Character Based Literacy Program
Independent Study Lesson Plan
To Kill a Mockingbird, Week 1

Change Requires Effort
Change is possible. Change requires three things; a vision, a plan and effort. It requires changing bad habits to good habits. It requires effort even when I don’t feel like working. It requires taking one step at a time.

PREPARE

Background
Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.

Research and define each of the following background questions. They will be important pieces to the story. Answer each question in complete sentences.

What does the narrator mean when she says the town “had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself?” (6.)

Did Winston County really secede from Alabama during the Civil War?

What is an Indian-head penny?

What was the Second Battle of the Marne?

What is Appomattox?

Wordwall
Here are vocabulary words to learn and add to the Word Wall.

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READ

Read
Read the selection.

Read 3-74

RESPOND
Timeline List 15-20 of the most important events on your Timeline.

Think about what you read today and begin your timeline
- First, fix the facts: who, what, when, where, why
- Then, decide on the most important events and begin your timeline with these

Over the course of the next week you will be required to read a number of pages. It would be best if you spread the reading out over the week and not try to do everything at the last minute before your next appointment.

Map Add to ongoing, class activities like a KWL chart or Map: where did the characters go?

Map of Maycomb: Create a map showing the layout of Maycomb, Alabama and identify the locations where the major events of the text take place. Each day add to your map. You should draw pictures of all of the locations, using your imagination to create the town of Maycomb, Alabama. If there are especially important events, you may illustrate that event where it takes place on the map.

After you have read today’s reading, you will begin your map of Maycomb, Alabama, most likely beginning with the Finch House. If there are any significant events that occur at any of the places on the map, then you should make a note of that event next to that location.

Add the school to your map of Maycomb. Be sure to include both the school building and the playground. Perhaps find a picture of an Alabama school… how do they look different than schools in your hometown?

Add the Radley house and property to the map. Be sure to include the oak trees at the edge of the property where Jem and Scout found the chewing gum and the Indian-heads.

Add Miss Rachel’s fish pond, and the Radleys' collard patch to your maps!

Update Miss Maudie’s home. What might it look like after the fire?

EXPLORE Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

1g6 Setting Chart: Complete a setting chart for the story. The narrator gives the reader much information about Maycomb, Alabama at the time of the story.

Postcard – Pretending you are Scout, write a postcard to Dill. On one side of the postcard, draw a picture of an event or person you met at school today. On the other side, write a note to Dill explaining to him what your first day of school was like.

One Act Play –Write a one-act play based on Jem’s Boo Radley game. You can write the dialogue of one of the events described in the novel, or create a new scene in the Radley drama.
**Story Sketch** – Draw a picture of the most important moment from today’s story. You might sketch Scout’s and Miss Calpurnia’s conversation, Dill ringing a bell in Atticus’ face, or Jem running away without his pants.

**Change Require Effort Community Bookmark**

What is your vision for your community? On one side of the bookmark, write a paragraph or draw a picture of what you would like your neighborhood, city, or county to be like ten years from now.

On the other side, list at least 5 things you could do to make your community more like the one in your vision. Each day, update the bookmark with one step you’ve taken toward reaching that vision.

**Discussion**

**Key Questions**

**Chapter 1, Pages 3-15**

1. Who is the narrator of the story?
2. What is the point of view of the narrator?
3. Where is Macomb located?
4. Why does the narrator go into detail about the history of Maycomb?
5. Have you ever visited a town like Maycomb, Alabama?
6. Why does Charles Baker Harris (Dill) come to Maycomb?
7. What happened to the Finch children’s mother?
8. What does Mr. Radley do for a living?
9. Why do you think Boo Radley stabbed his father with scissors?
10. Does Maycomb, Alabama remind you of a place you have lived?
11. Do Scout, Jem, and Dill remind you of yourself or anyone you know?
12. Would you want to live in Maycomb, Alabama? Why or why not?
13. Would you want to explore the Radley place if there was a house like that in your neighborhood?

**Chapters 2-3, Pages 15-32**

1. Why are Scout and her classmates suspicious of their new teacher?
2. What is the difference between the Cunninghams and the Ewells?
3. Is there a “Cunningham” or “Ewell” in your community or neighborhood?
4. Why do you think Harper Lee includes both a Cunningham and a Ewell in Scout’s classroom? What do these families reveal about the community of Maycomb?
5. Do you think that Miss Caroline was right to tell Scout to stop reading and writing?
6. How would Scout have acted differently if Miss Caroline did not ask her to stop reading and writing? Would the events of the chapter unfold in a different way as a result?
7. Why does Calpurnia punish Scout for what she says to Walter Cunningham at lunch?
8. What lesson does Calpurnia teach Scout about how to treat others?
9. What is one character trait that Atticus and Scout share?
10. What do we learn about the citizens of Maycomb by the fact that they dislike Northern Alabama’s “Liquor Interests, Big Mules, steel companies, Republicans, professors, and other persons of no background” (16?)

Chapter 4, Pages 32-41
1. Who do you think the chewing gum and Indian-heads belong to?
2. Why does Jem get mad at Scout for chewing the gum she found on the Radley place?
3. What kind of students are Scout and Jem? Do they remind you of anyone you know?
4. Why does Jem want to play the Boo Radley game?
5. What role do you think Boo Radley will play in the story?
6. Why would Atticus disapprove of their game?
7. What kind of games did you play with your friends during summer vacation when you were a child?
8. Do you think that the stories about Boo Radley are true? Why or why not?
9. Would you want to find out the real story about Boo Radley?
10. Do you think that there was really someone laughing inside the Radley house, or was it Scout’s imagination?
11. Who do you think Scout heard laughing inside the Radley house?

Chapter 5-6, Pages 41-57
1. Why is Jem so fascinated by Boo Radley?
2. Why does Scout think that she and Jem are growing apart?
3. Why does Scout think that it is a bad thing that she is becoming more like a girl?
4. What role does Miss Maudie play in Scout’s life? What kind of relationship do they have?
5. Why did Scout’s “confidence in pulpit Gospel lessen at the vision of Miss Maudie stewing forever in various Protestant hells”? (44)
6. Based on this chapter, what is the author’s opinion of religion?
7. How much truth is in the stories about Arthur Radley?
8. Why does Atticus object to the kids trying to contact Boo Radley?
9. Why does Jem insist on going back to the Radley place to get his pants?
10. What kind of figurative language is “Jem’s white shirt-tail dipped and bobbed like a small ghost dancing away to escape the coming morning”? (57)

Chapters 7-8, Pages 57-74
1. Who repaired Jem’s pants?
2. Who do you think is leaving gifts for Scout and Jem?
3. Do you think that the person who repaired Jem’s pants is the same person who is leaving gifts for the Finch children?
4. Why do you think Nathan Radley plugged the knot-hole in the oak tree?
5. Have you ever lived in a place where it snows? Would you like to?
6. Why does Atticus care that the snowman looks suspiciously like one of their neighbors?
7. Why does Atticus make Jem and Scout leave the house the night of the fire?
8. What descriptive words does Harper Lee use to make the fire scene frightening for the reader?

9. Why isn’t Miss Maudie more upset when her house burns down?

10. When he gives them the blanket, is Boo Radley trying to scare Scout and Jem, or is he trying to be friendly?

**EXTEND**

**Write** Write a short product from today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

**Key Paragraph**

People moved slowly then. They ambled across the square, shuffled in and out of the stores around it, took their time about everything. A day was twenty-four hours long but seemed longer. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: Maycomb County had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself (5.)

**Writing Task**

Scout describes Maycomb as a very relaxed, slow paced town. The outside world feels very far away to its citizens, and no one is in a hurry to live their lives. Is this different from the town that you grew up in, or the town you live in today? Would you rather grow up in a town like Maycomb or in a big city like Los Angeles?

Write a paragraph for or against the statement “Maycomb is a great place to grow up.” What changes would you make in order for the town of Maycomb to better suit your needs? Be sure to support your argument with sufficient evidence from the text and relevant, real-world experiences. Be sure to be persuasive. Use examples from the text to back up your point. Try to use several rhetorical devices as part of your argument.

**Key Paragraph**

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.”

One morning Jem and I found a load of stovewood in the backyard. 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.

**Writing Task**

Smilax is a slender vine with glossy foliage that is used in floral arrangements and decorations. Holly is also used during Christmastime as a festive decoration. Also, turnip greens are a staple in most Southern-collards, and are used in many vegetable dishes. By leaving these items at the Finch’s house, the Cunninghams work to repay the debt that they owe Atticus.
Throughout the novel, the Cunninghams are described as hardworking folks who are economically challenged. Unwilling to accept charity from Miss Caroline, or anyone for that matter, the Cunninghams find an alternative way to pay off their debt.

Write a paragraph arguing for or against the Cunninghams' method of paying back services. Do you think that the Cunninghams should put their pride aside and rely on the charity of others? How much effort does this family exert in order to repay their debts through serviceable acts? Do you feel that they should continue paying others by exchanging goods and services?

Key Paragraph
Atticus’s arrival was the second reason I wanted to quit the game. The first reason happened the day I rolled into the Radley front yard. Through all the head shaking, quelling of nausea and Jem-yelling, I had heard another sound, so low I could not have heard it from the sidewalk. Someone inside the house was laughing (41.)

Writing Task
Scout hears laughter coming from the Radley house and becomes frightened. As readers, we can assume that Boo Radley’s laughter is provoked by the Finch children’s game, which suggests that he often watches them play.

Do you believe that Boo Radley is laughing out of malevolence or good-natured humor? Write a short argumentative paragraph claiming that Boo is either mocking the Finch children or simply amused by their actions. How has your opinion of this character changed since the beginning of the story?

Key Paragraph
“Do you think they’re true, all those things they say about B—Mr. Arthur?”
“What things?”
I told her.
“That is three-fourths colored folks and one-fourth Stephanie Crawford,” said Miss Maudie grimly. “Stephanie Crawford even told me once she woke up in the middle of the night and found him looking at her. I said what did you do, Stephanie, move over in the bed and make room for him? That shut her up a while” (45.)

Writing Task
Jem, Scout, and Dill were all terrified when they were running away from the Radley House. Everyone gets scared sometimes, whether it’s of a person, a scary movie, a frightening real-life experience, or an imaginary creature under the bed. However, the more information one gains about a scary person or situation, it is easy to have a more balanced perspective and the fear is dispelled.

Write a paragraph that argues in favor of or against Boo Radley’s character traits and overall personality, based on the information that has been provided to us, as readers. Is he more mysterious than he is scary? If so, how do the conflicting / inconclusive descriptions of the character add to this perception? Has your opinion of Boo changed since the first chapter of the novel? Is he a figure that the Finch children should be frightened of? Or is he misunderstood? Using evidence from the text and personal experiences, support your claims.
Key Paragraph

Jem stayed moody and silent for a week. As Atticus had once advised me to do, I tried to climb into Jem’s skin and walk around in it: if I had gone alone to the Radley Place at two in the morning, my funeral would have been held the next afternoon. So I left Jem alone and tried not to bother him (57.)

Writing Task

When Scout is confused by Jem’s moodiness, she tries to see things from his point of view by “climbing in his skin and walking around in it.” Think of a time when you had a disagreement with someone or you had trouble understanding someone’s point of view. Do you think it would have been helpful to try to see the situation from their side?

Think back to a conflict you have experienced with a family member or friend. Does looking at the situation from the other person’s perspective help you to gain insight or help solve the conflict? How did it change your mind? Write a paragraph arguing in favor for or against this strategy as a problem-solving technique.

Close

Close by extending today’s lesson to life and the world.

Community Connection

Early in the novel To Kill a Mockingbird, Atticus Finch acknowledges that Tom Robinson will lose his case, and that he will have to appeal.

The Supreme Court of the U.S. has heard thousands of cases, many of them regarding education. Each day, students should examine a different Supreme Court case that deals with education. Suggestions are provided daily. Students might research these individually, and present them to the class. Alternatively, a teacher might present the information for class discussion.

Research Meyer v. State of Nebraska (1923)—a case that deals with an anti-German law banning the teaching of foreign languages prior to high school.

Research Brown v. Board of Education (1954)—probably the most famous Supreme Court case dealing with education; it addresses the constitutionality of segregated schools.

Research Epperson v. Arkansas (1968)---the Court rules on Arkansas’ ban of teaching the theory of evolution in public schools.

Research Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)—students were suspended for wearing black armbands to protest the war in Vietnam.

Research Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)—the state of Wisconsin took Amish parents to school for pulling them out of school after 8th grade, in violation of laws that required compulsory education until the age of 16.
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