

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Bischoff	School:	OLMS
Book Title:	To Kill a Mochingbird	Genre:	Historical Fiction
Author:	Harper Lee	Pages:	336
Publisher:	Harper	Copyright:	1960

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

"Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird." A lawyer's advice to his children as he defends the real mockingbird of Harper Lee's classic novel—a black man charged with the rape of a white girl. 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.

One of the best-loved classics of all time, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has earned many distinctions since its original publication in 1960. It has won the Pulitzer Prize, been translated into more than forty languages, sold more than forty million copies worldwide, and been made into an enormously popular movie. It was also named the best novel of the twentieth century by librarians across the country (*Library Journal*). HarperCollins is proud to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the book's publication with this special hardcover edition.

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)  
Common Core RL. 7.1,2,3 and RL. 7.9

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

### Review #1

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Lee's beloved American classic makes its belated debut on audio (after briefly being available in the 1990s for the blind and libraries through Books on Tape) with the kind of classy packaging that may spoil listeners for all other audiobooks. The two CD slipcases housing the 11 discs not only feature art mirroring Mary Schuck's cover design but also offers helpful track listings for each disk. Many viewers of the 1962 movie adaptation believe that Lee was the film's narrator, but it was actually an unbilled Kim Stanley who read a mere six passages and left an indelible impression. Competing with Stanley's memory, Spacek forges her own path to a victorious

reading. Spacek reads with a slight Southern lilt and quiet authority. Told entirely from the perspective of young Scout Finch, there's no need for Spacek to create individual voices for various characters but she still invests them all with emotion. Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning 1960 novel, which quietly stands as one of the most powerful statements of the Civil Rights movement, has been superbly brought to audio. Available as a Perennial paperback. (Aug.)

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### Review #2

Amazon.com Review

"When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow.... When enough years had gone by to enable us to look back on them, we sometimes discussed the events leading to his accident. I maintain that the Ewells started it all, but Jem, who was four years my senior, said it started long before that. He said it began the summer Dill came to us, when Dill first gave us the idea of making Boo Radley come out."

Set in the small Southern town of Maycomb, Alabama, during the Depression, *To Kill a Mockingbird* follows three years in the life of 8-year-old Scout Finch, her brother, Jem, and their father, Atticus--three years punctuated by the arrest and eventual trial of a young black man accused of raping a white woman. Though her story explores big themes, Harper Lee chooses to tell it through the eyes of a child. The result is a tough and tender novel of race, class, justice, and the pain of growing up.

Like the slow-moving occupants of her fictional town, Lee takes her time getting to the heart of her tale; we first meet the Finches the summer before Scout's first year at school. She, her brother, and Dill Harris, a boy who spends the summers with his aunt in Maycomb, while away the hours reenacting scenes from *Dracula* and plotting ways to get a peek at the town bogeyman, Boo Radley. At first the circumstances surrounding the alleged rape of Mayella Ewell, the daughter of a drunk and violent white farmer, barely penetrate the children's consciousness. Then Atticus is called on to defend the accused, Tom Robinson, and soon Scout and Jem find themselves caught up in events beyond their understanding. During the trial, the town exhibits its ugly side, but Lee offers plenty of counterbalance as well--in the struggle of an elderly woman to overcome her morphine habit before she dies; in the heroism of Atticus Finch, standing up for what he knows is right; and finally in Scout's hard-won understanding that most people are essentially kind "when you really see them." By turns funny, wise, and heartbreaking, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is one classic that continues to speak to new generations, and deserves to be reread often. --Alix Wilber --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

### **What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

Title: **The Watson's Go To Birmingham**

Author: **Christopher Paul Curtis**

Title: **Bud, Not Buddy**

Author: **Christopher Paul Curtis**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

### **Document any potentially controversial content:**

Parents need to know that through the eyes of children Jem and Scout Finch, racism is examined when a black man goes on trial for the rape of a white woman. There is some intense material in this Pulitzer Prize winner: A drunk breaks Jem's arm, and is killed with a knife. The children are stalked, and Atticus and his children face down a lynch mob in the middle of the night. But this is a true American classic and one of our most eloquent appeals for tolerance and justice. Lee accurately

portrays both sides of the divided society of 1930s Alabama, and readers may be inspired to read more about the history of the time.

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated  Regular  At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** 12 years old (suggested by Common Sense Media)

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 12-14-12

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults