

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
How to Use this Guide	4
A Custom Resource — Keeping Novel Logs — Complete Lesson Plan	
Novel Information	7
Book Summary — About the Author — Make It a Text Set!	
Pre-Reading Activities	8
<i>Individual: "Word Association" — Individual: "The Power of Language"</i>	
Interactive Novel Logs	10
Teacher Instructions — <i>Individual: "The Summaries of Its Parts" — Individual: "My Word Wall" — Individual: "Keeping Up with the Finches" — Individual: "Lending Their Support?" — Individual: "A Sense of It All" — Individual: "The Passage of Time" — Individual: "A Conflict of Interest" — Individual: "Another Voice" — Individual: "Choice Sentences" — Individual: "Checking In on Theme" — Individual: "I Predict"</i>	
Sections from <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	
Section I: Chapters 1–4	23
Teacher Instructions — <i>Collaborative: "A Novel Narrator" — Individual: "A Novel Character" — Individual: "The Where and the When" — Individual/Collaborative: "The First Day of First Grade" — Individual: "Boo Who?" — Individual: "Section I Log-In"</i>	
Section II: Chapters 5–11	30
Teacher Instructions — <i>Individual: "Character Interactions" — Individual/Collaborative: "Three Mysteries" — Individual: "Take Two" — Collaborative: "Father Figure" — Individual: "A Lesson in Bravery" — Individual: "Section II Log-In"</i>	
Section III: Chapters 12–16	38
Teacher Instructions — <i>Individual: "A Sunday in Church" — Collaborative: "An Opinionated Aunt" — Individual: "Tensions Rising" — Individual: "A Gala Occasion" — Individual: "Section III Log-In"</i>	
Section IV: Chapters 17–23	44
Teacher Instructions — <i>Individual: "Cast of Characters" — Individual: "Questions and Answers" — Individual: "Conflicted Characters" — Individual: "The End of the Trial" — Collaborative: "Talking Points" — Individual: "Section IV Log-In"</i>	
Section V: Chapters 24–31	51
Teacher Instructions — <i>Individual: "Ladylike" — Individual: "A Sudden Death" — Collaborative: "A Building Anger" — Individual: "Storyboard a Scene" — Individual: "The Scene of the Crime" — Individual: "Section V Log-In"</i>	

(CONT.)

Teacher Instructions — *Individual*: “The Summary of the Whole” — *Individual*: “Theme Infographic” — *Individual*: “An Elemental Choice” — *Individual*: “Static vs. Dynamic” — *Individual*: “Personal Conflict” — *Collaborative*: “Turning Points” — *Collaborative*: “A Novel Poster” — *Individual/Collaborative*: “Language Locator” — *Individual/Collaborative*: “Up for Debate” — *Individual*: “A Novel Film” — *Individual*: “Star Rating”

Teacher Instructions — Novel Sentences

Meeting Standards 79

INTRODUCTION

Read through today’s national and/or state standards for “Reading: Literature,” and you will find that the work expected of students is expressed using such academic terminology as *describe*, *determine*, *develop*, *support*, and *cite*. Requirements such as these cannot be met via the comprehension-question worksheets and culminating quizzes that have long been the staples of literature guides designed for classroom use. The primary objective of those traditional activities was to make sure that students were keeping track of what was happening in the section of the novel that they had just read. Very little rigor and synthesis was asked of students—and usually none until the entire novel was read.

From a teacher’s standpoint, this style of classroom analysis misses multiple opportunities to delve deeply into the details that make a specific piece of literature a classic. From a student’s standpoint, this way to reflect on literature is monotonous and inflexible, and it fails to nurture the momentum experienced when one is invested in a compelling work of art. That is why the guides in the *Rigorous Reading* series aim to do much more: they aim to transform the reading of a great novel into a journey of discovery for students.

Instead of merely asking students what happened in any given section, this resource asks questions that require closer reading and deeper analysis—questions such as, “Why did the author choose to include this information?” and “How does this information further the plot or offer more insight into the themes, characters, settings, etc.?” And instead of waiting until the end of the novel to put the pieces of the puzzle in place, students will learn to add to and alter their understanding of the novel *as they are reading it*. The various activities in this resource systematically prompt students to consider and appreciate the many ingredients the author has combined to form the novel as a whole.

A CUSTOM RESOURCE

This in-depth guide has been written specifically for Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The lessons and activities have been structured and scaffolded to maximize the experience of reading and teaching this novel.

To prepare your students for their reading of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, utilize the **novel information** and **pre-reading activities** included on pages 7–9 of this guide. Included in this section is information about the book and its author, along with activities designed to acclimate students to the themes and/or concepts present in the book they are about to read.

This resource provides activities that help foster comprehension and reinforce knowledge of literary elements as students read the novel. These section activities allow students the opportunity to process short sections of the novel individually, laying a strong foundation for their ability to engage more deeply with the chapters to come. For each section of the novel, students will complete individual and collaborative activities that encourage close reading, referencing textual evidence, and drawing their own conclusions about the text.

Additionally, this resource provides students with another avenue through which they can reflect on recurring literary elements while also connecting personally with the novel. Each student maintains his or her own Interactive Novel Log, using it as a way to consider and then reconsider various aspects of the novel.

Upon completion of the entire novel, students can synthesize their ideas about the novel by completing several individual and/or collaborative post-reading activities (pages 58–73). This section of the resource includes such larger assignments as group projects and essay prompts.

On pages 74–75, several of the novel's richly worded sentences are provided for each section of the novel. This gives students an opportunity to learn the novel's **vocabulary** in context.

At the end of this guide, an **answer key** is provided for activities that require specific answers, and a list identifies how each activity correlates to **standards**.

Teacher Tips

For a description of Interactive Novel Logs and how to use them in your classroom, see page 5 of this guide.

An ideal way to use this resource would be to follow the complete lesson plan given on page 6 of this guide. Special attention should be paid to the Important Note included in Lesson 1, which offers strategies for handling the novel's use of racial epithets.

The use of multiple texts can help build and extend knowledge about a theme or topic. It can also illustrate the similarities and differences in how multiple authors approach similar content or how an individual author approaches multiple novels.

See the bottom of page 7 for suggestions about using this novel as part of a text set.

When teaching other novels in your classroom, consider using the specific ideas and also the general approach presented in this resource.

This guide is designed for use in grades 6–8, and the standards correlations on pages 79–80 reflect this range. This leveling has been determined through the consideration of various educational metrics. However, teacher discretion should be used to determine if the novel and guide are appropriate for lower or higher grades, as well.

KEEPING NOVEL LOGS

Great works of literature are complex texts, and complex texts are multilayered. They enrich and reveal as they go along. Successful readers are those who “go along” with the novel, too. Interactive Novel Logs give students a place and a space to record their thoughts and observations as they journey through the book. After each section of the novel is read, students use their Interactive Novel Logs to track the introduction and development of such literary elements as plot, setting, theme, characterization, craft, and structure, while also choosing their own ways to connect the novel to their own life experiences.

Materials needed for each student:

- ✦ a three-ring binder or presentation folder
- ✦ a sheet of plain paper for the title page
- ✦ two or three sheets of lined paper for a Table of Contents
- ✦ several extra sheets of paper (both lined and plain) for student’s responses to the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” prompts at the end of each section

Teacher Tip

One Interactive Novel Log can be kept for multiple novels, in which case a larger three-ring binder will be needed. If it will be used only for the activities included in this guide for *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a 1½-inch binder or presentation folder will be adequate.

Assembling the Interactive Novel Log:

1. On the plain paper, allow students to design and decorate their own title page. Have them write “Interactive Novel Log” and “*To Kill a Mockingbird*” in the middle of the page. They should include their name and grade at the bottom.
2. Add blank lined paper for the Table of Contents. Have students write “Table of Contents” at the top. They will add to this list as they create new pages.
3. Before reading each section of the novel, photocopy and distribute new copies of the Interactive Novel Log worksheets (pages 12–20). Directions for completing these activities can be found in the “Teacher Instructions” on pages 10–11.
4. For the final activity in each section, photocopy and distribute the “Section Log-In” page for the section. Follow the directions given. Students begin by completing a copy of the “Checking In on Theme” and “I Predict” worksheets (pages 21–22). Students then select one or more of the four prompts in the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” section, and they create an Interactive Novel Log page that responds to that topic.
5. After the class has completed the entire novel and the post-reading activities, you may have students include the “Star Rating” worksheet (page 73) as a final entry in their Interactive Novel Logs.

Teacher Tip

Consider allowing your students to preview the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” prompts a day or two before they are asked to respond to them. When asking students to reflect on past experiences and articulate their personal connections to a work of art, give them the time and space they need to collect their thoughts. By allowing your students to sit with the ideas presented in these prompts, you will relieve the pressure an immediate response can cause.

To Kill a Mockingbird is filled with vivid descriptions of the people, places, and things that populate its world. In the section you have just read, locate three passages in which Harper Lee uses vivid imagery to describe this world. Choose one person, one place, and one object/thing. Record some of the words and phrases she uses. Explain how her language appeals to the readers' senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell).

Chapters in section: from ____ to ____ **Pages in section:** from page ____ to page ____

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Section I
Chapters 1–4

NAME: _____

BOO WHO?

For this activity, take a closer look at the character named Boo Radley.

1. Think about when in the novel Boo Radley is first mentioned.

a. Name the chapter and page: _____

b. In your own words, what is said about Boo in this first mention?

c. Look at your previous two answers. Without knowing anything else about him, what might these two pieces of information tell us about the character of Boo Radley and his role in the novel?

2. What does Scout know about Boo based on her direct observation of him?

Find a quote that supports your answer. _____

3. In Chapter 1, Boo is described as a “malevolent phantom.” Define these words.

a. The word *malevolent* means _____.

b. The word *phantom* means _____.

c. On what does Scout base this description of Boo? What stories has she heard about what he does? What has she heard of what he did in the past? Use your own words to answer these questions in a few sentences.

4. Does Scout ever walk by the Radley place? If so, why and how? If not, why not?

5. How does Scout end up in the Radley’s yard? What happens when she is there?

Section II
Chapters 5–11

NAME: _____

TAKE TWO

Chapters 9 and 10 introduce two events: the Tom Robinson case and the rabid dog incident. Begin by writing a very short news article about each. Write only the facts that are given in these two chapters. Focus on answering the questions *who, what, why, when, where, and how*. Each article should be one paragraph long. Each should be written in a professional tone and only contain facts. Then answer the questions below.

LAWYER ASSIGNED TO CASE

How does this event affect Scout? In Chapter 9, what does she learn from it and/or how does it change or shape her ideas about things?

RABID DOG SHOT!

How does this event affect Scout? In Chapter 10, what does she learn from it and/or how does it change or shape her ideas about things?

NAME: _____

SECTION IV LOG-IN

Now that you have finished this section of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, take some time to add to your Interactive Novel Logs.

- ✦ **First, write about a theme important to this section of the novel.**
Use your “Checking In on Theme” worksheet (page 21) to do this.
- ✦ **Then, make a prediction about what will happen next in the novel.**
Use your “I Predict” worksheet (page 22) to do this.
- ✦ **Finally, make a more personal connection to what you have read.**
Choose one of the suggestions below and use it to fill a page in your Interactive Novel Log. Take this opportunity to connect with the novel in a way that appeals to you.

- ★ Then, make a prediction about what will happen next in the novel.

- ✦ **Finally, make a more personal connection to what you have read.**

Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log

1

Children in Court

Jem, Scout, and Dill sneak into the court to watch Atticus work and to join the rest of Maycomb in watching a trial that deals with a graphic and violent crime. Do you think they should be there? Are they too young to hear these testimonies? Pick a side and make your case. Defend their right to be there, or explain why they should not be allowed inside.

2

Just Doing His Job

When Dill grows upset about the way Mr. Gilmer treats Tom Robinson, Scout offers a defense of the prosecutor. She says that he is just doing his job and that he has to talk to Tom that way. Do you agree? Do you think that is part of the job? Explain why you think Mr. Gilmer's approach is more effective, as effective, or less effective than Atticus's. Give reasons.

3

The Simple Hell

In Chapter 20, Mr. Raymond seems to feel he understands Dill for crying about “the simple hell people give other people—without even thinking.” What, if anything, does this statement make you think about? Do you feel that people still do that? In what places or forums are you more likely to see people act that way these days? Explore your thoughts on this idea.

4

Courtroom Sketch

For centuries, sketch art was the main medium through which people were given a peek into courtroom events. Artists sketched (drew) pictures of important moments during trials. Create your own courtroom sketch. Draw an important moment from the Tom Robinson trial. In the space below your sketch, explain your choice.