

Socratic Seminar for *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Part One)

You will be participating in a Socratic seminar on *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This will be conducted differently than previous seminars, in that it will be split into three sessions (instead of two) with separate questions for each session.

One-third of you will be given one set of questions (**Group A**), another third of you will be given another set of questions (**Group B**), and another third of you will be assigned another set of questions (**Group C**).

When it is your group's turn, you will sit in a circle in the designated area of the room and discuss the questions that you were assigned. You are graded on your participation in the discussion. Your discussion should last 10–15 minutes total. Your grade will be based on the following:

- frequently and positively contributing to the discussion (without dominating) **AND** contributing insightful and thoughtful comments without simply repeating what another peer said and without simply agreeing. If you do agree, be sure that you are adding onto what your peer said and not just repeating it.
- use of textual evidence to support your ideas
 - inviting others to contribute
 - posing new questions to the group (**NOT** questions that Mrs. Dewey assigns)

While one group is discussing, the other groups will sit on the outside and be expected to write down comments about what the other group is discussing. There are 4 categories of comments. You don't need to write down ideas from every category, or every word every person says, or even limit yourself to just these four questions, but these are just the types of things you could write down:

1. Things that make you think, “Huh? I don't get what you mean.”
2. Things that make you think, “I never thought of it like that.”
3. Things that make you think, “I totally agree with that.”
4. Things that make you think, “I totally disagree with that.”

Group A

1. When explaining why she hates nut grass, Miss Maudie says, “Why, one sprig of nut grass can ruin a whole yard. Look here. When it comes fall this dries up and the wind blows it all over Maycomb County!” (). **Using quotes and examples from chapters 1–6**, explain why nut grass is a fitting symbol for either racism or gossip,

2. Neighborhood gossip has Arthur “Boo” Radley portrayed one way; Miss Maudie and Atticus have him portrayed another. **Using textual evidence**, explain the differing views. With which does the author agree? Explain, **using textual evidence**.

3. Why are these minor characters in the novel? Use textual evidence to explain your answer.

Miss Maudie Calpurnia

Aunt Alexandra Miss Stephanie Crawford

Miss Dubose

4. Find examples of verbal irony in part one. Explain how verbal irony emphasizes big ideas in the novel.

Group B

1. Find examples of dramatic irony and explain their purpose in the novel. How does dramatic irony emphasize big ideas in the novel?

2. People often alienate and even persecute or bully those who appear different. **Using textual evidence**, explain how this is true for characters in the first six chapters.

3. Why are these minor characters in the first part of the novel? Use textual evidence to explain your answer.

Cousin Francis Uncle Ike Uncle Jack Heck Tate

4. How do specific characteristics of the setting create specific conflicts in part one? Use textual evidence when explaining your ideas.

Group C

1. Find examples of situational irony in part one. Explain how the different examples of situational irony emphasize big ideas in the novel.

2. The best place to learn is in a public-school classroom with a trained teacher. If Harper Lee were present, how would she respond? **Use textual evidence** to support your answer.

3. Why is it important that this story is told from Scout’s point of view? Use textual evidence to explain your answer. (Hints: Harper Lee, irony, innocence)

4. What could be the significance of the following symbols? (What big ideas do they symbolize?) Use textual evidence when explaining your ideas.

Mad dog (Tim Johnson) Mockingbird

Camelias