

Decision Education Foundation English Curriculum

To Kill a Mockingbird

by Harper Lee

Unit Snapshot

<i>Designed For</i>	Middle and High School Students
<i>Essential Questions</i>	What is more revealing—ideas or actions How do choices affect community?
<i>Content and Skill Focus</i>	<p>Decision Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• six questions to test decision quality• decisions require follow through• including others helps with follow through• weigh tradeoffs and risk with each alternative <p>English Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• public speaking• interview skills• character analysis
<i>Expected Outcomes</i>	<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• use specific questions to evaluate a decision• explain Atticus’s values and reasoning <p>Students will give oral reports on important decisions.</p>
<i>Kinds of Assessment</i>	Performance Task: Decision Interview Mind and Heat Map for Atticus Six decision skill exercises Group Decision Reports
<i>Time Required</i>	Five class periods.
<i>Comments</i>	Harper Lee’s novel about growing up in a small southern town is filled with intriguing decisions for students to explore. While this unit’s main focus is on one of them—Atticus’s decision to defend Tom Robinson—the plan includes a list of additional decision situations for students to examine in class discussion and writing exercises

(Version 7)



Overview

General Description: This plan, designed for middle and high school students (grades 8-10), is intended to be part of a larger unit on Harper Lee's, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Through various exercises focused on significant decisions in the story, students will explore character development, motivation, and conflict in the novel. With minor adjustments teachers can use the material either as an introduction to elements of good decision making, or as a review once students have explored the individual topics in greater depth.

Duration: While this plan is designed for five periods, teachers will need to schedule additional class time for student group work and oral reports. If time is an issue, teachers can shorten this unit by omitting or restructuring the **Group Decision Reports** (see **Assessment Evidence**, page , for more specific guidelines).

Summary and Decision Perspective: *To Kill a Mockingbird*¹ is about growing up in a small Alabama town in the 1930's, as seen through the eyes of the protagonist, a five-year old tomboy nicknamed Scout. As the novel begins, Scout (Jean Louise Finch) lives a life of relative innocence, playing with her older brother Jem and neighbor Dill under the eye of her widower father Atticus Finch. However, as the story proceeds, she learns unpleasant realities about life and faces decisions on how to cope with them. Of particular importance is the subplot of the trial of a black man, Tom Robinson, who has been falsely accused of raping Mayella Ewell. Atticus is Tom's appointed defense attorney. During the course of the trial, Scout learns about the injustice of the case, faces ridicule from her peers for her father's role, and finds herself in the middle of an attempted lynching. After the trial, Tom dies in an attempted escape from jail, and Bob Ewell, Mayella's father, seeks revenge on Atticus for having made a fool of him in court by attacking Scout.

The novel is full of engaging decisions for students to consider. While this unit's main focus is on one of them—Atticus's decision to defend Tom Robinson—the plan includes a list of additional decision situations for students to explore in class discussion and writing exercises.

¹ Pages citations in this unit refer to the Warner Books (Hachette Book Group USA) paperback edition of the novel first printed in 1982.



To Kill a Mockingbird

Unit Contents

1. Learning Plan

- **First Class: Introduction—Who is Telling the Truth? (page 4)**
 - Decision Interview—Directions for Students (page 6)
 - Handout 1—Decision Quality (page 8)
 - Handout 2—Create a Head and Heart Map for Atticus (page 9)
 - Teacher Resource 1: Some Points and Procedures for Handout 2 (page 12)
- **Second Class: Decision Elements (page 14)**
 - Handout 2—Create a Head and Heart Map for Atticus, Steps 4, 5, and 6 (page 15)
- **Third Class: Pulling It All Together (page 18)**
 - Teacher Resource 2: Decision Situations in the Novel (page 19)
 - Teacher Resource 3: Decision Skill Examples in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (page 21)
- **Fourth Class: Map Reports (page 22)**
 - Performance Task: Decision Interview—Directions for Students (page 23)
- **Fifth Class: Decision Interview (page 23)**

2. Assessment

- **Performance Task: Decision Interview (page 24)**
- **Mind and Heart Map for Atticus (page 26)**
- **Group Decision Report for To Kill a Mockingbird (page 26)**

3. Resources on the Web (page 27)



1. Learning Plan

First Class: Introduction—Who is Telling the Truth?

Materials

Decision Interview—Directions for Students

Handout 1—Decision Quality

Handout 2—Create a Head and Heart Map for Atticus

Teacher Resource 1: Some Points and Procedures for Handout 2

Procedures

- Ask students to imagine the following situation (project or pass out copies before you read the scenario):

Bill comes to school one day, and after first period, his teacher tells him to report to Mrs. Melson, the dean of students. Once he sits down in her office, she explains that he is involved in a serious situation: one of his classmates, Paul Billings, has just reported that on Saturday Bill stole an i-pod from a display at the Mac store in the mall and later asked Paul to hold it for him while he (Bill) set up a sale on e-bay. Because there has been so much theft recently, the school has involved the police, and Bill will have to go to the station and face the consequences. Bill explains that he was in the mall on Saturday with Paul, but that he did not steal the i-pod. The dean looks at him doubtfully and says, “Why would Paul make up this story?” Paul is a popular, well-respected member of the school who, in spite of a difficult family life, has achieved an outstanding academic record, become captain of the basketball team, and been appointed director of the honor council. The truth (and all Bill knows about the situation) is that Bill shared a pizza with Paul at the mall on Saturday, and Paul told Bill he was frustrated because he did not have the money to buy a bus ticket so he could visit his father who recently moved away. Bill also remembers that Paul mentioned something about “all these stores with over-priced stuff and more money than they need.”

Ask students to discuss their views of the situation. Some questions to ask:

- What probably happened?
- What are Paul’s decisions and what do you think of them?
- What would you do if you were Bill? Mrs. Melson? the policeman in charge of the case? Paul’s mom? Paul’s Dad?
- How does this story end?
- What does it feel like to be falsely accused (to be Bill)?

Points to emphasize:

1. While a **reputation** is often a helpful source of information, it can also cause **prejudice** (making a judgment before we have sufficient information), as in this case. Tell students to be alert for examples of prejudiced thinking in the novel. They will meet a character who is falsely accused and is innocent—and his life is at stake.



2. Personal decisions—good or bad—can have a dramatic effect on the larger community. Here Paul’s decisions are likely to cause a great deal of pain to many people he cares about. Let students know that they will look closely at how an important decision Atticus makes in *TKAM* affects those around him.

- Discuss the [Decision Interview](#) project. Hand out the students directions and see guidelines in [Assessment](#).
- Use [Student Handout 1](#) to review the elements of a quality decision.
- Explain that for the next few periods the class will look closely at one of Atticus’s important decisions in the novel. Give them copies of [Handout 2](#) (first page only), and have them complete [Step 1](#) in class. Discuss results. For more specific guidance see [Teacher Resource 1: Some Points and Procedures for Handout 2](#).
- Give students the second two pages of [Handout 2](#).

Next Steps

Homework Assignment: Complete [Handout 2, Step 2 and 3](#).



Performance Task: Decision Interview

Directions for Students: Your task is to interview a parent or other relative of your choice about an important and challenging decision he/she has made. The following steps will lead you to the final product: a three-five minute oral report to the class describing the specific situation, the process your relative used to make the choice, the final outcome of the decision, and your relative's opinion about whether or not it was a good decision.

1. Talk with your family. Discuss this project with your family and ask them to help you choose a relative to interview. Once you choose a relative who agrees to talk with you about a personal decision, make sure that person knows you will be sharing the interview with your class.

2. Create Your Interview Plan. Using your notes and the information you gathered from your group and class discussions, select the interview questions that you think will be most helpful to inspire conversation about the situation and give you useful information about the decision. **Remember** to include interview questions about all six elements of a good decision.

3. The Interview.

- Make an appointment with your relative, and explain that you will need about 30-45 minutes for the interview.
- Before the interview, list the questions you plan to ask on paper with space after each one for you to write notes about the person's responses. Because you do not know exactly where the conversation will go, make sure you have extra space for additional topics that surface during the interview.
- Interview tips:
 1. Listen carefully and avoid interrupting unless a point is not clear.
 2. Ask all the questions on your list, and be flexible enough to add new questions of interest that arise during the conversation.
 3. Ask for clarification of any points you that did not understand or that you think need more explanation.
 4. End with the following two questions:
 - *Now that I have asked you all of my questions, is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't discussed?*
 - *Do you think you made a good decision? (Please explain.)*

4. Organize your oral report. Take the information you have gathered, and create an engaging 3-5 minute oral report. Use the following structure:

Part 1. Describe the decision situation.

- What was the reason for the decision?
- Who was involved in the situation?
- Why was it challenging or important?



Part 2. Describe your relatives decision process.

- Which elements were most important?
- Which elements did the person ignore?
- Were you surprised by any of the interview responses? Why?

Part 3. Conclusion: Strengths and Weaknesses

- What did your relative think about his/her decision process?
- What do you think about the way your relative made the decision?
- Final points: draw some conclusions from your relative's experience about what we should avoid and what we can do to improve our own decision making.

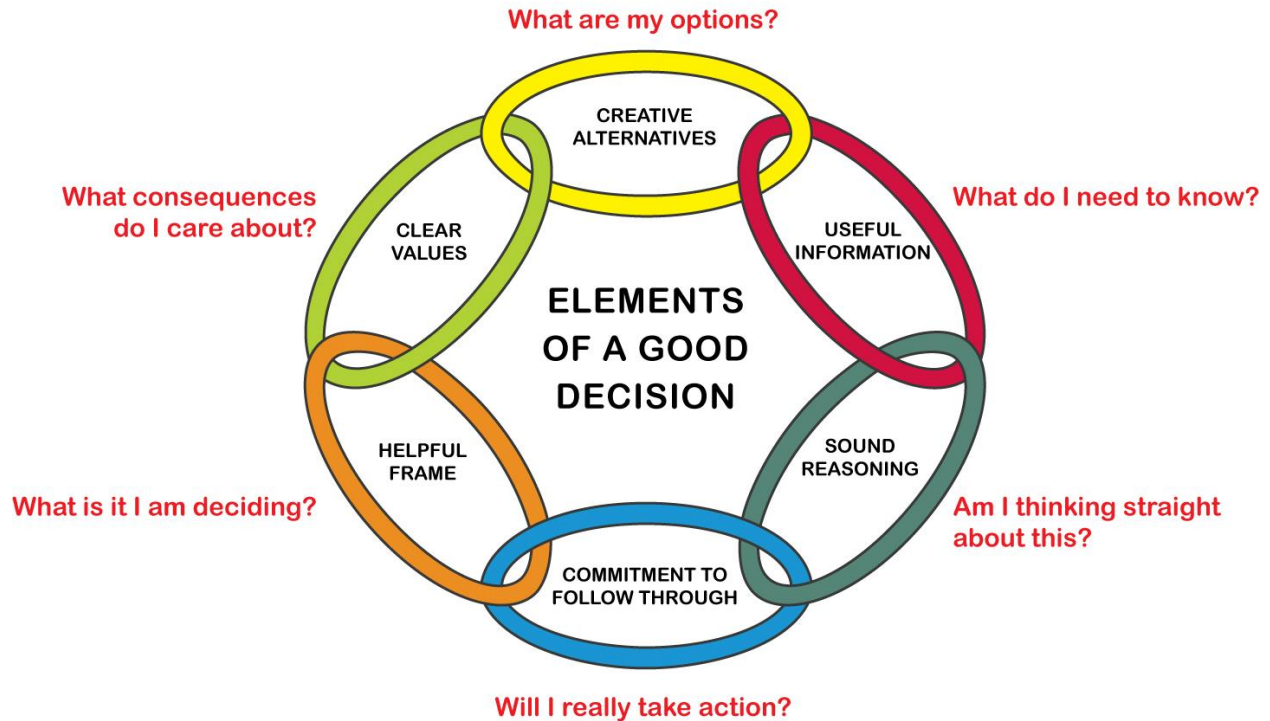
5. Practice, practice, practice. Rehearse your report at least three time--preferably in front of someone who is willing to give you constructive feedback. Time yourself to make sure you do not pass the five minute limit.

Important note: When we get nervous, we tend to rush and make ourselves hard to understand. If you are nervous, take a deep breath before you begin (to relax your muscles) and remember to speak slowly and clearly.



Handout 1. Decision Quality

The following diagram helps us remember the essential questions that lead to making good decisions...



Three points to remember...

- *Each link is equally important, and if I ignore any of them, my decision won't be as strong as it could be.*
- *The six links are related to each other—they influence each other. For example, being clear about what I want in a given situation and knowing enough information about the choices gives me confidence to follow through with my decision.*
- *Our “HEARTS” are just as important as our “HEADS” when we make decisions: as we answer the six questions above, we pay attention to the way we FEEL (our hearts) as well as to what we THINK (our heads).*

Student Handout 2. Create a Head and Heart Map for Atticus.

Atticus's decision to defend Tom Robinson causes much of the conflict in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Do you think he made a good decision? Why or why not?

Directions: To help answer the questions above, review pages 74-77, 87-89, and 104-105 (Part I, Chapters 9 and 11); then use the following steps to create a map of the way Atticus thinks and feels about his choice.

Step 1. Helpful Frame: Consider the boundaries of the decision:

a. What causes Atticus to make the decision? What is the main goal or purpose of the decision?

b. What are some concerns or fears Atticus has about the decision?

c. List the people involved in or possibly affected by the decision. Include a brief description of each person's connection.

Example: *Tom Robinson—he needs a lawyer to defend him*

d. Whose opinions does Atticus consider and ignore in this situation? Why?

e. How is Scout's perspective (frame) of the decision different from Atticus's? Why?



Step 2. Useful Information: What does Atticus know about this situation?

In Part 1 (especially the pages listed above), what important information does Atticus consider about...

--Tom Robinson?

--the trial?

--Jem and Scout?

--his community?

--himself?



Step 3. Clear Values: What and whom does Atticus care about in this situation?

Look again at pages 74-77, 87-89, and 104-105 (Part I, Chapters 9 and 11) and pick a passage that you think reveals one of Atticus's most important values. Write out the passage in the space below and include the number of the page where you found it.

Describe the value you see in the passage above. What does this value reveal about Atticus?

What else does Atticus want in this situation? List below any additional values you discovered (include page references).



Teacher Resource 1: Some Points and Procedures

Introduction

- As students begin this process of collecting information from the story, explain the importance of reviewing the novel to find accurate detail. Sound responses require a close look at the text.
- Remind students that this exercise is the first stage of creating a mind and heart map for Atticus. Therefore, they need to record important points from class discussion (practice note-taking) as well as their individual responses: their notes will help them when they gather in groups to create the final mind-heart maps.

Helpful Frame

- Atticus is clearly anxious about the town's reaction to his choice to defend Tom primarily because he knows his children will suffer from some of the consequences. This situation provides a good opportunity to discuss with students how fear and anxiety affect our choices. Ask them to give some examples from their own experience of times fear has been a factor in their decisions.
- People involved: Tom, Jem, Scout, Mrs. Dubose (and other neighbors), Calphurnia
- Atticus chooses to accept Judge Taylor's opinion, and he rejects the opinion of the narrow-minded members of the community.
- Question e (Scout and Atticus's frames) provides an opportunity for discussion about the different frames parents and children might have on important decisions. Ask students for examples of their own to discuss (Has anyone had to change school because of a family decision to move? Have they experienced their parents' refusing permission to go to a party, see a friend, play a game, etc.?), and explore how and why the frames are different.

Useful Information

- For complicated and important decisions gathering the needed information can take some work, but it is worth the effort.
- The only information needed is what is useful in the given situation. For example, Atticus needs to think about the chances of winning or losing the case, the effect the trial will have on his children and his career. However, information about the results of similar trials outside of Maycomb County would not be of much use.
- Once they have responded to this part, ask students what information Atticus thinks is most important in this situation and what they think of his saying he knows he will not win?

Clear Values

- Allow students to share their chosen passages and explanations until all of the different responses have been heard. During discussion record the various values on the board for students to list in their notes.
- Ask students to discuss the connection between Atticus's *conscience* and his values. How do our consciences help us define our values (what we want and care about)? Can students give any examples of being directed by conscience?

Creative Alternatives & Sound Reasoning

- While the two alternatives are clear in this situation, emphasize the role of *creativity* in making choices. Often we are too narrow in our thinking when considering options. Encourage students to think of "wild" options here and in their own decisions (even if they seem too outrageous): the more we practice stretching our imaginations the more we will see.



- Emphasize the importance of weighing the tradeoffs and risks when we make choices. Give some examples from history, current events, or literature that illustrate not reasoning well about risk (i.e. Jem destroying Mrs. Dubose's flowers; US initiating war on Iraq). Ask for students to share some examples of when they wish that they had considered the risk of a choice more carefully. Do they think Atticus is weighing the risks accurately here?

Commitment to Follow Through

- Emphasize that we have not made a decision until we take action. Sometimes we frame a choice, think carefully about it, complete research, consider values, but neglect to take action: in these cases we have not made a decision.
- Note that we learn more about Atticus (and anyone, for that matter) by what he *does* than by what he *says* (or *thinks*). It is the action (or commitment to follow through) that finally makes values real. Encourage students to discuss other examples from literature, history, or their lives. (**Note:** Mrs. Dubose's decision to kick her drug habit is another excellent example of effective commitment to follow through—see Teacher Resources 1. Notice that Jem does not understand who she really is until Atticus explains the choice she has made and the role Jem plays in her commitment to follow through.)
- Some examples of Atticus's steps to ensure that he will act: takes time to prepare his children for outcome of his decision; shares his thinking with his brother; has thought carefully about the way the town will react—so he won't be surprised.
- Allow students to discuss which links help Atticus the most in taking action. One possible response: because he is so clear about his values and takes the time to reason carefully about the outcomes, Atticus can act with assurance.

Finally, refer students to the original question: Has Atticus made a good decision in choosing to represent Tom Robinson? During the conversation, include a discussion of the ideas in the note below.

Important Note: At this point it might be useful to mention to the class that we do not yet know the outcome of the trial (assuming they have only read Part 1) or the complete outcome for the Finch family. Does this mean we cannot yet judge whether Atticus's decision is a good one or not? After students have debated this idea, explain that a good decision is **not** dependent on a good outcome. Give some examples and ask students for their own (i.e. Drunk driver arrives home safely after a party—bad decision, good outcome. Sober, designated driver takes friends home after a party, and they are hit by a drunk driver who runs a red light—good decision, bad outcome.) We can, however, judge the quality of a decision by how well we answer the six questions related to the element of a good decision.



Second Class: Decision Elements

Materials

Handout 2—Create a Head and Heart Map for Atticus, Steps 4, 5, and 6
Teacher Resource 1: Some Points and Procedures for Handout 2

Procedure

- Review homework and discuss the role of information and values in Atticus’s decision situation.
- Give students **Handout 2, Steps 4 and 5**, and have them complete in class. They can work in groups or individually.
- Discuss results and identify Atticus’s use of alternatives and reasoning.
- Hand out **Step 6** for homework.

Next Steps

Homework Assignment: Students complete Handout 2, Step 6



Step 4. Creative Alternatives: What are Atticus's options in this situation?

The two obvious alternatives are to defend or refuse to defend Tom. Are there other options he might consider? For example, he could move his family to another town or state. Use the table below to identify any additional alternatives you can think of and to describe the risks and tradeoffs of each option.

ALTERNATIVES	TRADEOFFS	RISKS
Example: Move family to another town or state	Children would not experience harassment from the community; Atticus would avoid losing a case. BUT Family would be uprooted from home, close community ties, and friends; Atticus loses the opportunity to defend an innocent man	Will Atticus be able to find a job in another town? How upset will his children be about moving away from their home and friends? How will he adapt if Calphurnia does not agree to move with the family?
Refuse to defend Tom Robinson.		
Accept the case and defend Tom Robinson		
Additional option:		

Step 5. Sound Reasoning: Is Atticus thinking straight about the situation?

Look again at pages 74-77, 87-89, and 104-105 (Part I, Chapters 9 and 11) and find a passage that shows Atticus's explanation (reasoning) of the situation. Write out the passage in the space below and include the number of the page where you found it.

Summarize below the point Atticus makes in the passage you selected above.

List below (with page references) other important points Atticus makes in explaining the situation.



Step 6. Commitment to Follow Through: Atticus takes action.

We learn in Part 1 of the novel that Atticus has decided to defend Tom Robinson. While the results of his choice are beginning to surface (i.e. Scout teased in school), we will not know the final outcome completely until the end of the novel. With all of the conflict that he knows will result from his choice, Atticus might find it challenging to commit himself to following through with the decision.

What are steps Atticus has taken so far to help him commit to action? How does he prepare for what lies ahead? Does he consider obstacles that might get in his way? Does he seek support from anyone else? Write your thoughts below. (Continue to look for steps he takes in Part 2 of the novel).

Which of the “links” in the decision process (frame, alternatives, values, information, reasoning) are most influential in Atticus’s decision to defend Tom? In other words, which ones are most important in providing him with the a strong foundation for his choice? Explain.



Third Class: Pulling It All Together

Materials

Teacher Resource 1: Some Points and Procedures for Handout 2
Assessment—Mind and Heart Map for Atticus
Teacher Resource 2: Decision Situations in the Novel
Teacher Resource 3: Decision Skill Examples in *To Kill a Mockingbird*
Assessment—Decision Reports

Procedures

- Review homework and discuss commitment to follow thorough in the decision process. For more specific guidelines see **Teacher Resource 1: Some Points and Procedures for Handout 2**.
- Explain the **Decision Reports** (see **Assessment**). Assign groups and explain that each group will report on their decisions once the class reads the part of the story where the decision appears. (Make sure to allot class time for groups to meet and discuss their assigned decisions.) Find a list of specific decisions in **Teacher Resource 2: Decision Situations in the Novel** and **Teacher Resource 3: Decision Skill Examples in *To Kill a Mockingbird***.
- Break students into groups and have them begin **Mind and Heart Map for Atticus** (see **Assessment Evidence**). Explain to the groups that they will present their maps during the next class. They should be clear with each other about any homework that needs to be completed to prepare for the group's presentation.

Next Steps

Homework Assignment: Students work on mind and heart maps.



Teacher Resource 2: Decision Situations in the Novel

- **Jem challenges Boo Radley (p. 14).** Early in the novel, the children develop fantasies about their reclusive neighbor, Arthur Radley, envisioning him as a monster and nicknaming him Boo. Dill wants to see what Boo looks like, so he goads Jem into running up to Boo's house and slapping the wall. Is Jem's decision a conscious one or not? Are his values clear and his reasoning sound? Probably not, but there is a lot of material here for reflection and discussion.
- **Walter Cunningham refuses to take lunch money (p. 19).** Walter is one of Scout's classmates from a poor but proud and honest farming family. When he forgets his lunch, his teacher offers to loan him a quarter to buy one, but he refuses because he knows he cannot pay her back. His decision illustrates resolute behavior based on his and his family's values. During the incident, Scout intervenes to explain the situation to the teacher (who is new on the job).
- **Jem goes back for his pants (p. 56).** Jem and Dill, in their continuing fixation on getting a look at Boo, hatch the idea of sneaking up at night and peeking in the window. Someone (presumably Boo) hears them, investigates and discharges a shotgun, causing the children to flee through the hole in the back fence through which they entered the Radley yard. Jem, the last through, snags his pants and abandons them. Later, not wanting to face a whipping by Atticus, he returns to retrieve his pants and cover his tracks in spite of the perceived risk. His decision presents some interesting (if confused) values and reasoning. There is good discussion topic about what information he has at the time of his decision and how his choice might have been different had the information been different.
- **Atticus defends Tom (p. 75).** We learn that Atticus is defending Tom Robinson, even though he is sure to lose, because he believes it is the right thing to do and because he feels he could not teach his children to do the right thing if he does not practice what he preaches. This is a powerful example of an important and well-made decision. He goes into it with his eyes wide open – his values are clear, and he is mindful of the risks to himself and his family. He clearly explains his reasoning to his children. He is totally committed to follow through, up to and through the trial. He restrains himself under both verbal and physical abuse. As we later learn, his decision eventually leads to the attack on his children by Bob Ewell.
- **Scout refrains from fighting (p. 76).** Initially, Scout's reaction to challenges by her peers (in particular, criticism of her father) is to fight. When Atticus asks her to refrain, she chooses to obey, and she is mostly successful. Her decision appears both conscious and proactive, since in the heat of the next incident, she is prepared to follow through.
- **Mrs. Dubose kicks her drug habit (pp. 104-112).** Mrs. Dubose is a cantankerous, sickly old woman who is addicted to morphine prescribed as a painkiller. Nevertheless, toward the end of her life, she courageously resolves to kick the habit before she dies. She declares her decision and decides on the basis of her values ("to be beholden to nothing and nobody"). Further she recognizes the difficulty of following through and comes up with the creative alternative of enlisting Jem's help – to distract her from her cravings by reading to her. She demonstrates extraordinary commitment to follow through.

- **Mr. Cunningham abandons the lynching (p. 154).** Mr. Cunningham, the poor but honest and hardworking farmer, joins the mob that seeks to lynch Tom, but when confronted by Scout outside the jail, he abandons the idea and gets the others to go along. This is an interesting study in framing. Initially, he sees his decision from the perspective of “something needs to be done”. Later, his frame shifts to how he will be viewed in the eyes of his community and its children. A couple of thought-shots – one before the children intervene and one after – might be useful in making this point.
- **Bob Ewell accuses Tom of raping Mayella (pp. 124,167,173).** From his testimony, we surmise that Bob Ewell accused Tom in a rage over finding them embracing, as well as to cover up the fact that he gave Mayella a beating immediately thereafter. His decision sets off a chain of events that result in his public humiliation and ultimately in his death. It is a fine example of the importance of decision-making. It is also an example of a terrible decision, initially made in the heat of the moment with no consideration of the largely foreseeable consequences.
- **Mayella testifies against Tom (pp. 178-188).** Probably from embarrassment and fear of her father, Mayella persists in asserting that Tom attacked her. This is an interesting study in values and tradeoffs, in which she has to weigh the value of Tom’s life against the condemnation of her community and wrath of her father. This is a good case for the students to try to sort out which values are in play.
- **Mayella courts Tom (pp. 190-194).** From Tom’s testimony, we learn that Mayella, out of ignorance and loneliness, “courted” Tom and created the situation that led to his arrest. This is another example of an important and terrible decision.
- **Tom tries to escape (p. 240).** After his conviction, Tom, in desperation, makes a run for the prison fence and is killed. How does he frame his decision? What other alternatives does he have? Were his values clear and his reasoning sound in light of the information available to him? A written or oral debate on these questions would be interesting.
- **Tate, Scout, and Atticus cover up Boo Radley’s role in Bob Ewell’s death (p. 276).** When Bob Ewell attacks Scout and Jem, Boo Radley comes to their defense and, in the process, kills Bob Ewell. Reflecting on this and Boo’s reclusive nature, Sheriff Tate, Atticus, and Scout come to the agreement to cover up Boo’s involvement. As Scout says, “Well, it’d be sort of like shootin’ a mockingbird.” In other words, their values are telling them that Boo’s right to his privacy and innocent nature (coupled with the fact that he is of no further danger to the community) outweigh the letter of the law which would have the whole affair aired in public. Again this is a good topic for analysis and reflection.

Teacher Resource 3: Decision Skill Examples in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Decision / Lesson	The Importance of Decision-Making	Declaring a Decision	The Concept of a Good Decision	Helpful Frame	Creative Alternatives	Useful Information	Clear Values	Sound Reasoning	Commitment to Follow Through
Jem challenges Boo Radley.		X					X		
Walter Cunningham refuses to take lunch money.							X		
Jem goes back for his pants.						X	X	X	
Atticus defends Tom.	X	X	X				X	X	X
Scout refrains from fighting.		X							
Mrs. Dubose kicks her drug habit.		X			X		X		X
Mr. Cunningham abandons the lynching.				X					
Bob Ewell accuses Tom of raping Mayella.	X		X			X		X	
Mayella testifies against Tom.							X		
Mayella courts Tom.	X								
Tom tries to escape.					X	X	X		
Tate, Scout, and Atticus cover up Boo Radley's role in Bob Ewell's death.							X		

Fourth Class: Map Reports

Materials

Performance Task: Decision Interview—Directions for Students

Procedures

- Groups present maps. Class discussion of maps.
- Hand out **Decision Interview—Directions for Students** and discuss any questions about the **Performance Task**. See **Assessment**.

Next Steps

Homework Assignment: Explain to the class that the assignment is to use **Handout 1 and 2** to create a list of questions for the **Decision Interview** (see **Assessment**). Each person should think of 2-3 questions for each of the six decision elements. They will share their question during the next class.



Fifth Class: Decision Interview

Procedures

- Discuss interview questions. Make a list of the questions the class thinks are most effective. Students can select questions from this list for their interviews.
- Set the deadline and parameters for the oral reports.

Next Steps

Additional Class Periods: Teachers will need to schedule additional class periods to hear the oral reports and to allow students to present their group decision reports.



2. Assessment

Performance Task: Decision Interview

Overview for Teachers: This exercise is intended to give students the opportunity to exercise their research, interview, and public speaking skills while demonstrating and sharpening their knowledge of basic elements that comprise good decision making. Tell students that the premise of this exercise is that everyone can improve decision skills by reviewing and analyzing past decisions—both good and bad.

Directions for Students: Your task is to interview a parent or other relative of your choice about an important and challenging decision he/she has made. The following steps will lead you to the final product: a three-five minute oral report to the class describing the specific situation, the process your relative used to make the choice, the final outcome of the decision, and your relative's opinion about whether or not it was a good decision.

1. Talk with your family. Discuss this project with your family and ask them to help you choose a relative to interview. Once you choose a relative who agrees to talk with you about a personal decision, make sure that person knows you will be sharing the interview with your class.

2. Create Your Interview Plan. Using your notes and the information you gathered from your group and class discussions, select the interview questions that you think will be most helpful to inspire conversation about the situation and give you useful information about the decision. **Remember** to include interview questions about all six elements of a good decision.

3. The Interview.

- Make an appointment with your relative, and explain that you will need about 30-45 minutes for the interview.
- Before the interview, list the questions you plan to ask on paper with space after each one for you to write notes about the person's responses. Because you do not know exactly where the conversation will go, make sure you have extra space for additional topics that surface during the interview.
- Interview tips:
 1. Listen carefully and avoid interrupting unless a point is not clear.
 2. Ask all the questions on your list, and be flexible enough to add new questions of interest that arise during the conversation.
 3. Ask for clarification of any points you that did not understand or that you think need more explanation.
 4. End with the following two questions:
 - *Now that I have asked you all of my questions, is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't discussed?*
 - *Do you think you made a good decision? (Please explain.)*



4. Organize your oral report. Take the information you have gathered, and create an engaging 3-5 minute oral report. Use the following structure:

Part 1. Describe the decision situation.

- What was the reason for the decision?
- Who was involved in the situation?
- Why was it challenging or important?

Part 2. Describe your relative's decision process.

- Which elements were most important?
- Which elements did the person ignore?
- Were you surprised by any of the interview responses? Why?

Part 3. Conclusion: Strengths and Weaknesses

- What did your relative think about his/her decision process?
- What do you think about the way your relative made the decision?
- Final points: draw some conclusions from your relative's experience about what we should avoid and what we can do to improve our own decision making.

5. Practice, practice, practice. Rehearse your report at least three times--preferably in front of someone who is willing to give you constructive feedback. Time yourself to make sure you do not pass the five minute limit.

Important note: When we get nervous, we tend to rush and make ourselves hard to understand. If you are nervous, take a deep breath before you begin (to relax your muscles) and remember to speak slowly and clearly.



2. Assessment (continued)

Mind and Heart Map for Atticus

Use the exercise below to help students review and use what they have learned during class discussion of Student Handout 2.

- Divide the class into groups of three-six students. Provide poster size paper and markers for each group.
- Explain that each group's task is to use the information they have gathered from class discussion of Student Handouts 1 & 2 to create a representation of Atticus's decision to defend Tom Robinson—a mind and heart map that describes the way he thinks, feels, and acts in this decision situation.
- More specific guidelines:
 - Each Group should decide (separately) which of the six elements are most important in this situation, and which links they will include.
 - If possible, each person in the group should create one representation of a link for the map. The representations can include drawings, symbols, names of people and places, and written main points. There is no one right way to create the map: each group should be as imaginative as possible and choose its own method.
 - Emphasize that the goal** is to have a clear representation of what Atticus's decision to defend Tom Robinson looks like and to explain to the rest of the class what the group has created and how it reveals Atticus's mind and heart.

Decision Reports for *To Kill a Mockingbird*

- Divide the class into groups of 3-6 students. Use Teacher Resources 1 & 2 to assign each group a decision (or make a list and have each group choose one of the decisions).
- Explain that once the class has read the part of the novel that describes the situation, the group who "owns" that particular decision will report on it to the rest of the class.
- The group will
 - Discuss the decision together.
 - Use notes and Student Handouts 1 & 2 to decide which of the six elements are most important in the decision and why.
 - Choose a creative way to present their findings to the rest of the class (i.e. power point, role play, skit, poster, etc.). Everyone in the group should participate in the presentation.
- Finally, have a class discussion of the decision and the group's findings.

Note: To save time, teachers can assign each students a decision in the novel. Students would be expected to work independently (using guidelines above) and to be prepared to lead the conversation about the decision when the class discusses that particular situation in the novel.



3. Resources on the Web

To Kill a Mockingbird: The Student Survival Guide

http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Belmont_HS/tkm/

Nancy Louise Rutherford's site is an easy to navigate resource to help students with challenging vocabulary, allusions, and idioms in the novel.

SCORE Teacher's Guide for *To Kill a Mockingbird*

<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/tokil/mocktg.htm>

Useful activities for class—in particular a “speculation exercise” to be used before students begin reading the novel.

To Kill a Mockingbird: A Historical Perspective

<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/98/mock/intro.html>

This Library of Congress website provides useful activities to help students understand the background of the novel.

