To KILL A MOCKINGBIRD READING/Writing Journals

Purpose: to reflect on reading and relate it to our own lives and experiences.

Procedure:
1. In the journal section of your notebook, start a new page for Mockingbird Reading/Writing Journals.
2. All entries are required and should be a minimum of one page in length and must incorporate textual evidence.
3. Entries will be rated on a five point scale; a proficient entry (4) will be focused on one topic, developed using specific details, and of sufficient length.

Journal #1 (Chapter 1-3)
Topic: Childhood
Choose one of the following topics:
1. In Chapter 1, Scout, Jem, and Dill are fascinated by the Radley house. When you were a child, was there a neighbor, family member, or place that scared you? Describe that person/place as you remember them and think about how your experience parallels the children in the novel.
2. The children enjoy their summer experiences. What kinds of experiences did you enjoy when you were a young child? Describe one of these experiences and think about how that experience was similar/different to those of the children in the novel.
3. In chapters 2 and 3, Scout begins her public school career. What were your "first days" of school like? Think about your earliest school experiences and how they compare to Scout's.
Journal #2 (Chapters 4-6)

Topic: Labels

Choose one of the following topics:

1. On p. 39, the narrator says that "Jem was a born hero." What is a hero? Are they born or made? How is Jem a hero?
2. In Chapter 5, Miss Maudie is described as "a reasonable creature." What makes her "reasonable"? How would you define a "reasonable creature" in your own life?
3. On p. 52, Jem tells Scout that she is "gettin' more like a girl everyday." What does he mean? What is his definition of "girl"? How has that changed from then to now?

Journal #3 (Chapters 7-9)

Topic: Symbols/Metaphors

Choose one of the following topics:

1. In Chapter 7 Jem has two watches: the one from the tree and the one from his father. What kinds of symbols are these watches? What might they symbolize in the novel? What other meanings might a watch have?
2. In Chapter 8, the Finch home is threatened by a fire, then Scout is protected by a blanket. Choose one of these items and explain what it symbolizes in the story. What else could it represent?
3. In Chapter 9, Atticus expresses his desire that Scout not catch "Maycomb's usual disease." What is this disease? How might she catch it? What "diseases" do we have in society today?

Journal #4 (Chapters 10-12)

Topic: Perspective

Choose one of the following topics:

1. The children's view of Atticus changes from the beginning to the end of Chapter 10. Why does this happen? Think about your views of your own parents; has your perspective ever changed? Why?
2. Note how Mrs. Dubose is described in Chapter 11. How does the children's perspective on her change? What lesson do they learn? Have you ever learned a similar lesson?
3. How does the children's view of Calpurnia change after their visit to First Purchase? Can you think of a similar experience when your view of someone was changed by something he/she did?
4. By Chapter 12, Cal starts referring to Scout's brother as "Mister Jem." What has changed? Have you witnessed/experienced a similar chang
Journal #5 (Chapters 13-15)

Topic: Life in the South

Choose one of the following topics:

1. In Chapter 13, Aunt Alexandra moves in with the family. How does her arrival change the lives of Jem and Scout? What do they learn from her? What does she represent to them? What does she represent in the novel?

2. In Chapter 14, Dill returns. Why does he come back? What do we learn about his family? How is his father different from Atticus? What kind of character is Dill? What do you think is Dill's purpose in the novel?

3. In Chapter 15, what is "the mob" trying to do? Why are they trying to do it? How is it prevented? What does this tell us about life in the South? What does it tell us about life today?

Journal #6 (Chapters 16-18)

Topic: Social class

Choose one of the following topics:

1. In Chapter 16, we watch with Jem and Scout as the people of Maycomb pass by and congregate at the courthouse. Why is Dolphus Raymond an outcast? Why are "mixed" children so miserable? What do the children learn about people and social class?

2. What is meant by the term "poor white trash"? How do the Ewells exemplify this stereotype? Does this stereotype exist today? How has it changed?

3. In Chapter 17 and 18, we finally hear about the crime itself. Think about Bob and Mayella Ewell: how they are described, how they act, what they say. How do you feel about these characters? Why?

Journal #7 (Chapters 19-21)

Topic: Truth

Choose one of the following topics:

1. Compare Tom Robinson's version of the "rape" with the Ewells'. Which is more "truthful"? Why? What is Tom Robinson's apparent crime?

2. What do the children learn about Dolphus Raymond? What do they learn from him? How do those lessons relate to the novel? How do those lessons relate to life?

3. In Chapter 21, we learn the verdict of the trial. What is the "truth" in the verdict? What is the justice in it? What does the verdict say about the people in the novel and society as a whole?
Journal #8 (Chapters 22-24)

*Topic: Irony*

Choose one of the following topics:

1. There are many ironies in Chapter 22. Atticus loses, but the African-American community showers him with gifts. Bob Ewell wins the court decision, but vows to get Atticus if it takes the rest of his life. Dill wants to be a clown, but a clown that laughs at the crowd. Choose one and explain its significance.

2. In Chapter 23, Jem asks a lot of pertinent questions about the jury system. What does he learn? How do these "lessons" pertain to society?

3. In Chapter 23, Aunt Alexandra explains some of the differences between families, but Scout comes to the conclusion that "there's just one kind of folks. Folks." What does he mean? How does this relate to Jem's thought that Boo "wants to stay inside"?

4. In Chapter 24, Scout learns a little more about what it means to be a "lady." What does she learn that is ironic? What is ironic about her new, changing role in the household?

Journal #9 (Chapters 25-27)

*Topic: Lessons*

Choose one of the following topics:

1. In Chapter 25, we see or hear about a number of incidents that thematically relate to the title. Look for these references and explain how they are used and why.

2. In Chapter 25, Scout learns about the "secret courts of men's hearts," that adults do have hiding places. What is hidden there?

3. In Chapter 26, Scout's class learns a lesson about Hitler and "democracy." What lesson is "taught"? What are we supposed to "learn"?

4. At the end of Chapter 27, the children begin their "longest journey." What do you think this means?

Journal #10 (Chapters 28-31)

*Topic: Conclusions*

Choose one of the following topics:

1. What is a conclusion supposed to do? How do these last chapters "do" this?

2. What conclusions does Scout come to at the end of the novel?

3. What conclusions do you draw from the novel?