

To Kill a Mockingbird

By Harper Lee

SETTING OF THE NOVEL

- ◎ **1930's**
- ◎ **Southern United States**
- ◎ **Maycomb, Alabama (fictional city)**
- ◎ **1930's**
 - > **Great Depression**
 - > **Prejudice and legal segregation**
 - > **Ignorance**

1930's - Great Depression began when the stock market crashed in October, 1929

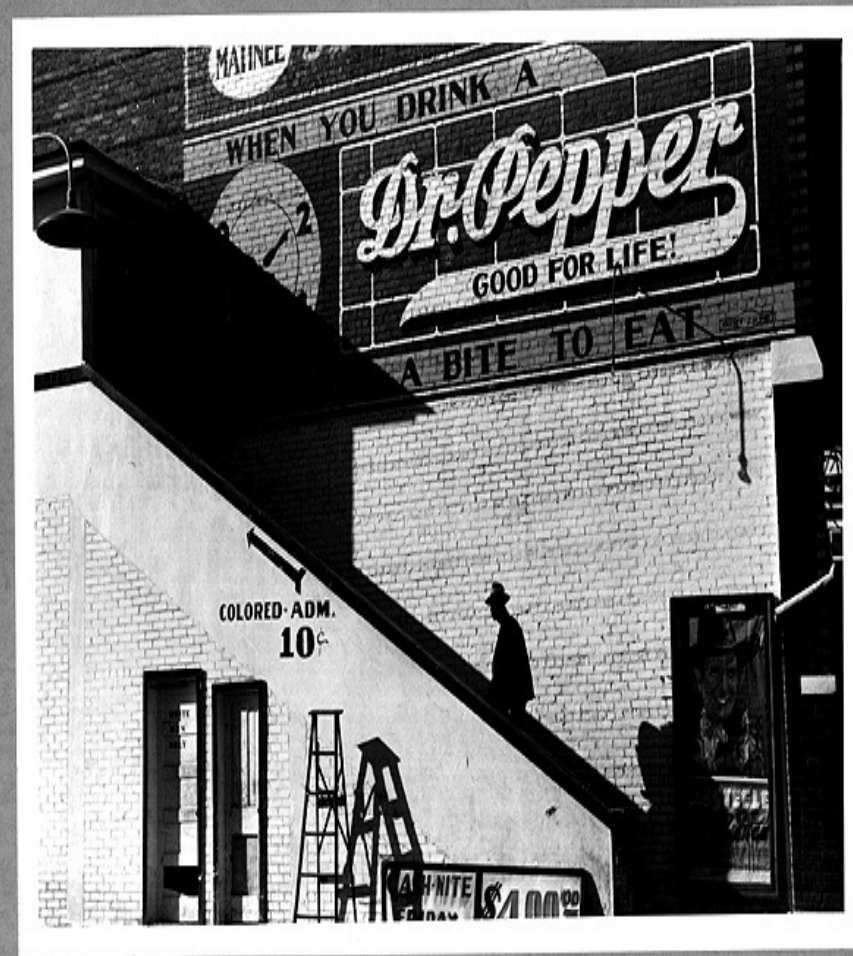
- ⊙ **Businesses failed, factories closed**
 - > **People were out of work**
 - > **Even people with money suffered because nothing was being produced for sale.**
- ⊙ **Poor people lost their homes, were forced to “live off the land.”**





“Racial prejudice was alive & well. Although slavery had ended in 1864, old ideas were slow to change.”

Racial Separation (Segregation)



Although slavery has long been abolished, the Southerners in Maycomb continue to believe in white supremacy.

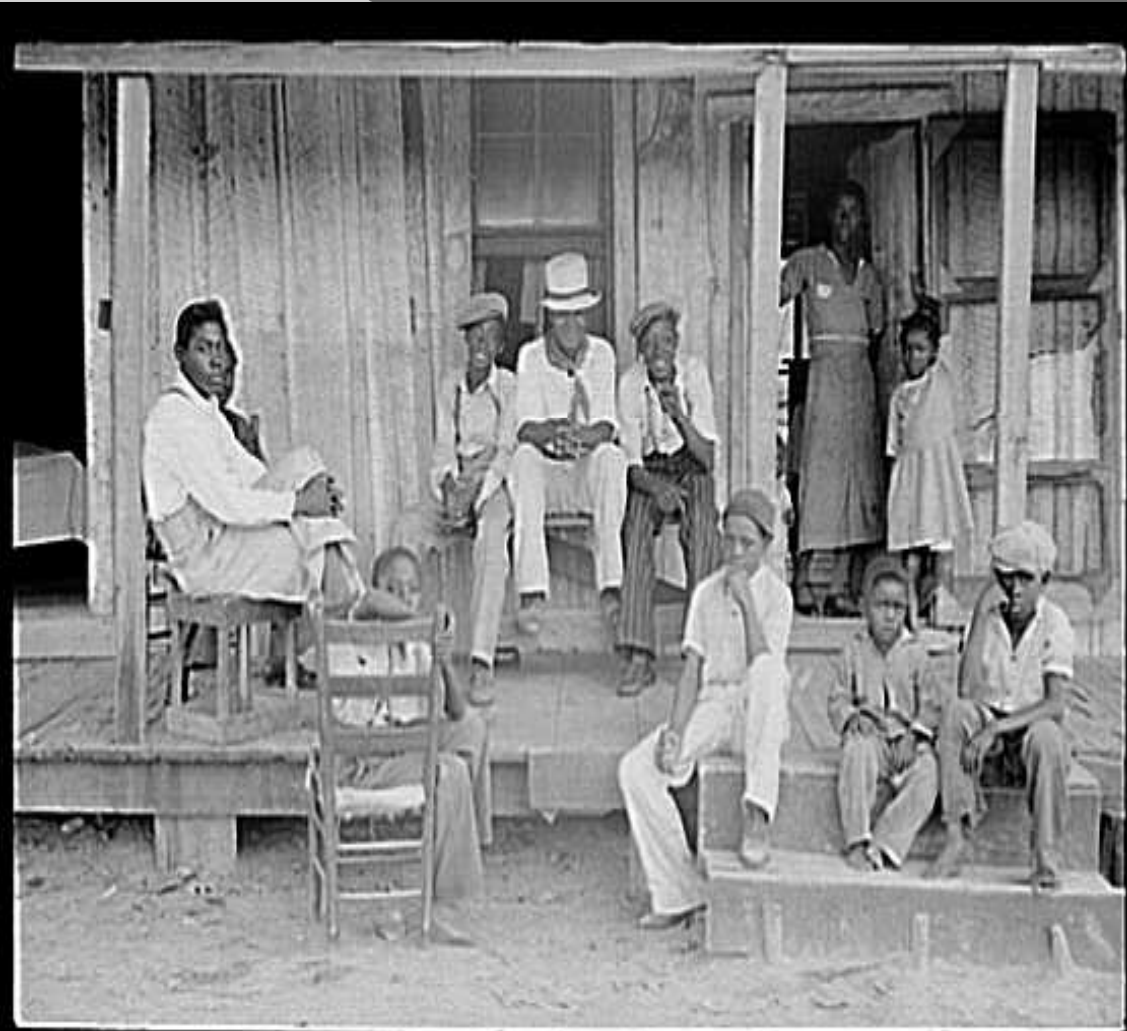


Legal Issues of the 1930's which impact the story

- ◉ **Women given the vote in 1920**
- ◉ **Juries were MALE and WHITE**
- ◉ **“Fair trial” did not include acceptance of a black man’s word against a white man’s**



Prejudice in the novel



Race
Gender
Handicaps
Rich/Poor
Age
Religion

Characters

- ◎ **Atticus Finch** - an attorney whose wife has died, leaving him to raise their two children:
 - **Jem** - 10-year-old boy
 - **Scout** - (Jean Louise), 6-year-old girl
- ◎ **Tom Robinson** - a respectable black man accused of raping white girl; he is defended at trial by Atticus

Characters continued...

- **Arthur (Boo) Radley** – a thirty-three-year-old recluse who lives next door
- **Charles Baker (Dill) Harris** – Jem and Scout's friend who comes to visit his aunt in Maycomb each summer
- **Calpurnia** – the Finches' black cook

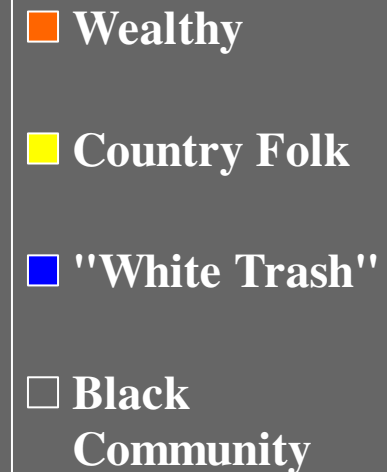
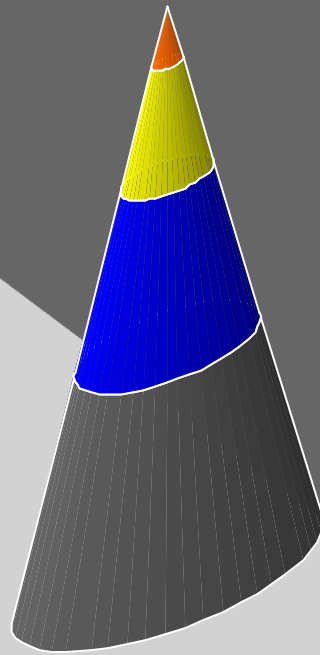
Point of View

◎ **First person**

- > **Story is told by Scout, a 6-year-old girl**
- > **Harper Lee is actually a woman; Scout represents the author as a little girl although the story is not strictly autobiographical**

Social Class in To Kill a Mockingbird

This is probably similar to how class structure existed during the 1930's in the South. The wealthy, although fewest in number, were most powerful. The blacks, although great in number, were lowest on the class ladder, and thus, had the least privileges.



Examples of each social class:

Wealthy - Finches

Country Folk - Cunninghams

"White Trash" – Ewells

Black Community – Tom Robinson

Reading the Novel

- ◎ **Setting** is all important –be aware of the “where” and “when” as you begin
- ◎ **Point of View** – the novel is shaped by the voice of a young girl who sees the story from a position of naïve acceptance
- ◎ An important **theme** is:
“Goodness vs. Ignorance (Evil)”

Other themes in TKAM:

- ◉ **Racial Prejudice**
- ◉ **Social Snobbery**
- ◉ **Morality**
- ◉ **Tolerance**
- ◉ **Patience**
- ◉ **Equality**
- ◉ **The Need for Compassion**
- ◉ **The Need for Conscience**

