

Drama: 1962, Not rated, B&W, 2:09
Atticus Finch Gregory Peck
Scout Mary Badham
Jem Philip Alford
Dill John Megna
Tom Robinson Brock Peters
Boo Radley Robert Duvall
Director: Robert Mulligan
Screenplay by Horton Foote
Based on the novel Harper Lee



To Kill a Mockingbird



Academy Award Best Actor Gregory Peck plays a widowed small-town Alabama lawyer in 1932 trying to raise two children while defending a black man against charges of raping a white woman. Narrated by the younger child, Scout, a feisty six-year-old tomboy, it is a story of honor and integrity, racism and stereotyping, and the lessons we all learn when confronted with crises. Two storylines play out simultaneously; that of the trial and the children's small-town

life, especially their relationship with a reclusive neighbor, Boo Radley. The interwoven stories come together dramatically and skillfully in the exciting climax. The interest arises both from the social context and from the use of the lawyer's kids who are growing up and who must understand the world of their seniors and matters of justice and injustice. The film uses very carefully laid-out Americana with sensitive, well-observed touches and with elements of southern gothic.

PREVIEWING PROMPT:

The following questionnaire relates to the themes and issues of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Give your first reacton to each of the statements by circling one the numbers: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree somewhat, 3=disgree somewhat, 4=disagree strongly. Jot down comments about any statement you are unsure of or question.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.All men are created equal.	1	2	3	4
2.Girls should act like girls.	1	2	3	4
3.It's okay to be different.	1	2	3	4
4.Nobody is all bad or all good.	1	2	3	4
5.Some words are so offensive that they should never be stated or written.	1	2	3	4
6.Under our justice system, all citizens are treated fairly in our courts of law.	1	2	3	4
7. "Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never hurt you."	1	2	3	4
8.Speaking standard grammar proves that a person is smart.	1	2	3	4
9.A hero is born, not made.	1	2	3	4
10.No one is above the law.	1	2	3	4
11.Education is the great equalizer.	1	2	3	4
12.When the law does not succeed in punishing criminals, citizens should do so.	1	2	3	4

Comments:

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

1. Describe the opening title scene. What technique does the film use to present these objects to us? What mood is created here?

2. There is an example of foreshadowing in the opening scene. In detail explain what is being foreshadowed and how effective this is as a cinematic technique.

3. Describe Maycomb as you see it at the beginning of the film. How does the filmmaker use an establishing shot to create a mood of the town? How effectively is this done?

4. Study the scene in Scout's room as Atticus reads to her. What is the relationship between the father and daughter? How does this scene capture and define that relationship and set the scene for the entire film?



5. What is your first impression of Scout? What words would you use to describe her?

5A. What is your first impression of Atticus? What words would you use to describe him?

5B. Describe Jem. How is he different from Scout?

6. Many of the characters are depicted as holding stereotypes about how people will behave as a result of their age, gender, race, social status and other categories. Which characters are victims of this stereotyping? Do any of them break through the behavior expected of them, showing individuality and exposing the falseness of narrowly labelling people?

7. Atticus tries to provide moral lessons to help his children cope with their world. Explain the lesson he is trying to teach with each of the following lines:

a. " You never know someone until you step inside their skin and walk around a little"

b. " It's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

c. (Write your own quote from the book or film that you remember—paraphrase if necessary)

f. the cemented hole in tree

g. Atticus' pocket watch

h. columns on buildings

13. *To Kill a Mockingbird* has the **gothic** theme present, including elements such as the supernatural, ghosts, sinister murders, sexual violence, haunted houses, prisons and dungeons, encounter with people unlike ourselves, and the baleful influence of the past. Behind the gothic is the idea of imprisonment within and the breaking through boundaries. When characters attempt to break out of boundaries, violence inevitably breaks out. Match the following elements with events in the movie:

	Events in the film
a. foreboding of evil	
b. ghosts and ghost houses	
c. forbidden secrets	
d. insanity	
e. the lure of terror	
f. imprisonment, including barriers, walls and veils	
g. taboos including racemixing	
h. violence, especially having to do with attempting to break boundaries	

16. Read the following excerpt from the novel. What mood is conveyed. How accurately does the film capture the same mood? What changes, if any, are evident?

The Radley place jutted into a sharp curve beyond our house. Walking south, one faced its porch; the sidewalk turned and ran beside the lot. The house was low, was once white with a deep front porch and green shutters, but had long ago darkened to the color of the slate-gray yard around it. Rain-rotted shingles drooped over the eaves of the veranda; oak trees kept the sun away. The remains of a picket fence drunkenly guarded the front yard--a "swept" yard that was never swept--where johnson grass and rabbit-tobacco grew in abundance.

17. List the events that happen that give you an idea about the character of Boo Radley. From this write a paragraph describing Boo. Was he treated fairly by the people of Maycomb? Explain.

18. The night scene in which the children sneak up to the Radley house dramatizes their fascination with and their fear of the unknown. How do the filmmakers use lighting, music, sound effects, and camera work to heighten suspense? How suspenseful does the scene seem to viewers today?

19. Why does Atticus take on Tom Robinson as a client? What does this say about him as a person?

20. Describe Tom Robinson. How believable is he on the witness stand?

21. How does Atticus prove that Tom is innocent? Why was the verdict a "foregone conclusion?"

23. Complete each of the listed statements. You may write a single sentence or do a free-writing elaboration.

My idea of a hero is ...

America's idea of a model family may be described as...

A defendant in a jury trial has the best chance of being found innocent if ...

One advantage of living before 1950 was ...

One disadvantage of living before 1950 was ...

A Southern lady would never ... Opinionnaire
