

Slipping into Scout's Southern Setting

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2014

Welcome to Maycomb County, Alabama!

Welcome to the world of Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*! Imagine that you are in a small Southern town in the United States in the 1930s. Everything around you seems somewhat familiar, but really, your home, neighbourhood, school, clothes and community are very different than what you're used to in 2014. This WebQuest will take you back in time to learn about what your life would perhaps be like as a young person growing up in the 1930s in the South. Using what you find out, you will write a letter to someone living in 2014. You will have this class period to sift through the Resources and next period to complete a letter. Use your time wisely!

The Task

Using the collection of website resources below, you will be able to learn about your life in the 1930s. With the information you discover, you will write a four paragraph informal letter to someone living in 2014. Each paragraph of your letter will focus on one particular aspect of your life. Below are the four required paragraph categories/topics:

Paragraph One: describe your home, neighbourhood and community in detail. Include specific and interesting information so that the reader of your letter can visualize your environment. Remember to be creative! If you're stuck, the interviews at the bottom of the Resource list might give you some ideas. Mentioning the Great Depression, the climate/weather would be a few things to possibly mention.

Paragraph Two: tell about your family and those around you. What types of activities do you enjoy as a family? What is your *standard of living*? How do your parents make a living?

Paragraph Three: tell about life in your small Maycomb-like town. What is school like? Are there extra-curricular activities? What kind of music do people listen to? What kind of community activities? Is religion "big"? Tell about popular fashions, music, radio programs, and other interesting facts.

Paragraph Four: describe what's going on in the world around you. What's happening in the nation politically and economically? Talk about race. How do people in your community interact with those of other races?

Remember, some of the paragraphs might end up "mixing" a little. The main thing is that you impart to your reader:

- racial issues, like Jim Crow laws
- major social/economic issues (like the Great Depression)
- the small town setting in Alabama and the South
- cultural aspects of daily life in 1930s

Procedure

1: You are going to write your letter in the voice of a person growing up in the 1930s, writing to someone in 2014.

Before you begin researching the websites, consider:

- the sex, race, and age of the "character" that you will become as you write your letter. The experience of a Black seven-year-old male will be much different than that of a White fifteen-year-old girl, right?
- your audience. Who are you writing to? A friend, family member, teacher?

2: Use the links in the Resource section below to gather information for each paragraph of your letter.

3: Keep track of your research in a Word document or on a separate piece of paper. To make it easier, you can create four categories (one per letter paragraph) to help you organize your facts.

4: Type your letter using the informal letter format (see below for example). When your letter is done, save your work, print and hand in.

You're Done!

If you're done early, continue to explore the Resource section.

Informal Letter Template:

Your Address

Your City, Province, Postal Code

January 1, 2014

Dear Friend in 2014,

In this type of letter, paragraphs are not indented. Friendly letters can be any length, but should be written in paragraph form to keep it organized and easy to read.

Along with using short paragraphs, leaving a space between paragraphs makes it easier to read your letter.

Salutation, (begin in the middle of the page)

(Leave three spaces here for your written signature)

Your Name (typed)

Resources

Take some time to peruse through these websites to "get into" the historical context of *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Try to find connections to contemporary life, as well as interesting differences. As you look through the sites, try to find things that would interest a Caroline reader in 2014. As you explore, look for similarities to the first chapters of the novel.

The following links will provide you with the necessary information to fill your letter with content to make your letter authentic and "come alive". Remember: you have to complete this letter during your class tomorrow; therefore, *scanning* websites for pertinent information is important. Reading each site from top to bottom will not help you. As suggested before, as you find relevant information, add it to your four planning categories. Also, remember that you can take information, but make sure you put it in your own words. As well, if you would like additional information, feel free to "Google" it, or refer back to the initial chapters of the novel.

Be sure to quickly visit Monroeville, Alabama, Harper Lee's hometown. Many suggest that Maycomb is heavily based on Monroeville. This website offers a great photo of the courtroom that is home to the trial in the novel, and has a few interesting facts as well.

<http://www.tokillamockingbird.com/>

American Cultural History from 1930-1939

<http://kclibrary.lonestar.edu/decade30.html>

"Jim Crow" laws refer to the collection of the laws in the United States that forced the segregation of races.

http://www.nps.gov/malu/forteachers/jim_crow_laws.htm

-this site has many actual examples of Jim Crow laws

Photographs of Signs Enforcing Racial Discrimination

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/085_disc.html

Photographs of Several Alabama Towns

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fsaPlaces01.html#bottom>

Look specifically at Selma, Eutaw and Greensboro

Photographs of "Dust Bowls" during the Great Depression

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsowhome.html>

A List of Prices for General Items during the Great Depression

http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-54463_19268_20778-52530--,00.html

Some Background Information on the Novel

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12111/SG/SG5.html>

Interview: Growing Up Black in the South in the 1930s

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12111/mculley.html>

Interview: Growing Up White in the 1930s

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12111/girl.html>

The Rubric: How Your Letter Will Be Assessed

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Format	Complies with all the requirements for a friendly letter including salutation, body, and closing.	Complies with almost all the requirements for a friendly letter.	Complies with several of the requirements for a friendly letter.	Complies with none of the requirements for a friendly letter.
Ideas	Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It was easy to figure out what the letter was about.	Ideas were expressed in a pretty clear manner, but the organization could have been better.	Ideas were somewhat organized, but were not very clear. It took more than one reading to figure out what the letter was about.	The letter seemed to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It was very difficult to figure out what the letter was about.
Content	Each paragraph contains at least 3 accurate facts about 1930s Alabama.	Most of the paragraphs contain 3 or all of the paragraphs contain 2 accurate facts about 1930s Alabama.	Each paragraph contains 1 or 2 accurate facts about 1930s Alabama.	The letter contains no accurate facts about 1930s Alabama.
Grammar & spelling (conventions)	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar and/or spelling.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar and/or spelling.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar and/or spelling.
Voice	The writer clearly represents a character from 1930's Alabama.	The writer usually stays in the character of someone from 1930's Alabama but sometimes uses modern slang.	The writer rarely sounds like someone from 1930's Alabama and frequently uses modern slang and text-speak.	The writer sounds like a modern teen text messaging or msn-ing his or her buddy.