



Newspaper Project: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Choose partners who share your interest, enthusiasm, and willingness to work on this project. No more than four students per group. You will plan, write, and “publish” a newspaper that showcases your understanding of the people and events of the novel as well as world and national news from the novel’s time period. Writing skills for informative, editorial, expository, journalistic, and creative writing will be practiced.

You are each reporters (one of you may be the editor) for a local Maycomb newspaper, but not Mr. Underwood’s *Maycomb Tribune*. Come up with your own newspaper name. Look to real newspapers as examples for your name.

All content in the main newspaper articles must be true to the facts/details of the novel and to historical happenings. Any characters, places, details you make up (such as a local diner or want ads) must be logical. As much as possible, use the real characters and settings from the novel.

Required	Choose at least 2 of the following extras per student. (Extra credit given for more)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Headline News Story (with byline) from each group member relating to the novel (250 words minimum) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional news story Personality profile, a story about a person who deserves recognition for something he/she did.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Editorial from each group member (250 words minimum) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dear Abby section Classifieds, Ads Letter to the Editor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Expository writing based on a historical happening outside of the novel using research (300 words minimum) Pictures with captions (get from the web or draw) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ladies’ Section—Recipes, Teaparties, Missionary Circles Entertainment Obituaries. Sporting events Comic strip (Only choose this option if your team has the skill to do it)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masthead (list of your newspaper staff) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flag (the name of your paper) 	

Suggested events from the novel for your headline article (you may use any significant event from the novel)	
The Trial	Miss Maudie’s Fire
Sneaking a note to Boo Radley	Atticus shoots Tim Johnson
Aunt Alexandra hosts the ladies	Scout fights with Walter
Dill meets Dolphus Raymond	The pageant at school
The kids walk home from school	Mob visits courthouse
Jem reads to Mrs. Dubose	Scout meets Boo Radley

HEADLINE NEWS ARTICLE: Headlines are meant to do two things: draw attention to the story through eye-catching language and to summarize the main point of the story. All headlines need a present tense verb. Headlines should also give the reader some basic information. Think 5 W’s and 1H and choose the most important ones. In the example that follows you know who, what, why, and where, hopefully enough to interest you in the story. Notice that only the first word and any proper nouns (Bend) are capitalized. This is called Down Style and is preferred over capitalizing all words in headlines. EX:

Bend teacher recuses teens

Summit High School teacher rescues four teens from Newport Beach rip current

EDITORIAL

An editorial is an article that presents a writer's opinion on an issue. Much in the same manner of a lawyer, editorial writers build on an argument and try to persuade readers to think the same way they do. Editorials are meant to influence public opinion, promote critical thinking, and sometimes cause people to take action on an issue. In essence, an editorial is an opinionated news story where the writer presents his/her side cohesively and persuasively.

TKAM Editorials will have the following:

1. An introduction, body and conclusion like other essays
2. An objective explanation of the issue
3. A timely news angle for the time period
4. Opinions from the opposing viewpoint that refute directly the same issues the writer addresses
5. The opinions of the writer delivered in a professional manner; Good editorials engage issues, not personalities and refrain from name-calling, personal attacks or other petty tactics of persuasion. Don't preach.
6. Alternative solutions to the problem or issue being criticized; Anyone can gripe about a problem, but a good editorial should take a pro-active approach to making the situation better by using constructive criticism and giving solutions.
7. A solid and concise conclusion that powerfully summarizes the writer's opinion; Give it some punch.

TKAM Editorials will use predominately *one* of these purposes:

1. **Criticize:** These editorials constructively criticize actions, decisions or situations of concern while providing solutions to the problem identified. Immediate purpose is to get readers to see the problem, not the solution.
2. **Persuade:** Editorials of persuasion aim to immediately see the solution, not the problem. From the first paragraph, readers will be encouraged to take a specific, positive action.
3. **Praise:** These editorials commend people for something done well.

Writing an Editorial

1. Select a significant topic or issue in TKAM which was/is controversial and about which you care deeply. Inject emotion. Academics teach us that to craft an effective argument we need to be clear, cold and removed--"just the facts, please." But an editorial's audience is very different from that of an academic essay. The reader must feel your passion for the issue.
2. Collect information, facts, and evidence to convince people that your opinion is the one they should follow. Make sure your facts are solid. A foundation of real-world information is key. While emotion is important to engage the reader, it should be a vehicle for the facts to shine through, not a fog to obfuscate them. Emotion is the frosting; facts are the cake. Few would want to eat a cake made entirely of frosting.
3. State your opinion briefly in the fashion of a thesis statement.
4. Explain the issue objectively as a reporter would and tell why this situation is important.
5. Give opposing viewpoint first with its quotations and facts.
6. Refute (reject) the other side and develop your case using facts, details, figures, quotations. Pick apart the other side's logic.
7. Concede a point of the opposition — they must have one good point you can acknowledge that would make you look rational.
8. Repeat key phrases to reinforce an idea into the reader's minds.
9. Give a realistic solution(s) to the problem that goes beyond common knowledge. Encourage critical thinking and pro-active reaction.
10. Wrap it up in a concluding punch that restates your opening remark (thesis statement).
11. Keep it to 400 words; make every word count; never use "I"

A Sample Structure

I. Introduction. *The Lead* – Hook the reader with the opening. A personal story works. So does a shocking statement. Maybe it is speaking to the reader like he or she were in the room with you. Whatever you do, make sure you are honest, accurate, and specific. Once you think the reader will be firmly with you, indicate your topic and give a committal statement to what you believe. Include the five W's and the H. (Members of Congress, in effort to reduce the budget, are looking to cut funding from public television. Hearings were held ...)

- Pull in facts and quotations from the sources which are relevant.
- Additional research may be necessary.

II. Body paragraph. Present Your Opposition First. *The Concession* – You might want to disarm your opposition by recognizing that their viewpoint has some importance. This is good because those who disagree with you will be thinking it anyway. Concede only the hardest point to argue against your thesis and then add a *but* . . .

As the writer you disagree with these viewpoints. Identify the people (specifically those who oppose you. (Republicans feel that these cuts are necessary; other cable stations can pick them; only the rich watch public television.)

- Use facts and quotations to state objectively their opinions.
- Give a strong position of the opposition. You gain nothing in refuting a weak position.

III. Body paragraph. Directly Refute The Opposition's Beliefs. Perhaps begin with a transition. (Republicans believe public television is a "sandbox for the rich." However, statistics show most people who watch public television make less than \$40,000 per year.)

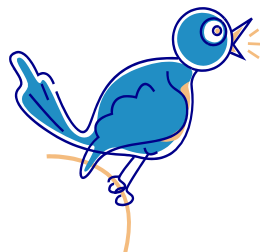
- Pull in other facts, quotations, reasons and analogies from people or sources who support your position.
- Concede a valid point of the opposition which will make you appear rational, one who has considered all the options (fiscal times are tough, and we can cut some of the funding for the arts; however, ...).

IV. Body paragraph. Give Other, Original Reasons/Analogies. The body of the piece should include a strong argument for your thesis, followed by a stronger argument for your thesis, followed by the strongest argument for your thesis. Save the strongest argument for last because the reader will tend to remember the final argument longer and ending with a weaker argument just invites people to oppose your position. (Taking money away from public television is robbing children of their education ...)

- Use a literary or cultural allusion that lends to your credibility and perceived intelligence (We should render unto Caesar that which belongs to him ...)

V. Conclusion. An effective ending to the essay is to leave the reader with a little something extra: a call to action, a vision of the future, or food for thought. Give solutions to the problem or challenge the reader to be informed. (Congress should look to where real wastes exist — perhaps in defense and entitlements — to find ways to save money. Digging into public television's pocket hurts us all.)

- A quotation can be effective, especially if from a respected source
- A rhetorical question can be an effective concluser as well (If the government doesn't defend the interests of children, who will?)



Possible Ideas for Editorial:

- Where's Maycomb's moral compass?
- Racial inequality and prejudices alive and well in Maycomb.
- Wake up to gender inequality and stereotyping in Alabama
- Stereotyping blinds men from seeing the truth about each other
- Why are people so quick to judge what they do not understand?
- Bullying is for cowards
- Class structure and social status barriers to tolerance
- Atticus—wise or unwise to defend Tom Robinson?
- Atticus an admirable father?
- Atticus's closing argument rocked the courthouse
- The cowardly mob mentality vs. the power of one strong individual who acts with integrity
- Prejudicial behavior limits one's ability to develop fully as human being
- Who is responsible for Tom Robinson's death?
- The stereotypical southern gentleman and Atticus Finch
- Is the death sentence morally wrong?
- Capital punishment has been disproportionately used between Blacks and Whites
- Our jury selection process needs a facelift. Flaws in our interpretation of the sixth amendment?
- Is the electric chair death penalty cruel and unusual punishment?
- Flaws of our Southern social code.
- Why can't Tom feel sorry for a white woman?
- Steps to erasing racial prejudice
- Tolerance is not an emotion but an act of will
- True courage resides in those who summon inner strength to fight moral and spiritual battles.
- Zealot Bible-thumpers are often hypocrites who do more harm than good.
- What can Maycomb do about delinquent and abusive parenting?
- Deferring judgment until one considers life from another person's perspective erases a whole lot of societal ugliness
- Based as it is upon a naively optimistic appraisal of the average American citizen, the jury system should be scrapped and replaced with permanent tribunals.

HISTORICAL EXPOSITORY ESSAY

Mrs. Overcash will be presenting a mini-unit on research and documentation in the library. Some possible topics:

- **Role of Women of the 1930s:**

-Fashion, careers, family roles, taboos for women, the workplace, and wages

-Gertrude Stein, Mrs. Wallis Simpson, Margaret Mitchell, Jane Addams, Pearl S .Buck, Amelia Earhart, Eleanor Roosevelt

-What was the typical role of women in the South in 1930s America? What limited rights did they have and/or what were they expected to be in the South at this time?

-The character of Aunt Alexandra in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is often thought of as a "proper" Southern lady. Based on your research, what was a "proper" woman of the South supposed to be like? What was the "social code" she was trying to uphold in the South? Look for descriptions of clothing, behavior, personality, and social roles.

- The character of Miss Maudie, the main character's neighbor, is considered by many to be a woman who defied the typical role of women in the South. Based on your research, what would a woman be doing and behaving like that would be considered "improper" or "breaking the code" of a Southern lady. Are there any examples in history of such women? Who were they and what did they do to break the code?

- **Economic Concerns of the 1930s:**

-President Herbert Hoover, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal," Social Security, Wall Street, Statistics: population, wages and salaries, costs of home, food, cars, rent

-The Stock Market Crash and The Great Depression: The Impact on Economic Prosperity for Blacks and Whites in America

- What was "Black Friday"? What caused the stock market to crash? Had it happened before? Where/when? Could the stock market crash have been prevented? How?

-What impact did the stock market crash have on Americans and life in America? Explain some of the tragic events that occurred immediately after the Crash?

- Explain what the Great Depression was and its importance/prominence in American history. Who was President and what policies affected the Great Depression?

-What factors led to the Great Depression? What was life like for Americans during the Great Depression? Who was hardest hit and how? What were some examples that you can give to make the Great Depression real to today's audience?

-The Dust Bowl: The Impact on Economic Prosperity for Blacks and Whites

- What was the Dust Bowl? Where did it take place and when? Who was directly affected by it?

- What impact did the Dust Bowl have on life in America? How is it connected to the Great Depression? Could it have been prevented? If so, how? Have we done things since then to prevent it from happening again or could it still happen?
- How did Herbert Hoover deal with this natural disaster and the people involved? What were “Hoovervilles” and why were they called that? Who were the “Okies”? Explain the problems that arose in the country in places like California as a result of the Dust Bowl, the “Okies,” and migrant farming.
- Herbert Hoover v. Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Two Presidencies, Two Policies, One Era in American History
- When was Herbert Hoover President? What condition was the country in when he started as President? What were his major policies as President (economic and domestic policies specifically)? What major changes happened in the United States while Hoover was President? What condition was the country in when he finished as President? What was his legacy as President? (Ex. What were “Hoovervilles”? For what do people remember him?)
- When was FDR President? What condition was the country in when he started as President? What were his major policies as President (economic and domestic policies specifically)? What major changes happened in the United States while FDR was President? What condition was the country in when he finished as President? What was his legacy as President? (Ex. What was “The New Deal”? What do people remember him for?)
- Compare and contrast each Presidency and the effect both had on the country. What were some famous quotes from each President and explain the significance of those quotes.

Science/Technology/Innovation during 1930s:

- Television, radio, Chicago World’s Fair (1933), U.S. Nobel Prize winners Glenn Curtiss, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Edison, Thomas Hunt Morgan, Golden Gate Bridge, Boulder Dam

Education in the 1930s:

- Educational Reforms: John Dewey -"Experience and Education, "Level of education -state laws, Literacy Schools in rural America during the Depression

Education for Blacks in the Early 20th Century:

- W.E.B. Dubois and the NAACP: Fighting Against Scientific Racism. Who was W.E.B. Dubois? Give important biographical facts of his background. Why was he so important? Why is he a historical figure?
- What ideas did W.E.B. Dubois promote that focused on improving life for Blacks in America and supporting their rights? What is scientific racism and what were his views on it? Who were his main supporters and who were his main opponents?
- What is the NAACP? What was W.E.B. Dubois’ connection with the NAACP? What was the purpose or mission of the NAACP with Dubois’ help?
- What impact did Dubois have on the education and the general welfare of Blacks in America? Do you agree with his views? Why or why not?
- Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute: Up From Slavery
- Who was Booker T. Washington? Give important biographical facts of his background. Why was he so important/why is he a historical figure?
- What was the Tuskegee Institute? Who founded it and what was its purpose? What role did Booker T. Washington have at Tuskegee and what did he accomplish while he was there?
- What ideas did Booker T. Washington promote that focused on improving life for Blacks in America and supporting their rights? Who were his main supporters and who were his main opponents?
- How did Washington’s views differ from W.E.B. Dubois? What impact did he have on things such as education and the general welfare of blacks in America? Do you agree with his views? Why or why not?

- Explain the laws/policies regarding the education of Blacks during the Civil War. What were they/how were they any different after the Civil War?
- For those blacks who were receiving an education, what were their schools like? What obstacles did they face in trying to get an education? Who/what opposed their opportunities to get an education?
- What effect did their education or lack of an education have on their abilities to compete with Whites as equals in the United States? How has that had a longstanding impact on equality between Blacks and Whites in the U.S.? The Rise of Black Identity and Culture after The Civil War.

Status of African-Americans in the 1930s:

- Jim Crow Laws: Its History, Guiding Policies and Impact on Blacks
- Explain what Jim Crow Laws were and how/where/why they originated. Who was Jim Crow? What were the original laws/policies?
- What impact did Jim Crow laws have on blacks and what rights did they violate? How did whites/states defend Jim Crow laws?
- What connections do you see between Jim Crow laws/policies and *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
- The Klu Klux Klan: Its History and Its Methods of Instilling Fear
- Explain where the Klu Klux Klan originated in the United States. What was there mission and who were its members? Provide

significant historical facts about the group.

- What impact did the KKK have on life in America (particularly on Blacks and minorities? What methods did they use in order to promote their agenda?
- What influence did the KKK have on local governments and people in power? How does this influence connect with what you are reading in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

-Plessy v. Ferguson: A Landmark Case and Its Impact on “Separate but Equal”

- Explain/summarize what the case was (i.e. who was involved, what the case was about, when it occurred, what the final decision was, etc.)
- Why was this case such a significant one in terms of its impact on life for blacks? How did it push the agenda of “separate but equal” and how was this constitutional?
- What connections do you see between the circumstances of this case and *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

-Lynching and Lynch Mobs: Citizen Reinforcement of Jim Crow Laws; Nooses: Modern Day Symbolic Threats (The Jena Six); Sundown Towns

- Give a brief history of lynching in America and the origins of the lynch mob. What influence did they have on local governments/people in power?
- How did they come to represent white hatred of blacks? Why were so many white people supportive of them? At their peak, how frequent were lynchings of black people by white lynch mobs in America? Where in the country were they most prominent? What were sundown towns? How were they connected to lynchings?

Popular Entertainment of the 1930s:

Movies, Hollywood stars, Dance Radio programs

Popular music: "The Cotton Club," Shirley Temple, Charlie Chaplin, Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Judy Garland, and Salvador Dali

The Headlines of the 1930s:

What and who made the news? Sports, disasters, "big" events, 21st amendment, crime, Howard Hughes, Charles Lindbergh, Knute Rockne, Joe Louis, John Dillinger, George Eastman

Political Concerns of the 1930s: International Relations, Relationships with other world leaders (Hitler, Stalin, Chamberlain/Churchill) League of Nations

-The Rise of Hitler and Nazi Germany: Hitler's Rise to Power, the Formation of the Nazi Party, and the Treatment of Blacks in the U.S. Compared to Jews in Germany

- Who was Adolph Hitler? When was he born and what was his family like? Explain how he came into power in Germany (i.e. what was the condition of Germany before Hitler rose to power, what were Hitler's policies and beliefs that gained him a following, etc.)
- Who were the Nazis? What were their beliefs and political philosophies that appealed to Germans and gave them popularity? Why were Jewish people the target for Hitler's and the Nazis' hatred? (I.e. what did they blame the Jews for and why?) Explain how the Nazis gained a following and rose to power.
- Compare the treatment of the Jews in Nazi Germany at this time to the treatment of Blacks in America at the same time. Specifically look at the condition of Germany and the U.S. economically and politically and explain laws in both countries that were created in each to target Jews and Blacks.

The Great Migration: Blacks Moving from the South to the North after The Civil War:

- What was The Great Migration? What started it? Where did it occur and when?
- How did The Great Migration change/affect life in places where blacks were migrating from and where they migrated to? What changes can we still see in America today as a result of The Great Migration?
- What effect did it have on the Blacks who decided to stay and not join the migration? What connections does this have to *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

-The Harlem Renaissance: The Rebirth of Black Arts and Culture in the North

- What was the Harlem Renaissance? Where did it occur and who/what did it involve? Name some major people/results of it?
- How did the Harlem Renaissance change life for blacks in America? Can we still see evidence of it in America today? If so, how/where?
- Does it go against what many people in America believed about Blacks at the time/today? If so how?

-The Black Church: The Rise of the Church in the Southern Black Community and in Educating and Organizing Black Communities for Civil Rights

- What were some of the earliest Black churches in the U.S.? Who started/founded them? Give some history of some of these pioneering churches including dates, locations, Christian denominations, and early church leaders.
- What role did Black churches (particularly in the South) play after the Civil War in educating African Americans? How did singing

in the church help reading and literacy? Discuss “call and response” and early Negro Spirituals.

- Explain how the Black church was critical to educating and organizing Blacks in the South after the Civil War.

The Evolution of Black Music: Negro Spirituals/Field Music

- “Strange Fruit” by Abel Meeropol/performed by Billie Holliday
- What were the early forms of Black music? What were its roots and how was it evolving in slaves in the U.S.?
- What were the messages and what was the power of Black music to its people in America, especially early on?

Civil Rights Defenders for Blacks: Atticus Finch as a Reflection

- In the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus Finch is the father of the main character, Scout, and he is a defense lawyer for a black man, Tom Robinson. Despite all the racism and ignorance that surrounds him, Atticus fights strongly to defend Tom Robinson. What did white people who fought to defend the rights of blacks face in terms of hate and violence? Are their historical accounts of white defenders of blacks who faced the hate and violence? Explain who they were and the details of their experiences. Provide quotes when and if you can.

- Based on historical accounts and opinions in research, have all Black people looked at white characters like Atticus positively? Do some have negative perceptions of him as a character? Explain why.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Choose a minor character and write a letter to the editor of your newspaper in your character’s voice. You’d need to choose an event from the novel that prompts you to write. Most people write letters to the editor when they have a problem with an issue that affects the community or when they want to praise the efforts of a community member. Letters to the editor express the writer’s opinion. While you do not need to cite the text in the same way you do for a literary analysis (using quotation marks, page numbers, etc.) for this letter, you will need to make reference to events as if they actually happened. To best view the events of the novel from your character’s point of view, take Atticus’s advice and “consider things from his point of view and climb inside of his skin and walk around in it.” After you choose your character, it is up to you to determine what he or she would most want to say? Remember, the letters are public for the citizens of Maycomb.

Possible Topics:

1. Why the town’s treatment of Tom Robinson is not fair.
2. Why no one in the town is willing to stand up against that treatment even though they may think it is wrong.
3. Why the town is unhappy with Atticus for defending Tom.
4. Your reaction to Scout, Jem and Dill’s interaction with the lynch mob.
5. The mystery of Boo Radley
6. Comment on one of the many themes of the book:
 1. Loss of innocence
 2. Racial injustice
 3. Courage to stand up for one’s own beliefs
 4. Gender roles
 5. Education, especially Scout in school
 6. Choose any significant event/theme from the novel.

