

Part	To Kill a Mockingbird Plot	Key Characters		Context		
1 1933 - 1935	<p>The reader is introduced to the narrator of the story, Scout Finch. Although the story is recounted by the adult Scout in the form of a retrospective first person narrative it starts when she is six years old. Along with her brother Jem and her friend and sometime neighbour Dill, Scout becomes obsessed with her mysterious and mute neighbour, Boo Radley. The children experience their first snowfall and Miss Maudie's house burns down in a fire. Scout's father, Atticus, agrees to defend a local black man, Tom Robinson, who has been accused of rape. A rabid dog descends on the town and Atticus is forced to shoot it. Jem destroys a neighbour's (Mrs Dubose) flowerbed and is forced to read to her as a consequence of this. Mrs Dubose dies.</p>	Scout Finch	The narrator of the story, she is intelligent, thoughtful and forthright child.	The legacy of the American Civil War and Slavery in the Southern States: The American Civil War was fought in the United States from 1861 to 1865. After a long standing controversy over slavery and state's rights. The Southern States formed a separate union and wanted to protect the system of slavery. This is why some believe that racism is more entrenched in the Southern States.		
		Atticus Finch	Scout's father. He is a lawyer and an advocate for social justice and equality.			
		Jem Finch	Scout's older brother. He believes in equal rights and has a temper at times.			
		2 1935	<p>The children are taken to the church of Maycomb's black community by their housekeeper, Calpurnia. Aunt Alexandra arrives in Maycomb and Dill also returns. A lynch mob from a neighbouring area try to take Tom from jail in order to kill him, but Scout manages to talk down one of the local ringleaders, Mr Cunningham. Tom Robinson's trial starts and the children sit in the black community's gallery. Heck Tate, The Ewells and Tom Robinson all testify during the case. Despite a lack of evidence, the jury find Tom Robinson guilty. Bob Ewell vows revenge on Atticus for making him look like a fool in the courtroom and Jem is upset by the verdict. An innocent man without hope, Tom Robinson attempts to escape from jail and is shot dead. Tensions in the town of Maycomb reach a climax when a drunk Bob Ewell attacks the Finch children. They are saved by a mysterious figure who turns out to be Boo Radley. Atticus thinks Jem is responsible for killing Bob Ewell, but the town's sheriff Heck Tate proves that it was in fact Boo Radley. The novel ends with Boo Radley visiting Scout and Scout taking him back home. At the end of the novel Scout is able to view the town and the events of recent years directly through the eyes of Boo Radley.</p>	Calpurnia	The black housekeeper to the Finch family and a mother figure to the children.	The Wall Street Crash and The Great Depression: The Wall Street financial crash took place in 1929 causing mass unemployment. The novel is set during the Great Depression that followed in the 1930s. This had a huge impact on the poorest members of society and meant that many families struggled with housing and food.
				Dill	Nephew of Scout's neighbour. Had a difficult childhood and sometimes lies.	Racism and the Jim Crow Laws – The Jim Crow laws were created in the 19 th century and they enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 overruled the Jim Crow laws.
				Miss Maudie	A thoughtful and kind neighbour.	
				Boo Radley	A mysterious and mute neighbour.	Scotsboro Boys Trial The Scottsboro Boys were nine African American teenagers accused in Alabama of raping two white women in 1931. The landmark set of legal cases from this incident dealt with racism and the right to a fair trial. The cases included a lynch mob before the suspects had been indicted, all-white juries, rushed trials, and disruptive mobs. It is commonly cited as an example of a miscarriage of justice in the United States legal system.
				Tom Robinson	Well respected member of the black community. He is accused of rape by Mayella Ewell and her family.	
The Ewells	A poor and isolated family with a 'mean streak'. They epitomise a small town racist mentality.					
Key Themes and Ideas				Position of women in 1930s America – Women were marginalised and discriminated against in a number of different ways. For example, they were not given the right to vote until 1920 and until 1936 there was a law that classified birth control information as obscene. The idea of women serving on state juries was ridiculed and they were not allowed to serve on juries in Alabama until 1966.		
Prejudice and racism				1950s – Start of the Civil Rights Movements: – Two events may have shaped the novel, the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott (Rosa Parks) and the 1956 riots at the University of Alabama. The novel was written and published during the most significant and conflict-ridden period of social change in the American South since the civil war.		
Understanding and coming of age		Harper Lee - The novel was published in 1960 and it later won Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. It contains many autobiographical elements relating to Lee's childhood in Monroeville, Alabama. Like Scout, Harper Lee grew up during The Great Depression and her father was an attorney who had defended two black men accused of murder. Dill is modelled on her close childhood friend and fellow author Truman Capote. Harper Lee lived as a reclusive figure after the publication of the novel and it is her only complete and approved publication. In 2015 Lee's early draft of the novel, set when the children are adults, was published. Harper Lee died in 2016.				
Loneliness and Isolation						
Courage						
Innocence						
Hypocrisy						
Social Inequality						
Southern Gothic						