

To kill a Mocking Bird by Harper Lee

1. Title: To Kill a Mockingbird
2. Author: Harper Lee
3. Genre: Fiction
4. Plot Synopsis -- without spoilers: This classic is always worth a re-read. It is a mystery seen through the eyes of a child. Scout, who can read newspapers when she starts school, is told by the teacher that her father has to stop teaching her. The father, Atticus, displays honesty and respect for each person. Little by little, the personality of each character is revealed - whether kind, cruel, or intelligent. Set during the Depression, Atticus defends a Black man accused of rape, which riles some in the poor white community.
5. Why I recommend this title: The author's introduction to mannerisms in the poor south through the new teacher works so well. Examples: The teacher's attempt to give a child lunch money is rejected because they don't take anything from anybody and get by on what they have. The teacher screams when she sees lice crawling through a child's hair. The children react to her scream, but not to the source - "It's only cooties." Tip: the character of her playmate, Dill, is based upon Truman Capote, who was a childhood friend of the author. The characters feel like real people, with their secret past, respect, pettiness or hatred for each other, and small town atmosphere, where everybody knows everybody and their uncle. Filled with gentle adults as well as vengeful retaliation, this book presents the full dimensions of life.
6. Staff Reviewer: Leslie G.