



SHELLEY MCNAMARA

## Analysing Literary Merit of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* Unit of Work

Unit overview and  
lessons based on the  
study of literary merit in  
*To Kill a Mocking-  
bird* by Harper Lee

*Quiller*

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<b>Unit of work:</b>	<i>Analysing Literary Merit of Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	<b>Year:</b> 10	<b>Stage:</b> 5
<b>Duration:</b>	6 weeks	<b>Assessment:</b>	Analytical essay
<b>Text types:</b>	Narrative Film	<b>Language:</b>	Abstract nouns Narration types Essay writing
<b>Concept:</b>	Aestheticism Appreciation		
<div> <div> <b>Learning experiences:</b> reading, writing, viewing  <b>Links to other learning areas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History</li> </ul> <b>General capabilities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy</li> <li>Critical and creative thinking</li> <li>Ethical understanding</li> <li>Difference and diversity</li> </ul> </div> <div> <b>Other learning across the curriculum areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civics and citizenship</li> <li>Difference and diversity</li> </ul> </div> </div>			

Essential Learning Goal	Overarching Questions	Key Learning Ideas
Why would <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> be considered worthy of literary merit?	How does <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> have literary value? How do narrative elements demonstrate literary merit?	What is literary value and merit? How is it represented through narrative elements in the novel and film versions of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ? How does the language in <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> (novel and film) position the responder to consider certain values and ideas? What is worthwhile about the personal and public worlds represented in <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ? How can students relate to this world?

# Analysing Literary Merit of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* Unit of Work

## Links to NSW English Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum: Stage 5

### Objective A: Outcome 1

**A student:** responds to and composes increasingly sophisticated and sustained texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure EN5-1A

Sub-strands	Content descriptions
Engage personally with texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>appreciate, explain and respond to the aesthetic qualities and the power of language in an increasingly sophisticated range of texts</li> </ul>
Develop and apply contextual knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analyse and explain the ways language forms and features, ideas, perspectives and originality are used to shape meaning</li> <li>analyse ideas, information, perspectives, contexts and ideologies and the ways they are presented in increasingly demanding, sustained imaginative, informative and persuasive texts</li> </ul>
Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify how vocabulary choices contribute to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness (ACELA1561)</li> </ul>

### Objective B: Outcome 3

**A student:** selects and uses language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts, describing and explaining their effects on meaning EN5-3B

Sub-strands	Content descriptions
Engage personally with texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engage with a range of increasingly complex language forms, features and structures of texts in meaningful, contextualised and authentic ways</li> <li>analyse and explain how text structures, language features and visual features of texts and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response (ACELT1641)</li> </ul>
Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluate techniques (eg contrast, exaggeration, juxtaposition or changing chronological order) used in spoken, written and visual texts to, for example, construct plot and create emotional responses</li> <li>understand how certain abstract nouns can be used to summarise preceding or subsequent stretches of text (ACELA1559)</li> </ul>

### Objective C: Outcome 5

**A student:** thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts in a range of contexts EN5-5C

Sub-strands	Content descriptions
Engage personally with texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflect on, extend, endorse or refute others' interpretations of and responses to literature (ACELT1634, ACELT1640)</li> </ul>
Develop and apply contextual knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand how language use can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people (ACELA1551, ACELA1564)</li> <li>compare ways in which spoken, written, visual, multimodal and digital texts are shaped according to</li> </ul>

	personal, historical, cultural, social, technological and workplace contexts
<b>Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand and use the language of argument, eg the use of logic, evidence, refutation, ellipsis, irrelevance and circumlocution, and analyse how it affects responses</li> </ul>
<b>Respond to and compose texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>respond to and compose a range of sustained imaginative, informative and persuasive texts which are increasingly demanding in terms of ideas, arguments and linguistic, structural, cognitive, emotional and moral complexity</li> </ul>

### Objective D: Outcome 7

**A student:** understands and evaluates the diverse ways texts can represent personal and public worlds EN5-7D


<b>Sub-strands</b>	<b>Content descriptions</b>
<b>Engage personally with texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explore and reflect on their own values in relation to the values expressed and explored in texts</li> </ul>
<b>Develop and apply contextual knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts (ACELT1812)</li> <li>explore and reflect on personal understanding of the world and significant human experience gained from interpreting various representations of life matters in texts</li> </ul>
<b>Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analyse the ways in which creative and imaginative texts can explore human experience, universal themes and social contexts</li> </ul>
<b>Respond to and compose texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>respond to and compose sustained imaginative, creative and critical texts that represent aspects of their expanding personal and public worlds, for a wide range of purposes, including for enjoyment and pleasure</li> </ul>

### Objective D: Outcome 8

**A student:** questions, challenges and evaluates cultural assumptions in texts and their effects on meaning EN5-8D

<b>Sub-strands</b>	<b>Content descriptions</b>
<b>Develop and apply contextual knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences (ACELY1752)</li> <li>identify, explain and challenge cultural values, purposes and assumptions in texts, including representations of gender, ethnicity, religion, youth, age, disability, sexuality and social class</li> </ul>
<b>Respond to and compose texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices (ACELY1749)</li> <li>analyse and describe the ways texts sustain or challenge established cultural attitudes and values</li> </ul>

NSW Board of Studies, *NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum: English K-10 Syllabus*, 2012, pp 116-133

Content descriptions	Lesson Outline	Suitable for homework	Resources
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> evaluate techniques (eg contrast, exaggeration, juxtaposition or changing chronological order) used in spoken, written and visual texts to, for example, construct plot and create emotional responses</p> <p><b>Outcome 5</b> reflect on, extend, endorse or refute others' interpretations of and responses to literature</p> <p><b>Outcome 8</b> identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences</p>	<p><b>What is literature?</b></p> <p><b>Guidance</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain, discuss or read notes from the worksheet about the meaning of literature.</li> <li>2. Ask students to complete the exercise below:</li> </ol> <p><b>Exercise</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the opening lines of the novel to 'Atticus was related by blood or marriage to nearly every family in the town'.</li> <li>2. Identify examples of the following narrative aspects in the opening pages considered to illustrate literature. Explain how these aspects illustrate the extract is an example of literature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plot</li> <li>• Setting</li> <li>• Characterisation</li> <li>• Themes</li> <li>• Structure</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Identify examples of the following style aspects considered to illustrate literature. Explain how these aspects illustrate the extract is an example of literature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poetic devices</li> <li>• Sophisticated punctuation</li> <li>• Sentence structure</li> <li>• Word choice</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>Diversity of Learners</b> To differentiate the curriculum, implement the alternative approaches and/or discuss and ask students to complete the exercises below:</p> <p><b>Extension</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss with a partner the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the meaning and connotations of the title</li> <li>• what the illustrations on the front cover suggest the novel is going to be about</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		<p>What is literature worksheet</p> <p>Opening scene</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>possible issues to be addressed in the novel based on the title, front cover and opening passage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Special educational needs</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write dot points in response.</li> <li>Reduce the number of activities.</li> <li>Prepare answers before the lesson so students can match them up.</li> </ol>		
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