is a print PDF called TKAM_Print.

This PDF includes the full publication in a **print-friendly form**.

The A4 printable activity pages look like this:



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Teachers' Notes

To Kill a Mockingbird – 12 New EMC Approaches provides 12 activities to support students in exploring and getting to know the novel, in stimulating and enjoyable ways, whether for examination or controlled assessment. The approach is particularly suitable, however, for examinations which require students to focus closely on a single passage and then relate it to the whole novel. The material does not offer a chapter-by-chapter approach, but provides activities to develop students' ability to analyse the novel in detail, in the context of a 'big picture' overview of the novel. Activities have been chosen with the particular aim of developing students' independence and confidence in discussing and writing about language, structure and form, as well as themes and character.

Students preparing the novel for GCSE English Literature will be expected to 'relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts; explain how texts have been influential and significant to self and other readers in different contexts and at different times' – two areas of study which often trip students up. Activity 8 on context and activity 12 on criticism tackle these challenges head on, supporting students in engaging with these additional materials to further their own understanding and interpretation of the novel, without being overwhelmed by them.

Getting the Reading Done

Strategies to support the reading

Although this resource does not provide chapter-by-chapter support, you may find the following strategies useful for helping students to get the reading done:

- As they read students create a 'personal summary' by writing a headline and selecting a quotation to represent each chapter.
- Give students post-it notes to jot down comments or questions as they read chapters on their own.
- Give very specific focuses for independent reading, for example one comment and one question on the way Harper Lee creates the character of Scout.
- Encourage students to become familiar with the text by selecting a set of 20 or so short quotations to represent the novel.

Notes on Activities

Although the material does not have to be used in order, and is intended to be dipped into, to add to or complement a teacher's own scheme of work, it is loosely organised into before, during and after reading.

Activity 1 is for use before students know anything about the novel at all, even its title. You also need to withhold the information that they all discussing the *same* novel. The extra piece of information to give students part way through the material is that the novel they have all been discussing is *To Kill a Mockingbird* by the American author Harper Lee. The students should go on to share their first response to discovering that the four descriptions refer to a single novel. Is there anything they would now change or add to their expectations?

Activities 2 and 3 are also most suitable for before reading, as they introduce students to ideas and themes central to the novel through group work, role-play and the exploration of contemporary images.

For Activities 4 and 7 you will need a copy of the 1962 film adaptation of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This is widely available and reasonably priced. It also contains some fascinating extras including:

- a 90-minute feature on the making of the movie, with extensive comments from the production team and cast
- a director's commentary
- further documentary material on social context and race issues which we suggest would provide an absorbing way into **Activity 8**.

Activities 5 and 6 both require students to have read the first volume of the novel. They could also be used at the end of the whole novel.

Activity 7 asks students to match each quotation to one of the screenshots from the film. The most suitable screenshots for the quotations are:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 4 | I most positively am not [ambidextrous], I can use one hand good as the other. |
| 23 | You felt sorry for her, you felt sorry for her? |
| 21 | In the name of God, believe him |
| 8 | Did you, during all this running, run for a doctor? |
| 14 | you're all stinkin' cowards, stinkin' cowards, the lot of you |
| 16 | Mr Finch, if you was a nigger like me, you'd be scared too |
| 12 | Don't see how any jury could convict on what we heard – |
| 2 | His left arm was fully twelve inches shorter than his right, and hung dead at his side |
| 5 (or 17) | Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father's passin'. |
| 6 | All around her throat? At the back of her neck? |

Activity 8 on context relies on students having read a good chunk of the novel, but need not be left until the end. You may find it helpful, for example, to explore the contextual material – a set of key facts and extracts from interviews with American women who grew up in the 1930s – before reading the trial of Tom Robinson.

Activity 10 ('Stand Up, Sit Down' on character) could be used at different points in the reading, allowing students to deepen their appreciation of the ways in which Harper Lee creates character and the role each character plays. This strategy allows you to model for students how to talk and write about character or other aspects of the novel.

Activity 11 is an after reading activity which gives students the opportunity to get to grips with the text through physically sorting and discussing the key events. In addition to the 'worked-up' activity on pages 46-49, you could use the key events cards in the following ways:

- Get students in groups, or as a class, to arrange the events in chronological order.
- Follow this by either arranging a second set into narrative order, or re-arranging the first set, before discussing the choices Harper Lee made in organising her story.
- Pick out moments of highest tension. Where do they occur in the novel?
- Create large versions of the cards. Pin the cards to the wall, in narrative order. Add quotations.

1. Bestseller, Prizewinner, Banned

This activity is for before you read the novel.

For this activity you will need to work in twos or threes. Your teacher will give each group a small amount of information about a novel.

1. With your partner talk about what you would expect from a novel described in this way.
2. Take it in turns to read out the description you've been working on, and the ideas and expectations it raised for you.

Your teacher will now give you an extra piece of information about the novel you have been discussing.

3. Share your first response to this new bit of information. Is there anything you would now change or add to your expectations?

The Cards

I. BESTSELLER

When this novel was published in 1960 it went straight into the American bestseller charts. It stayed there for 88 weeks when first published in 1960, selling more than 500,000 copies in the first six months. It has been translated into more than 40 languages and by 2010 had sold over 30 million copies worldwide.

II. PRIZEWINNING

This novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961, a US award 'honoring excellence in the media and arts since 1917'. In 1962 the novel was adapted into an Oscar-winning film.

III. BANNED

According to the American Library Institute, frequent attempts have been made to get this novel banned – it is the 21st most 'challenged' book in the first decade of the 21st century.

IV. LONG LASTING AND MUCH-LOVED

In 1999 this novel was voted the 'Best Novel of the 20th Century' by readers of the American Library Journal. In 2006 British librarians voted it as the book every adult should read before they die. In 2003 it came 6th in the BBC's Big Read survey while in 2011 it topped a UK World Book Day poll as the novel readers would most like to recommend to someone else.

V. ADAPTED AS AN OSCAR WINNING FILM

The film of this novel has been voted the 25th greatest film of all time. It was nominated for eight Oscars and won three. Its hero was voted the *greatest* film hero of the 20th-century.

2. What Should You Do? A Moral Dilemma Role-play

1. Read the following situation.

THE SITUATION

An old person has been attacked close to your home. A man, the father of two teenage children, witnessed the attack by a group of local youths. He has decided to tell the police who was responsible.

The dilemma

- Should his family support his decision?
- Should his family persuade him that it is a bad idea?

There's disagreement amongst his family. Some of them think that he definitely should tell the police what he knows. But other people are convinced this would be a bad idea.

2. Working in pairs, you are going to have a discussion, in role, between two members of the family, one of whom supports the father, the other of whom wants to persuade him to keep quiet and do nothing. Label yourselves A and B. Your teacher will now tell you which side each of you will be arguing for.
3. Spend a couple of minutes on your own thinking of all the points you could make in support of the position you are arguing for. Join up with one other person arguing the same way as you and help each other by pooling the arguments you might use.
4. Now go back to your original partner and carry out the role-play in your pairs.
5. As a class, listen to four or five of the role-plays, making a mental note of any particularly strong arguments for or against the father's decisions.
6. In class discussion, pull out the moral issues raised by this situation.
7. As you read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, pay attention to the way Harper Lee explores the moral dilemmas surrounding making the 'right' decision.

3. Exploring Images

Life in 1930s America

Your teacher will give you a selection of images showing aspects of life in the southern states of America in the 1930s.

1. In pairs, share your first impressions of what life was like at this time.
2. Choose two or three of the images and annotate them with any ideas or questions they prompt.
3. As you begin to read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, find short quotations as captions for the images you chose. The example on page 18 shows you the sort of thing you might do.
4. You could use the images and quotations to create a class display.