



The Perks of Being an Author

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Language Arts
Grades 9-12



Introduction

To Kill a Mockingbird is an American classic. Why is it so popular? In this lesson, students will discover how Harper Lee's choices as an author made her novel appeal to the masses and transcend generation after generation.

Learning Objectives

([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL11-12.3](#)) Students will analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Materials Needed

- Journals/notebooks
- Laptops/computers

Procedure

Students should be familiar with Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* before beginning this lesson.

1. Ask students to think about this question: What are the elements of a story? Allow students one minute of think time before asking for responses. Then, discuss the following terms and their meanings: **setting, action, characters**.
2. On a piece of paper or in a notebook/journal, ask students to write a short paragraph in response to the following question: *Why are the elements of a story so important?*
3. Discuss how the setting, action, and characters of *To Kill a Mockingbird* enhance the story. Ask students: *Did Lee appropriately develop and relate elements of the story? Does the setting make the most sense? Does the action fit the characters, the time period, etc.? Are the characters fully developed? If not, did the author do this on purpose?* Discuss these questions as a class. Allow students to respond and develop the conversation as much as possible. Be sure to include how Lee's choices created greater appeal for her book, etc.

Continued on page 2



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Continued from page 1

4. Students will now pretend that they are writing a book, and a publishing agency has requested a book summary. Ask students to create a book summary about the book they are writing. They must carefully select the setting, action, and characters to make the most sense and enhance the possibilities of the story. Book summaries should be two to three paragraphs in length and include all elements of the story in an abbreviated form.

Evaluation

Student learning will be evaluated using the following checklist:

The student's book summary includes a setting.	
The student's book summary includes the action that will take place in the book.	
The student's book summary includes characters.	
The elements of the story sound logical, make sense, and could enhance the story's overall appeal.	
The summary is free of misspellings, grammatical errors, and sentence fragments.	