Book: To Kill a Mockingbird

April 20-27

Essay Questions

**1.** Why does Atticus choose not to reveal to his children that Judge Taylor appointed him to Tom's case? How does his decision affect Scout's perception of her father?

**2.** Do you think that the adult Jean Louise telling the story through Scout's eyes may have added any embellishments to the story? Think of an event from your own life that occurred at least five years ago. Do you see the event differently now? How do memory and education affect your perception of the event?

**3.** If Scout and Jem's mother were still alive, how might the following people be different: Atticus, Scout, Jem, Calpurnia, and Aunt Alexandra?

**4.** Would Heck Tate have filed charges against Tom Robinson so quickly if Tom were white? Why or why not? Would Sheriff Tate have been so unwilling to file charges against Boo Radley if Boo was black? Why or why not?

**5.** Compare and contrast the relationship between Jem and Scout with the relationship between Atticus and Aunt Alexandra.

**6.** Based on what you know about Scout, describe the adult Jean Louise Finch.

**7.** Suppose that Mayella had admitted that she was lying when she testified against Tom. What would have happened to her? What would've happened to Tom? How would Scout, Jem, and Dill perceive the situation differently? Would the town have been willing to accept Tom's innocence? Why or why not?

**8.** What significance do the items that Boo leaves for the children have? What do they tell you about Boo? Why does his brother object so strongly to his leaving items for the children?

**9.** Harper Lee uses language and grammar that mirrors how the characters actually speak. Is this technique helpful in understanding the characters? Is it distracting? Could Lee have told the same story with the same impact if she'd used proper grammar throughout?

**10.** Compare the way Miss Caroline treats Scout on her first day of school with the way the town treats Mayella Ewell.

**11.** What, if any, prejudices do African Americans face in today's world? Have the issues that Lee discusses in *To Kill a Mockingbird* been resolved or are they ongoing? What forms of prejudice can you identify in your own community? Have you ever been the victim of prejudice? Did the situation end justly? Explain.

**12.** Why does Boo Radley stay inside all the time?