

Time Needed: 180-240 minutes

Supplies:

- script for the trial (there are many online free resources)
- (optional) costumes/props for the trial scene in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, such as a gavel, judge's robe, three-piece suit, dress, overalls, etc.
- field trip forms and signed permission slips
- [Duke TIP Amplifying Voices Note-taking Sheet](#)
- [Duke TIP Short Story Rubric](#)

Content Objectives: Students will know:

- how the historical, social, and cultural context of *To Kill a Mockingbird* shapes the characters and plot of the novel
- how the themes of empathy, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression impact the characters and plot in *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- historical information about the Great Depression, poverty, and race relations as well as modern incidents with civil rights

Skill Objectives: Students will be able to:

- write from various perspectives of characters in the novel
- describe why hidden, silenced voices matter in a novel
- analyze what makes the “white savior” element of *To Kill a Mockingbird* problematic
- understand how different time periods and environments can silence various voices

Essential Understandings: Students will understand:

- how silenced voices in literature and history can and must be amplified
- there are multiple perspectives on a story

Essential Questions: Students will explore:

- How do social norms influence and shape individuals?
- How does the historical, social, and cultural context of a novel affect how characters act and react?
- Whose voices have been silenced in our own backyards? Whose voices do we need to lift up?

- How can I creatively represent the silenced voices in the novel?

Notes for the Teacher

I teach *To Kill a Mockingbird* with a focus on how the theme of empathy. We also dive deeply into the impacts of the social norms of the setting of Maycomb, Alabama (a time and place where many people had to survive profound poverty, ignorance, and prejudice) and how it helps shape the characters throughout the book. After acting out the trial scene in class, my students take a field trip focusing on the life of a historical figure in our local community—one that is not as well known as she should be. In our town of Hillsborough, North Carolina’s The Burwell School offers a tour centered around the life of Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley. Keckley was a slave-turned-successful-businesswoman as well as beloved friend and confidante to Mary Todd Lincoln. Students compare Ms. Keckley to Calpurnia from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, especially with regard to her charisma, strength, and influence as an African-American woman during the era of slavery and Jim Crow.

We then go on a field trip to the Historic Orange County Courthouse in Hillsborough so students can experience a Southern courtroom like the one described in the book. The court clerk, Anne Austin, a former teacher, keeps the students engaged by inviting them to take a seat in the jury box, the defendant stand, and other areas of the courtroom. She relates the book’s axiom, “The one thing that doesn’t abide by majority rule is a person’s conscience” to their own teenage lives, challenging them to be 21st century civic activists and think and act for themselves in the face of inequality and social injustice.

Look around your hometown or region for the hidden, silenced voices that may be beckoning to be heard. You may want to start by visiting your city’s Chamber of Commerce or “Visitors Center” web pages. [This website](#) may also spark some ideas. If going on a physical field trip is not an option, you may also want to peruse [this resource](#) for virtual excursions you and your class can embark upon.

Besides the field trip and trial reenactment, there is a class performance representing characters in the novel and a summative writing assignment.

You may want to teach the novel in class over six weeks while allowing students to choose among several independent readings in order to complete some interest-based reading and writing tasks at home and/or in class via literature circles. Literature circles offer syntopical experiences (Adler and Van Doren) where students can consider other texts, such as young adult literature, comparing and relating them to *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Students can make even deeper connections with themes such as empathy or the effects of history and culture on characters.

Because many gifted youth have a strong interest in social justice and staying well-informed about historical and current events, and because many may have strong tendencies toward empathy, this lesson challenges them to find new approaches to using their analytical, creative, verbal skills. This lesson will allow them to relate one idea (empathy) to many other ideas (poverty, racism, equality) in advanced ways.

Preparation Activities

Pre-Work

- Prior to the *To Kill a Mockingbird* unit, have students view and discuss the PBS documentary [“A Class Divided,”](#) which shows the story of teacher Jane Elliot and her class of all-white third-graders. She developed the lesson the day after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. She segregated the class according to eye color, and “in a span of thirty minutes created a microcosm” of discrimination. Students only need to view the first part of the documentary in which Elliott teaches her lesson and interviews her students years later as adults. They gleaned lifelong lessons about how it feels to be on the receiving end of discrimination.
- Inform students about the use of racial epithets in the novel and how these will be handled during the course of study. Because these are words of violence when used in the novel and when used by white people, they will not be used in any other context, such as read aloud or performed aloud, except quoting in written material when doing analytical or journal writing. Talk about how it’s important to keep the classroom a safe space.
- You may wish to have students journal about ways they find they are viewed and treated differently due to a physical feature or other unchangeable element they possess and how they respond to this treatment. Present the empathy prompts (where students are asked to walk in someone else’s shoes) as speculations but not true findings or necessarily accurate. Remind them that we can only let the voices of other people speak to their individual experience. However, walking in someone’s shoes for a moment makes us put aside some of our assumptions and prejudices as we try to imagine someone else’s life.
 - Have I ever faced different treatment because of a physical feature or other unchangeable aspect of myself? Was it discrimination or preferential treatment, or something else? How do I know?
 - How did I respond to this different treatment?
 - Think of someone who has experienced discrimination for a physical feature or other unchangeable element. Complete these two statements: “I wonder how it feels to...” and “I wonder if it might feel as if...”
 - Students might also journal in answer to this question: How do I attempt to prevent discrimination against others?
- Introduce students to the historical, social, and cultural context of the novel. Explain how during The Great Depression, poverty was widespread. Jim Crow laws were instituted by

governments and civic leaders across America, oppressing people of color. These laws also put poor whites in a position where they could feel superior to somebody.

- Other resources that help establish context, besides historical resources you might find on Jim Crow and the Depression:
 - Laura Randazzo’s problem-solving activity, “[A Day in the Life of the Working Poor](#),” where students role play budgeting for their family’s needs on a meager income. This activity increases understanding of financial challenges and hardships, requires collaborative problem-solving skills, and increases empathy.
 - Barbara Ehrenreich’s book, *Nickel and Dimed*, where she as a journalist worked minimum-wage jobs and struggled to survive, offers a number of sections worth excerpting to help students see how economic privation is an ongoing, modern problem and not a certain part of American history.
 - Tara Ray’s [historical context activity](#) that shares the impact of two acts of violent racism: Emmett Till’s lynching (1955), which is close to the time when Harper Lee was writing *To Kill a Mockingbird* (and what is considered its first draft, *Go Set a Watchman*) as well as the trial of the Scottsboro Boys (1931), which parallels Tom Robinson’s false accusation.
 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speech, “[The Drum Major Instinct](#),” both transcript and audio.
 - Robin DiAngelo’s book, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. Chapter 2 in particular provides several helpful explanations and quotes to use to explain to students how white supremacy underscores all the social and political institutions in American history.

Reading Activities

- As students read the novel, ask them to be on the lookout for the theme of empathy throughout, when someone appears to be considering things from another person’s point of view, and “climbing into someone else’s skin and walking around in it,” to paraphrase Atticus’ advice to Scout. Use journal entries and reading questions that constantly ask students to walk in a character’s shoes, especially secondary characters who may appear to be “background.”
 - What is Calpurnia thinking while in church with Jem and Scout? What is she thinking after taking them to the church? Why did she bring them? Would she do it again, do you think?
 - What is Walter Cunningham, Senior, thinking as he leads the mob to the jail? What is he thinking after he leaves? What has changed him and why?
- Students should trace, through annotation assignments and journals, how all of these historical elements impact the characters in the novel.

- Where do you see Jim Crow laws at work?
- Where do you see evidence of economic class influencing people’s behaviors? (Ask students to analyze Scout’s, Atticus’, and Calpurnia’s behavior at the dinner table scene, as well as Mr. Cunningham’s leading of the mob to the jail and how that might be connected to his economic hardship.)
- Where do you see a white man or woman’s word having more power than a black man or woman’s word?
- Where do you see acts of racism, ranging from violent words to violent actions?
- Where do you see the “drum major instinct” in individual characters, whether it is about race or something else?

Other questions for reading analysis:

- Which characters do you think symbolize the mockingbird in the book’s title, “who don’t do one thing but make music for us to enjoy,” (as Ms. Maudie puts it in Chapter 10)?
- Which voices are silenced voices in the book?
- How and why have their voices become silenced?
- What might this tell us about how oppression works?

Trial Re-enactment & Analysis

Preparation

A few days before you re-enact the trial from the book, preview this activity with students. Since it’s a “going back in time” exercise, it may be painful for some students who have ancestors who were discriminated against, who were lynched, or who were wrongfully incarcerated, to name a few instances of how white supremacy and systemic injustice. Since you also will be stopping to make comparisons to modern incidents of racial injustice, and may have students in your class who have lost friends or family in similar instances of violence, be sure to let them know prior that you plan to share some modern comparisons. This novel also hints at domestic abuse and sexual abuse. You should also mention this fact to students.

Let students know they can approach you privately via email or otherwise with concerns if they don’t feel comfortable participating directly as actors or discussion participants and wish to complete an alternative assignment instead. Students don’t have to explain why they choose to not participate. You can offer alternative options for these days in class, such as

- Completing different readings while the trial, discussions, and fishbowl improvisation occur, and responding to an online discussion board or emailing you journal entries by the end of class. Reading any one of the independent reading choices in the media center

while class goes on might be viable alternatives to sitting in the class during this section of the unit.

- Completing research on social justice organizations that work to end racism, sexual violence, and forms of systemic oppression

You may choose to encourage students who enjoy performance and acting to not shy away from the opportunity to bring to life something powerful, if they feel led to do so. They can have an option to take a break at any point during this part of the unit.

Before acting out the trial scene of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in class, follow these steps:

- Assign or take volunteers for roles.
- Arrange the classroom like a courtroom; bring in (or ask volunteers to bring in) props and costumes, such as a gavel, judge's robe, etc.
- Assign students homework to rehearse lines, using guided reading questions to help students imagine what it's like to be
 - Atticus keeping his composure as he asks Bob Ewell to write his name
 - Tom Robinson as he watches the trial for his life in progress
 - Helen Robinson as she watches Mayella try to keep her story straight
 - Mayella as she tries to lie effectively, knowing Bob Ewell is watching
 - Scout to watch her father argue this case
 - A member of the jury having to pronounce Tom "guilty as charged."

Here are a few guided reading questions you might give students as they prepare. There are a range of challenge levels here, so you might tier the assignments.

- When you are Atticus waiting for the trial to begin, your desk is bare, but are your thoughts clear as well? What is going through your mind? What are your hopes? What are your fears? Use the text to make your speculation.
- When was a time you felt you were "made fun of"? Why? Why do you suppose Mayella feels she is being "made fun of" by Atticus? Use the text to make your speculation.
- When Tom is being cross-examined on the witness stand, how do you imagine he'd really like to respond to Mr. Gilmer? How must it feel to be treated in such a belittling demeaning way and have no power to say anything in your own defense? How do you think he manages to keep his composure? Imagine his inner monologue. Use the text to make your speculation.
- The story hints at domestic abuse in the Ewell home. Someone has hit Mayella, and Atticus will prove that it wasn't Tom Robinson. Knowing this information, why do you think Mayella might choose to lie by accusing someone else rather than the actual perpetrator? Imagine her inner monologue
- Why do you think Harper Lee brought all these characters together in these pairings—Mayella vs. Tom, Mr. Gilmer vs. Atticus? (For example, Lee could have created a

wealthy white woman or a poor black woman, but instead, she chose to create Mayella.) What is she showing us by these choices of characterization?

Trial Performance and Analysis

Perform the trial scene, breaking at key moments for reflection. Let students know you will be stopping to give them the mic to report in on their feelings. You will be like the roving talk show host as teacher, bringing them a mic during a “commercial break.”

- After 15-20 minutes of performance, stop to “take the pulse” of various silent characters. Bring the mic to Helen Robinson, Scout, Mayella, Tom Robinson, Jem, and Atticus.
- Just before Tom Robinson’s testimony: ask students to pay attention to all the ways that Robinson--arguably already an underdeveloped character--is discounted and mocked during Mr. Gilmer’s cross-examination. Ask students to cite instances of
 - Language that discounts Tom Robinson as a lesser, unimportant voice or perspective
 - Language that directly mocks his identity or perspective
- At the point in the trial when Jem instructs Scout to take Dill outside, stop and make a comparison to the Trayvon Martin case.
 - [Summarize the 2013 Trayvon Martin case.](#) Ask students to speak of other cases where someone standing/walking/driving while black died in this manner. They may or may not know about Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Philando Castile, and many others whose deaths by police became important historical moments for America to face its problems with police brutality and equality under the law.
 - Show [a clip of Trayvon Martin’s mother \(Sybrina Fulton\)](#) being cross examined. Ask students to listen carefully to questions she is asked and the attitude and tone of the attorney cross examining her.
 - Compare and contrast her treatment during cross examination with the treatment of Tom Robinson.
 - Is the way Sybrina Fulton treated better than Tom Robinson? How do you know?
 - What do you imagine she’d like to say to the cross examiner? Why do you make this assumption? What would you want to say if you were in her shoes, and why?
 - What keeps her from saying it?
 - *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960. The story is set in the 1930s. Trayvon died in 2013. What similarities and differences can you draw between Lee’s fictional representation of American justice and this snapshot of American

justice from the more recent trial? Encourage students to ask more questions than to make assumptions, and to research these topics on their own.

- Return to the trial. At the point where Dill leaves the trial, ask
 - Why does Dill have to leave the courtroom during Tom's testimony?
 - What do you imagine was Harper Lee's purpose for interjecting Dolphus Raymond into this scene?
- Just before the closing argument, show two clips from the film *A Time To Kill*. Ask students to watch for how the theme of empathy appears in the following scenes:
 - the night before the closing argument, when Carl Lee talks to Jake
 - the closing argument, when Jake ends with, "Now imagine she's white."
- Ask students to [compare and contrast](#) Jake's closing argument with that of Atticus'.
 - What was missing in Atticus' argument that was present in Jake's?
 - What makes Jake's argument stronger or more convincing?
 - Why do you think Atticus made the argument he did and Jake made the argument he did? How does setting play a role in their decisions? How does character (morality and individual choices) play a role in their decisions?

Point out how Jake's closing argument would not have happened without Carl Lee's audacious truth-telling. The success of Jake's closing argument is directly tied to Carl Lee's voice--a voice Tom Robinson didn't get to have.

This also presents an opportunity to circle back to the opening discussion of how setting impacts characters. Ask students, How does the setting of *A Time To Kill* impact the characters' words and actions? In a post-Jim Crow, post-Civil Rights era, Carl Lee's ability to speak truth to Jake and to confront Jake's privilege, is more plausible. Carl Lee's determination to make his voice heard is ultimately what saved his life.

Imagining the Jury Room

There is one important discussion we don't get to hear in the book: what happens when the jurors convene in the jury room? How do they reach their verdict?

Turn to Your Partner and Discuss:

- Instruct students to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the following topics:
 - What do you think might have been statements made in a 1930s Maycomb, Alabama jury room? Consider that it is an all-male, all-white jury.
 - Infer what that discussion might have sounded like so we can hear the jurors' voices. Write some dialogue that you imagine was exchanged. (Tell students to give the jurors authentic "Maycombian" names; Southern accents encouraged!)
 - Why do you think it took jury members two hours to decide?

Ask pairs or groups to report back to the class. Students may be unimpressed with two-hour deliberations, and not have context for it. Explain to students that for the time, the two hours was a significant amount of deliberation for what is assumed to be an open-and-shut case (white woman's word versus a black man's). You may need to share the story of Emmett Till or the Scottsboro Boys here for context if you have not referenced them earlier. To debate that long was a start of progress. As Atticus notes in the book, their consciences were awakened in some way, however small. Meanwhile, Tom has lost his freedom.

Fishbowl Improvisation

- Have students move the seats into a [fishbowl arrangement](#), then have 12 students volunteer to be in the inner circle improvising an “In the Jury Room” scenario where we get to hear their voices. Appoint a jury foreman.
- Preface their performance with two statements:
 - A note that while we are trying to emulate the historical setting, we will not use racial epithets such as the “n” word. If we were adult actors on a Hollywood set, making a movie with adult language and subjects, we would be given license and free speech to do so, but we are students and teacher together in a setting where these words raise painful feelings, memories, and issues for a number of us in the room. Out of empathy for one another, we’ll use other phrases such as Tom’s name, even though a racist white male at the time would probably not have called Tom by his given name, but rather “boy” or the n word.
 - A note that if this re-enactment becomes uncomfortable for you, you can feel free to not participate and to leave the room.
- The students in the outer circle will pay attention to the jury members, observing how they reached their decision, and what made it easy, and what made it difficult. Fish bowl observers should also be able to comment on how improvisers demonstrate the historical time and setting of the story, and how they do and do not show empathy towards Tom Robinson and/or Mayella.
- Ask fish bowl observers to comment after the improvisation is over. Ask students to mention
 - Statements that show empathy by the jurors
 - Statements that show a lack of empathy
 - Statements that demonstrate a strong understanding of the historical context of 1930s Alabama

Arrange the seats back into the courtroom arrangement.

Amplifying Voices in To Kill a Mockingbird

The online script ends at the point after which all witnesses are questioned. Starting at, “But Mr. Tate said, ‘This court will come to order,’...” narrate the rest of Chapter 21, have students act out the words as you’re reading.

Discussion of the White Savior Narrative

At the end of the trial scene, the black community stands up as Reverend Sykes tells Scout, “Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father’s passin’.” A problematic point for many Americans with *To Kill a Mockingbird* is how Atticus is often perceived as the great white hope, or the “White Savior.” For others, Atticus is a hero.

Give students a teaser about *Go Set a Watchman*, explaining its basic plot and what made it controversial when it was published in 2015. For homework, have students read, “[Now We Can Finally Say Goodbye to the White Savior Myth of Atticus](#),” by Dr. Osamudia R. James, and be prepared to share in class the following day:

- Highlight 2-3 sentences that strike you, and indicate why they leap out at you.
- Where do you see evidence in *To Kill a Mockingbird* of Dr. James’ point, that it is a white savior narrative?
- Answer Dr. James’ query: Did the Atticus of “Mockingbird” owe anything to the black community other than the individual defense of one man? Why or why not?
- Bonus question: How are Atticus’s words and actions both implicitly and explicitly racist? (For a definition of implicit bias, see this Duke TIP Teachers Workshop article and companion videos, “[Overcoming Implicit Bias](#).”)
- Was Atticus a hero for his times? Does that mean he’s not a hero for our times? Examine both of these questions and decide how we should approach historical figures and fictional characters from another era.

Personal journal entries:

- In the movies, books, and games you consume, who are the heroes? Is there racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual diversity in the characters you see? Are there patterns and trends, such as a white savior narrative? How do you know?
- Why does race matter in representation in our stories?
- In what ways have you faced explicit and implicit bias for some aspect about you? How did you respond to this situation?
- In what ways have you demonstrated explicit or implicit bias toward someone else? How might you correct this behavior?
- Ask someone who’s from another generation (10, 20, 30, or 40 years older) whether they have read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and what they remember from the book. Interview them to get an impression of what messages and memories they took away from the book.

Then share what you are learning about the book. Where are your opinions similar or different?

- Ask students to share a sentence from the article they noted in their homework from last night.
- Highlight the author’s claim that “America likes its stories about race: centered on innocent white protagonists benevolently exercising power, with black characters relegated to the margins even in stories about their own oppression.”
 - Ask students whether they agree or disagree with this statement, citing specific support from other readings and/or personal observations.
- View [“We Wear The Mask”](#) by Maya Angelou. Ask students to recall Chapter 12, in which Calpurnia brings Scout and Jem to her church and they see how differently she speaks. Scout states, “That Calpurnia led a modest double life never dawned on me.”
- How would the book be different if Tom Robinson wrote it? If Calpurnia wrote it? If Mayella Ewell wrote it?

Personal Journal Questions

- Do you lead a double life? Explain why you do, or don’t.
- Who do you know who you assume doesn’t lead a double life? Why do you think that? Could you be wrong?
- Write some questions about another person’s life, someone who confuses or frustrates you. Try to do an empathy walk. that try to show curiosity and an admission of what you would need to ask them, and really experience (if you climbed inside their skin), in order to

Field Trip to Find and Amplify Silenced Voices

Introduction to Field Trip

Note to teacher: If you live outside of North Carolina and can’t go to the Burwell School, use these ideas and steps as a structure for organizing your field trip. Or, use the resources and questions as reading and discussion activity.

Prepare students for today’s field trip. The first stop will be where students will learn about Elizabeth Keckley’s childhood and adult life and the profound impact she had on the life of Mary Todd Lincoln. Tell the students, or be sure to have the docent explain to the students, how the publication of Keckley’s memoir, *Behind The Scenes, or, Thirty Years a Slave, And Four Years in the White House* did irreparable damage to Keckley’s and Lincoln’s friendship, to the extent that Mrs. Lincoln never spoke to her again.

Ask students to think about whether the severing of the friendship would have happened had Elizabeth been white, or had Mrs. Lincoln written a tell-all memoir that included personal information about Elizabeth. Why or why not?) Note that *Go Set a Watchman* touches on these topics in a scene where Scout questions Calpurnia what it was really like raising her and Jem. Ask students to start thinking about what Calpurnia’s “tell-all” story would be.

The Field Trip

Preview the [field trip note-taking handout](#) that students may complete during the trip, after time spent with touring, and then also after the field trip. Questions during a field trip should invite students to reflect in their journals to practice these skills:

- making comparisons between local historical and fictional figures—the similarities and differences in life circumstances, as well as their impacts on the community
- analyzing the challenges for historical and fiction individuals when it comes to race and the balance of power in their communities
- analyzing their role as modern students in their local community when it comes to making sure that all voices are heard.

In our case, we made two stops: the [Burwell School](#) and the [Orange County Historic Courthouse](#). Since the students will have just finished acting out the trial, the field trip to a real southern historic courthouse right in their own backyard offers a rich opportunity to “climb inside someone else’s skin” and experience what it would have been like to have been in a courtroom during the time in which *To Kill a Mockingbird* was set. Students are invited to sit in the jury box, have a seat in the witness stand, and experience the space.

You and/or the docent/tour guide of your local historical spaces can ask the questions you have on the handout and ask students to sit silently with these questions before writing.

Final Assessments

I recommend both theatrical performance and written assessments as the summative work for students in this unit.

The Okra Show

- The final speaking and listening assessment is student participation in “The Okra Show.” Okra is a favorite North Carolina vegetable, and the playful name sets the tone of this walk-in-the-shoes exploration. The students come to class dressed as a character of their choice from the book and must demonstrate how that character would walk, talk, dress, act, and react to other characters in different situations. The students are assigned groups,

and with their group, generate a dilemma that their characters might plausibly face in their community and then prepare to act it out. Each student should generate notes that demonstrate thorough knowledge of the text to defend their decisions of how their character will behave in this scene.

- To really set the mood of feeling transported to Maycomb, Alabama, I project a running slideshow of 1930s images and set up a 1930s playlist, and we all bring in authentic Southern-style food for the day of performances.
- Each student performance is assessed in three areas:
 - Convincing portrayal of a character through voice, gesture, stance, and/or costume
 - Articulation of larger themes in the book and awareness of the character's role in expressing those themes
 - Substantive use of textual evidence to justify the character's dialogue and choice of actions in the scenario

Creative Short Story

- The final writing assessment for the unit asks students to compose a creative short story sharing a voice we don't get to hear in the book. Students must use incidents, dialogue, and elements of setting from the original text as their launching pad while taking creative license to imagine a voice that isn't allowed to speak in the story. There should be a beginning, middle, and end to a short scene from the character's life. It can be rendered through first-person recollection, first-person real time action, third person, second person, or a dialogue/script.
- View the [rubric](#) with the students and discuss what each section of it challenges them to do. Discuss with students what is hard about stepping into another person's shoes. What seems easy? What risks do we take in misrepresenting someone else's identity? What would we want people to know and do when stepping into our shoes? What types of things will we never know?
- Here are some prompts:
 - *The Silenced Speak*. Re-write one or more scenes from a silenced character's point of view. What did Boo Radley see through the window? What does Helen Robinson feel as she watches her husband on the stand, or Mayella on the stand? What was Lula thinking when she saw Scout and Jem at the church? What does one of Tom Robinson's children feel?
 - *Survival After Tragedy*. Write an epilogue to the story detailing the life of one or more characters whose life must go on despite the tragedy of Tom Robinson's death. How do these characters cope knowing that Tom's death doesn't matter to many white people in the town?

- *Not the First Time Prologue.* The microaggressions and major oppressions of the story started long before Scout was a girl. Write a scene from Tom Robinson's life, Calpurnia's life, or Mayella's life where discrimination due to race or class created difficulties in someone's life.
- *What About Me?* Rewrite a scene from a silenced person's view instead of Scout's.
- *What If?* Rewrite a scene where a white person or a black person in the novel chooses a different action that takes a stand on oppression, and imagine the consequences for the time period.

Suggested Independent Reading:

- *Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee
- *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- *The Last Ballad* by Wiley Cash
- *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely
- *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- *The Dry Grass of August* by Anna Jean Mayhew
- Biographies of civil rights activists such as John Lewis; Diane Nash; Ella Baker; Dr. Pauli Murray; Dr. Martin Luther, King, Jr; Malcolm X; James Baldwin
- Biographies of historical figures in your community
- Nonfiction that takes a deep dive into certain communities during the Depression, such as Susan Goldman Rubin's *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*. (Including several short nonfiction picture books in your classroom can allow students to begin a process of deeper research.)
- *Behind the Scenes, or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House* by Elizabeth Keckley