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Introduction
Character, Theme, and Structure in
*To Kill a Mockingbird*
Overview

What is this unit about?
In this unit, students will read, write about, and discuss the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Their work will be driven by the following overarching questions:

- What do the characters’ words and actions reveal about them in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
- What is the relationship between the characters’ development and the big ideas/themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
- What does the structure of *To Kill a Mockingbird* reveal about Harper Lee’s purposes?

In this unit, students will expand their understanding of the interplay between the elements of a fictional narrative. Students will trace the development of Harper Lee’s characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* as the characters struggle and change, and will use this analysis to interpret the themes enacted through the novel.

Students will examine the text to find how Harper Lee uses language and the events of her time to create a believable world populated with powerful, complex characters, and how she structures her story to place particular emphasis on certain events and ideas.

Though this unit is not a genre study of historical fiction or a unit devoted expressly to the themes of human rights, racism, or justice, those issues too will likely arise, along with others, as students do the work of making meaning from the text.

The unit does not provide for the explicit teaching of the historical issues and context of the novel. Instead, students will read the novel without preconception or intermediary in order to develop stronger habits of independent reading.

The culminating assignment asks students to select and analyze a character from the novel. The character’s actions and words will form the basis of the students’ analysis, but students will also be asked to discuss their character’s role in the creation and conveyance of the novel’s themes.

What content will students learn?
Students will expand their understanding of

- how the “elements” of a narrative are interconnected in a well-written story.
- how characters are crafted and how their words and actions are a central conveyance of theme.
- themes as a unifying element which develops and can be traced through the story.
- narrative structure as something that an author can use, intentionally, to convey meaning.
- how believable, contextualized characters are crafted in the text and developed as they encounter the story’s events.
- how Harper Lee uses language to create dynamic, complex characters.
How will students develop their skills and habits of reading, writing, and speaking?

The unit provides a methodology as well as instructional resources and questions that guide the students through an inquiry approach to understanding text. Students engage as problem solvers and sense makers as they read, write, talk, and think about the texts in a pattern that emphasizes individual writing, paired and whole group discussion.

Each task students engage in includes an inquiry for them to answer and/or pursue. Students are supported to develop skills and habits such as how to:

- comprehend complex text with assistance and independently.
- develop, support, and defend text-based interpretations and arguments.
- determine themes and analyze how themes develop over the course of a text, including how elements of a narrative, specifically characters, interact to help develop theme.
- read, annotate, and take notes from texts.
- use models to guide their ability to analyze and construct their own text.
- study and determine how a text’s structure contributes to its meaning.
- recognize their own needs and independently locate resources.
- participate in routines such as maintaining a Reader/Writer Notebook, completing Quick Writes, pair/trio sharing of textual evidence, and whole group discussions on a text’s ideas and interpretations of texts.
- value effort as a way to get smarter about reading, writing, listening, speaking, and research.

What is the unit outline?

In the next section, you’ll find the unit outline. This unit outline provides a one-page snapshot of the major work that students will engage in over the course of this unit. The outline shows what students will do, while the pages that follow the unit outline show how students will engage in that work.

The unit outline lists the unit’s overarching questions, texts, tasks, and culminating assignment. The unit outline is meant to be read horizontally and vertically. The horizontal work represents the work that students do across texts. For example, the overarching questions reach across all the texts in the unit. Students are asked to apply these questions to each of the texts in the unit in order to deepen their understanding of that text and to build understanding across texts.

The vertical work shows the tasks and questions students will work through for each text. As you read, notice how the tasks in the vertical rows are designed to build on each other and engage students in evolving, challenging work. Notice too how the tasks are designed to give students multiple opportunities with each text to engage in key tasks aligned to the CCSS.

At the bottom of the page, you’ll find the unit’s culminating assignment. This assignment asks students to apply the knowledge, habits, and skills they gained over the course of the unit. Tasks within and across texts are designed to prepare students for this application as well as for the successful completion of the culminating assignment. Each unit task on the unit outline is represented by a prompt, question, or set of questions preceded by two numbers. The first number references a unit text and the second number references the task number for that text. For instance, Task 1.2 uses Text 1, Chapters 1-11 of To Kill a Mockingbird, and is the second task for this text.

Please be aware that a task is not the same as a class period or session. Tasks will often take more than one class session to complete as determined by the students’ needs and readiness.
## Overarching Questions

- What do the characters’ words and actions reveal about them in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
- What is the relationship between the characters’ development and the big ideas and themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
- What does the structure of *To Kill a Mockingbird* reveal about Harper Lee’s purposes?

### Unit Outline

#### INTRODUCTION:
- Independent Reading

  - **To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee
    - Part 1: Chapters 1–11
    - Part 2: Chapters 12–31
      - (1 week prior to the start of the unit)
      - (1–2 sessions)

#### TEXT PART 1
- To Kill a Mockingbird
  - by Harper Lee
  - Chapters 1–11
  - (4–7 sessions)

#### TEXT PART 2
- To Kill a Mockingbird
  - by Harper Lee
  - Chapters 12–31
  - (5–8 sessions)

#### 0.1 Independent Reading Preparation
- (1 session)
- How can you read the whole book independently and be ready for two weeks of talking and writing about it?

#### 0.2 Comprehension Check: Part 1
- What is each chapter mostly about?
- What do we learn about the characters?
- What big ideas emerge through the events, characters, and narration?

#### 0.3 Comprehension Check: Part 2
- What is each chapter mostly about?
- What do we learn about the characters?
- What big ideas emerge through the events, characters, and narration?

#### 0.4 Culminating Assignment Preparation
- (1 session)
- How will you show what you have learned at the end of this unit?
- How do the unit’s tasks support you to show what you learned?

#### 1.1 Comprehension
- (1–2 sessions)
  - What are the key events in Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
  - Who are the characters, and what do we know about them through their words and actions?
  - What big ideas came through the events and characters in Part 1 of the novel?

#### 1.2 Significance
- (1–2 sessions)
  - What did you identify as the most significant moments in Part 1 of the novel?
  - How did these moments contribute to your understanding of the characters and the big ideas in the novel?

#### 1.3 Author’s Methods: Characterization
- (1–2 sessions)
  - What does Lee do to make her characters believable as they move through the events of the novel?

#### 1.4 Interpretation: Theme
- (1 session)
  - What is the relationship between the characters’ development and possible themes in the novel?

#### 2.1 Comprehension
- (1–2 sessions)
  - What are the key events in Part 2 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
  - Who are the characters, and what do we know about them through their words and actions?
  - What big ideas came through the events and characters in Part 1 of the novel?

#### 2.2 Significance
- (1–2 sessions)
  - What did you identify as the most significant moments in Part 2 of the novel?
  - How did these moments contribute to your understanding of the characters and the big ideas in the novel?

#### 2.3 Interpretation: Theme
- (2 sessions)
  - What recurring big ideas can we now identify as themes?
  - What characters, symbols, and/or words are associated with these themes?

#### 2.4 Author’s Methods: Structure and Purpose
- (1–2 sessions)
  - How does the novel’s structure support your understanding of the story and Lee’s purposes?

#### Culminating Assignment:
- Choose a character from the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and write an essay in which you analyze that character through his or her words and actions, any changes he/she goes through, and his/her role in conveying the themes in the novel.

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1. Students read the novel independently before the unit begins.
2. The writing process lessons for the Culminating Assignment are not included in the unit.
Common Core State Standards\(^3\) (CCSS)

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards:

**Reading (p. 35)**
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

**Writing (p. 41)**
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Speaking and Listening (p. 48)**
1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

---

Language (p. 51)
1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Note

- CCSS grade-level focus standards are provided at the end of each task. For standards where there is partial alignment, the underlined words and phrases indicate the part of the standard to which the task is aligned. The callout boxes featuring teaching and technology options contain the standards specifically aligned to those options.
Instructional Supports in the Unit

How does the unit support planning and implementation?

The unit provides teacher-friendly features such as:

- a unit outline that provides a one-page snapshot of the major work in which the students will engage during the course of the unit.
- texts that are fully identified in the unit’s “Materials” lists and on the Unit Text page in the Appendix.
- tasks with identified learning targets and goals (overarching questions, open-ended questions, text-based questions, and grade-level CCSS).
- additional teaching options allow the teacher to plan lessons to meet the needs and interests of individual students and the whole class.
- specific means of support—for example, task questions, recommended pedagogical routines with explanations—are provided with each lesson.
- chart titles, resources, and handouts that are listed in one table in the unit introduction to make it easy to organize materials.
- a copy-ready culminating assignment.
- a teacher’s instructional glossary with explanations of terms that is provided in the “Instructional Glossary” section of the Appendix.
- instructional tools relevant to this unit that are explained in the “Instructional Resources” section of the Appendix.
How is it best to read and use the task pages?
Each task on the unit outline has several pages dedicated to it in the pages of the unit that follows. Each task has an overview page that’s similar to the first example below, a teaching approach, and highlighted boxes to indicate different teaching options within the task.

**Comprehension**
- What are the key events in Part 1 of To Kill a Mockingbird?
- Who are the characters, and what do we know about them through their words and actions?
- What big ideas came through the events and characters in Part 1 of the novel?

**Materials**
- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- Independent reading work (in Reader/Writer Notebook)
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents
- Note cards
- Quota created in this task
  - Sequence of Key Events in To Kill a Mockingbird
  - Characters in To Kill a Mockingbird
  - Vocabulary
  - How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision
  - Big Ideas in To Kill a Mockingbird
  - Lingering Questions
- Reader/Writer Notebook
- Chart paper and markers

**Focus Standards**

**Reading Literature**
- RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it evolves and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.9–10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the themes.
- RL.9–10.4 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Writing**
- W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (as single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Speaking and Listening**

© 2013 University of Pittsburgh – English Language Arts Unit, Grades 9–10: Character, Theme, and Structure in To Kill a Mockingbird
How is each task organized and sequenced?
Each task is intended to scaffold student learning through the use of pedagogical routines such as teacher modeling (as needed), individual Quick Writes with teacher support, partner/trio sharing, or whole group work. The routines assist learners toward fully independent engagement and completion of tasks. The pedagogical routines, which signal the level of scaffolding for tasks, are highlighted through the use of bold print.

Differentiated options are provided throughout the unit. These options provide teachers with varying instructional methods, so that the content and pedagogy can be differentiated between classes and within a class. Teacher notes are also provided to assist delivery of the lesson.

Why these task questions?
The questions have been carefully developed and reviewed to support students’ engagement with the text or texts under study. Changing the language of a question can diminish or increase the thinking work that students need to do with a question. The questions follow a sequenced pattern from initial comprehension work with a text to more difficult analytical work. This sequence has also been developed and reviewed carefully to support the lesson’s learning goal which links to the unit’s larger learning goals. Changing the questions can change the unit’s intent and purposefulness. As part of fully supporting students to answer the questions, provide the questions in writing as well as orally. Students can then see and refer back to a question at any time during completion of the task.

How long will it take to fully implement the unit?
It will take approximately two weeks to deliver the lessons in this unit based on 45-minute class sessions. Since students are to read the novel before the unit begins, this increases the efficiency of the instruction and provides for engagement in the lesson’s tasks rather than spending class time on initial reading of the novel. These lessons are designed to be implemented sequentially to support students to achieve the instructional goals. As such, the pacing of the lessons should depend on the time students need to achieve these goals.

How does the unit provide support for English learners?
Support for English learners is provided within the lessons in a number of ways. Students learn new information in manageable segments, which are sequenced to build on existing knowledge of language and genre and explicitly relate to the overarching questions and core concepts of the unit. Students revisit new learning a number of times. For example, students read texts multiple times, each time with a new purpose and using a scaffold appropriate to the purpose and the text.

In this way of working, the first time students read a text it is for literal comprehension and to make overall sense of the text. It is only after students have comprehended a text’s basic plot and information about characters that they read the text again for a new purpose. Given their basic comprehension, students are more ready to analyze the development of the characters and themes.

Talk is an essential part of this unit, and students’ development of spoken academic language is fostered through routines of discussion. Please see the Accountable Talk® Moves and Functions in ELA in the Instructional Resources section of the Appendix. The tool offers practical guidelines and exemplars on how to promote and deepen students’ talking to learn and to expand their thinking with powerful facilitation.

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moves. Students are given multiple opportunities to practice using the language in purposeful ways with effective feedback. To help English learners, as well as other students, students are often asked to share in pairs or trios before being invited to share with the large group. This allows students to practice and gain confidence sharing their responses with one or two students before doing so with the whole group.

**How is writing supported in the unit?**

Throughout the unit, students will practice writing to learn using a Reader/Writer Notebook to complete Quick Writes, take and make notes, and construct short essays. As they move through the sequence of tasks, students will use their new understanding about characterization, theme and structure, plus their writing in their Reader/Writer Notebooks to gather what they need to construct an effective character analysis. Please see the Instructional Resources section of the Appendix for information about setting up Reader/Writer Notebooks with students as a daily routine. Essay writing is not taught explicitly in this unit; however, there are embedded options for using student and teacher models to demonstrate planning, drafting, and revising an essay.

Students benefit from reading and deconstructing models of the genre in which they will be writing. Models allow students to examine and talk about the language, subject, and organizational choices other writers have made to construct their analyses of themes so that those choices become explicit. Teachers use authentic models (actual pieces written by students, the teacher, or professional writers in draft or final form) so students can talk about the choices those writers made. Highlighting or bringing students’ attention to how writers make meaning through their various techniques can help students see examples that they can use in their own writing. Being explicit about the grammatical choices writers make can aid student writers in recognizing and using the variety of choices available to them.

**What is our approach to vocabulary instruction?**

There are at least three different contexts to consider when thinking about vocabulary instruction: during shared reading, during independent reading, and during other times in the ELA block/period/week.

**During a First Reading When the Focus is Comprehension and the Context is Shared Reading**

At some point, in all of our units, you will be guided to lead students in a close reading of at least a portion of text, or in some cases a whole text, in a guided reading context. You are encouraged to identify those words in the text that may be unfamiliar to your students and that are essential to comprehension of the text and for each of these words to provide a short, student-friendly definition during the reading (Collins COBUILD English Learner’s Dictionary, 2012).

The idea here is to provide just enough information (when it is needed and not before) about the new words so that students maintain the flow of ideas and can continue their focus on understanding the central ideas in the text. You will need to analyze the text carefully in advance to identify such words. In some cases, these words have been pointed out in the unit, but you may need to add to the words we have identified and write or find your own student-friendly definition. Coxhead has identified a list of 570 academic word families that consist of words that occur with frequency across a number of academic content areas in academic texts. This list can be a resource in deciding which words are most worthy of attention (Coxhead, A., 2000).

During a First Reading When the Focus is Comprehension and the Context is Independent Reading

When reading texts independently, students are likely to encounter a range of words with which they are unfamiliar. They may or may not be able to discern which of these words are essential to understanding the text and which are not. In this situation we recommend that students use one of three approaches to figure out the meaning of the word:

1. Analyze the word to see if they are familiar with the meaning of any part of it or another form of it (e.g., decide versus decision);
2. Look for context clues, such as definitions within the sentence/paragraph; or
3. If these approaches fail, continue reading to see if they can make sense of the passage without this particular word.

During Language Arts Instruction at Other Times during the ELA Block/Period/Week

Vocabulary is a critically important part of supporting students to understand what they read. The vocabulary work within these units is not meant to replace a district’s robust vocabulary instructional program, but rather to be an important part of it. Typical vocabulary instruction that asks students to look up words in a dictionary and use them in a sentence has been demonstrated to be ineffective and, at its worst, may turn students off and diminish an interest in learning new words (Snow, Lawrence, & White, 2009). More powerful approaches include providing repeated exposure to a word in varied contexts; providing opportunities and encouragement to use the word in speaking and writing; encountering the word in the context of motivating texts (rather than in a word list); providing explicit instruction in the word’s meaning (such as through student-friendly definitions); and through explicit instruction in using word-learning strategies such as morphological analysis, cognate use and learning multiple meanings (Snow, Lawrence, & White, 2009).

For examples of robust vocabulary instruction and programs, see “Word Generation” by the Strategic Education Research Partnership (http://wg.serpmedia.org/) (for free materials, email them at wordgen@serpinstitute.org); Rev it Up! (2007) by Steck Vaughn; and Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction by Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002, 2013.

Additional Comments

You should decide if talking about a particular word or phrase before reading a text would better support your students to establish essential prior knowledge. There are times when this is useful and necessary, e.g., for English language learners and for students with special needs. However, as a rule, we encourage you not to front load vocabulary and instead to give student-friendly definitions right within the text as it is needed for comprehension. We also discourage asking students to provide definitions of unfamiliar words encountered during shared reading. Guessing is likely to distract from comprehension rather than enhance it.

Research suggests that it takes many repetitions with a new word before it truly becomes part of a student’s repertoire (Beck & McKeown, 2002). Students will have many and varied opportunities to incorporate these new words into their spoken vocabulary and writing as a result of repeated use by you, the teacher, and by fellow students throughout the sequence of lessons in these units. You may also want to utilize techniques such as building a word wall on which you post new vocabulary words and to which your students contribute as they discover new words during their reading. Finally, verbally marking when students use any of the newly acquired words in their speaking or writing will encourage other students to show off their newly acquired vocabulary.

## Materials by Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 0.1  | - *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
- The Independent Reading Guide (copies for students)  
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents  
- Chart to be created in this task: Our Independent Reading Plan  
- Teacher Resource: Rationale for Independent Reading (see Appendix)  
- Student Handout: Independent Reading Guide  
- Access to Internet for blog  
- Sticky notes for annotating novel  
- Reader/Writer Notebook  
- Chart paper and markers |
| 0.2  | - *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
- Student’s copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, if annotated |
| 0.3  | - *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
- Reader/Writer Notebook |
| 0.4  | - *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
- Handout: Culminating Assignment  
- Handout: Unit Outline  
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents  
- Reader/Writer Notebook  
- Chart paper and markers |
| 1.1  | - *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
- Independent reading work (in Reader/Writer Notebook)  
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents  
- Note cards  
- Charts to be created in this task:  
  - Sequence of Key Events in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
  - Characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
  - Vocabulary  
  - How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision  
  - Big Ideas in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
  - Lingering Questions  
- Reader/Writer Notebook  
- Chart paper and markers |
### Task | Materials
---|---
1.2 | • *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
   • Independent reading, significant moments, and vocabulary work (in Reader/Writer Notebook)  
   • Enlarged copy of a student’s marked text  
   • Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents  
   • Charts from previous tasks:  
     - Sequence of Key Events in *To Kill A Mockingbird*  
     - Characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
     - Vocabulary  
     - How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision  
     - Big Ideas in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
   • Charts to be created in this task:  
     - Significant Lines in Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
     - Lines Significant to Character  
     - Lines Significant to Big Ideas  
   • Reader/Writer Notebook  
   • Chart paper and markers
1.3 | • *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
   • Handout: Characterization Assignment: Short Essays  
   • Independent reading and significant moments work (in Reader/Writer Notebook)  
   • Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents  
   • Charts to be created in this task:  
     - Lines Significant to Character  
     - Creating Realistic Characters  
     - Characterization of Scout (multiple group charts for Gallery Walk)  
   • Reader/Writer Notebook  
   • Chart paper and markers
1.4 | • *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
   • Handout: Short, On-Demand Essay  
   • Independent reading and vocabulary work for Part 2 (in Reader/Writer Notebook)  
   • All unit charts to date  
   • Chart to be created in this task: Character and Theme Connections in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
   • Reader/Writer Notebook  
   • Chart paper and markers
2.1 | • *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
   • Independent reading and vocabulary work for Part 2 (in Reader/Writer Notebook)  
   • Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents  
   • Classroom Charts from Part 1  
   • Reader/Writer Notebook  
   • Chart paper and markers
### Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Materials</th>
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| 2.2  | • *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
• Independent reading, significant moments, and vocabulary work for Part 2 (in Reader/Writer Notebook)  
• Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents  
• These charts from tasks 1.1 and 1.2 will be expanded and revised in this task:  
  – Significant Lines in Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
  – Lines Significant to Character  
  – Lines Significant to Big Ideas  
  – How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision  
• Reader/Writer Notebook  
• Chart paper and markers |
| 2.3  | • *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
• Chart: Lines Significant to Big Ideas in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
• **Sticky notes or note cards**  
• Chart: Themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
• Chart: Connecting Character and Theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
• Reader/Writer Notebook  
• Chart paper and markers |
| 2.4  | • *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
• Chart from previous tasks:  
  – Themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
• Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents  
• Charts to be created in this task:  
  – Indicators of Importance in a Text  
  – Target Text for Close Reading  
• Reader/Writer Notebook with independent reading work  
• Chart paper and markers |
| Culminating Assignment | • *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee  
• Culminating assignment |
Overarching Questions
Character, Theme, and Structure in
To Kill a Mockingbird
Grades
9-10
Overarching Questions

Grades 9–10
Character, Theme, and Structure in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

- What do the characters’ words and actions reveal about them in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

- What is the relationship between the characters’ development and the big ideas and themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

- What does the structure of *To Kill a Mockingbird* reveal about Harper Lee’s purposes?
26 Overarching Questions
Introduction: Independent Reading
Character, Theme, and Structure in
*To Kill a Mockingbird*

Tasks, Teaching Approaches, and Standards
Grades 9-10
Independent Reading Preparation

- How can you read the whole book independently and be ready for two weeks of talking and writing about it?

**Materials**

- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- The Independent Reading Guide (copies for students)
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents
- Chart to be created in this task: Our Independent Reading Plan
- Teacher Resource: Rationale for Independent Reading (see Appendix)
- Student Handout: Independent Reading Guide
- Access to Internet for blog
- Sticky notes for annotating novel
- Reader/Writer Notebook
- Chart paper and markers

**Teaching Approach**

**Teacher Note:** Read through the teacher resource, “Rationale for Independent Reading” (found in the Appendix) carefully in preparation for this task.

First, determine how much time you will give students to read the novel. A week or less is recommended in order to build stamina for the types of reading required for success in college and career. Teach this lesson to begin the independent reading time. This task should take approximately one class session to complete.

**Individual Work: Quick Write (5 minutes)**

Distribute the novel, Reader/Writer Notebooks, and the Independent Reading Guide (found at the end of this task). Ask students to take about five minutes to read the Independent Reading Guide and jot down questions/concerns on the document itself as they read. When they have finished, post the question below and ask students to respond in their Reader/Writer Notebooks:

- How can this resource help you to read the whole book independently and be ready for two weeks of talking and writing about it? Highlight or underline areas of the document where you see items or ideas that will help you.

**Pair Work (3-5 minutes)**

Working in pairs, have students share their annotations and their response to the above Quick Write. Allow time for students to address each other’s questions and concerns using the guide for support. Circulate to assist and check for accuracy.

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**Whole Group (3-5 minutes)**
Answer remaining questions and concerns of the whole group. Have students decide upon reasonable dates for the novel’s completion and for the collection of their Reader/Writer Notebook and novel for assessment and Comprehension Checks. Tell students whether or not they will be annotating in the novel directly or if they will be using their Reader/Writer Notebooks.

**Teacher Note:** You may have students annotate directly in their novels, with sticky notes, or on separate notes pages. In addition to the two scheduled Comprehension Check tasks, you might want to have students show you their annotations more often during the independent reading to assess and increase accountability to the tasks.

**Charting:** Create a chart entitled, “Our Independent Reading Plan,” with the agreed upon reading and Comprehension Check dates. Add any additional protocols for your own work with students during independent reading (i.e., how to access support). Keep this plan posted for frequent reminders as the unit start date approaches.

**Review** the “Habits of Annotation” handout. If students are unfamiliar with how to read actively, annotate, highlight, and mark unfamiliar vocabulary during independent reading, you may need to model by demonstrating these techniques live, following the instructions in the handout. If some students are familiar with techniques, you might have students demonstrate using the first few pages of the novel.

**Teaching Option: Model Annotation:** Using a document projector or transparency copy of the first few pages of the novel, tell students to follow along and “do as you do” as you read aloud from the novel and think aloud about your annotations. Afterward, have students identify which of the habits you were enacting and facilitate a brief discussion of how active reading supported comprehension.

**StepBack (3-5 minutes)**
Ask students to take a few minutes to respond to the following questions in their Reader/Writer Notebook:

- How do you plan to accomplish the required reading and tasks independently?
- How, where, and when will you work?

**Whole Group (3-5 minutes)**
Facilitate a discussion of their plans, evaluating strategies as a whole group.

**Revise Chart:** Our Independent Reading Plan. Add practical ideas to the chart. If students do not suggest study groups, you may wish to add this and suggest that they find ways to work together either face-to-face or using social media. Study groups are a common tool used for success in college and career.

**Technology Option: Virtual Study Groups:** Consider creating an online space for students to chat or blog about the novel and their independent reading. A student may be able to design and set up the space for the class. You might choose to be a silent observer or moderate as needed.
Focus Standards (CCSS, 2012, p. 38, 47, 50)

**Reading Literature**
RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Writing**
W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Speaking and Listening**
SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Independent Reading Guide for
*To Kill a Mockingbird*
by Harper Lee

This guide contains the following documents:
* Why Independent Reading?
* Independent Reading Instructions
* Habits of Annotation
Why Independent Reading?

It is very common for entire novels to be read aloud in class. While many students and teachers enjoy this, and much can be learned from a shared initial reading, this practice has some unfortunate consequences.

Many readers can become reliant on the read aloud, not only to accomplish the task of reading the text but also to understand it. Fluent reading supports comprehension, but when a reader relies on others for this, he/she becomes a listener, not a reader, and may not develop that expert reader voice in his/her own head. Without a fluent internal voice, readers can become exhausted by the effort of silent, sustained, independent reading.

For these reasons and the ones listed below, you will read *To Kill a Mockingbird* independently before the unit begins.

- The purpose of reading the novel independently is to support you in becoming independent readers of an assigned text.
- There are ways of reading for college and career that can be learned and practiced. Doing so will ease your transition to working independently in college and career settings and increase the likelihood of success.
- Using class time to read the novel will consume a disproportionate amount of the school year and cause the novel to become tedious. The goal is to keep the discussion and work brisk and engaging.
- The amount of time given for the reading, a week, also helps to prepare you for the more rigorous work and timelines that await you in college and career. Push yourself to read the novel in an even shorter timeframe of two to three sittings.
- While you will be working independently to read and write about the novel, you will have guidance and support from both the teacher and the Independent Reading Guide.
- You should also learn to recognize your own need for support and to seek out resources independently (whether asking a colleague, researching online, or otherwise), as you will need to do this as an independent learner.
**TASK 0.1**

**Independent Reading Instructions**

As you are reading, complete the following tasks either in the novel or in your Reader/Writer Notebook (see note below).

1. **Significance:** Highlight or note (in your Reader/Writer Notebook) particular lines that stand out to you. These might stand out for any number of reasons, but trust your reactions and highlight or note a line that you feel is important.

2. **Vocabulary/unclear sections:** Mark or note areas where you struggled to understand. Unfamiliar vocabulary, sentence structure, or references get in anyone’s way when reading. Capture these for discussion with peers.

3. **Annotations:** Jot down your own thinking as you read. Make notes in the margin or in your Reader/Writer Notebook (citing the page where the thought occurred). You might have a question about why something was said or done; you might have an Aha! moment where some larger idea becomes clear to you; you might notice something about what the author is doing, such as repeating a word or image, or shifting in time.

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**Note to the Student: Novel or Notebook?**

**Novel:** If permitted, highlight significant lines, circle unfamiliar vocabulary, mark where you are confused or have questions, and make margin annotations directly in the text.

**Reader/Writer Notebook:** If you cannot or do not wish to mark the text, complete the work in your Reader/Writer Notebook:

- Copy significant lines and unknown vocabulary, noting page and paragraph
- Note the location of unclear sections by page and paragraph
- Write your comments, questions and other annotations

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After you read each chapter, use your Reader/Writer Notebook to answer the three questions below. Use your highlights and annotations for this chapter to form and support your answers.

1. What is the chapter mostly about? What does Harper Lee spend the most time on in this chapter?
2. Who are the characters in this chapter, and what do we learn about them from what they say and do?
3. What big ideas are emerging through the events and narration in the chapter?

**Comprehension Checks 1 and 2**

- At least twice during your independent work, your Reader/Writer Notebooks (and novels if annotated) will be collected and assessed. These are Comprehension Checks 1 and 2.
- The purpose of these checks is to make sure that you are understanding what you’re reading and that you are prepared for the deeper work in the unit. These checks should also help to keep you accountable and on pace for the independent reading work.

**Assessment:** Your independent reading work is assessed for completion of the tasks. Complete independent reading work is comprised of the following:

1. Significant lines copied into the Reader/Writer Notebook or highlighted within the text.
2. Vocabulary questions and other questions noted in the Reader/Writer Notebook or text.
3. Annotations written in the Reader/Writer Notebook or margins of the text.
4. Responses to the three “gist” questions for each chapter.
Habits of Annotation

When you read, capture information about the following:

- The events of the chapter/section
- Who the characters are and how they change throughout the text
- Scenes that have an impact both on the reader and on the characters
- Passages that clarify what you know about characters or events
- Vocabulary words that are new or unfamiliar
- Questions that you have

You can capture this information by doing any of the following:

- Underlining and highlighting the text
- Writing in the margins of the text
- Making notes on sticky notes and placing them in the text
- Noting thoughts about passages, events, and characters in your Reader/Writer Notebook

You may wish to use different techniques for different work. For example, you might underline significant lines from the text and write a margin note to explain your thinking; circle unfamiliar vocabulary; highlight character noticings—perhaps in different colors for different characters.

The goal is for you to develop your own methods and style of annotating to support your academic work now and in the future.
Comprehension Check: Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*

- What is each chapter mostly about?
- What do we learn about the characters?
- What big ideas emerge through the events, characters, and narration?

**Materials**
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- Student’s copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, if annotated

**Teaching Approach**

**Teacher Note:** The Comprehension Checks (Tasks 0.2 and 0.3) do not require instruction or use of class time.

Collect the students’ Reader/Writer Notebooks (and novels if students are marking the novel as well) to check that students are on course with their independent work and that they are getting the gist of what they are reading.

Score or grade the work for completion of the requirements only, since there has been no instruction at this point. Complete independent reading work is comprised of the following:

1. Significant lines copied into the Reader/Writer Notebook or highlighted within the text.
2. Vocabulary questions and other questions noted in the Reader/Writer Notebook or text.
3. Annotations written in the Reader/Writer Notebook or margins of the text.
4. Responses to the three “gist” questions for each chapter.

Avoid writing on or “correcting” student work. Students will use this independent work as a starting point for building their understanding of the novel as they work through the unit’s tasks. These tasks will require students to examine what is accurate/supportable and inaccurate in this initial work.

**Formative Assessment:** Reviewing the Reader/Writer Notebooks allows you to:

- monitor individual and group progress, accountability and readiness for the tasks in the unit.
- address concerns with individual students and, if necessary, provide supplementary support (e.g., access to audio, additional modeling via another student’s independent work, scheduled small group work).
- survey student identification of unfamiliar vocabulary and other references so that you can be ready with quick definitions/synonyms at point of contact during the unit; preselect a few high-utility Tier 2 words for use during discussion and writing.
**Teacher Note:** The use of audiobooks or other supplementary materials is not a substitute for independent reading, unless the student is unable to read text. Audiobooks provide a fluent reading to support comprehension but students ultimately need to build these abilities for their own independent reading. If such aids are used, we recommend that the student keep his/her eyes on the text while listening, and annotate in order to build independent reading skills. You may also wish to require struggling readers to pause more frequently than at the end of each chapter to answer a general “gist” question (e.g., “What is happening in the text?”).

**Focus Standards**

**(CCSS, 2012, p. 38, 47, 55)**

**Reading Literature**
- RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.9–10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- RL.9–10.5 Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Writing**
- W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Language**
- L.9–10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.


**TASK 0.3**

**Comprehension Check:**

**Part 2 of To Kill a Mockingbird**

- **What is each chapter mostly about?**
- **What do we learn about the characters?**
- **What big ideas emerge through the events, characters, and narration?**

**Materials**

- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- Reader/Writer Notebook

**Teaching Approach**

**Teacher Note:** The Comprehension Checks (Tasks 0.2 and 0.3) do not require instruction or use of class time.

**Collect** the students’ Reader/Writer Notebooks (and novels if students are marking the novel as well) to check that students are on course with their independent work and that they are getting the gist of what they are reading.

**Score or grade** the work for completion of the requirements only, since there has been no instruction at this point. Complete independent reading work is comprised of the following:

1. Significant lines copied into the Reader/Writer Notebook or highlighted within the text.
2. Vocabulary questions and other questions noted in the Reader/Writer Notebook or text.
3. Annotations written in the Reader/Writer Notebook or margins of the text.
4. Responses to the three “gist” questions for each chapter.

**Avoid** writing on or “correcting” student work. Students will use this independent work as a starting point for building their understanding of the novel as they work through the unit’s tasks. These tasks will require students to examine what is accurate/supportable and inaccurate in this initial work.

**Formative Assessment:** Reviewing the Reader/Writer Notebooks allows you to:

- monitor individual and group progress, **accountability** and **readiness** for the tasks in the unit.
- address concerns with individual students and, if necessary, provide **supplementary support** (e.g., access to audio, additional modeling via another student’s independent work, scheduled small group work).
- survey student identification of unfamiliar **vocabulary** and other references to ready quick definitions/synonyms at point of contact during the unit, and preselect a few high-utility Tier 2 words for use during discussion and writing.
**Teacher Note:** The use of audiobooks or other supplementary materials is not a substitute for independent reading, unless the student is unable to read text. Audiobooks provide a fluent reading to support comprehension but students ultimately need to build these abilities for their own independent reading. If such aids are used, we recommend that the student keep his/her eyes on the text while listening and annotate in order to build independent reading skills. You may also wish to require struggling readers to pause more frequently than at the end of each chapter to answer a general gist question (e.g., “What is happening in the text?”).

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**Focus Standards**

(CCSS, 2012, p. 38, 47, 55)

**Reading Literature**

RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9–10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

RL.9–10.5 Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Writing**

W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Language**

L.9–10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9–10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
Culminating Assignment Preparation

- How will you show what you have learned at the end of this unit? How do the unit’s tasks support you to show what you learned?

Materials
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- Handout: Culminating Assignment
- Handout: Unit Outline
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents
- Reader/Writer Notebook
- Chart paper and markers

Teaching Approach

Teacher Note: This lesson should be delivered just prior to beginning Task 1.1. Allow about half of a class period.

Individual Work
Have students read the culminating assignment independently and answer the following question in their Reader/Writer Notebook:

- How will you show what you have learned at the end of this unit?

Pair Work
Give students time to examine the unit outline in pairs or small groups and respond to the following question in their Reader/Writer Notebooks:

- How do the unit’s tasks support your work on the culminating assignment?

Whole Group
Ask students to share their findings as you display the culminating assignment. Highlight their findings and analyze the task. Press students to be clear as to what, exactly, is required? Tell students to highlight on their hard copies.

Next, display the “Unit Outline,” highlighting tasks that scaffold the completion of the culminating assignment. Tell students to highlight on their hard copies.

Students should trace and highlight the connections between the culminating assignment and tasks in the unit overview. Emphasize that this shows the importance of participating throughout the unit.
Focus Standards (CCSS, 2012, p. 47, 50)

**Writing**
W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Speaking and Listening**
SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Character, Theme, and Structure in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Culminating Assignment
Grades 9–10

This culminating assignment is a chance for you to demonstrate and use all that you have learned about characterization and the connections between characters and themes in the novel. You have already done much of the preliminary work for this assignment as you looked closely at the characters and how Lee created them through believable words and actions. You have also looked at how particular characters were used to convey certain recurring ideas.

For this assignment, you will use all the work and resources developed throughout the unit to respond to the following task.

**Task:** Choose a character from the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and write an essay in which you analyze that character through his or her words and actions, any changes he/she goes through, and his/her role in conveying the themes in the novel.

**Reminders:**
Analysis requires you to examine the role of the parts to the whole. In this case, you will examine how the “parts” of the character (his or her words, actions, and indications of change or development) relate to the story as a whole (the big ideas or themes that run through the whole story to create a coherent work).

Remember to cite strong and thorough evidence from across the novel to support your analysis. Your essay should be written in standard English for an audience who is familiar with the text and should establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.

After you’ve written your essay, answer the StepBack questions. Your responses to the StepBack questions will be collected but not graded.
Text Part 1:  
*To Kill a Mockingbird*  
by Harper Lee  
Chapters 1–11  
Character, Theme, and Structure in  
*To Kill a Mockingbird*  
TASKS, TEACHING APPROACHES, AND STANDARDS
Grades
9-10
Comprehension

- What are the key events in Part 1 of To Kill a Mockingbird?
- Who are the characters, and what do we know about them through their words and actions?
- What big ideas came through the events and characters in Part 1 of the novel?

Materials

- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- Independent reading work (in Reader/Writer Notebook)
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents
- Note cards
- Charts to be created in this task:
  - Sequence of Key Events in To Kill a Mockingbird
  - Characters in To Kill a Mockingbird
  - Vocabulary
  - How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision
  - Big Ideas in To Kill a Mockingbird
  - Lingering Questions
- Reader/Writer Notebook
- Chart paper and markers

Teaching Approach

Teacher Note: Divide the work for this task into two class sessions. Have students do the comprehension work for half of the chapters in one session and the remainder in a second. The StepBack and Retrospective can be done at the end of each session or once after all the chapters have been covered.

Teacher Note: Big ideas are ideas and interpretations drawn from a text that apply and connect to the world at large—an idea that transcends the story. These are distinct from theme since there may be many big ideas identified by students that do not recur through the entire story as a theme. An example of a big idea might be “a neighborhood can be the world to a child.” This idea transcends To Kill a Mockingbird and is a possible theme, but it has to recur as a central focus of the story before we call it a theme.

Themes are ideas that recur through the events of a story and can be abstracted from a particular story to discuss ideas that connect the story to other texts or the world at large. Students are repeatedly asked to read to identify events that convey “big ideas.” Tracing these recurring ideas through a story helps students to identify possible themes and to see how these add coherence to the story as a whole. Students are asked to examine themes in order to build deeper comprehension, drive text-based discussion, interpret author’s purpose, and study structure and craft.
**Task 1.1**

**Whole Group**

Explain to students that they will start their deeper exploration of the novel by first establishing, as a group, a shared understanding of the first part of the story.

They will be using the independent reading work completed in their Reader/Writer Notebook for Part 1 (chapters 1–11) of *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a resource in their discussion with other readers, their classmates.

The goal of this work is for students to work together to determine the most accurate, supportable responses to the guiding questions for this task:

- What are the key events in Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
- Who are the characters and what do we know about them through their words and actions?
- What big ideas came through the events and characters in Part 1 of the story?

Tell students that they will begin by working with the first two questions only, in order to develop a shared, accurate understanding of the more literal aspects of the story: What is happening and who is involved?

After this initial comprehension work, they will move into the third, more abstract question.

**Pair Work (5-10 minutes)**

Determine how many chapters you will have students cover as they work together to respond to the first two questions.

- What are the key events in these chapters of *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
- Who are the characters, and what do we know about them through their words and actions?

Instruct students to:

1. discuss the story with their partner to determine the key events in these chapters.
2. create an agreed-upon sequence of key events (partner 1 creates a summary, list, or timeline of these events).
3. create a list of the characters in these chapters.
4. talk about what they know about each character according to what the character said and did.
5. use the discussion to generate a brief description/character sketch with text details (cite page numbers) that support their claims about the character (partner 2 drafts the description).

Remind students that the **text is the expert** for resolving differences and that they will need to be ready to share their responses and support those responses with specific text references.

As students work, circulate to keep them focused. Determine which responses you will use to begin the whole group work based on the **completeness**, **brevity**, and **accuracy** of student work.

Take note too of unfamiliar **vocabulary** words that surface in the paired work. You will need to define these informally and quickly, using synonyms, during the whole group work.

**Whole Group (10-15 minutes)**

At the start of this work, it is important, too, to acknowledge with students that there are likely to be ambiguities and questions that cannot be resolved at this point in their reading. It will be up to them to work through these challenges in their discussions rather than relying on you, their teacher, for “the right answer.”
Use the board or a chart called, “Lingering Questions,” to collect these lingering questions as you move through the unit so that students can return to them as the story and their understanding develop.

Call upon pairs to provide or display (via document camera) their responses and text support.

Create two charts. One chart should be entitled, “Sequence of Events in To Kill a Mockingbird,” and the other should be called, “Characters in To Kill a Mockingbird.” Use student responses to create a sequence of events or timeline and a list of characters and their traits for the selected chapters. As students contribute, press for clear, specific, well-supported responses. Students should have their novels handy in order to locate references during the discussion.

Define unfamiliar vocabulary quickly, as part of the talk, noting a few high-utility (Tier 2) words for further examination and use in discussion and writing. Capture these words on note cards or a chart to post in the classroom. Use the vocabulary chart to collect additional words and to remind students to use these words in their reading and writing when appropriate.

During the whole group work, motivate students to remain active and accountable by requiring them to revise their partner work in response to the class discussion and charting. Remind students that their Reader/Writer Notebook is their resource for what is said and done in class. It is an essential academic tool.

If you are planning to collect and assess the accuracy and completeness of the Notebook periodically (see “Teacher Resource: Reader/Writer Notebook” in the Instructional Resources section of the Appendix for ideas on how to assess the Reader/Writer Notebook), this is a good time to remind students of this.

**Teaching Option–Small Group:** If students are working well without the need for too much teacher guidance, consider having pairs combine into working groups of four to six students as an alternative to the whole group.

Circulate to assist students in locating parts of the text that can settle disagreements or repair inaccurate comprehension. Have each group make charts: Sequence of Events in To Kill a Mockingbird and Characters in To Kill a Mockingbird. Groups can then present or participate in a gallery walk to share thinking between groups.

**StepBack (10-15 minutes)**
Have students complete this StepBack individually in their Reader/Writer Notebook at the end of their comprehension work for Part 1 of To Kill a Mockingbird (Chapters 1–11).

- How did the discussion affect your own understanding of the story?
- What was one important revision that resulted from your discussion with others?

**Whole Group**
Ask students to share their responses. Use a two-column chart to capture examples of the effect of discussion on their understanding (1st column) and examples of revisions that resulted (2nd column).

This metacognitive work is intended to point out the importance of discussion to intellectual work. The social aspect of discourse builds both understanding and enjoyment of work in the content area.
TASK 1.1

Retrospective (10-15 minutes)
Explain to students that when we use the term “big ideas,” we are referring to our thoughts about the story that apply and connect to the world—ideas that transcend the story.

The term theme will be used when students are analyzing the entire novel. At this point in the work, students can only provide text support for isolated or recurring big ideas.

Individual Work—Quick Write
Refer to the overarching questions for the unit and have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader/Writer Notebooks:

• What big ideas came through the events and characters in Part 1 of the story?

Circulate to support and to see which ideas students identified. Help students phrase ideas in terms beyond the specific events and characters in To Kill a Mockingbird.

For example: Suggest that a student use the word “people” or “children” instead of “the people of Maycomb,” “Jem,” or “Scout.” This phrasing should serve to check whether or not the idea can transcend this specific story.

Pair Work (2-3 minutes)
Instruct students to try out, and possibly rethink, their responses with a partner before going public in the whole group.

Circulate to listen in, and select a place to start the whole group discussion. If students struggle to understand the task, restate the question, but allow the whole group discussion to support struggling students’ understanding of the more abstract nature of this question.

Whole Group Discussion (5 minutes)
Allow students to present and support their responses. If this is the first structured talk for students, take a moment to have students set and monitor agreed-upon norms for the discussion.

Create a chart capturing, “Big Ideas in To Kill a Mockingbird.” This chart should remain available for reference and revision throughout the unit.

Teacher Note: Facilitating Discussion: If the discussion needs further support and structure, refer to Accountable Talk Moves and Functions for ELA in the Instructional Resources section of the Appendix.

You might also facilitate by using your knowledge of what students wrote independently to call students into the discussion to support or counter the previous speaker, or to move the discussion to another big idea.
**Focus Standards**

*(CCSS, 2012, p. 38, 47, 50)*

**Reading Literature**
RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.9–10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Writing**
W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Speaking and Listening**
SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Significance

- What did you identify as the most significant moments in Part 1 of the novel?
- How did these moments contribute to your understanding of the characters and big ideas in the novel?

Materials

- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- Independent reading, significant moments, and vocabulary work (in Reader/Writer Notebook)
- Enlarged copy of a student’s marked text
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents
- Charts from previous tasks:
  - Sequence of Key Events in To Kill A Mockingbird
  - Characters in To Kill a Mockingbird
  - Vocabulary
  - How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision
  - Big Ideas in To Kill a Mockingbird
- Charts to be created in this task:
  - Significant Lines in Part 1 of To Kill a Mockingbird
  - Lines Significant to Character
  - Lines Significant to Big Ideas
- Reader/Writer Notebook
- Chart paper and markers

Teaching Approach

**Teacher Note:** Divide the work in this task between two class sessions. For instance, you might have students discuss the significant lines they selected for Chapters 1–5 in one session and significant lines from Chapters 6–11 in a second.

For this task, students will again use the work they did independently while reading Chapters 1–11 of To Kill a Mockingbird. Use your findings from the assessment of this work (Task 0.2) to help determine how much support students will need.

The second part of this task has students sort the lines into those significant to characterization and big ideas. This can be done either at the end of each session or at the end of the second session, once all 11 chapters have been discussed for significance.

**Whole Group (2-3 minutes)**

**Explain** to students that the purpose of noting lines that seem or feel important is a key habit of successful independent readers.
During their independent reading, students were required to mark lines as they read (through highlighting, underlining or note-taking). Explain that their independent work provided them with a record of their thinking they will now use to review, rethink, and make supported claims about Part 1 (Chapters 1–11) of the text.

Share any general observations that you made of this independent work when you collected the Reader/Writer Notebooks for Comprehension Check 1.

**Teaching Option—Modeling:** If students need support to begin this work, project a student’s marked text as a model of the expectation. Be sure to confer with and acquire permission from this student prior to using his/her work.

Ask the student to talk through his/her processes for selecting lines.

If no accurate student model exists, model the expectation with the text, thinking aloud as you make decisions for selecting particular lines.

**Pair Work (5-10 minutes)**

Determine how many chapters you want students to cover from Part 1.

Instruct students to work with a partner to share and discuss their significant lines that they selected during their independent reading. Have partners work together to select several key lines to share in whole group. They will need to provide a citation and explain why they feel that the line is important to something larger at play in the story.

Circulate while students work to hold them accountable to the task and to identify students/pairs to begin whole group sharing. You may wish to do the following when planning the whole group work:

- Begin discussion by calling upon students who have only one or two strong selections.
- Call upon students who chose the same line but for different reasons.
- Identify students who have pulled a line that you know will be important for students to understand well as they progress through the story (lines that include symbolic references, motives, foreshadowing, etc.).

**Group Work (15 minutes)**

Call upon students to share significant lines, and chart responses on their chart, “Significant Lines in Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.” If there are lines selected by multiple pairs, have each pair say why they selected that line. This will allow students to practice building on each other’s ideas and examine multiple perspectives.

It is not important to share all of the lines, but sample those that will support students’ deeper thinking about the story and provide practice for literary discussion and use of text evidence. This sharing should not drag on but should demonstrate the type of thinking necessary to advance literary interpretation.

Keep the chart, Significant Lines in Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, available as a resource so that students can use these lines of text to form and support claims efficiently in their discussion and writing.

As students share their selections, check for understanding of vocabulary that may be unfamiliar. The Comprehension Check provided a preview of which words students found problematic, but others are likely to surface here as well. Use this time to provide quick on-the-spot support for any lines that contained unfamiliar vocabulary, allusions, or other issues of background knowledge that impeded comprehension.
TASK 1.2

Pair or Whole Group (5-10 minutes)

Explain to students they will now look more closely at lines that make connections across events in the story. This work will help students trace a particular “thread” of meaning across the text and will also provide a bank of lines they can use to form and support claims about characters and themes in the Culminating Assignment.

Instruct students to work in pairs to sort through the significant moments for lines that help them to answer and support the second question for this task:

- How did these moments contribute to your understanding of
  - the characters?
  - the big ideas in the novel?

Have students work together to identify lines that fit into each category and chart these in their Reader/Writer Notebooks in the charts: “Lines Significant to Character” and “Lines Significant to Big Ideas.”

Tell students to highlight lines that contribute to their understanding of both character and big ideas. Share these so all students can record them in their Reader/Writer Notebooks.

Teaching Option–Scaffolding: Students may need more support to begin this task. You might consider using one or more of the following scaffolds:

Demonstrating Through Whole Group Work
Sort the significant lines in whole group. Create a class version of the two charts, Lines Significant to Character and Lines Significant to Big Ideas, and have students copy these into their Reader/Writer Notebooks as a resource for their writing.

Providing a Scaffold
If students are unsure about how to recognize lines that are significant to characterization and/or big ideas, they may need cues such as those below to get started.

- The line shows what a particular character is like through his or her words and actions or shows a change or development in his or her personality/character.
- The line shows the character struggling with something—e.g., a conflict—that illustrates aspects of his or her personality for the reader.

Lines Significant to Big Ideas or Emerging Themes
- illustrate or state a larger issue that transcends the events of the story.
- contain a recurrence of a big idea through the novel (theme).
- may introduce or repeat an image or object that is or becomes symbolic of something bigger.
Focus Standards

(CCSS, 2012, p. 38, 50)

**Reading Literature**

RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9–10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Speaking and Listening**

SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9–10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
Author’s Methods: Characterization

- What does Lee do to make her characters believable as they move through the events of the novel?

Materials
- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- Handout: Characterization Assignment: Short Essays
- Independent reading and significant moments work (in Reader/Writer Notebook)
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents
- Chart: Lines Significant to Character
- Charts to be created in this task:
  - Creating Realistic Characters
  - Characterization of Scout (multiple group charts for Gallery Walk)
- Reader/Writer Notebook
- Chart paper and markers

Teaching Approach

Access Prior Knowledge
Acknowledge with students that most of them have probably had some practice analyzing characters and some instruction about authors’ characterization techniques. The purpose of this opening Quick Write is to allow them to recall what they already know, and for you to formatively assess how they might need to add to or revise their prior knowledge in order to be ready for the next part of the task.

If there are students who have had no formal instruction in character analysis or characterization techniques, reassure them that prior knowledge is not necessary and that there is an alternate Quick Write prompt that will prepare them for the work ahead.

Individual Work–Quick Write (2-3 minutes)
Have students respond individually to the question below in their Reader/Writer Notebooks:

• How do writers make a character seem real?

If a student has no prior instruction regarding characterization, he/she should respond to this version of the question:

• What makes fictional characters seem real?

Pair Share (2-3 minutes)
Tell students to compare responses and revise their own response after a short discussion with their partner.

Circulate to assess what students understand about how authors create realistic, fictional characters.
Determine a starting point for the whole group work based upon the range of responses—starting with students who have the least written.
**Whole Group (3-5 minutes)**
Select students to share their responses and encourage others to add, agree, disagree and provide examples from texts, TV, etc.

Chart responses on a chart called, “Creating Realistic Characters.”

Keep this chart available for students to refer to in the classroom, and instruct them to add to/ revise their Reader/Writer Notebook response so that it can be more helpful to them during independent work.

Responses might include but should not be limited to:

- Writers make characters’ actions and reactions understandable/believable.
- Realistic characters struggle and change (dynamic vs. static).
- Writers make the characters have good and bad sides—*multidimensional* or *complex*—like real people, not like stereotypes, or cartoon characters.
- Realistic characters say things and do things that fit with what we already know about them (consistent, if not predictable).
- When the characters speak (dialogue) they have a particular sound (voice).
- The writer gives enough information about the characters so that we can imagine them (physical information, backstory, etc.).
- The writer gives information in direct and indirect ways. The narrator can describe the characters directly or the reader can make inferences from what the characters say or do, and how they interact with other characters.

**Whole Group (3-5 minutes)**
*Explain* to students that the work in this next task will build on what they already know about characterization and apply it to Harper Lee’s characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This work will also support their ability to begin their culminating assignment.

**Teacher Note: Preparing for the Culminating Assignment:** Advise students that if they have not already selected a character to analyze for the culminating assignment, now would be a good time to identify a character to trace through the story.

Distribute the handout, “Characterization Assignment: Short Essays,” (found at the end of this task).

Read the assignment aloud, or have students read it independently. Explain that the questions here represent the types of questions that strong readers of literature think about when they are focusing on reading for the purpose of character analysis and that this type of short essay assignment is common in college course work.

Explain that they will practice short essay writing first with Scout as their focus. They will then select another character and respond to the prompts independently.

**Individual Work: Planning and Drafting (5-10 minutes)**
Have students count off by fours and assign a corresponding question to them from the Characterization Assignment handout.

Allow students time to think about, plan and draft a response to their assigned question. Circulate and cue students to use the classroom charts and their own independent reading notes to make supported claims about Scout.
**Small Group (10-15 minutes)**

Group students by question and allow them time to compare, share, and debate the answer to their prompt. Instruct students to collaborate and combine their best thinking and write a group essay on chart paper to present to the class. Title the chart, “Characterization of Scout.”

Circulate to support the work and guide students to resources that will help them to support their claims and combine their ideas into a group essay.

**Group Presentations or Gallery Walk (20-30 minutes)**

Have groups present their essays and the thinking that went into each essay. Alternately, students can read the essays in a gallery walk.

These models should remain posted to guide students’ independent writing.

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**Teaching Options–Modeling:** If many students seem unable to draft an essay independently, call the whole group back together to model the work:

**Student Modeling:** Ask a student who has successfully turned his/her notes into a draft if he/she would demonstrate and talk students through his/her thinking and drafting process. Use a document camera for this work if available.

**Teacher Modeling:** If there is not a suitable student example, demonstrate using student notes. Think aloud as you draft and use the classroom resources (charts) to inform your writing.

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**Individual Work: Quick Write**

Refer students to the chart created at the start of this task, Creating Realistic Characters, then have them respond to the following question in their Reader/Writer Notebooks:

- What does Lee do to make her characters believable as they move through the events of the novel?

Explain to students that the following questions may help them to respond more fully:

- What connections do you see between the methods collected in the chart, Creating Realistic Characters, and the analysis of Scout done in these short essays?
- Which techniques from this chart do you see Lee using in her characterization of Scout?
- What other techniques do you see Lee using that need to be added to the chart?

**Whole Group**

Have students share their findings about Lee’s characterization techniques. Mark the connections between the Creating Realistic Characters chart and the writing students did in the group essays.

**Assign Independent Essay Writing**

Instruct students to complete the essays independently focusing on a character of their choice from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Set a time when the essays will be collected and assessed and offer to look over their work to monitor progress and provide support.
Focus Standards  

**Reading Literature**  
(CCSS, 2012, p. 38, 45, 47, 50)

**Reading Literature**

RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9–10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Writing**

W.9–10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Speaking and Listening**

SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Characterization Assignment: Short Essays

As you read, you should capture in your Reader/Writer Notebook ideas and evidence about the character you are studying. Those notes will help you to form and support your responses to these short essay questions. Later, these essay questions will help you to write your culminating assignment.

For each of the questions below, write a short essay response. Clearly answer the question and provide several quotations from the novel to illustrate and support your claim.

1. What does the character want? What motivates him/her and what conflicts get in his/her way?
2. What aspects of the character are conveyed through the character’s dialogue and actions? Are these consistent or are there noticeable contradictions?
3. In what ways is the physicality (sex, age, race, etc.) of the character important to his/her role in the story?
4. How are other characters, including the narrator, used to develop aspects of this character? This might include things said about the character, interactions with other characters, or Lee creating contrast with other characters in the story.
Interpretation: Theme

• What is the relationship between the characters’ development and possible themes in the novel?

Materials
• *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
• Handout: Short, On-Demand Essay
• Independent reading and vocabulary work for Part 2 (in Reader/Writer Notebook)
• All unit charts to date
• Chart to be created in this task: Character and Theme Connections in *To Kill a Mockingbird*
• Reader/Writer Notebook
• Chart paper and markers

Teaching Approach

Teacher Note: Themes are ideas that recur through the events of a story and can be abstracted from a particular story to discuss ideas that connect the story to other texts or the world at large. Students are repeatedly asked to read to identify events that convey “big ideas.” Tracing these recurring ideas through a story helps students to identify possible themes and to see how these add coherence to the story as a whole. Students are asked to examine themes in order to build deeper comprehension, drive text-based discussion, interpret the author’s purpose, and study structure and craft.

Individual Work: Short, on-demand essay (10-15 minutes)
Explain to students that “on-demand” writing of this type is frequently used for college midterms and finals. The short essay writing that they did in the previous task and that they are completing independently should provide support for this task. In addition, they may use their own resources—the independent and class work from their Reader/Writer Notebooks and any annotations they made in the novel.

Charts from Tasks 1.1–1.3 should be visible in the classroom.

Distribute the student handout, “Short On-Demand Essay,” (found at the end of this task) and display an enlarged copy of it. After students complete their essays, circulate to assist and select a student to begin the discussion.

Inquiry-Based Discussion (10-15 Minutes)
Prepare for the discussion by reviewing inquiry-based discussion protocols and assigning roles if you are using any of the student roles for the discussion.

You may need to call on a student to start the discussion, but then step out of the discussion as much as possible to allow students to practice and develop habits of academic discourse. Refer to the Teacher Moves section of the Accountable Talk Moves and Functions page indicated for student-led inquiry-based discussion (located in the Instructional Resources section of the Appendix).
**TASK 1.4**

Create a chart, “Character and Theme Connections in *To Kill a Mockingbird*,” to capture student thinking in regard to the discussion question.

If students are focused on the relationship of a particular character and theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird* throughout the discussion, you might challenge them to consider the relationship of character to theme generally before ending the discussion.

**StepBack (2-3 minutes)**
- What was said in the discussion that most affected your understanding about the connection between characters and possible themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

**Whole Group**
Share responses to the StepBack. Refer back to the charts from Task 1.1 (How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision and Big Ideas in *To Kill a Mockingbird*) as well as the charts in Task 1.2 (Lines Important to Big Ideas and Lines Important to Character) to support and connect the work.

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**Focus Standards**

(CCSS, 2012, p. 38, 45, 47, 50, 55)

**Reading Literature**
- **RL.9–10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RL.9–10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **RL.9–10.3** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- **RL.9–10.10** By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Writing**
- **W.9–10.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- **W.9–10.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- **W.9–10.10** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Speaking and Listening**
- **SL.9–10.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **SL.9–10.4** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

**Language**
- **L.9–10.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
Handout: Short On-Demand Essay

Write a short essay response to the following question in preparation for a whole group discussion on the connection between character and theme:

What is the relationship between the development of characters and themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

- Use the character you have been studying as a starting point.
- Identify at least one possible theme (a big idea that you have seen recur) in which that character is a key player.
- Form and support your ideas with the evidence you’ve already collected.
Text Part 2: *To Kill a Mockingbird*
by Harper Lee
Chapters 12–31
Character, Theme, and Structure in *To Kill a Mockingbird*
TASKS, TEACHING APPROACHES, AND STANDARDS
Comprehension

- What are the key events in Part 2 of To Kill a Mockingbird?
- What more do you know about and what changes do you see in the characters during Part 2 of the novel?

Materials
- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- Independent reading and vocabulary work for Part 2 (in Reader/Writer Notebook)
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents
- Classroom Charts from Part 1
- Reader/Writer Notebook
- Chart paper and markers

Teaching Approach

Teacher Note: Divide the work for this task into two class sessions. Have students do the comprehension work for half of the chapters in one session and the remainder in a second.

Notice that the third task question regarding the development of theme is not included here as it was in the comprehension work in Task 1.1. This is because Task 2.3 is devoted to the work of tracing possible themes through the entire novel.

Teacher Note: Explain to students that they will now take the work and ideas established in Part 1 of the novel and apply these to the chapters in Part 2 to start a deeper exploration of the novel as a whole. Tell students which chapters they will cover in each of the sessions.

Students will be using their independent reading work in their Reader/Writer Notebook for Part 2 (Chapters 12–31) of To Kill a Mockingbird as a resource in their discussion. They will also need their work from Part 1 since the whole novel is under examination from this point forward.

Pair Work (5-10 minutes)

Explain to students that they will start by working with the first two questions only, in order to develop a shared, accurate understanding of the more literal aspects of the story:

- What are the key events in Part 2 of To Kill a Mockingbird?
- What more do you know about, and what changes do you see, in the characters?
Instruct students to

1. discuss the story with their partner to determine the key events in these chapters.
2. create an agreed-upon sequence of key events to create a summary, list, or timeline of these events. Both partners are responsible for having this work in his or her Reader/Writer Notebook.
3. update the Characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* chart that they created in their Reader/Writer Notebook in Task 1.1. Who remains and who is gone?
4. describe what *more* they know about each character from what the characters say and do in these chapters, and add this to the chart with text support and citations.
5. generate ideas supported by the text as to what *caused* the changes, if any are noted, and record these ideas in their Reader/Writer Notebook.
6. Remind students that *the text is the expert* for resolving differences and that they will need to be ready to share their responses and support those responses with specific text references.

As students work, circulate to keep students focused. Determine which responses you will use to begin the whole group work based on the completeness, brevity, and accuracy of student work.

Take note too of unfamiliar vocabulary words that surface in the paired work. You will need to define these informally and quickly, using synonyms, during the whole group work.

**Whole Group (10-15 minutes)**

Call upon pairs to provide or display (via document camera) their responses and text support to the first two questions.

Update the two class charts created in Task 1.1 (Sequence of Events in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*). Use student responses to continue the sequence of events or timeline and update the characters and their traits for the selected chapters. Press for specific text references for all characterization.

Define unfamiliar vocabulary quickly, as part of the talk, adding some high-utility (Tier 2) words to the *To Kill a Mockingbird* Vocabulary Collection. Remind students that these words should be finding their way into discussion and writing about the novel.

During the whole group work, have students remain active and accountable by requiring them to revise their Reader/Writer Notebook work in response to the class discussion and charting.

**Teaching Option—Small Group:** If students are working well without the need for too much teacher guidance, consider having pairs combine into working groups of four to six students as an alternative to the whole group.

Circulate to assist students in locating parts of the text that can settle disagreements or repair inaccurate comprehension. If group work was used for Task 1.1, have students update the charts they made for Sequence of Events in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Groups can again present or conduct a gallery walk to share thinking between groups.
**StepBack (10-15 minutes)**

After reviewing the chart created in Task 1.1 (How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision), have students respond to the following questions individually in their Reader/Writer Notebook. Do this at the end of their comprehension work for Part 2 of *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Chapters 12–31).

- In what ways has student-to-student discussion changed since starting the novel?
- What was said in today’s discussion that helped you to better understand the story?

**Whole Group**

Ask students to share their responses. Update and revise the chart, How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision.

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**Focus Standards**

*Reading Literature*  
RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9–10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

*Writing*

W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

*Speaking and Listening*

SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

*Language*

L.9–10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
Significance

- What did you identify as the most significant moments in Part 2 of the novel?
- How do these moments contribute to your understanding of the characters and the big ideas in the novel?

Materials

- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- Independent reading, significant moments, and vocabulary work for Part 2 (in Reader/Writer Notebook)
- Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents
- These charts from tasks 1.1 and 1.2 will be expanded and revised in this task:
  - Significant Lines in Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*
  - Lines Significant to Character
  - Lines Significant to Big Ideas
  - How Discussion Affects Understanding/Revision
- Reader/Writer Notebook
- Chart paper and markers

Teaching Approach

**Teacher Note:** The work in this task can be done across two sessions. Look for a natural break or midpoint to allow for a coherent transition.

**Whole Group (2-3 minutes)**

Give students a few minutes to review the significant work that they did for Part 1 of the novel and then direct their attention to the classroom charts (listed below) from that work to refresh their memory of the work and the process that produced it:

- Significant Lines in Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Lines Significant to Character
- Lines Significant to Big Ideas

**Pair Work (10-20 minutes)**

Instruct students to continue that work, informed by all that they’ve done in class with the text, by

1. going sequentially through the chapters assigned for this session sharing the lines that they selected during their independent reading.
2. selecting a few lines from their independent work for whole group examination. Students may also select new lines from the chapters since they probably have a different perspective on the story as a result of class work.
3. focusing on lines that reveal character and emerging themes (recurring big ideas) for whole group examination.
Circulate to capture a few well-supported interpretations of lines that will lead students to examine character development in the text.

It is not important to share all the lines, but sample those that will support students’ further analysis of character development and lead to exploration of emerging themes. This sharing should not drag on, but demonstrate the type of thinking necessary to advance literary interpretation and academic discourse.

**Group Work (15 minutes)**
- Share and chart significant moments and note those that were shared by many readers as particular hot spots for interpretation.
- Mark when a student successfully interprets a line in a way that builds meaning across elements of the text (e.g., recognizing that a line reveals a character’s motives in an earlier or later event, foreshadows, reiterates an idea that occurs elsewhere, serves to explain an ambiguity elsewhere in the text, etc.).
- Use this time to provide quick on-the-spot support for any lines that contained unfamiliar **vocabulary**, **allusions**, or other issues of **background knowledge** that impeded comprehension.

**Individual Work: StepBack (2-3 minutes)**
Have students respond to the following question in the Reader/Writer Notebook after the significance work for Part 2 is completed.
- Which line(s) led to discussion that helped you to understand more about the characters and events in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

**Pair Work (2-3 minutes)**
Allow students a few minutes to share and compare their responses.

Circulate to listen in and select some insights to share with the whole group.

**Whole Group**
Ask students to share what they themselves and their partner felt were the most significant moment for this task. Then ask students to consider how their understanding of the novel might be different without discussions of this type.

Add responses to update the chart, How Discussion Affects Understanding/ Revision.
### Focus Standards

#### Reading Literature

RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9–10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

#### Writing

W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

#### Speaking and Listening

SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9–10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
Interpretation: Theme

- What recurring big ideas can we now identify as themes?
- What characters, symbols, and/or words are associated with these themes?

Materials
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- Chart: Lines Significant to Big Ideas in *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Sticky notes or note cards
- Chart: Themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Chart: Connecting Character and Theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Reader/Writer Notebook
- Chart paper and markers

Teaching Approach

**Teacher Note:** Find a natural stopping point in the task to divide the work over two class sessions.

**Whole Group (2-3 minutes)**

Explain to students that although people often talk about “the” theme of a story or refer to a theme as the moral or lesson of the story (especially when teaching younger children), these notions are not accurate enough for the work of literary analysis.

Direct students’ attention to the chart, Lines Significant to Big Ideas in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and have them return to this work in their Reader/Writer Notebooks.

Explain that in this task they will look more closely at the recurring big ideas to see which can be considered themes—i.e., central to the meaning and coherence of the story while carrying meaning that transcends the circumstances of this particular story.

They will also analyze how these themes are crafted by tracing the theme through the text to see which characters and other story elements Lee ties to each.

**Partner Work (5-10 minutes)**

Before students begin their work, make the following clarification:

Theme is best expressed as a full sentence rather than as a single word or phrase. A single word might express the topic of a text, but not the theme as in these examples:

- “Fear” is a topic. A theme statement about fear might be something like, “Sometimes what a person fears in others is really what he/she fears in him/herself.”
- “Perseverance” is a topic. A theme statement about perseverance might be something like, “Giving 100% effort to what we do makes life worth living.”
Instruct students to use the novel and the artifacts in the Reader/Writer Notebook and classroom charts to list possible themes. Their theme statement might reference an element of the story, but should transcend the story and apply to the world at large.

Students should be able to identify and support several themes within the text.

It is important that students construct their own theme statements. The two examples below are provided to you as models only. These are stated with a reference to an element of the story:

- Children, such as Jem, Scout, and Dill, struggle to understand the complexities of the adult world and issues of equity, justice, and race.
- An ingrained, status quo “caste system,” such as the one in Maycomb, can be revealed for what it is through a child’s perspective.

**Teaching Option:** Have students list their theme statements on note cards or sticky notes and then post these on a class chart to expedite whole group sharing.

Circulate to support students and to verify that their theme statements are accurately stated and supported by text. Take note of common themes expressed in different ways and be sure to call for these during the whole group work.

**Whole Group Work (5 minutes)**
Ask students to share their list entries and direct the class to the text for examples of the themes’ recurrence.

Collect possible themes on a chart entitled, “Themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*,” and require students to add these themes to their own Reader/Writer Notebook lists.

**Small Group or Pair Work (5-10 minutes)**
Instruct students to work together to reduce the items in the list to the best-supported themes. If students need structure to proceed, post the following guidelines on the board:

- Identify patterns or similarities in the chart entries.
- Combine and reword several items.
- Question whether or not the theme is central to the story while transcending the story.

**Whole Group**
Reduce the items on the list using students’ suggestions. You will need five or so themes to proceed to the next part of the task.

**Individual or Pair Work (15-20 minutes)**
Display a chart like the one below.

Assign or have each student or pair select a single theme to trace through the text.

Instruct students to create and complete this chart on chart paper in order to show the connections between the theme and the characters, objects, ideas and/or words that mark the recurrence of that theme.
Connecting Character and Theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

**Theme:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Evidence: Character’s words and actions that develop the theme</th>
<th>Other markers: Images, objects, words, etc., that mark the recurrence of the theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Circulate to support and to pull some examples from groups to use as models, if necessary.

**Teaching Option–In-Process Models:** If students are struggling, student models can be selected as you circulate. Share these quickly to support students. You or the student can explain his/her process to the class or with individual students. A teacher demonstration can be used if there are no instructive student models available.

**Gallery Walk (20 minutes)**

Have students post their charts. Have students make a blank copy of the chart in their Reader/Writer Notebook and instruct them to collect analysis notes for each of the themes during their walk. Conduct a gallery walk.

**Teaching Option:** If time permits, you might have students use their charts to present their theme analysis to the whole group.

**Quick Write–StepBack (3-5 minutes):**

Have students respond to the following in their Reader/Writer Notebooks.

- What more do you understand about the novel after doing this work?
- What is something that you learned from another group’s work?

**Whole Group (3-5 minutes)**

Share responses if time permits and/or use these StepBack entries to formatively assess students’ grasp of the concepts.
Focus Standards

**Reading Literature**

RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9–10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Writing**

W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Speaking and Listening**

SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9–10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
Author’s Methods: Structure and Purpose

• How does the novel’s structure support your understanding of the story and Lee’s purposes?

Materials
• To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
• Chart from previous tasks: Themes in To Kill a Mockingbird
• Projector or other means of displaying enlarged copies of documents
• Charts to be created in this task:
  – Indicators of Importance in a Text
  – Target Text for Close Reading
• Reader/Writer Notebook with independent reading work
• Chart paper and markers

Teaching Approach

Teacher Note: In this task, students will examine Lee’s structuring of the novel as a means of expanding their understanding of the development of the novel’s themes and to locate evidence of the author’s purpose.

Pair/Trio Work (1-2 minutes)
Ask students to turn and talk for a minute or two and use their Reader/Writer Notebook to jot down their ideas in response to the following question:

• How do writers place emphasis on the characters, events, or ideas that they want to stand out in their writing?

Circulate to listen in and provide some guidance. You might suggest students think of their own writing techniques. If they want something to stand out in their writing, what do they do?

Whole Group Work (2-3 minutes)
Create a three-column chart, “Indicators of Importance in a Text.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of Importance in a Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Explain to students that you will use the terms at the top of the columns to categorize and define these techniques. Post or display the following definitions:

- **Scale**: The amount of time/text the writer devotes to an event/idea in comparison to the length of the text as a whole. *What is the chapter mostly about?*
- **Repetition**: The writer’s use of a recurring idea, image, object, etc. *The “threads” traced in the last task.*
- **Emphatic positioning**: Placing an event, idea, image, phrase, etc., in a “power” position in the text where it is likely to be noticed: first; last; in isolation; at the breaks between sections, scenes, or parts of a text.

Give students a moment to look over their responses to the question above (heading **Pair/Trio Work**: “How do writers place emphasis on the characters, events, or ideas that they want to stand out in their writing?”) to see if their ideas fit these definitions.

Ask students to share their responses, identifying which type of indicator it is. If there are other indicators of importance that do not neatly fit into a category, or that fit into several, discuss these briefly to determine the best placement, or create a side category entitled, “Other.”

If students do not notice, point out they have already looked at *scale* in their comprehension question, “What is the chapter mostly about?” They also traced *recurring themes* in the last task.

Explain that now they will look more closely at how Lee structures her novel in terms of *emphatic positioning* in order to answer the following question (display the question so that all students can see it):

- **How does the novel’s structure support a deeper understanding of the story and of Lee’s purpose?**

**Teacher Note–Using Prior Knowledge**: You can illustrate the idea of emphatic positioning using examples from students’ prior knowledge of essay and paragraph writing; dramatic scene breaks in plays, television, and movies; musical refrain; the use of white space; the jolt of flashback and flash forward, etc. These all incorporate positioning for emphasis—probably because we tend to remember the first and last things we hear and those between short breaks.

**Pair Work: Discuss with a Partner (1 minute)**

Have students turn and talk to discuss and jot down responses to the following in their Reader/Writer Notebooks:

- What are the most obvious structural or organizing components Lee decided to use in this novel?

Circulate to listen in and support student thinking.

**Group Work (5 minutes)**

Create a chart entitled, “Target Text for Close Reading,” and record student responses. You will likely start by listing the most obvious components (Parts 1 and 2 and the chapter divisions), but allow room on the chart as students “drill down” to more and more specific locations. If students don’t include the following, point them out when students are done contributing:

- Parts 1 and 2
- Chapters
- Page breaks and white space used within a chapter to set a section apart
The title
• The epigraph (see note below)
• The dedication, too, is important but not always directly related to the meaning of the story.

**Teacher Note:** Provide a definition such as the one below for “epigraph” if students are not familiar with the term.

The Encarta Dictionary in Microsoft Word defines epigraph as “a quotation at the beginning of a book, chapter, or section of a book, usually related to its theme.”

Have students locate the epigraph Lee chose. It is a quote from Charles Lamb: “Lawyers, I suppose, were children once.”

**Pair Work (1-2 minutes)**
Ask students to turn and talk again, this time to drill down by applying the idea of *emphatic positioning* to the parts and chapters of the novel to respond to the question:

• What might be the emphatic positions within the parts and chapters of *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

If students are struggling to respond, guide them to dig down by again thinking of beginnings and ends.

**Whole Group (5-10 minutes)**
Add student responses to the chart. Be sure that the following have been added:

• Chapters 1 and 31: the beginning and end of the novel
• Chapters 1 and 11: the beginning and end of Part 1
• Chapters 12 and 31: the beginning and end of Part 2

Press students further by asking them to continue this line of reasoning to consider an even smaller grain size. Discuss this progression with students to identify and chart the following emphatic positions:

• the first and last pages of the target chapters
• the first and last paragraphs of those target chapters
• the first and last sentences of those target chapters

To illustrate, refer to “cliffhangers,” which depend upon placement at the very end of a section of text to create suspense—and novels that are referred to as “page turners” because the writer is using this device continually. In many cases, even the first and last word are worth close examination to find evidence of an author’s purposes.

Explain to students that with this habit/pattern of structuring in mind, they will now do a *close reading* of the targets to answer the question (posted previously):

• How does the novel’s structure support a deeper understanding of the story and of Lee’s purpose?

**Individual Work (15 minutes)**
Assign, or have students select, a target chapter (Chapters 1, 11, 12, or 31) for a closer reading.
Task 2.4

Instruct students to

1. gather and review the resources that they have in their Reader/Writer Notebooks for their assigned chapter.
2. reread their chapter closely to identify what Lee places in these prime locations in terms of events, character, ideas, images, objects, etc.
3. use a highlighter, sticky notes or their Reader/Writer Notebook to record their findings/evidence
4. reread the last pages, paragraphs, and lines of the chapters before and/or after their assigned chapter to note anything else of importance that emerges from a study of this sequencing.

Teaching Options: Scaffolds and Demonstration: If students need support to begin this work, provide the following, and if further support is needed, model using these cues for the whole group, a small group, or an individual student.

Use the following cues to see what Lee’s choices reveal. Depending on the chapter you are using, you might take note of

- plot event Lee placed here,
- conflicts in development,
- characters in development,
- use of time shifts: flashback and flash forward,
- choice of narration (child or adult Scout),
- location and time of day,
- word choice, etc.,
- recurring words, images, objects, ideas in these spots.

Pair or Small Group Work (5-10 minutes)

Instruct students who examined the same chapter to meet to compare and discuss their findings and evidence before responding individually in their Reader/Writer Notebooks to the following question:

- How does the novel’s structure support a deeper understanding of the story and of Lee’s purpose?

If students are struggling with the task, borrow a group’s findings to demonstrate how to draft a response to the guiding question of this task. As you demonstrate, use the technique of emphatic location to place your answer or topic sentence first and follow it with an explanation of findings and evidence. Close with a sentence that emphasizes your thinking.

Whole Group Discussion (10-12 minutes)

Review protocols and assign student roles. Select a student to begin the discussion by reading his/her response to the question:

- How does the novel’s structure support a deeper understanding of the story and of Lee’s purpose?

Facilitate according to Accountable Talk Moves and Functions in ELA (found in the Instructional Resources section of the Appendix).
**Individual Work: StepBack**

After the discussion have students reflect on the work by responding to the following question in their Reader/Writer Notebooks:

- What more did you learn about the novel and Lee’s purposes by
  - examining structure?
  - discussing findings with classmates?
- How can this help you to complete the culminating assignment?

Share responses if time permits and/or use these to formatively assess students’ grasp of the concepts.

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**Focus Standards** *(CCSS, 2012, p. 38, 47, 50, 55)*

**Reading Literature**

RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9–10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9–10.5 Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**Writing**

W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Speaking and Listening**

SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9–10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

**Language**

L.9–10.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
Culminating Assignment
Character, Theme, and Structure in
*To Kill a Mockingbird*

TASKS, TEACHING APPROACHES, AND STANDARDS
Culminating Assignment

Materials

- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- Culminating assignment

Teacher Note: It is highly recommended that teachers draft their own response to this essay prior to assigning it to students. Doing so can help teachers to anticipate difficulties that may arise for particular students so that they can prepare supports.

The culminating assignment may be completed in a number of ways. The standards covered in the culminating assignment will vary depending upon your decision. Students can complete the assignment during class; independently; outside of class; as an on-demand writing; or as a process piece. Determine the best fit for your class and present your framework for this assignment to students along with the means of assessing the essays. You may already have a rubric for this type of writing (school, district, or the available PARCC/Smarter Balanced) or you might consider generating a rubric or set of scoring criteria with students. Use available, authentic student samples of similar, successful essays to demonstrate expectations and build a rubric or criteria if needed.
# Focus Standards

(CCSS, 2012, p. 38, 45, 46, 47, 54, 55)

## Reading Literature

RL.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9–10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9–10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9–10.5 Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9–10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

## Writing

W.9–10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.9–10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.9–10.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 9–10 on page 54.)

W.9–10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.9–10.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## Language

L.9–10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.9–10.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

L.9–10.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
Character, Theme, and Structure in
To Kill a Mockingbird

Culminating Assignment
Grades 9–10

This culminating assignment is a chance for you to demonstrate and use all that you have learned about characterization and the connections between characters and themes in the novel. You have already done much of the preliminary work for this assignment as you looked closely at the characters and how Lee created them through believable words and actions. You have also looked at how particular characters were used to convey certain recurring ideas.

For this assignment, you will use all the work and resources developed throughout the unit to respond to the following task.

Task: Choose a character from the novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, and write an essay in which you analyze that character through his or her words and actions, any changes he/she goes through, and his/her role in conveying the themes in the novel.

Reminders:
Analysis requires you to examine the role of the parts to the whole. In this case, you will examine how the “parts” of the character (his or her words, actions, and indications of change or development) relate to the story as a whole (the big ideas or themes that run through the whole story to create a coherent work).

Remember to cite strong and thorough evidence from across the novel to support your analysis. Your essay should be written in standard English for an audience who is familiar with the text and should establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.

After you’ve written your essay, answer the StepBack questions. Your responses to the StepBack questions will be collected but not graded.
**StepBack Questions:**

Please answer the following questions in the space below. Your responses will be collected but not graded.

1. What did you find easy about completing this assignment?

2. What did you find difficult about it?

3. What questions do you still have?
Appendix
Character, Theme, and Structure in *To Kill a Mockingbird*
Unit Text

To Kill a Mockingbird
Obtaining Copyright Permission

A number of texts, such as journal and newspaper articles, book chapters, children’s books, and poems, may be mentioned in this IFL Unit. Because of copyright considerations, these resources could not be included in the unit. A comprehensive reference citation has been included in this section of the unit.

The resources referenced in this unit may be protected by copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code). You are responsible for obtaining permission from the rights holder(s) in order to reproduce and distribute copyrighted material. The rights holder may require a fee for this permission, which will be based on the number of copies made. Even if the rights holder does not require a fee, you are still obligated to make a formal request before redistributing copyrighted material.

Notes

• The rights holder will need the following information to process your request—title of work, author, place of publication, page numbers, and how and when the resource will be used.
• When text comes from an anthology or a textbook, the publisher of the book is most likely not the rights holder. The publisher generally gets permission to include the text in their book. The rights holder will need to be determined in order to get permission to use the text.
• Picture books generally have two rights holders, one for the text and another for the images. Both rights holders must grant permission to make copies of the texts.
• Other resources, such as paintings, photographs, graphics, cartoons, videos, songs, etc., also require copyright permission.

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Instructional Glossary

ASSESSMENTS IN IFL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS reflect what is known about the assessments under development by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Both consortia closely align their assessments to the Common Core State Standards.

ASSESSMENT TASKS:

- Allow for an assessment of how well students are learning the content and habits of thinking that they are being taught through the designed curriculum.
- Build from the notion that we should assess what we actually teach. Therefore, the assessment and unit content learning goals, skills, and habits of thinking are the same.
- Ask students to individually complete tasks that mirror tasks they have completed, often with others, as part of the unit’s daily instruction. The specific content of the assessment is new to students, yet within the scope of the content they have been studying as part of the unit of study.
- Use student work to assess what students know, what teachers need to reteach, and what modifications teachers must make as they continue the work of the unit.

BLOG refers to a website that allows individuals or groups of users to post facts, opinions, stories, etc. and allows other users to respond to those posts through the use of comment boxes on the blog page.

CHARTING of the pair/trio sharing by or for members of the group represents the work of the group to the entire class. Wall charts are dynamic displays that are frequently revisited and revised by the teacher and learners as their understanding of the particular content is developing. In the process of creating these charts, learners voice their own interpretations of content or ideas, providing teachers with key opportunities to assess learners’ understanding. While the teacher is collecting the students’ ideas, often s/he is also shaping and organizing their ideas given the content and standards that are the focus of the lesson or unit. Wall charts also act as a way to provide support for students who may not have understood the work individually (or in their pair/trio/group work). Additionally, wall charts provide learners with clear expectations of what they are learning or expected to produce. Learners use these charts as references when doing work independently or in small and large groups; this allows students to begin to self-manage their learning. Therefore, these charts should be strategically placed in the classroom so that students can use them as tools of instruction. Wall charts are part of the gradual release of the responsibility for learning from teachers to students. They are intended to reflect and impact the learner’s work and achievement, unlike posters, which are fixed products and are often used as decoration.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS) have been adopted by most states. Information about this standards project and the English language arts/literacy standards are on the CCSS website: http://www.corestandards.org.

COMPREHENSION/SORTING QUESTIONS promote close reading and allow students to get the gist of a text while sorting out, for example, the characters and settings, central and supporting ideas, or claims and counterclaims.

CULMINATING ASSESSMENT refers to the final unit assessment. Students complete this performance assessment individually. It focuses on the big ideas and skills students have studied and used in the unit. It takes into account the standards and sequence of lessons, and tests what has been taught, modeled, and included on criteria charts and trackers.
CULMINATING ASSIGNMENT refers to the final unit assignment. The culminating assignment focuses on the big ideas and skills students have studied and used in the unit. Unlike the culminating assessment, students receive support in its completion including opportunities for multiple drafts, peer review, and revision. Almost always, students learn about the culminating assignment at the beginning of the unit, which helps them to understand how the work that they do throughout the unit connects and supports their completion of this individual but scaffolded assignment.

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY (DL) is an approach to teaching and learning that integrates academically rigorous content with discipline-appropriate habits of thinking. In DL, students become literate in a specific discipline by learning the big ideas and habits of thinking of that discipline simultaneously.

EMBEDDED ASSESSMENT TASKS describe assessments that are integral to a curriculum and are part of a unit’s instructional sequence. They are literally embedded as on-demand “tests” in units of instruction and require students to perform tasks that mirror work they have completed, often with others, as part of the unit’s daily instruction. Embedding assessments throughout instruction allows teachers to find out what students don’t know or aren’t able to do while there is still time to do something about it. These assessments provide formative data that allow teachers to change or modify instruction to better address the needs of individual learners.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT is assessment for learning. This type of assessment occurs throughout the course of a unit and is used to measure students’ understanding of the unit’s key concepts, content, and skills. The data from formative assessments are used to adjust instruction and learning to meet the needs of students. This adjustment may include reteaching certain concepts, either to the whole class or a specific group of students, or incorporating alternative approaches to assessing the content.

GALLERY WALKS refer to walks students do around the classroom in order to read, take notes on, or respond to various classroom artifacts such as individual or pair/trio charts, whole group charts, displays constructed by the teacher or peers, etc. Gallery walks provide the opportunity for students to share their work with others and/or display what they know or have learned. Additionally, gallery walks can provide teachers with an active way to share information with students on various topics. Gallery walks are usually followed by whole class discussions.

GENRE: “A genre of writing is a rough template for accomplishing a particular purpose with language. It provides the writer and the reader with a common set of assumptions about what characterizes the text.” (Hampton, S., Murphy, S., & Lowry, M. [2009] in Using Rubrics to Improve Writing, New Standards, IRA, University of Pittsburgh & NCEE, p. 1.)

INFORMATIONAL TEXT: The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) explicate expectations for reading and writing informational text. The CCSS section below elaborates on these expectations for writing informational text:

“Informational/explanatory writing conveys information accurately. This kind of writing serves one or more closely related purposes: to increase readers’ knowledge of a subject, to help readers better understand a procedure or process, or to provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a concept. Informational/explanatory writing addresses matters such as types (What are the different types of poetry?) and components (What are the parts of a motor?); size, function, or behavior (How big is the United States? What is an X-ray used for? How do penguins find food?); how things work (How does the legislative branch of government function?); and why things happen (Why do some authors blend genres?).” (Appendix A, p. 23)
Writers of informational/explanatory texts:

“use a variety of techniques to convey information, such as naming, defining, describing, or differentiating different types or parts; comparing or contrasting ideas or concepts; and citing an anecdote or a scenario to illustrate a point. Informational/explanatory writing includes a wide array of genres, including academic genres such as literary analyses, scientific and historical reports, summaries, and précis writing as well as forms of workplace and functional writing such as instructions, manuals, memos, reports, applications, and résumés” (ibid).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress addresses the reading of informational text in its reading framework, “Informational texts include three broad categories: exposition; argumentation and persuasive text; and procedural text and documents.” Informational texts include such reading materials as textbooks, magazine and newspaper articles, documents, essays, and speeches.

The sidebar of the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading advocates that students read “increasingly challenging literary and informational texts.” They provide examples of informational text such as “texts in history/social studies, science and other disciplines” (2010, p. 10).

The following sections from the CCSS provide examples of informational texts which are meant to illustrate the kinds of texts that can be selected, but not to be the only texts students would read:

**Informational: Historical/Social Science Texts**

Historical/Social Science texts are informational texts with historical or social science content. Examples from Appendix B of the CCSS include: Preamble and First Amendment to the United States Constitution, Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott by Freedman, The Great Fire by Murphy, and Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist by Greenberg.

**Informational: Scientific and Technical Texts**

Scientific and Technical texts are informational texts with scientific and technical content. Examples from Appendix B of the CCSS include: The Building of Manhattan by Mackay, Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet out of Idaho by Katz, “Space Probe” from Astronomy & Space: From the Big Bang to the Big Crunch, and “The Evolution of the Grocery Bag” by Petroski.

**Literary Nonfiction**

Literary nonfiction “includes the subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience” (2010, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, 2010, p. 57). These texts can be informational, persuasion, and narrative. Examples from Appendix B of the CCSS include: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave by Douglass, “Letter to Thomas Jefferson” by Adams, Travels with Charley: In Search of America by Steinbeck, and “Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: Address to Parliament on May 13th, 1940” by Churchill.
INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS are text-based, thought-provoking questions that stem from genuine inquiry. These open-ended questions can sustain multiple, varied responses based on evidence from the text. Interpretive questions are the focus of WriteAbouts and inquiry-based discussions.

INQUIRY-BASED DISCUSSIONS are whole group discussions in which readers discuss their responses to interpretive questions (WriteAbouts). These student-centered discussions usually follow a second or third reading of the text. Before students engage in inquiry-based discussions, they have had the opportunity to write individually on the interpretive question and share their responses in pairs or trios. The purposes of an inquiry-based discussion are to help readers:

- “try out” their answers and explanations using specific moments and evidence from the text;
- practice making interpretations supported with evidence from the text;
- accept alternative views/interpretations of the same text;
- rethink what they think about the text; and
- understand that readers can have different valid interpretations of the same text.

METACOGNITION refers to thinking about one’s thinking and how one learns. Students are asked to think metacognitively when they answer StepBack questions. During this part of the learning, students consider WHAT they learned and HOW they learned it.

MODELS are examples of work, either oral or written, that support students producing similar work. A model is of a total performance, which can be large or small, in order to help learners understand the essence of an activity and develop a mental picture of what the real thing looks like. It may be an example of one way to explain significant moments, answer a StepBack question, write the culminating assignment, etc. Models include work completed by peers, the teacher, and/or professional writers. Before completing the task/assignment themselves, learners are usually asked to deconstruct these models in order to analyze what makes them effective. Models are not necessarily exemplars; therefore, they do not need to be perfect.

OVERARCHING QUESTIONS present the big ideas of the unit as inquiry questions that reach across and connect all of the texts under study including the students’ writing. These overarching questions are informed by the standards and central ideas worth knowing about a particular topic within a given discipline.

PAIR/TRIO SHARING refers to students working in groups of two or three to share their responses to individual Quick Writes or other tasks in order to establish academic conversations in a safe environment with high accountability to the task and the group members.
**PATTERNED WAY OF READING, WRITING, AND TALKING** refers to DL ELA pattern of reading, writing about/like, and discussing texts multiple times for different purposes using scaffolded questions that lead students from literal comprehension to higher-order thinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Quick Write:</th>
<th>How the writing varies:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discovery Writing</strong></td>
<td>Quick. Students are accessing prior knowledge or thinking on paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry Slips</strong></td>
<td>Usually quick. Students respond to a writing prompt from the teacher on previous or current learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exit Slips</strong></td>
<td>Usually quick. Exit Slips are similar to Entry Slips except these are handed in at the end of the class rather than at the beginning and most often require students to focus on an aspect of the learning done that day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Getting the Gist</strong></td>
<td>Quick. Students are sharing events, characters, key ideas, etc. Length of time depends on amount and difficulty of text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant Moments</strong></td>
<td>Longer. Students are sharing moments and evidence, questioning each other, identifying similarities and differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Quick Write:</td>
<td>How the writing varies:</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WriteAbout</strong></td>
<td>Time for writing and sharing is longer since the task is more difficult. During the pair/trio share, students are sharing ideas and evidence, debating interpretations, questioning each other’s ideas and evidence, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WriteLike</strong></td>
<td>Time allotted depends on students’ familiarity with the task. Writing and sharing might look more like working together to solve a problem, find examples of a literary device, analyze aspects of an author’s style, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**READ ALOUD** is a reading approach in which the text is not seen by the students, but is read aloud by the teacher with intermittent questions designed to foster student discussion that builds meaning.

**READ TO GET THE GIST** is the first reading of a text in which readers read for literal comprehension. Literal comprehension questions such as, “What is happening?” in a narrative; “What is the author’s argument?” in an argumentative text; or “What are the issues?” in an informational text guide this first reading. For narrative writing, questions such as, “Who are the characters? What do you know about them? How do you know it?” help students sort the characters and develop literal comprehension.

**READER/WRITER NOTEBOOK** is a classroom tool students use to record their thinking and/or ideas, generate writing ideas, and try out new voices. Students compose Quick Writes and WriteAbouts, take notes, compose observations for writings, respond to questions and tasks, and track their learning in their Reader/Writer Notebooks. The Reader/Writer Notebook is a place students can go back to when working on larger pieces such as their culminating assignment. It also serves as a central notebook to store handouts, papers, calendars, and other materials used in the class. It is helpful to use a loose-leaf notebook so that pages from each student’s Reader/Writer Notebook can be collected, shared, returned, and rearranged with greater ease.

**REREAD FOR SIGNIFICANCE** involves having students reread or skim through a text for the purpose of identifying moments or specific kinds of moments (e.g., author’s arguments, character’s response to challenge) that strike them as significant to that text. Students are then asked to explain the significance of the chosen moments to the text.

**RETROSPECTIVE** tasks on each text or across texts invite students to rethink and revise writing on the unit’s big ideas and overarching questions as they progress through the unit.

**RUBRICS** delineate the criteria of different levels of performance. In writing instruction, formative and summative ones are used. Summative rubrics are primarily useful to the teacher to more quickly assign a score to a piece of student writing. These are usually too complex or abstract to be helpful to students. Formative rubrics, developed by students with their teacher as part of instruction on specific writing assignments, can be helpful checklists/gauges for students of what they have included in their writing and how well their writing represents each element. With their teacher, students update rubrics as their writing improves through instruction, practice, and feedback.
The table below presents a brief overview of the main types of rubrics used to assess student work in ELA and some of the differences among them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Rubric and Description</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holistic</strong> assigns a single, overall rating or score to a product or performance based on an overall impression.</td>
<td>• good for simple products or performances (i.e., ones characterized by a single element or dimension); • provides a quick “snapshot” of overall quality or achievement performance; and • represents overall “impact” of a product or performance.</td>
<td>• does not provide detailed analysis of strengths and weaknesses, so not useful for diagnostic purposes or to inform instruction; and • does not help students to see what they need to do to improve.</td>
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<td><strong>Analytic</strong> assigns separate ratings or scores to identified elements or dimensions of a product or performance so that each category or dimension can be judged separately on a quality scale as the basis of determining a total score/judgment.</td>
<td>• captures complexity of product or performance that involves several elements or dimensions; • identifies the essential components of quality by element or dimension; and • provides specific feedback to teachers, students, and parents regarding individual strengths and weaknesses as well as a final score/judgment.</td>
<td>• time consuming, especially at first, to learn and use; • raises issues of reliability among different raters who are dealing with several elements or dimensions; • components of quality scale may be more generic; and • applied across writing tasks which can result in generic kinds of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary trait</strong> focuses attention on rating of a single trait considered to be the most essential for demonstrating success regarding a particular product or performance; in writing, isolates one component of written discourse and assesses the writer’s aptness for that particular trait; in reading and writing, isolates the essential attribute of the reading performance.</td>
<td>• gives a sharp view of the complex aspects of a particular skill, thus allowing for more precisely identifying particular strengths and weaknesses; • the dimension or trait being rated is clearly reflected in the primary trait at each score point; and • task-specific.</td>
<td>• time consuming, especially at first, to learn and use; and • tasks may require secondary trait rubrics in addition to a primary trait one, adding additional complexity to the scoring of papers.</td>
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</table>

References:
**SHARED READING** involves the teacher displaying an enlarged copy of the text and showing only the portions of the text to be read aloud and discussed as the text unfolds. It is important that students’ eyes track the text as it is being read aloud by the teacher, especially during an initial reading. The power of the shared reading component is that the teacher is taking on the decoding work, while the students are able to see the words and hear how they sound, simultaneously.

**SIGNIFICANCE** tasks ask students to locate significant moments in a text and to explain why those moments are significant to the text.

**STEPBACK** tasks ask students to reflect on what they are learning and how they are learning it. They are deliberate efforts to help students accumulate their growing body of knowledge on the unit focus and overarching questions and develop a metacognitive awareness that prompts transfer of learning to relevant new situations.

**SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT** is an assessment of the learning at a particular point in time. The evaluation, usually in the form of a test or culminating assessment, measures what students have learned over the course of a unit or other period of study. The assessment summarizes learning up to that point and is most times marked and scored.

**TASKS** ask learners to use knowledge, skills, and habits to accomplish an activity, project, or to solve a problem in reading, writing, and thinking. In completing tasks, learners “do” the subject of literature, composition, and/or language study within the disciplines working in ways authentic to the discipline. Typically, tasks are prompted by open-ended questions about a text(s) students are reading and/or writing.

**THINK ALOUD** is a form of modeling in which the teacher or a peer thinks aloud as s/he is performing a task such as reading a text, gathering evidence to answer a question, writing a thesis statement, etc. The person performing the think aloud usually chooses three or four strategies or techniques to explicitly model and asks learners to focus on, listen for, or take notes on those things. The purpose of a think aloud is to make the implicit explicit so that others may learn and apply these strategies when doing the task themselves.

**TOPIC** is a general subject, what a text is about. A topic can usually be expressed by a single word or phrase. For example: Animals, or Jungle Animals.

**TOPIC VS. MAIN IDEA:** While a topic is a general term describing the subject of a text (such as Animals or Jungle Animals), a main idea is more specific about what is being said about that topic in an informational text or part of the text. (Deforestation has devastating effects on jungle animals.)

**TOPIC VS. THEME:** While a topic is a general term describing the subject of a text (such as Friendship or Lasting Friendships), a theme is more specific about what is being said about that topic in a literary text or part of the text. (Even lasting friendship can be threatened by distrust.)

**TRACKERS** assist students to self-assess and monitor progress in relation to established criteria for success on a culminating assignment/assessment.

**TURN AND TALK** is a structure that takes place within a larger group discussion, in which a question is posed and students discuss their responses in groups of two or three. The purpose of a turn and talk is four-fold: 1) to engage all students in text discussion, even those less inclined to speak in whole group formats; 2) to allow students to try out ideas—and ways of articulating those ideas—with one another in a safe space before bringing their responses to the larger group; 3) to ensure a number of valid responses are developed to a significant text-based question; and 4) in order to encourage students to grapple with ideas, and work to support their claims as they also consider the claims made by their peers.
UNIT FOCUS identifies the big ideas (e.g., “Miseducation” or “Writing and Identity” or “Child Labor”), genre, or author to be studied, linked to the standards.

WIKI refers to a website with a collection of pages that are developed and edited collaboratively by a group of people. Each page in a wiki allows readers to leave comments about the content, and many wikis allow readers to edit the content within each page.

WRITEABOUTS are short pieces of writing students do in response to interpretive questions based on their reading. WriteAbouts usually follow a second or third reading of the text and are written in students’ Reader/Writer Notebooks. They are usually in preparation for an inquiry-based discussion.

WRITELIKES ask students to write like the texts, either in the style of the selection or in imitation of an author’s sentence and grammatical structure.
Rationale for Independent Reading

In an effort to prepare students for the expectations of college and career, this novel study moves away from the type of instruction that requires students to read a few chapters at a time in, or in preparation for, class. This type of episodic reading is inefficient in that it extends the amount of class time needed to cover a novel and limits the range and depth of the work, (here about the development of characters, themes) that can be done in class.

The expectation in this unit is that students will read the whole novel within about a week, while class time is used for close rereading, discussion and writing about sections of the text identified by the students and teacher for further examination and inquiry.

Preparing for the Unit:

- Explain the rationale for reading the novel ahead of time to students in order to build a shared understanding that this is a more efficient way of working, and that it prepares them for the way they will be expected to work in college and career. Page 1 of their Independent Reading Guide covers this.
- Emphasize that there will not be daily chapter deadlines. Instead, students will read the entire novel prior to the start date of the unit.
- As you are approaching the beginning of the unit, post a reminder of reading deadline.
- Provide all students with a copy of the Independent Reading Guide, a copy of the novel, and a copy of the Unit Outline and Culminating Assignment.
- Explain that they should use the tasks in the Unit Outline to focus their independent reading of the text. This is similar to the function of a syllabus.
- Suggest that they form partnerships/study groups to talk through and manage the independent work and collaborate to resolve questions and other issues. Groups might take an online form such as a reading blog or wiki.
- Check frequently to ensure that students are understanding the work outlined in the Independent Reading Instructions (located in the Independent Reading Guide).
- Model annotation, capturing and explaining significant/important lines, and vocabulary work using the opening of the text prior to the novel unit (Task 0.1). This should launch students into the work.
- If this way of working with a novel is new to students and/or to you the teacher, you may wish to enlist students as if they were collaborators or a focus group, testing this way of working. As the unit rolls out, ask for their critique and reflection as to whether this method raises the level of rigor and of what challenges it presents.
- In an effort to remove scaffolding toward independent reading in the 9–10 grade span, no templates, graphic organizers, worksheets, or other types of frames are provided for the written work students are asked to do independently and in class. Use your professional judgment regarding the needs of individual students and provide frames temporarily and as needed for the work in the Reader/Writer Notebook.
- List of questions for the text are also not provided. The questions used in the tasks are designed to allow students to draw and build meaning from the text without the scaffolding of prepared teacher questions. The questions are designed to be easily internalized habits of reading that students can apply independently to future novel reading.
- In this unit the work of understanding the novel rests firmly with students. The teacher facilitates but does not provide answers or even guiding questions regarding what the text means. Again, use your professional judgment to design strong text-dependent questions to use with students who are unable to read the text independently at this point, but always with the goal of removing all teacher scaffolding.
Reader/Writer Notebook

What is the Reader/Writer Notebook?
It is a notebook with loose-leaf paper that can be added, rearranged, or temporarily removed. Loose-leaf holed paper between pressboard covers, held together with rings would suffice.

Students will be asked to use a Reader/Writer Notebook this year.

What are two main purposes of the notebook?
It gives the writer a place for thinking and trying out different voices and techniques.
It also serves as a central notebook to store handouts, other papers, and calendars used in English language arts.

What are other specific uses of the notebook?
It is our classroom tool for thinking, recording ideas, generating writing ideas, and trying out new voices.

We use it for Quick Writes, two-column notes, WriteAbouts, WriteLikes, criteria charts, class notes, brainstorming, etc.

• It is a place for writers to work through writing problems and brainstorm.
• It is a place where we can go back to reread and/or select pieces for revision.
• It is a place where we can go back to reflect on how we have grown as readers and writers.

How may students set up their own Reader/Writer Notebooks?
Either on the cover or the first page of the notebook, ask students to write their name, class period, and the date they began using their notebook. They might also personalize their notebooks with decorations, pictures, nicknames, etc.

On the top of the second page of the notebook, ask students to write, “Table of Contents.”
On the first line of the Table of Contents page, ask students to write: “date,” “topic,” and “page number.”

Beginning with the Table of Contents, ask students to number the first 30 pages; students may number the rest of the pages when they get to page 30.

Students can now begin using the Reader/Writer Notebooks on page 6 (pages 2-5 will be set aside for the table of contents).

Note: Because the Reader/Writer Notebook is a place for students to think and try out different writing and reading ideas, encourage them to write and collect ideas in their notebooks as a habit of practice that extends beyond the times related to specific assignments for class.
Teacher Resource: Reader/Writer Notebook
Suggested Feedback System

Since the Reader/Writer Notebook is expressive writing (writing for the writer), it is important to lower the students’ level of anxiety relative to grammar and usage errors. Randy Bomer, author of *Time for Meaning: Crafting Literate Lives in Middle and High School* (1995), suggests that teachers also use a Reader/Writer Notebook. This helps to deepen the idea of a writers’ community in the classroom and allows teachers to give students ideas for their notebooks by sharing from time to time from their notebooks. Bomer has also devised a method of feedback based on the following criteria:

1. **Volume**
   A. One entry from each class, including one long selection.
   B. Five for homework, including two long selections.

2. **Variety**

3. **Thoughtfulness**

4. **Habits of Thought—Intention for Writing**
   Specifically:
   A. description
   B. precise dialogue
   C. movement between facts and ideas

5. **Playful Experimentation with Language**
   He then uses a class rotation system, collecting every student’s notebook once every two weeks. He writes brief comments and the score from the class rubric on sticky notes and places them in each notebook.
Pedagogical Rituals and Routines

When we ask students to engage in inquiry units and lessons, we ask them to use the following key Pedagogical Rituals and Routines. These rituals and routines, derived from research on cognitive apprenticeship, are designed to engage all students as learners in collaborative problem solving, writing to learn, making thinking visible, using routines for note-taking/making and tracking learning, text-based norms for interpretive discussions and writings, ongoing assessment and revision, and metacognitive reflection and articulation as regular patterns in learning. These cyclical apprenticeship rituals and routines build community when used with authentic tasks through collaboration, coaching, the sharing of solutions, multiple occasions for practice, and the articulation of reflections (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

The key English language arts pedagogical routines that support students’ learning are:

* Quick Writes composed by individual learners in response to questions and tasks for any and all of the design features of lessons and units;
* pair/trio sharing of individual Quick Writes to establish academic conversations in a safe environment with high accountability to the task and the group members;
* charting of the pair/trio sharing by members of the group to represent the work of the group to the entire class;
* gallery walks for members of the class to read and take notes on the pair/trio work in preparation for a whole class discussion of the task;
* whole group discussions of the questions or tasks that prompted the scaffold of Quick Writes, pair/trio share, charting, and gallery walks to deepen understandings and address lingering questions;
* model of a total performance in order to help learners understand the essence of an activity and develop a mental picture of what the real thing looks like;
* Reader/Writer Notebook in which learners compose Quick Writes, take notes, make notes, compose observations for writings, respond to questions and tasks, and track their learning; and
* StepBacks in which learners metacognitively reflect through Quick Writes, pair/trio shares, charting, gallery walks, discussions, and writing assignments on the content and pedagogy of their learning to develop and track their understandings and habits of thinking.
## Accountable Talk® Moves and Functions in ELA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER MOVE</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO ENSURE PURPOSEFUL, COHERENT, AND PRODUCTIVE GROUP DISCUSSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Marking</td>
<td>Direct attention to the value and importance of a student’s contribution.</td>
<td>“I hear you saying ______. Let’s keep this idea in mind.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Challenging Students</td>
<td>Redirect a question back to the students or use a student’s contributions as a source for a further challenge or inquiry.</td>
<td>“What do YOU think?” “What surprised you about what you just heard about the text’s ______?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Modeling</td>
<td>Make one’s thinking public and demonstrate a total performance in order to help learners understand the essence of the activity and to develop a mental picture of what the real thing looks like.</td>
<td>“Here’s what good readers do…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY TO ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pressing for Accuracy</td>
<td>Hold students accountable for the accuracy, credibility, and clarity of their contributions.</td>
<td>“Where can we find that…?” “What is your basis for that conclusion?” “Who said that?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Building on Prior Knowledge</td>
<td>Tie a current contribution back to knowledge accumulated by the class at a previous time.</td>
<td>“How does this connect…?” “How do we define ______ in this context?” “What else comes to mind given our discussion about ______?”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TO SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY TO RIGOROUS THINKING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Pressing for Reasoning</td>
<td>Elicit evidence and establish what contribution a student’s utterance is intended to make within the group’s larger enterprise.</td>
<td>“Why do you think that…?” “What evidence from the text supports your claim? How does this idea contrast with ______?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Expanding Reasoning</td>
<td>Open up extra time and space in the conversation for student reasoning.</td>
<td>“Take your time… say more.” “Given what we just read and discussed, what would you now say about ______?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Recapping</td>
<td>Make public in a concise, coherent way, the group’s developed, shared understanding of the content or text under discussion.</td>
<td>“What have we discovered?” “So far, we have discussed the following …What else do we need to address?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE LEARNING COMMUNITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Keeping the Channels Open</td>
<td>Ensure that students can hear each other, and remind them that they must hear what others have said.</td>
<td>“Please say back what ______ just said.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Keeping Everyone Together</td>
<td>Ensure that everyone not only heard, but also understood, what a speaker said.</td>
<td>“Do you agree or disagree with what ______ just said? Explain your thinking.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Linking Contributions</td>
<td>Make explicit the relationship between a new contribution and what has gone before.</td>
<td>“Who wants to add on to …?” “What do you notice is missing?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Verifying and Clarifying</td>
<td>Revoice a student’s contribution, thereby helping both speakers and listeners to engage more profitably in the conversation.</td>
<td>“So, are you saying…?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In an inquiry-based discussion, readers discuss their responses to an interpretive question about a text(s). An interpretive question stems from a genuine inquiry about a text, is thought-provoking, and can sustain multiple and varied responses supported by textual evidence.

The purposes of the discussion are to help readers to:

- “try out” their answers and explanations anchored with specific moments from the text;
- accept alternative views/interpretations of the same text (not about reaching consensus or proclaiming a winner);
- rethink what they think about the text; and
- understand that readers can have different, valid interpretations of the same text.

Preparing for the Discussion:

- The discussion lead, usually the teacher, explains inquiry to readers, models some responses, and describes the teacher’s and the students’ roles during the discussion.
- Allow enough time for the discussion given the text complexity.
- The discussion usually follows the second or third reading of a text.
- Individually, students WriteAbout the interpretive question and mine the text for evidence supporting their responses.
- Students are seated so they can see, talk to, and listen to each other.

Features of the Inquiry-Based Discussion:

- A central inquiry/question that can sustain multiple responses related to interpreting the ideas of one text or across texts focuses the talk.
- The facilitator prompts students to “say more” and to anchor their talk in the text.
- Initial student talk is exploratory and can be halting as participants “try out” and modify their answers and explanations.
- Participants return often to cite or reread the text, texts, or their notes.
- There is usually genuine talk related to the question by over 60% of the group.
- Participants listen to each other using the ideas of others in their answers.
- At the end of the discussion, there is time for each participant to jot down what they are thinking about the text given the discussion.
- The teacher takes the long view on students’ discussions, expecting the students to get better as they have more experience.
Facilitator’s Role:

- The teacher facilitator is not a direct teacher or a presenter. The facilitator does not talk too much, does not repeat the talkers’ responses, and does not verbally compliment or negate responses.
- When teachers step out of their role as guides and into their role as participants or teachers, they limit participation (Vygotsky, 1986; Alvermann, et. al., 1996).
- As teacher facilitator, you elicit what readers are thinking and validating with evidence, but you are not telling them your interpretation.
- The teacher facilitator:
  - Uses questions to get others talking;
  - Encourages everyone—not just some—to participate;
  - Presses for clarification and evidence from the text;
  - Keeps the conversation on track during the time frame provided;
  - Encourages readers to listen to and learn from each other by not repeating their responses;
  - Reminds them, only if and when necessary, of the guiding question under discussion;
  - Asks each discussant to validate answers with explanations anchored in evidence from the text;
  - Summarizes a flow of three or four responses or questions further to raise rigor of discussion—not to do the mental work for students;
  - Asks participants to step back and reflect on what they learned from the discussion: Would they now change their first Quick Write response and, if so, what would they change and why?, and
  - Asks the idea tracker to recap the intellectual work of the discussion.
- The facilitator asks readers to step back and reflect on the discussion: If they didn’t participate successfully, what needs to improve and who has responsibility for the improvement?