To Kill a Mockingbird

1. Identity card

Title: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Author: Harper Lee

Date of publication: 1960

Genre: Coming-of-age novel / Historical fiction

Historical and Cultural Context: Set in the American South during the 1930s, the novel explores racial segregation, injustice and social inequality. Published during the Civil Rights Movement, it challenged prejudice and encouraged readers to defend justice and equality.

2. Plot summary

In a nutshell: The story is narrated by Scout Finch, a young girl growing up in the small town of Maycomb, Alabama. Her father, Atticus Finch, is a lawyer who defends Tom Robinson, a Black man falsely accused of assaulting a white woman. Through the trial and the events surrounding it, Scout learns about racism, courage, empathy and the complexity of human nature.

Key Moments:

- ➜ Atticus agrees to defend Tom Robinson.
- ➜ Scout, Jem and Dill become fascinated by Boo Radley.
- ➜ Tom Robinson's trial exposes racial injustice.
- ➜ Tom is found guilty despite the evidence.
- ➜ Boo Radley saves Scout and Jem from Bob Ewell.

3. Main characters

Name	Role	Symbol
Scout Finch	narrator	innocence, curiosity
Atticus Finch	lawyer, Scout's father	justice, integrity
Jem Finch	Scout's brother	empathy, maturity
Tom Robinson	accused man	injustice, discrimination
Boo Radley	mysterious neighbour	kindness, misunderstood
Bob Ewell	accuser	prejudice, hatred

4. Major themes and links to the LLCER program

Première – Rencontres

How does the novel illustrate this theme?

➜ Encounters challenge prejudice and transform individuals.
➜ The novel explores empathy through relationships with others.
➜ Meeting people from different backgrounds changes the characters' understanding of society.

Key examples

➜ Scout's relationship with Boo Radley.
➜ Atticus defending Tom Robinson.
➜ Scout learning to see the world through other people's eyes.

Terminale – Arts and debates of ideas

How does the novel illustrate this theme?

➜ Denunciation of racism and social injustice.
➜ Defence of equality and human rights.
➜ Reflection on justice and moral courage.

Key examples

➜ Tom Robinson's trial.
➜ Atticus defending an unpopular cause.
➜ The jury's verdict.

5. Key quotes and key words

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view."

justice – prejudice – racism – empathy – innocence – equality – courage

6. Author's message

➜ Prejudice leads to injustice.
➜ Empathy helps us understand others.
➜ Courage means defending what is right.
➜ Every individual deserves dignity and equality.