

Honors (pre-AP) Sophomore Summer Reading: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

(Please Note: important additional guidelines and information are available in Schoology Groups (NOT Courses). The join code: **ZPK5-8XBP-PDBQN**. Make sure to click on “Resources” on the left-hand side to access your folder.)

Your only summer assignment as an entering 10th grader for Honors English is to read and think about Harper Lee’s classic American novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The famous story follows a traditional/standard coming-of age format. Two kids, Jem and Scout, live in the deep South during the depression era with their lawyer father, Atticus. Over the course of a few summers they discover many complexities about the outside/adult world: Who is Boo Radley and why is he seen as a “strange,” mysterious neighbor? Can their father successfully defend an innocent black man, Tom Robinson, from a serious charge of rape during a trial that becomes the focus of the novel? Will Jem and his sister Scout begin to “grow up” and understand that, while the larger world beyond childhood is, sometimes, grossly unfair, people can still learn and maintain their integrity and personal honor despite the difficulties each one of us faces?

As you read, please consider the following:

- 1) It’s certainly OK to engage on-line sources (such as Shmoop, *Spark Notes*, etc.) to help you comprehend essential plot elements and various character developments
- 2) You may check the book out from our school library for the summer. Or, if you can, purchase a copy of the book so you can high-light/mark any passages of key (what we call “power”) words that you think provide excellent insight and understanding of **any** person, event or moment in the book
- 3) And, please, feel free to watch the famous Academy-award winning film that brilliantly captures the novel’s essential characters and themes. (However, we will be watching the film during class time as well.)

Please remember the following vital responsibilities:

- 1) Yes, **READ the book!** This is a pre-AP class; thoughtful engagement with literature is essential for success in any AP English course
- 2) Have **FUN while reading!** The book remains a genuine all-time classic, presenting a relatively easy story line and unforgettable characters. Arguably, it’s the most popular piece of American literature written during the last 50 years.
- 3) **Watch the film with your friends!** It will be a truly enjoyable way to spend time with each other; plus, you’ll be able to share and discuss your ideas about the film and book. (Very cool!)

When school begins again in August: Just show up for class and be ready to share your ideas and opinions about the book. We have a lot of worthwhile—and yes even fun!—activities ready for you to begin a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to discover how intelligent and thoughtful you are as students ready to continue your dedicated preparation for absolute success while in high school, during your future college years, and throughout the rest of your entire lives!