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To Kill a Mockingbird
Harper Lee



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

To Kill A Mockingbird

Chapter 1

1. In 1934, in Maycomb, Alabama, things seemed to move quite slowly. As you read the description of Maycomb on page 5, how do you think you'd feel about living and growing up in that town at that time?
2. What do you find interesting about this first chapter?

Chapter 2

3. What is your opinion of the scene in which Scout is trying to tell her teacher something, but the teacher won't listen to her? Has anything like this ever happened to you? Explain.
4. Scout explains the Cunningham philosophy of life, which is, "If you don't have it, you do without." What is your opinion of the Cunninghams and their philosophy?

Chapter 3

5. Atticus tells Scout, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view." Think of someone you were upset with or argued with recently, and try to write down the incident that upset you from the other person's point of view.

Response Journal

Chapter 8

16. The first eight chapters are part of what we could call plot line #1. Summarize the action of this plot line and give it a name.
17. A number of things happen in this chapter and some questions could be raised. For example, where does the blanket come from that is put around Scout's shoulders? What is snow like to someone who has never experienced it? Respond to these or any other points in this chapter that interest you.

Chapter 9

18. Plot line #2 begins with this chapter. From the clues that have been given, what do you suppose this plot line will follow. What name could we give to plot line #2?
19. Atticus tells his sister that he's doing the best he can in raising two young children without a mother. How do you suppose that you'd do as a single parent raising two children? Is there anything you'd try to do or avoid doing in this situation?
20. Aunt Alexandra believes that Scout doesn't behave as a proper young woman should. Do you have any thoughts on how a proper young woman should behave?

Chapter 12

31. Does Calpurnia's explanation as to why she spoke one language at work and another language at church give rise to any thoughts in you about language? How do your surroundings affect the way you speak?
32. Do you act, talk, or think differently depending who is nearby or who you are with? Why? What do you do differently?
33. Comment on anything else in this chapter that you found thought-provoking.

Chapter 13

34. The narrator tells us that the day Aunt Alexandra arrived, "The remainder of the afternoon went by in the gentle gloom that descends when relations appear." What does she mean? Describe a relative's visit that you remember.
35. Because of the way she was raised, Aunt Alexandra is self-assured, always in control, and without any doubts about herself or her place in the world. To what extent are you like that? To what extent would you like to be like that? Describe the negatives that Aunt Alexandra exhibits.
36. Aunt Alexandra believes, "...the longer a family had been squatting on one patch of land the finer it was." Have you ever seen anyone else, either in life or the movies, who thought like that? What is your opinion of that kind of thinking? How important is the idea of owning land to you?

To Kill A Mockingbird

Chapter 24

62. If the Tom Robinson trial were to take place today, it is very likely that a show like “Inside Edition,” “60 Minutes,” or “A Current Affair” would show up in town shortly after the verdict was in. If so, who would do the interview, whom would they interview, and what would be the interviewer’s opening and closing comments?
63. How do you suppose it is possible for the Missionary Society ladies to have so much sympathy for the Mrunas, but so little sympathy for the black people in their own town?
64. Miss Maudie says that Atticus does the right thing, the thing that many other people would like to do but are afraid to do. In what ways would you like to be like Atticus? How would you feel about having that role in your community?

Chapter 25

65. We are told that Mr. Underwood wrote an editorial about the shooting of Tom, but we are not told much about the editorial. Write the editorial you think he might have written.

Chapters 26 and 27

66. The Tom Robinson subplot that began in chapter nine has concluded. Where do you think the story line will go in the last five chapters?