



**International Center  
for Leadership  
in Education**



**Gold Seal Lesson:**

Copernicus Education Gateway

<b>Author(s):</b> <i>Maura Pierce</i>			<b>Lesson Title:</b> <i>Pieces of the Past in <u>To Kill a Mockingbird</u></i>			
<b>Grade Span</b>			<b>ICLE Application Model</b>			
<i>K-4</i>	<i>5-8</i>	<i>9-12</i> <i>X</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i> <i>X</i>	<i>D</i>

**Instructional Focus:**

Language Arts State Standard #1: Students read a variety of grade level materials, applying strategies appropriate to various situations

Language Arts State Standard #2: Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences with sophistication and complexity appropriate to the grade level

Language Arts State Standard #3: Students listen for a variety of purposes appropriate to the grade level

Language Arts State Standard #4: Students speak for a variety of purposes and audiences with sophistication and complexity appropriate to the grade level

**Performance Task**

Current high school students sometimes have difficulty reading a piece of literature that is set in a time period other than their own. To facilitate their understanding of To Kill a Mockingbird, we discuss the definition of a literary allusion prior to beginning the novel.

Each student then randomly chooses one or two (depending of the size of the class) “pieces of the past” from a basket. These “pieces of the past” are individual slips of paper on which I’ve written the name of a person, place, object, or idea found in the novel with which the student might not be familiar. Many of the pieces are related to the Depression-era South. A complete list is attached. Each student is then responsible for researching his/her “piece of the past”. It is recommended that two sources be consulted, with the expectation that one of the sources will be electronic. Students take notes on their topics (using index cards) and include source documentation using the MLA format. As each topic is encountered in the novel, it is then that student’s responsibility to orally report on his “piece of the past” to the rest of the class. The presentations are generally brief – three to five minutes, but they give all students in the class the opportunity to contribute. All students are expected to take notes on the various topics as their classmates present them. Students are graded both on their oral presentation as well as their notes. These topics are included in the final exam for the novel. Having a firm handle on the historical background of the era, as well as the era during which Harper Lee wrote the story, helps students in their comprehension and appreciation of the novel.

**ICLE Essential Skills**

Gather information from a variety of sources, including electronic sources, and summarize, analyze and evaluate its use for a report (ela 3)

Prepare and deliver individual speeches by gathering information, rehearsing, making eye contact, speaking loudly enough, delivering information in a well-organized fashion, and appealing to the needs of the target audience (ela 10)

Discriminate important ideas from unimportant ideas while reading (ela 15)

Understand the personal, social, cultural, and historical significance of a text (ela 23)

Summarize, synthesize, and organize information while reading (ela 24)

Know how to find and read information from a variety of electronic sources (ela 28)

Identify, collect, and/or select pertinent information while reading (ela 5)

**Scoring Guide:**

**ORAL PRESENTATION**

Rating scale: 10 = Outstanding; 7= Good Job; 4 = Needs Improvement; 1= Low

Organization (Clear introduction, supporting data, conclusion) \_\_\_\_\_

Loud, clear voice \_\_\_\_\_

Preparation \_\_\_\_\_

Accuracy of information \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL FOR PRESENTATION: \_\_\_\_\_/40

**RESEARCH**

Rating scale: 5 = Outstanding; 3= Average; 1= Low

Accuracy \_\_\_\_\_

Correctly documented using MLA format \_\_\_\_\_

Legible \_\_\_\_\_

Directly related to assigned topic \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL FOR RESEARCH \_\_\_\_\_/20

**Keywords**

English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
Reading Authors Comprehension Research	Algebra	Earth Science
Writing Internet Note Taking Organization Paraphrasing	Geometry	Life Science
Communications Audience Listening Oral Presentation	Statistics	Chemistry
Literature American Literature Integration	Calculus	Physics
Other Literary Allusion	Trigonometry	Other
	Other	

Picture, Chart, or Graph file name(s):

Pieces of the Past in To Kill a Mockingbird continued ...

**Pieces of the Past Research Topics**

- Explain the background of and the qualifications for the Pulitzer Prize for Literature. In What year did Harper Lee win this award?
- Who wrote Tarzan, The Rover Boys and Tom Swift? Identify the author of each and give a brief description of each. Include an explanation as to why such stories might be popular in the 1930's.
- Identify John Dewey and explain what he had to do with educational reform. What was significant about his educational philosophy? What application did he have to Scout's introduction to public schooling in Maycomb?
- Explain the Dewey Decimal System and how it works. What did this have to do with Scout's introduction to public school in Maycomb?
- Tell what Kudzu is, where it grows and its origin.
- Explain the significance of Appomattox and tell why it would be important to folks living in Maycomb, Alabama.
- Find and write down a recipe for Lane Cake. What is the story of its origin?
- Explain what libel is and give some examples of it. What is the punishment for it? When the children built their snowmen, were they in fact "libelous?"
- Describe and give a brief explanation of the W.P.A. What role did it play during the depression?
- Explain the National Recovery Act. Tell why Atticus said that it was "killed by nine old men."
- Tell who Robert E. Lee was. Knowing his identity, explain why the clerk in the courtroom uses Bob Ewell's full given name when he is called to testify. What irony is shown here?
- Identify John D. Rockefeller and tell why anyone living during the 1930's would know his name.