

**Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird**

**Union-Endicott High School  
English 9 Honors Summer Reading Project  
The Big Book of Lessons from Life**

As you read Harper Lee's classic novel, you will notice that Atticus attempts to teach his children lessons of morality, integrity, honesty, courage, and acceptance. You will also notice that he is extremely eloquent when doing so. These lessons are as important and poetic today as they were when this book was first published in 1960.

Your assignment is to search not only for the lessons that Atticus teaches his children, but for the lessons that you think your parents, family members, and society have to teach you as you strive toward adulthood. With this in mind, you will construct a book of lessons from life.

**Guidelines for Creating Your Own Book of Lessons from Life**

Your assignment is to create a book of advice and instructions for living a good life. Draw upon the wisdom of Atticus in his lessons and examples to his children and neighbors. In addition, draw upon the wisdom of your parents and family (including yourself) in the lessons they have to teach you, and finally, look to other important cultural figures for the wisdom they have to share with humanity.

**Find quotes from Atticus**

You will need to review the text and find passages illustrating life-lessons that you believe are worth remembering. Look for passages that are important in showing Atticus' principles and values, in showing what he believes about courage, understanding others, respect for others' differences, compassion, fighting, shooting, justice, standing up for what you believe in, education, etc.

**Find quotes from your own family**

You will need to talk to your parents, grandparents, and other relatives about the lessons of life they are trying to teach you. Try to write down some of the exact words and phrases they use, so that you might employ their original and authentic wording in your book.

**Find quotes from other sources**

You will need to find quotes from important historical figures. Look to noteworthy thinkers, politicians and statesmen, authors, artists, and others and find out what they have to offer about living a good life.

**When you have collected enough material...**

You will need to select and arrange the quotes you want to use in your book. You need a minimum of ten quotes from each category, and you will want to think about how you want them placed in your book. Will you use some sort of thematic arrangement, one based on character, chronology (lessons for different stages of life) etc.? Put some time into not just presenting quotes, but presenting quotes in a particular way for a particular reason that you can rationalize in about a page of writing.

### **Eye Appeal**

No good book on living a good life would be complete without aesthetic appeal. Your book should be both pleasing to the soul and pleasing to the eye, so take the time to decorate your front and back cover as well as the interior with appropriate symbols, pictures, designs, etc.

### **The rationale**

Now that you have made this work of life-art, it is time to write your one page rationale (perhaps in the form of either a preface or an afterword) that discusses the following:

- Why you chose the quotes you chose—generally speaking of course, not every single quote needs to be explained.
- Why you arranged your quotes the way you did—again in broad strokes why did you lay out your quotes in the order you did?
- How you decorated your book—what artistic strengths did you play to? How are your decorations and quotes connected?
- How did you come up with your brilliant title? Did I mention your book has to have a title? Of course not; you already knew that because you're smart.

**YOUR PROJECT IS DUE AT THE START OF THE PERIOD THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!**

