

Analysing Literary Merit of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*: a student work ebook



Lessons and exercises based on
the study of literary merit in *To
Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

SHELLEY MCNAMARA

Qwiller

www.qwiller.com.au

Analysing Literary Merit of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*: a student work ebook

Shelley McNamara

www.qwiller.com.au

First published 2014 by QWILLER

Updated 2017

Visit our website at www.qwiller.com.au

Copyright © Shelley McNamara 2017

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner, except under conditions described in the Copyright Act 1968 of Australia (the Act) and subsequent amendments and conditions described in the Terms of Use on www.qwiller.com.au. All enquiries are to be made to the publisher at the web address above.

A licence must be obtained and a remuneration notice must be given to a Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) if educational institutions wish to copy any part of this work ebook for educational purposes under the Act. Then, a maximum of 10% of this work ebook is allowed to be copied by any educational institution for its educational purposes. Licence restrictions must be adhered to. For details of the CAL licence contact: Copyright Agency Limited, Level 15, 233 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. Telephone: (02) 9394 7600. Facsimile: (02) 9394 7601.

Email: info@copyright.com.au

Cataloguing data

Author: Shelley McNamara

Title: *Analysing Literary Merit of Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird: a student work ebook*

ISBN: 978-1-925624-30-4

Publisher: Shelley McNamara

Editor: Shelley McNamara

Proofreader: Linda Grace

Cover and text design: Toby Andrews at *Lilypad* www.lilypad.com.au

Cover image: Wikipedia

http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matar_un_ruiseñor#mediaviewer/Archivo:Atticus_and_Tom_Robinson_in_court.gif

Typeset in Book Antiqua and Bookman Old Style

Table of Contents

Welcome	5
Using this work ebook	5
The tools you could use	5
Resources	5
1. What is literature?	6
2. Literary value and To Kill a Mockingbird	9
3. Context and To Kill a Mockingbird	12
4. How literary merit is shown in To Kill a Mockingbird	19
a. Characters	19
b. Themes in To Kill a Mockingbird	23
c. Ethical issues in To Kill a Mockingbird	27
d. Settings in To Kill a Mockingbird	30
e. Writing style in To Kill a Mockingbird	34
f. Narrative viewpoint in To Kill a Mockingbird	39
5. Comparing key scenes in novel and film version	42
6. Writing analytical essays	49
7. Language of abstraction	52

1. What is literature?

Literature is a spoken, visual and/or written work of the creative imagination that illustrates cultural or historical significance. Literature includes works of drama, poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Generally, works of literature are considered texts that have something important to say that we can all learn from. They communicate these ideas in a stylistically sophisticated manner. For example, William Shakespeare's plays convey values and beliefs of the late 1500s and early 1600s that are still relevant today.

Features of literature

We can recognise literature through various features related to the content (what is said) and style (how it is said) of the work.

When deciding if the **content** of a piece of work represents literature, consider if:

- **plot events** are relevant, indicative of a time period and suitable to characterisation
- **settings** are clearly described and enhance the story and characters' experiences
- **characters** are realistically portrayed and developed
- **themes** are thought provoking and have enduring qualities
- **structure** is cleverly constructed to enhance the narrative.

When deciding if the **style** represents literature, consider if:

- **poetic devices** (or figurative language) such as metaphors, similes, alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance, rhythm and rhyme are poignant and clever
- **sophisticated punctuation** such as commas, semi colons and colons is used to add meaning to the content
- **sentence structure** such as a clever mix of complex and simple sentences are used to fully develop ideas reflected in the story
- **word choice** clearly represents characters and sophisticated words are used in description.

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

To Kill a Mockingbird is considered a work of literature as it is skilfully written and the story and characters have enduring qualities. The novelist Harper Lee grew up in a small town in Alabama in the southern states of America in the 1940s and 50s and reflects on the issues in American society at the time – the racial prejudice and religious intolerance, the class system and family dynamics as well as sexist attitudes. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1961.

In this work ebook you will be reading and analysing how *To Kill a Mockingbird* is an example of literature and what gives the novel literary merit.

A series of horizontal dashed lines spanning the width of the page, intended for student writing.