

HARPER LEE BOOK CLUB

To Kill A Mockingbird

by Harper Lee

Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with rich humor and unswerving honesty the irrationality of adult attitudes toward race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s. The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence, and hypocrisy is pricked by the stamina and quiet heroism of one man's struggle for justice—but the weight of history will only tolerate so much.

BOOK CLUB MEETING SUGGESTIONS

1. Buy the *To Kill A Mockingbird* DVD to view after you discuss the book.
2. Read *Scout, Atticus and Boo* by Mary McDonough Murphy, a book of interviews with prominent figures on how the book has impacted their lives.
3. Read the biography *Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee* by Charles J. Shields.
4. Listen to Sissy Spacek's audiobook recording of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE

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by Harper Lee

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do Scout, Jem, and Dill characterize Boo Radley at the beginning of the book? In what way did Boo's past history of violence foreshadow his method of protecting Jem and Scout from Bob Ewell? Does this repetition of aggression make him more or less of a sympathetic character?
2. In Scout's account of her childhood, her father Atticus reigns supreme. How would you characterize his abilities as a single parent? How would you describe his treatment of Calpurnia and Tom Robinson vis a vis his treatment of his white neighbors and colleagues? How would you typify his views on race and class in the larger context of his community and his peers?
3. The title of Lee's book is alluded to when Atticus gives his children air rifles and tells them that they can shoot all the bluejays they want, but "it's a sin to kill a mockingbird." At the end of the novel, Scout likens the "sin" of naming Boo as Bob Ewell's killer to "shootin' a mockingbird." Do you think that Boo is the only innocent, or mockingbird, in this novel?
4. Scout ages two years—from six to eight—over the course of Lee's novel, which is narrated from her perspective as an adult. Did you find the account her narrator provides believable? Were there incidents or observations in the book that seemed unusually "knowing" for such a young child? What event or episode in Scout's story do you feel truly captures her personality?
5. *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been challenged repeatedly by the political left and right, who have sought to remove it from libraries for its portrayal of conflict between children and adults; ungrammatical speech; references to sex, the supernatural, and witchcraft; and unfavorable presentation of blacks. Which elements of the book—if any—do you think touch on controversial issues in our contemporary culture? Did you find any of those elements especially troubling, persuasive, or insightful?
6. Jem describes to Scout the four "folks" or classes of people in Maycomb County: "...our kind of folks don't like the Cunninghams, the Cunninghams don't like the Ewells, and the Ewells hate and despise the colored folks." What do you think of the ways in which Lee explores race and class in 1930s Alabama? What significance, if any, do you think these characterizations have for people living in other parts of the world?

A complete reader's guide is available at
www.booksamillion.com/bookclub