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Reading Photos, Reading Life: Visual Literacy and To Kill a Mockingbird

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Reading Photos, Reading Life: Visual Literacy and *To Kill a Mockingbird*

[Destitute pea pickers in California by Dorthea Lange](#)

Title: Reading Photos, Reading Life: Visual Literacy and *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Type of Teaching Unit: Lesson Plan with Activities

Grade Level: 11th Grade

Time Frame: 3 Days

Subject Matter: American Literature

Teacher Information:

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Lesson Plan Description and Rationale:

Most students sitting in today's classroom are visual learners. Students will learn how to use their visual intelligence to create meaning from non-print text and make connections between what they see and know to the social and historical context of the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Curriculum Standards:

This lesson plan uses the Illinois State Board of Education English Language Arts State Goal 1 for Late High School:

- 1.C.5b Analyze and defend an interpretation of text.
- 1.C.5c Critically evaluate information from multiple sources.
- 1.C.5d Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material.

- 1.C.5e Evaluate how authors and illustrators use text and art across materials to express their ideas (e.g., complex dialogue, persuasive techniques).

Objectives:

Students will learn how to analyze a photo as a visual text to infer and derive meaning from its image. After practicing this new skill several times and completing a short writing assignment, students will then search the internet and the American Memory Collection to find photos that are connected to the social and historical context of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. For the photos the students find, they will then properly cite their source, analyze the photo and then complete a creative writing assignment using the photos they have found.

Resources:

Websites:

[The Library of Congress](#)

[The American Memory Collection](#)

[The African American Odyssey](#)

[Photos from the Chicago Daily New](#)

[America from the Great Depression to World War II](#)

[Panopticon- Emmet Till Trial](#)

[The UMKC School of Law Famous Trials Webpage- Scottsboro Trial](#)

[The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration](#)

[Photo Analysis Worksheet](#)

Book:

Lee, Harper. To Kill a Mockingbird. New York: Warner, 1960.

Technology Used:

Laptop Computer

LCD Projector

Internet Access

Computer Lab with Internet Access

Lesson Plan with Activities:

Before beginning the lesson plans with activity, classroom teacher should have already created a class vocabulary for the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The vocabulary words I began this unit with are compassion and courage. These words fit nicely with the themes of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This lesson with activities is designed to be used at the beginning of the *To Kill a Mockingbird* unit to further deepen student

understanding of the themes and ideas put forth by Harper Lee. While this lesson plan with activities is worked through students will be reading and discussing the book after the closure of each day's activity.

- **Day One- Whole Class Period:** Teacher will introduce visual literacy through [Reading Photos, Reading Life](#) PowerPoint presentation. Students will take notes from PowerPoint presentation on the procedure of how to read photographs. Teacher will practice reading the first three photographs with students as a whole class activity. Teacher will question students if they see a connection between the novel, historical context and the photographs. Students are to personally reflect on photographs and what they have learned in personal response journal.
- **Day Two- Half of a Class Period:** On day two of lesson plan, teacher will display the next photo from PowerPoint presentation. Students will work together in pair to take notes on the photo as they have learned the day before. After note-taking process is complete, students will be directed to write a dialogue taken after picture between the members of the family in the photograph. For homework, students are to personally reflect on photographs and what they have learned in personal response journal.
- **Day Three- Whole Class Period:** On day three of lesson plan, students will be taken to computer lab. As individuals, students are to search [The American Memory Collection](#), [The African American Odyssey](#), [Photos from the Chicago Daily New](#), [America from the Great Depression to World War II](#) to find a photograph that can be connected to any theme from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Once student finds photograph, they are to print it out and properly cite it according to [MLA documentation standards](#). Students are to read and take notes on the photographs as they have learned in class the previous two days. For homework, students are to write creatively from the perspective of one of the people or objects in the photo they found and printed.

Assessment:

Students response journals: As a part of regular classroom practice, these will be checked only for engagement of that day's topic.
"Reading Photos, Reading Life" PowerPoint Presentation Notes: These

notes will be check in at the end of the period to make sure students have recorded photograph reading process.

Student-found Photo Assignment: Student will be graded on the proper MLA documentation that they would have previously learned in another unit of study. Students will also be graded on their reading and note-taking process of reading their found photograph. Finally, students will also be graded on their creative engagement of the photograph for the the writing portion of assignment.