Congratulations on your choice to enroll in Honors English 10 for the 2026-2027 school year!

Because education is a year-round endeavor, for your course of study, you will need to read **Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*** over the summer. You are encouraged to purchase your own novel so that you may annotate at will, but you are also welcome to check one out from the school library for summer use. Upon your return in the fall, we will continue our in-depth analysis of literature based on the themes presented throughout the novel. Thus, as you read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, you should be cognizant of the following themes:

1) Prejudice
2) Sense of Family/Community
3) Fear vs Bravery
4) Moral Complexity
5) Loss of Innocence
6) Private vs. Public Identity

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at kelsey.white@sno.wednet.edu.

By the first day of school, you will need to have read the required text AND completed a dialectical journal of your reading.

Required Text: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
Full text online: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
Audiobook online: https://youtu.be/XODFEs8Gspk?si=ZZgSyKBGBe-VeUdP

From the Back Cover

Harper Lee's Pulitzer prize-winning masterwork of honor and injustice in the deep south—and the heroism of one man in the face of blind and violent hatred.

One of the best-loved stories of all time, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been translated into more than forty languages, sold more than forty million copies worldwide, served as the basis for an enormously popular motion picture, and was voted one of the best novels of the twentieth century by librarians across the country. A gripping, heart-wrenching, and wholly remarkable tale of coming-of-age in a South poisoned by virulent prejudice, it views a world of great beauty and savage inequities through the eyes of a young girl, as her father—a crusading local lawyer—risks everything to defend a black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime.

About the Author

Harper Lee was born in 1926 in Monroeville, Alabama. She is the author of the acclaimed *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman*, which became a phenomenal #1 *New York Times* bestseller when it was published in July 2015. Ms. Lee received the Pulitzer Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and numerous other literary awards and honors. She died on February 19, 2016.

About the Controversy

In 1961, the book won Lee the Pulitzer Prize and the next year was adapted into an Academy Award-winning film. It has since sold more than 40 million copies. **The book has been as controversial as it has been popular.** Attempts to ban it from schools began in Ohio in 1963 and continue today. When that happens, defenders and

detractors alike rise up to debate its place in our classrooms. While there are many reasons for these debates, perhaps the most prominent reason is for unabashed use of the N-word. Throughout the novel, you will read the N-word repeatedly. In this class, we **will not** say this word, instead using the euphemism "N-word," and we will not write this word, instead writing "N-word" or "N*****." While we hope you already know why, we want to provide some additional background for this decision. In the TEDTalk called "Why it's so hard to talk about the N-word" by Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor, the speaker offers explanation to the power of the word and the importance of understanding the history and hurt of the word as it has been used historically and today. It approaches the reason why it's included in school literature and how we can appropriately respond when it comes up. Here is a link to the video: https://youtu.be/CVPl8jRaAqM?si=tE5jKfkmc8YyjODP

MLA Formatted Citation: Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. HarperPerennial, 2001

Dialectical Journal

As you read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, you will need to complete a dialectical journal (two-column notes) in which you will discuss the aforementioned themes throughout the novel. You must include **a minimum of ten entries/quotations** in your journal. These ten quotations should represent each theme at least one time (that is to say, 6 themes x 1 quotation each = 6 entries), and the remaining four entries will represent a second entry for four of the six listed themes for a total of ten entries. The objective is to have a conversation both with the text and with yourself.

Here are some definitions that might help:

Dialectical: The art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer (dictionary.com).

Dialectical Journal: A written conversation with yourself about a piece of literature.

Prejudice: a preconceived opinion about something that is not based on reason, factual evidence, or personal experience

Sense of Family/Community: an individual's perception, understanding, attitude, and feeling about the environment to which he/she belongs and his/her relationship to it and to others' participation; sense of belonging (or lack thereof)

Fear vs. Bravery: possessing the personal fortitude to do what's right in the face of adversity; a code of conduct; the provision of service to another; understanding the root of one's fear and overcoming it

Moral Complexity: the concept that a person cannot be identified as "good" or "bad"; rather, a person's morality has many layers and can change to suit different situations

Loss of Innocence: the journey away from childhood naivety toward adult realities

Private vs. Public Identity: the difference between how an individual sees themselves in their own private settings versus how they present themselves to others in public settings; this difference is often grounded in the disconnect between personal beliefs/values and the need to conform to societal expectations

How Your Dialectical Journal Should be Formatted

- Label the top of each journal page with the THEME being discussed and its definition (provided for you above). You will have a minimum of six pages as there are six central themes you will be exploring. You may list more than one example of a theme on each page.
- Label the left side of each journal page "TE – Textual Evidence" and label the right side of each journal page "CM – Commentary."
- The "TE" side is where you record **examples of the theme**: paraphrase, quotations, notes, direct quotes, summaries, evidence, support, images, etc. from the book. Always accompany TE with MLA-formatted page numbers (see example below).
- The "CM" side is where you record corresponding **analysis**: reactions, ideas, opinions, comments, inferences, insights, questions, etc. from your head. This is where your discussion will take place. **Be sure to identify the context of the quotation**. You will also want to discuss how each quotation is demonstrative of the given theme and how your selected quotation adds to the deeper meaning of the story.
- Your dialectical journal should be typed and in MLA format complete with MLA formatted in-text citations. An example has been provided below. You are welcome to copy and paste the table into your own document for formatting purposes.

Prejudice: a preconceived opinion about something that is not based on reason, factual evidence, or personal experience

Textual Evidence	Commentary
"Because-he-is-trash, that's why you can't play with him" (Lee 225).	At this point in the novel, Aunt Alexandra insists that Scout not play with Walter Cunningham, a poor, dirty classmate of Scout's who can't afford lunch at school and who accidentally gets Scout in trouble. This quote is Aunt Alexandra's response when Scout questions why she cannot play with Walter. By identifying Walter Cunningham (and his family) as "trash," Aunt Alexandra verbalizes her preconceived opinion about his habits and traits based on his social status without actually taking into consideration his personal values or seeing him as an individual—all because he comes from a poor family.
Your first TE will go here…	Your first CM will go here…
Your next TE will go here…	Your next CM will go here…

How to Choose Quotations for Your Dialectical Journal

Select quotations: Choose at least ten quotations that stand out in the text for their effect; find quotes that are significant to the theme of the work; select quotes that affect you as a reader.
Identify: Note the context of the quotation (Where/when does it appear in the text? What is happening in the text at the time of your selected quote?)
Understand: Take some time to consider each quotation's relevance to both the section of the work in which it is found and its relevance to the work as a whole.

How Your Dialectical Journal Will Be Assessed

You will submit your dialectical journal immediately upon our return to campus. Be prepared to submit a digital copy on the first day of school. You will also need to be prepared to take a reading quiz upon your return.

Here are the guidelines for scoring your dialectical journal:

A = Detailed, meaningful passages, plot and quote selections; thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text; includes comments about theme and how the theme contributes to the meaning of the text; raises many thought-provoking, insightful observations; coverage of text is complete and thorough; journal is neat, organized and readable; student has followed ALL directions in the creation/organization of the journal.

B = Less detailed, but good selections; some intelligent commentary about the text; includes some comments about theme but less about how the theme contributes to the meaning of the text; raises some thought-provoking, insightful observations; coverage of text is complete and thorough; journal is neat, organized and readable; student has followed ALL directions in the creation/organization of the journal.

C = A few good details about the text; most of the commentary is vague, unsupported or plot summary/paraphrase; some listing of theme, but perhaps inadequate discussion; raises few or obvious observations; addresses most of the reading assignment, but not very thoroughly; journal is relatively neat; student has perhaps not followed all directions in organizing and/or formatting the journal.

D = Minimal good details from the text; all notes are plot summary or paraphrase; few examples of theme, virtually no discussion on meaning; no good observations; limited coverage of text/too short; did not follow directions; difficult to read/follow.

F = No dialectical journal completed on day collected or submission contains plagiarism and/or AI-generated material.

As you read, you will need to think outside the proverbial box, but the themes are there. We promise! Upon your return in the fall, your identification and analysis of these themes will be the basis upon which our discussions will begin.

Happy reading, Mrs. White

This assignment can also be found digitally on the GPHS website: https://gphs.sno.wednet.edu/student-life/summer-assignments