*To Kill a Mockingbird* Background Notes

**Harper Lee:**

* Was born in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Childhood best friend was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who came to Monroeville during the summers to stay with his aunt. Mr. Capote also became an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Her father served in the State Legislature from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Attended \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Though Harper Lee denies that this novel is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the parallels are obvious.
* Submitted the manuscript for *To Kill a Mockingbird* in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and then spend \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years editing before its publication in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* The novel was an instant success, and won the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for fiction.
* It is estimated that there are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ copies in print.
* The Novel was turned into a movie in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and the now deceased \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ won an Oscar for the film.
* Harper Lee has only published \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ novel.
* She is very elusive, does not make public appearances, and does not participate in interviews.
* This picture is from when she received the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 2007.

**Setting of the Novel:**

* *To Kill a Mockingbird* is set in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which is an imaginary town. However, Monroeville, Alabama, is a real town, and you can visit a replica of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ there.
* Maycomb is a relatively rural area, and it’s isolated. Many of the citizens are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are rare.
* The story begins in the summer of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and ends on Halloween night in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* At this time, the country was in the middle of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were still segregated in the 1930’s.

**Historical Background:**

* Remember: Though *To Kill a Mockingbird* is set in the 1930’s, it was written in the 1950’s – a time of great racial tension in America.
* 1954 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ states that “separate but equal” was unconstitutional, and schools must be integrated.
* 1955 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is arrested for refusing to give her seat on a bus to a white person.
* 1955 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a 14-year-old boy, is beaten, shot, and lynched in Mississippi for whistling at a white woman.
* 1956 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ home is bombed.
* 1957 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ black students attempt to enter an all-white high school in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and had to be protected from white mobs by Federal troops.
* 1960 – *To Kill a Mockingbird* is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* 1962 – *To Kill a Mockingbird* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is released.
* 1963 – Martin Luther King delivers the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Washington, D.C.
* 1963 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ black girls are killed at Sunday School when a Birmingham church is bombed.
* 1964 – The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is passed.

**Jim Crow Laws:**

* “Jim Crow” was the name of a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that existed in the Southern United States between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the mid \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* The system suggested that Caucasians were superior to African-Americans in all ways, including \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* People believed that blacks and whites should be separated and not have sexual relations because a “mixed” race would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Examples of Jim Crow Laws:**

* A black male could not shake hands with a white male because it implied \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Blacks and whites could not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ motorists had the right of way at all times.
* A black person could not even suggest that a white person was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were separate. As were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, water fountains, restrooms, and even \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Cruel justice, such as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, was “necessary” because blacks were thought to be prone to violence.
* In essence, the Jim Crow caste system was this:
  + 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + 3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + 4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When slavery existed, even poor white people were superior to black people. However, as you will see in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, after slavery ended the poor white people had to compete socially and economically with the black people, and hatred increased.

Scottsboro Boys Trial:

* On \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a freight train was stopped in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ African American male teenagers were riding on the train, as were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian young women.
* The white girls, who were known \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, accused the black boys of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* There were no \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and the girls were not seen by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* However, with no \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, all nine boys were convicted by an all-white jury.
* Later, one of the girls (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) recanted her story about the rapes…admitting the story was all \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Harper Lee had been studying this court case when she wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird.*