

# Year 9 – Term 3

## Post WWII Literature: New Voices

### To Kill a Mockingbird

### Grammar

In 1945, much of the world was reeling from three decades of turmoil: two cataclysmic world wars, separated by a global Great Depression. Many people struggled to make sense of the destruction and wanted to rebuild a better world. As old empires and powers declined, new ones arose, resulting in the clash of ideologies between competing powers. The following decades were dominated by a Cold War, and the ever-present danger of nuclear war.

#### Impact of World War II on Literature:

Literature in the post-war period was inevitably influenced by experiences of war. Writers across the world tried to come to terms with the horrors of the death camps, the social and political changes following the nuclear attack on Hiroshima and the uncertainties of the Cold War.

The unsettled atmosphere of the era after the war also inspired new postmodern writing techniques which reflected this uncertainty: narratives could be fragmented, presented out of chronological order, written from multiple perspectives and/or have an unreliable narrator.

In the USA, writers often gave a voice to the voiceless. Alongside other movements, the Civil Rights Movement gathered momentum in the 1950s and 1960s; African-American authors such as Ralph Ellison, Maya Angelou and many others described the marginalization, overt racial discrimination and state-sanctioned violence that pervaded the USA. More and more, readers were exposed to experiences and perspectives outside the mainstream of American life.

#### The New World

Many of the original settlers in the New World (modern-day USA) were escaping religious persecution. They saw the unexplored US as a place of freedom and endless possibilities. America became populated by immigrants who were in search of a better life; today, many Americans celebrate the fact that the country is a 'great melting pot' of nationalities, cultures and ethnicities.

American literature often exposes the hypocrisy that the US simply became a mirror image of the Old World that it had left behind: minorities were persecuted and disenfranchised (deprived of rights) because of the colour of their skin, their gender, etc.)

#### Central themes of American literature

##### ❑ The American Dream / The Individual & hard work

Hard work is embedded within the idea of the American Dream: any person can achieve whatever he or she wants as long as there is the drive and will to obtain it.

However, in American literature, this dream is often presented as unachievable. Furthermore, American literature tends to criticise a dream that has solely come to be about monetary gain, often at the expense of your fellow man.

### How has the internet changed our language?

#### Neologisms

Brand new words that have been created such as “*selfie*,” “*lipstick*” & “*newsflash*.”

#### New Ways of Communicating

- ❑ Blending – merging two words (e.g. breakfast + lunch = *brunch*)
- ❑ Compounding – two existing whole words together (e.g. hand + bag = *handbag*)
- ❑ Phonetic Spelling – where words are spelt how they sound (e.g. *shud* or *thang*)
- ❑ Initialism – take the first letters of each of a group of words but says the letters individually (e.g. *t.b.h.* (to be honest) or *b.t.w.* (by the way))
- ❑ Acronym – same as initialism but say the letters together as a new word (e.g. *LOL* (laugh out loud) or *ROFL* (rolling on the floor laughing))

#### Descriptivist

A linguist who observes language changing without judgement

#### Prescriptivist

A linguist who strictly follows grammatical rules & dislikes language change

#### Plot:

To Kill a Mockingbird is a novel by Harper Lee. Although it was written in 1960 it is set in the mid-1930s in the small town of Maycomb, Alabama. It is narrated by Scout Finch, a six-year-old tomboy who lives with her lawyer father Atticus and her ten-year-old brother Jem. During the novel Scout, Jem and their friend Dill try to make their reclusive neighbour Boo Radley leave his house. Boo has not been seen in Maycomb since he was a teenager.

Many residents of Maycomb are racists and during the novel Atticus is asked to defend Tom Robinson, a black man wrongly accused of raping a white woman. Atticus takes on the case even though everyone knows he has little hope of winning. The reader sees the trial develop through the childlike eyes of Scout, as gradually both she and her brother learn some valuable life lessons from their father about tolerance, empathy and understanding.

#### Context:

- Legacy of slavery
- Great Depression
- Jim Crow Laws
- Justice system for Black Americans - Scottsboro
- The Ku Klux Klan and Lynch Mobs
- The Civil Rights Movement

#### Characters

**Scout Finch** - The narrator and protagonist of the story. Intelligent and, by the standards of her time and place, a tomboy. Scout eventually develops a more grown-up perspective that enables her to appreciate human goodness without ignoring human evil.

**Atticus Finch** - Scout and Jem's father, a lawyer in Maycomb descended from an old local family. Atticus has instilled in his children his strong sense of morality and justice. He is one of the few residents of Maycomb committed to racial equality. Atticus functions as the novel's moral backbone.

**Jem Finch** - something of a typical American boy, refusing to back down from dares and fantasising about playing football.. Jem moves into adolescence during the story, and his ideals are shaken badly by the evil and injustice that he perceives during the trial of Tom Robinson.

**Arthur “Boo” Radley** - A recluse who never sets foot outside his house, Boo dominates the imaginations of Jem, Scout, and Dill.

**Charles Baker “Dill” Harris** - Jem and Scout's summer neighbour and friend. Dill is a diminutive, confident boy with an active imagination.

**Calpurnia** - Calpurnia is a stern disciplinarian and the children's bridge between the white world and her own black community.

#### Sentence Functions

**Declarative sentences** state an idea. They end with a full stop.

**Exclamatory sentences** show strong emotions. They end with an exclamation mark.

**Interrogative sentences** ask a question. As you would expect, they end with a question mark.

**Imperative sentences** give orders or directions, and so end with a full stop or an exclamation mark.

### Comparative vocab

**AND** – also, additionally, similarly, as, both, too, comparably, as well as, likewise

**BUT** – however, meanwhile, yet, whilst, although, in contrast, differently, although, though, differ

### Themes in TKAM

- The coexistence of good and evil
- The importance of moral education
- Social inequality
- Racism
- Justice
- Youth
- Fear
- Women and femininity
- Family
- Compassion and forgiveness

### Writing to argue

### Writing an essay

- ❑ Both sides of the argument
- ❑ Promote one side more than the other
- ❑ Counter arguments
- ❑ IAMAFORESTER

- ❑ An effective introduction and convincing conclusion
- ❑ Effectively/fluently linked paragraphs to sequence a range of ideas

### Keystone Vocabulary

American Dream  
Diversity  
Hypocrisy  
Injustice / inequality  
Social reform  
Phonetic spelling