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PERFORMING ARTS SOCIETY OF ACADIANA

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STUDENT GUIDE

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

MONDAY
OCTOBER 19
2009

// ABOUT // // //

The Montana Repertory Theatre

The Montana Repertory Theatre is one of the oldest and most respected touring companies in the country, established in 1968 to provide professional theatre to surrounding communities at an affordable cost. Today, their mission remains to tell the great stories of our world, enlightening, developing and celebrating the human spirit in an ever-expanding community.

Montana Rep assembles principal actors, directors, and designers with prestigious credits and awards from the worlds of Broadway, national and international tours, film and television. Touring nationally since 1996, Montana Rep is proud to present the very best of the American theatre tradition, continuing to examine the heart of every American character through the medium of live theatre

“With *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we return to a story we first encountered with a joy over a decade ago. We are delighted to reexamine this timeless tale in a new century, for a new generation of theatergoers.”

— GREG JOHNSON,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



// ABOUT // // //

The Performance

To Kill a Mockingbird, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, is unquestionably an American classic, bringing to life the Depression-era inhabitants of a small southern town. Adapted for the theatre by Horton Foote, the story of *To Kill a Mockingbird* speaks deeply and eloquently of human nature and human values, bringing to light issues of racism and prejudice in a context that transcends the story's individuals and their actions and impacts us all today.

The action is set in the 1930s in the fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama, where Atticus Finch, an attorney and widowed father of two young children, stands against his fellow townspeople by defending a young black man falsely accused of raping a white woman. Through every step and with every word, Atticus, assuming the responsibility of a true American hero, instills in his children the traditional moral values of respect for others, honesty, courage, integrity and above all responsibility for one's actions.

Born in a time when America wobbled on social change, effected by the paralyzing economy of the Great Depression and the brutal segregation of African-Americans in a Jim Crow south, Harper Lee gave birth to a novel whose powerful

theme spoke to many in the 1960s: that love can overcome hatred, and that each person carries some inner beauty, some fragile mockingbird's song that the rest of us need to hear.

PLOT OVERVIEW

To Kill a Mockingbird opens with an adult Scout (Jean Louise) Finch reminiscing about her childhood. Through Scout's memories, the reader is transported into the world of a small southern town in the 1930s, and Scout's story begins, a series of events occurring throughout three years of her childhood.



About the Characters in the play

SCOUT (JEAN LOUISE) FINCH is Atticus' daughter, a lively, intelligent "tomboy," who is almost six years old when the story begins. Scout is the narrator of the novel and grows from a fiery child into a young girl who is able to look at things from another person's point of view.

ATTICUS FINCH is a widower around fifty years old, rearing his two young children in Maycomb, Alabama, where he works as an attorney. Atticus is appointed to defend a black man who is falsely accused of raping a white woman. He demonstrates restraint and courage when confronted with the hypocrisy and antagonism of his fellow townspeople.

JEM (JEREMY) FINCH is Atticus' son and Scout's older brother. Jem has a tranquil disposition and his actions closely resemble Atticus' reserved behavior. He grows to be a sensitive, responsible adolescent.

CALPURNIA (CAL) is the black cook and housekeeper for the Finches, who assists in rearing Scout and Jem.

TOM ROBINSON is the black man accused of raping Mayella Ewell. Tom has a wife and children and lives a good, honest life in Maycomb.

HECK TATE is the sheriff of Maycomb County.

BOB EWELL is a poor farmer who makes no attempt to live a life of dignity, abusing his children and spending his state relief checks on alcohol.

MAYELLA EWELL is Bob Ewell's 19-year old daughter who accuses Tom Robinson of rape.

MR. GILMER is the prosecuting attorney.

JUDGE TAYLOR appoints Atticus to defend Tom Robinson and presides over his trial.

MISS MAUDIE ATKINSON is the children's friend, mentor and favorite neighbor. Maudie supports Atticus' decision to defend Tom Robinson.

REVEREND SYKES is a black minister and the pastor of Tom Robinson's church.



Scout Finch lives with her brother, Jem, and their widowed father, Atticus, in the sleepy Alabama town of Maycomb. Maycomb is suffering through the Great Depression, but Atticus is a prominent lawyer and the Finch family is reasonably well off in comparison to the rest of society. One summer, Jem and Scout befriend a boy named Dill, who has come to live in their neighborhood for the summer, and the trio acts out stories together. Eventually, Dill becomes fascinated with the spooky house on their street called the Radley Place. The house is owned by Mr. Nathan Radley, whose brother, Arthur (nicknamed Boo), has lived there for years without venturing outside.

Scout goes to school for the first time that fall and detests it. She and Jem also explore the mystery of Boo Radley and find gifts apparently left for them in a knothole of a tree on the Radley property. Dill returns the following summer, and he, Scout, and Jem begin to act out the story of Boo Radley. Atticus puts a stop to their antics, urging the children to try to see life from another person's perspective before making judgments. But, on Dill's last night in Maycomb for the summer, the three sneak onto the Radley property, where Nathan Radley shoots at them. Jem loses his pants in the escape. When he returns for them, he finds them mended and hung over the fence.



The next winter, Jem and Scout find more presents in the tree, presumably left by the mysterious Boo. Nathan Radley eventually plugs the knothole with cement.

Shortly thereafter, a fire breaks out in another neighbor's house, and during the fire someone slips a blanket on Scout's shoulders as she watches the blaze. Convinced that Boo did it, Jem tells Atticus about the mended pants and the presents.

To the dismay of Maycomb's racist white community, Atticus agrees to defend a black man named Tom Robinson, who has been accused of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell. Because of Atticus's decision, Jem and Scout are subjected to abuse from other children, even when they celebrate Christmas at the family compound on Finch's Landing. Calpurnia, the Finches' black cook, takes them to the local black church, where the warm and close-knit community largely embraces the children.

Tom Robinson's trial begins, and when the accused man



is placed in the local jail, a mob gathers to lynch him. Atticus faces the mob down the night before the trial. Jem and Scout, who have sneaked out of the house, soon join him. Scout recognizes one of the men, and her polite questioning about his son shames him into dispersing the mob.

At the trial itself, the children sit in the "colored balcony" with the town's black citizens. Atticus provides clear evidence that the accusers,



Mayella Ewell and her father, Bob, are lying: in fact, Mayella propositioned Tom Robinson, was caught by her father, and then accused Tom of rape to cover her shame and guilt. Atticus provides impressive evidence that the marks on Mayella's face are from wounds that her father inflicted; upon discovering her with Tom, he beat her. Yet, despite the significant evidence pointing to Tom's innocence, the all-white jury convicts him. The innocent Tom later tries to escape from prison and is shot to death. In the aftermath of the trial, Jem's faith in justice



is badly shaken, and he lapses into hopelessness and doubt.

Despite the verdict, Bob Ewell feels that Atticus and the judge have made a fool out of him, and he

vows revenge. He threatens Tom Robinson's widow, tries to break into the judge's house, and finally attacks Jem and Scout as they walk home from a Halloween party. Boo Radley intervenes, however, saving the children and stabbing Ewell fatally during the struggle. Boo carries the wounded Jem back to Atticus's house, where the sheriff, in order to protect Boo, insists that Ewell tripped over a tree root and fell on his own knife. After sitting with Scout for a while, Boo disappears once more into the Radley house.



Later, Scout feels as though she can finally imagine what life is like for Boo.

He has become a human being to her at last. With this realization, Scout embraces her father's advice to practice sympathy and understanding and demonstrates that her experiences with hatred and prejudice will not tarnish her faith in human goodness. ■

All the World's a Stage

Think you might want to be an actor?

Then consider this advice from William Shakespeare, a multi-tasking playwright/actor/director, which is still relevant even though it is 400 years old. Although Shakespeare set down his code for actors in Act III, Scene 2 of the play Hamlet, the rules given here are stated in simple language.

- **NEVER turn your back to the audience. If the audience can't see your facial expressions and body language, they won't understand your character.**
- **Speak loudly and clearly, and stick to what is written in the script.**
- **Exaggerate facial expressions slightly – a stage is not a movie screen, and people in the back row need to see things, too.**
- **Keep it real. Many directors say “Remember to act like a human being” as a way of encouraging their actors to avoid unnecessary movements or too-dramatic displays of emotion. The audience should believe you ARE your character, not just someone pretending to be that character.**
- **Become your character. Be able to show, not tell, the audience their age, social status, and likes and dislikes by the way you move your body and use your voice.**
- **Learn to do nothing effectively. A good actor knows that they must appear to be part of a scene even when they are not speaking. They will develop ways of remaining active but not taking attention away from the others on the stage.**
- **Avoid being a scene-stealer, or an actor who makes up things to do that are NOT in the script simply to get the audience's attention.**

Also, remember that being an actor is not always a glamorous job. Before an actor gets to walk down the red carpet with flashbulbs popping, he or she must study their craft just like a carpenter, hairstylist, computer technician, or lawyer would. Many hopeful actors earn theater degrees in college, where they take part in many plays and participate in “workshops” in which they interpret the rules for acting and critique performances. Every actor must compile a resume, which lists special skills (like dancing or singing) and performance experience (such as dates of plays, names of characters portrayed, etc.). In addition, an actor's resume tells the height, weight, hair color, and eye color of an actor. Resumes are accompanied by headshots, which are photos taken to show a detailed study of the actor's face. While people in many other

professions go to interviews when they hope to get jobs, actors go to auditions, where they perform scenes and individual pieces called monologues for directors. A director may also have an actor engage in improvisational exercises as a way of judging their performance skills.

Finally, actors have to gain experience before they can expect fame or even job security. For instance, a Montana Repertory Theatre actor may gain experience in local productions, as part of a touring company, or in other company's productions. In order to take a part in one of the Rep's premier touring productions, any potential theatre company member must audition. Each year, national tryouts and testings are held to assemble a team of

actors, directors, and designers with prestigious credits including Broadway, Off-Broadway, national tours of a Broadway show and major regional theatre. Principal roles are played by solely by actors whose past credits have included Broadway runs and national tours; major motion pictures; the Grand Ole Opry; and productions by the nation's leading regional theatres. Students at the University of Montana and other, less experienced actors fill the other roles. A mentorship system exists where the key actors guide, supervise, and train the students and younger company members.

Even after actors are hired or becomes part of a group like Montana Repertory Theatre, their work is never done. Professional actors will often continue taking acting lessons from professional teachers. They must learn lines, be fitted for costumes, rehearse for performances and audition for new jobs. Actors must do exercises to keep their voices flexible and expressive, and many engage in some form of exercise to keep their bodies limber for performances. Sometimes, a role might require an actor to change their physical appearance, either by training their body or by applying stage makeup. An actor's day may not be typical, but it is work all the same.

If you are an actor looking for a way to start out, consider this. Many professional theaters sponsor classes and training programs.

There are actually many options for a young actor looking for training. A community theater in your area may offer open auditions. Or, consider these websites:

- UL Lafayette's Performing Arts homepage, which lists expectations for student actors, as well as information about college-level programming. UL sometimes offers student acting workshops. Reach the PFAR at http://pfar.louisiana.edu/degree_programs.html
- A nationwide index of theater-training summer camps can be found at http://www.mysummercamps.com/camps/Arts_Camps/Theater/index.html
- UL Lafayette's Career Services Center: “What do I do with a degree in Theater?” is an interesting read. Check it out at <http://careerservices.louisiana.edu/students/majors/html/theater.htm>

11 TERMS

for Theatre Lovers

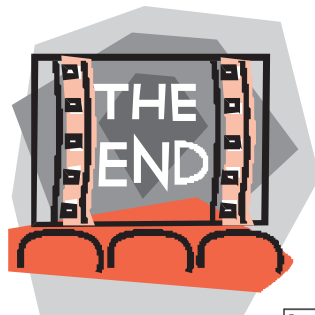
Master this theatre lingo and you can talk about plays like a pro. Also, use this terminology when it comes time to interpret plays and look for clues as to what the director and others are trying to convey.

- ACT:** large unit of a play that consists of several scenes. Sometimes a break in acts indicates the passage of time in the play. Sets are often changed between acts.
- ACTORS:** individuals who take the parts of characters in the play and appear as them on the stage
- CAST OF CHARACTERS OR DRAMATIC PERSONAE:** list of all characters in the play that often provides a brief description or significant information about characters.
- HAND PROPS:** small items such as telephones, books, or weapons that actors can hold and interact with during a scene
- LIGHTING CUES:** directions for raising, dimming or turning off the lights during a scene. Lighting is often used to suggest time of day or to enhance the mood of the play.
- PROLOGUE:** Spoken introduction to work that provides background information about characters, conflicts and setting of play
- PROPS:** Large items (such as furniture) that act as part of a set. These can be used to make a setting more real or to give actors something to interact with (chairs can be knocked over, bed covers turned down, etc.)
- SCENE:** small division of a play; several scenes put together form an act
- SET:** large backdrop used to suggest setting (place and time)
- SOUND EFFECTS:** notes in play that call for thunder and lighting, music, etc.
- STAGE DIRECTIONS:** notes included in a script that tell actors when to enter, where to stand, what emotions to use, etc.

Circle your answer: Maybe there should be an instructional television show called "What Not to Do," but until then, remember this: Theater behavior falls somewhere in between that expected for a church and a movie theater. If you wouldn't do it in one of the above, don't do it here. Apply that rule to the principle tips listed below. Five are DO's and five are DON'Ts. Determine which are which, label them in the boxes provided, and you will always be red carpet ready.

Do's & Don'ts OF GOOD THEATER BEHAVIOR

THEATER ETIQUETTE	DO	DON'T	1. Sit in your assigned seat for the entire performance. Seating is assigned in theaters for a number of reasons; staying your seat is keeps things organized, prevents disruptions, and stops you from accidentally taking the place reserved for someone else.
	DO	DON'T	2. Turn your cell phone off. Everyone else in the theater came to hear the performers and the music – not your ringtone.
	DO	DON'T	3. Shout rude things at the performers. Treat them as you would want to be treated if you were onstage.
	DO	DON'T	4. Eat or drink in the theater unless refreshments are sold there. This is disrespectful to the performers and the other patrons. Would you want to sit next to someone making noise with their gum and wrappers and potato chip bags?
	DO	DON'T	5. Clap at the end of an act, a scene, after a wonderful moment called a "show-stopper", or at the end of a production. If you are unsure, clap when others do.
	DO	DON'T	6. Disturb those around you (even if you are bored).
	DO	DON'T	7. Arrive on time. This will keep you from missing anything or from causing others to do so.
	DO	DON'T	8. Sing along at an opera or musical...after all, everyone else came to hear the performers.
	DO	DON'T	9. Forget to enjoy yourself and learn new things. That's why you came.
	DO	DON'T	10. Remain in your seat until intermission. Even bathroom breaks should be avoided until this time.



Good Theater Behavior:

DO YOU KNOW THE DO'S AND DON'TS?



- ACROSS**
- Clap at the end of a _____.
 - Good theater behavior falls between that expected for a _____ and for a movie theater.
 - Always remember to _____ new things.
 - Clap after an especially amazing part in the play called a "show-_____."
 - The only time you should leave your _____ is during intermission.
 - Your _____ should always be turned off.
- DOWN**
- _____ on time.
 - If you are unsure of when to clap, clap when _____ do.
 - Clap at the end of a _____.
 - Never eat or _____ unless refreshments are sold in the theater.
 - Pay attention during the production. Even if you are not interested, sit _____ to avoid disturbing others.
 - Always remember to _____ yourself.
 - Do not _____ along at an opera or musical.

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TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

MONDAY
OCTOBER 19
10:30 AM

EVENING PERFORMANCE

SUNDAY
OCTOBER 18
7:30 PM

AT THE HEYMANN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

- ANSWERS TO "Good Theater Behavior"**
- Across**
- act
 - church
 - learn
 - stopper
 - seat
 - cellphone
- Down**
- arrive
 - others
 - scene
 - drink
 - quietly
 - enjoy
 - sing
- ANSWERS TO "DO'S & DON'TS"**
- Do
 - Do
 - Don't
 - Don't
 - Do
 - Do
 - Do
 - Do
 - Do
 - Do

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ADD SOME DRAMA

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