

HEC-TV Live! Presents
Of Monroeville and Mockingbirds, Part 1: Setting and Character

Date: December 11, 2008

Times: 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. CDT or 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. CDT

Grade Levels: 7-10

Cost: NO CHARGE

Abstract:

Bring the setting and characters of Harper Lee's classic novel "To Kill A Mockingbird" to life as you learn from individuals who grew up with the author and still live in Monroeville today and also interact with the director and actors involved in a new theatrical production of the novel.

Program Description:

What was it like to grow up in Monroeville, Alabama with Harper Lee? How did the town influence the setting and characters for her famous novel? Bring the setting and characters of Harper Lee's classic novel "To Kill A Mockingbird" to life as you learn from individuals who grew up with the author and still live in Monroeville today and also interact with the director and actors involved in a new theatrical production of the novel. Take a virtual tour of Ms. Lee's hometown of Monroeville, Alabama. Learn of the town's history and culture. Find out about her family and the individuals of the town whose experiences are reflected in the novel. Have your students read the book this year? Will you be reading it later? Are you interested in them learning more about the town that greatly influenced the writing of this modern classic? If so, then we hope you can join us for one of our two programs. Cost for the program is FREE.

Program Objectives:

1. The participant will explore the concept of "setting" in a novel and offer their ideas on how the author's use of setting influences their reaction as a reader.
2. The participant will explore the development of "character" in a novel and offer their ideas on how the author's use of character influences their reaction as a reader.
3. The participant will engage in a discussion about setting and character with theatrical professionals and explore what it takes to translate those concepts from the page to the stage.

Program Format:

The videoconference program will consist of the following segments.

1. Welcome and Introduction—Student groups and experts will be introduced and welcomed to the program.
2. The Setting for the Novel—Students will take a virtual tour of Harper Lee's hometown in Monroeville, Alabama and compare it to their understanding of the fictional town of Maycomb in the novel. Students will learn from individuals who live in the town today and others who grew up with the author. Images of the town from the 1930's will be included as well as video of the town and courthouse today.

3. The Characters of the Novel—Students will learn about Harper Lee as a young girl in Monroeville and find out about her family and other individuals she interacted with as she grew up in the town. How did those individuals come to life in the novel? What are the similarities and differences between them? How do you go about bringing those characters to life as you perform a play? We'll explore these questions and more as students interact with the director and actors of a new theatrical production of the novel and also learn from individuals who grew up with the author.

4. Closing Segment--Including summary of topics discussed and final questions from students.

Featured National Standards:

English/Language Arts

Standards Developed by International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English

2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic) of human experience.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, and graphics).

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Featured State Standards (Missouri):

Schools from across the country are invited to join in the program. Missouri state standards are provided for Missouri schools since partial funding for this program comes from various Missouri organizations.

Communication Arts Grade Level Expectations

1H: Apply post-reading skills to comprehend and interpret text

- question to clarify
- reflect
- analyze
- draw conclusions
- summarize
- paraphrase

1I Compare, contrast, analyze and evaluate connections between

- information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works
- text ideas and own experiences
- text ideas and the world by analyzing the relationship between literature and its historical period and culture

2C Use details from text to analyze character, plot, setting, point of view and development of theme

Participant Preparation:

1. Participants should come to the program with an interest in and some degree of familiarity with the story of “To Kill A Mockingbird.” Participants do not need to have completed their reading of the novel.
2. Participants should utilize preparatory materials provided for the program and other resources of their own to better understand the context of the program’s subject and to think in advance of questions they wish to ask the experts. Any questions determined in advance, can be e-mailed to us prior to the program at live@hectv.org.
3. Participants should have pencil and paper ready to use during the program to jot down ideas and additional questions as they come to mind.

Pre-Program Activity Suggestions:

1. Have students draw a map or diagram of the town of Macomb, Alabama as described in the novel. Identify important locations such as the courthouse, the Lee home, neighbor’s houses, the school, the tree, etc. Have students bring this drawing with them to the program to compare their vision of the setting with the layout of Harper Lee’s hometown of Monroeville, Alabama.
2. Have students select a character of the novel they identify with and would like to know more about. Create a short description of that character in terms of their physical appearance and psychological make-up. What questions would they like to ask the actors about bringing this character to life? Write those questions out and bring them to the program to ask during the videoconference.
3. Have students learn more about the story of “To Kill A Mockingbird” via the excellent resources provided by the National Endowment of the Arts Big Read project at <http://www.neabigread.org/books/mockingbird/>.
4. View the DVD “A Teacher’s View of ‘To Kill A Mockingbird’ that will be sent to you once you have enrolled for the program.

Post-Program Activity Suggestions:

1. Have each student journal about how their experience in the videoconference has influenced their ideas about the setting of the novel, the characters in the novel, and/or the author of the novel. What new things have they learned? What new questions do they have? What new

insights into the novel have they developed? How might it have influenced what they think it means to be a writer and how to bring a story to life that they'd like to put down on paper?

2. If they have not yet completed reading the novel, have students complete reading the novel and notice when information and insights they have learned through the videoconference influence their understanding and/or appreciation of the novel. Have them record these insights in a student journal, and/or share them with peers or with the class as a whole.

Vocabulary:

Setting—The setting of a story includes the time, location and circumstances in which it takes place. Broadly speaking, the setting provides the main backdrop for the story.