

Alternative Assessment

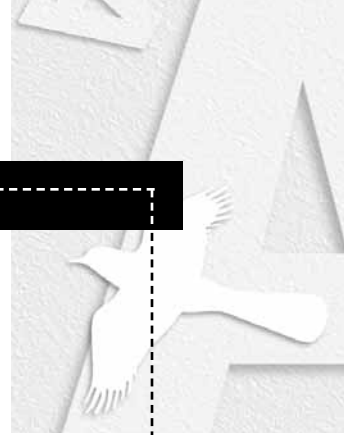
for

To Kill a Mockingbird



Perfection Learning

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Alternative Assessment for Literature

The suggestions in this teacher resource will help you put the latest research on assessment into practice. Current research suggests that

- assessing thinking is as important as measuring recall
- clear expectations improve performance
- students are motivated by real-world tasks

Performance-Based Assessment

The most effective nontraditional assessments are performance-based: They require students to create an answer or product that demonstrates their knowledge or skills by

- using knowledge in new ways
- engaging in projects that are worth doing in themselves
- completing meaningful assessments based on real-world tasks

Suggestions for projects related to the featured title are found on pages 12–15. These varied activities are designed to appeal to different learning styles. The chart on page 19 indicates how different types of activities relate to the theory of multiple intelligences. You can also use the chart to identify activities suited to auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners.

Using *Alternative Assessment for Literature*

■ *Prereading Questions*

You can introduce major themes and issues of the book with the Prereading Questions. Students can answer selected questions individually or in small groups before they

begin the book. After reading, students might see if their ideas and feelings have changed. You can also encourage students to discuss these questions at home.

■ *During-Reading Questions*

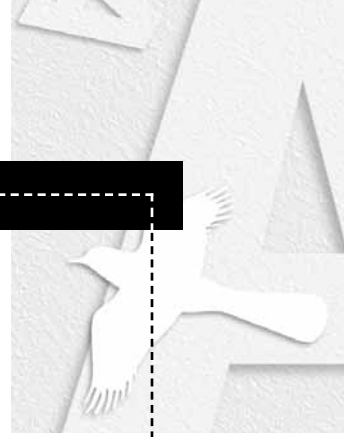
Personal connections to the book can be explored with the During-Reading Questions. Your students might respond to these questions in their journals. You can also use the questions as discussion topics for small groups or the entire class.

■ *Post-Reading Interview*

Questions in the Post-Reading Interview can serve as the basis for a dialogue between peers or a conference between student and teacher. Students' reactions to and questions about their reading can be used to lay the groundwork for performance-based projects.

■ *Project Prospectus*

Students can use the Project Prospectus to plan their final projects and demonstrations. You might approve the prospectus before students begin their projects. You can also require that the prospectus be submitted as part of the final project.



■ **Project Suggestions**

The activities suggested on pages 12–15 have been written by teachers for teachers. They can be used alone or with other methods of evaluation. For example, you might use an objective test to measure recall and a performance-based project to assess students' ability to apply their learning.

Two kinds of projects are suggested. Short-term projects are designed to be completed within one to three class periods. Long-term projects will require more than three class periods.

■ **Criteria and Standards for Evaluation**

Giving students the standards and criteria you will use to evaluate their work lets them know your expectations. The evaluation grid on page 16 can be distributed as students begin their projects. You can also develop your own grid, using the reproducible form on page 17. Both reproducible grids can be used by the teacher and the audience.

These forms are designed to reflect several principles of authentic assessment.

- People perform better when they know what is expected of them.
- Students should understand what they need to do to improve.
- Evaluators should consider both product and process.

You can easily adapt the forms to your classroom. For example, you might encourage students to develop the standards and criteria. You can also collect examples of student work to provide models for each

criterion. You might determine grades by assigning point values to each rating. For example, on a scale with five criteria, a *High* rating for one criterion might earn 5 points. The total number of points might be equivalent to a letter grade; for example, 20–25 points might equal an *A*.

Recommended Resources

These resources contain more information for alternative assessment.

- Belanca, James et al., *Multiple Assessments for Multiple Intelligences*, IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc., Palatine, Illinois, 1994.
- Campbell Hill, Bonnie and Cynthia A. Ruptic, *Practical Aspects of Alternative Assessment: Putting the Pieces Together*, Christopher-Gordon, Norwood, Maine, 1993.
- Herman, Joan L. et al., *A Practical Guide to Alternative Assessment*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia, 1992.
- Marzano, Robert J., "Lessons from the Field About Outcome-Based Performance Assessments," *Educational Leadership*, March 1994, pp. 44–50.
- National Education Goals Panel, *Handbook for Local Goals Reports*, Publication Number 93–01. *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1993.
- Rudner, Lawrence M. and Carol Boston, "Performance Assessment," *ERIC Review*, Winter 1994, pp. 2–12.
- Schneider, Sandra, "Designing an Authentic Assessment," *Educational Leadership*, April 1993, pp. 32–35.
- Wiggins, Grant, "The Case for Authentic Assessment," *ERIC Digest Series*, EDO TM-90-10, ED 328 611.
- "Creating Tests Worth Taking," *Educational Leadership*, May 1992, pp. 26–33.

Purpose Explain what you want to demonstrate by completing this project, and show how your project relates to the book.

Audience Include a brief description of who your audience will be, what its members are likely to know about your subject, how you plan to help them understand your project, and how you plan to capture their interest.

Project description Give a brief overview of the content and format of your project.

Materials/resources needed Summarize any equipment and materials you will need and explain where you will get them. Also list any resources you plan to use, such as books and people to interview.

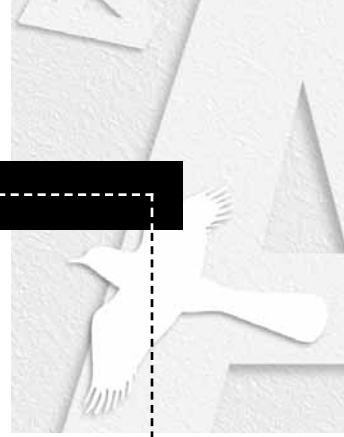
Points to consider in project evaluation What are the main ideas you are trying to communicate in your project? Identify the criteria that are most important for evaluating your project.

Assessment Projects

Short-Term Project Suggestions

1. Express your ideas about the meaning of the book's title in a poem, poster, or song.
2. Write an *obituary* for Atticus, Tom Robinson, or Bob Ewell. An *obituary* is a notice of someone's death; it usually includes a brief summary of the person's life and accomplishments.
3. Retell a memorable incident from your childhood. Decide whether you will use a child's or an adult's voice. Concentrate on the significance of the events as you retell them. Also, consider using dialogue in your biographical account.
4. Create the front page of the Maycomb weekly newspaper during Tom Robinson's trial. Include coverage of the trial and other articles that reflect the attitudes and lifestyle of the townspeople.
5. Lee describes several places in Maycomb, such as the Radley house and the courtroom. Make a map of Maycomb, or create a drawing or model of one specific location.
6. Illustrate the personality of one of the main characters in the book. You might combine quotations from the novel with a portrait of the character you choose. You could also take a different approach by showing how Maycomb and its residents influenced this person.
7. With a partner, conduct a Siskel-and-Ebert style review of the novel. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Conclude with your opinion—thumbs up or thumbs down—of the novel.
8. Compare an incident in *To Kill a Mockingbird* with a current event. You might explain the similarities in an essay or show them in a poster.
9. Write an editorial or design a poster that helps people overcome the "disease" of prejudice.
10. Present a dramatic monologue based on a passage from the novel. You may need to summarize or otherwise adapt parts of the passage so that it can be presented by a single actor. Your presentation should begin with a brief explanation of why you chose this passage and how it fits into the novel.
11. Write an original dialogue that includes at least one character from the book. Your conversation could be between two of the main characters, or between one or more characters and a talk-show host.
12. Many characters in the novel take a stand for something they believe in. Choose one of those characters and write three journal entries that describe that person's decision and its consequences.

continued



Assessment Projects continued

13. Create an editorial cartoon that expresses your opinion about an issue in the book.
14. Design a new front and back cover for *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Include a brief overview of the book and your opinion about its meaning on the back cover.
15. Create a diagram or visual organizer that shows the main events in the novel and the relationships among them.
16. Suppose that you are working with a film crew on a new movie of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Prepare written or oral directions for the stunt men who will reenact Bob Ewell's attack on the children.
17. Write the script for a television news-magazine feature on the trial of Tom Robinson. You might model your script on *60 Minutes* or *20/20*.
18. Develop an original theme song for a film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
19. In Chapter 3, Atticus tells Scout, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." Make a collection of the wise sayings of Atticus Finch. You might want to illustrate your sayings.
20. View the movie *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Then write a report comparing and contrasting the movie to the book. Were any scenes changed or deleted? Did the characters in the movie match your image of them from the book? Is one version more dramatic or emotional than the other? Which version do you prefer, and why?

Long-Term Project Suggestions

21. Turn the trial into a one-act play or Readers Theatre to be performed by your class. Develop a script and assign parts. Decide whether you will need props and sound effects. Finally, videotape your drama or present it to an audience.
22. Tom Robinson tries to escape because he believes that the justice system will never treat him fairly. Do statistics about how African-Americans were sentenced in the 1930s support his belief? How do sentencing trends then compare with sentencing trends now? Present your findings in a chart or spreadsheet.
23. Imagine that you are a staff artist for the Maycomb paper. Create a series of drawings of the trial and events that follow it for your paper.

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