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Humanities

*To Kill a Mockingbird* Research Activity Notes Sheet

**Topic #1: Life for African Americans in the South in the Years Following the Civil War**

You will ultimately be proving the following main idea through your research:

**Despite the abolishment of slavery, African Americans living in the South faced numerous hardships in the years following the Civil War (MI). Specifically, the Jim Crow Laws (DI#1) and the Ku Klux Klan (DI#2) served to oppress African Americans.**

**DI#1: Jim Crow Laws**

a. Explain what the Jim Crow Laws were and how/where/why they originated. Who was Jim Crow? What were the original laws/policies?

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| Notes/DQs that Answer these Questions: |  |
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b. What impact did Jim Crow laws have on African Americans and what rights did they violate? How did whites/states defend Jim Crow laws?

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**DI#2: The Ku Klux Klan**

a. Explain where the Ku Klux Klan originated in the United States. What was the Klan’s mission and who were the Klan’s members? Provide significant historical facts about the group.

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b. What impact did the KKK have on life in America (particularly on African Americans and minorities? What methods did they use in order to promote their agenda? What influence did the KKK have on local governments and people in power?

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**Questions to Ponder:**

What connections do you see between Jim Crow laws/policies and *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

How does the influence of the KKK connect with *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Humanities

*To Kill a Mockingbird* Research Activity Notes Sheet

**Topic #2: America and the World in the 1930s: The Economy During the Time Period of *To Kill a Mockingbird***

You will ultimately be proving the following main idea through your research:

**In the 1930s during the Great Depression, many Americans suffered from economic hardships (MI). Specifically, the Stock Market Crash (DI#1) and the Dust Bowl (DI#2) negatively influenced a vast majority of citizens in the United States.**

**DI#1: The Stock Market Crash**

a. What was “Black Friday? What caused the stock market to crash? Had it happened before? Where/when? Could the stock market crash have been prevented? How?  
b. What impact did the stock market crash have on Americans and life in America? Explain some of the tragic events that occurred immediately after the Crash.

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c. Explain what the Great Depression was and its importance/prominence in American history. Who was the President during this time and what policies affected the Great Depression?  
d. What factors led to the Great Depression? What was life like for Americans during the Great Depression? Who was hardest hit and how?

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**DI#2: The Dust Bowl**

a. What was the Dust Bowl? Where did it take place and when? Who was directly affected by it?   
b. What impact did the Dust Bowl have on life in America? How is it connected to the Great Depression? Could it have been prevented? If so, how? Have we done things since then to prevent it from happening again or could it still happen?

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c. How did Herbert Hoover deal with this natural disaster and the people involved? What were “Hoovervilles” and why were they called that? Who were the “Okies”? Explain the problems that arose in the country in places like California as a result of the Dust Bowl, the “Okies,” and migrant farming.

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**Question to Ponder:**

In *To Kill a Mockingbird,* howdoes the Great Depression influence people living in Maycomb, Alabama?

**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Humanities

*To Kill a Mockingbird* Research Activity Notes Sheet

**Topic #3: The Rise of African American Culture after the Civil War**

You will ultimately be proving the following main idea through your research:

**While the years following the Civil War presented challenges for many African Americans, it is important to note that these years also saw a growth in African American culture (MI). Specifically, the Great Migration (DI#1) and the Harlem Renaissance (DI#2) were movements in the North that allowed African Americans to foster a strong sense of cultural identity.**

**DI#1: The Great Migration**

a. What was The Great Migration? What started it? Where did it occur and when? .

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b. How did The Great Migration change/affect life in places where African American migrated from and where they migrated? What changes can we still see in America today as a result of The Great Migration?

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**DI#2: The Harlem Renaissance**

a. What was the Harlem Renaissance? Where did it occur and who/what did it involve? Name some major people/results of the movement.

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b. How did the Harlem Renaissance change life for African Americans in America? Can we still see evidence of it in America today? Identify examples.   
c. How did the Harlem Renaissance affect the politics of the decades leading up to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s?

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**Question to Ponder:**

Consider how the Great Migration affected those who did not partake in the movement. What connections does this have to *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Humanities

*To Kill a Mockingbird* Research Activity Notes Sheet

**Topic #4:** Beyond the Book: The Culture of To *Kill a Mockingbird*

You will ultimately be proving the following main idea through your research:

***To Kill a Mockingbird* is a book that possesses a profound legacy, perhaps because the novel provides such a detailed depiction of Southern culture in the 1930s (MI). Specifically, the elements of Harper Lee’s personal life that are incorporated into the book (DI#1), as well as Lee’s portrayal of female characters in the novel (DI#2) allow the reader to develop a sense of Southern culture during the era of the 1930s.**

**DI#1: Harper Lee’s Personal Life**

a. Provide a clear biographical profile of Harper Lee both as a person and as a writer.

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b. How did her childhood and upbringing influence her writing of this novel? What major characters, elements of its setting and plot emerge directly from real experiences in her childhood?

c. What connections did Harper Lee have to the Civil Rights movement? Was she trying to make some political/social statements with this book? If so, what were those statements?

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**DI#2: The Portrayal of Females in *To Kill a Mockingbird***

a. What was the typical role of women in the South in 1930s America? What limited rights did they have and/or what were they expected to be in the South at this time?   
b. The character of Aunt Alexandra in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is often thought of as a “proper” Southern lady. Based on your research, what was a “proper” woman of the South in the 1930s supposed to be like? What was the “social code” she upheld in the South? Look for descriptions of clothing, behavior, personality, and social roles.

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c. The character of Miss Maudie, the main character’s neighbor, is considered by many to be a woman who defied the typical role of women in the South. Based on your research, what would a woman be doing and behaving like that would be considered “improper” or “breaking the code” of a Southern lady? Are there any examples in history of such women? Who were they and what did they do to break the code?

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**Question to Ponder:**

What impact has *To Kill a Mockingbird* had on American culture?