# To Kill a Mockingbird 5E Lesson: Using Symbols to Develop Characterization and Theme
## ELA

## Essential Question

How does the author use symbolism to develop characterization and theme? Are humans inherently good or evil? How does inherent human nature impact prejudice?

## Summary

In this lesson, students examine how the author uses symbolism to develop characterization and theme in Part One of To Kill a Mockingbird. Students specifically examine human nature through readings, a Four Corners activity, and a Flipgrid reflection.

## Snapshot

### Engage

Students vote for the best and worst characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and participate in a [Four Corners](#) activity about human nature.

### Explore

Students read an article and use the [Why-Lighting](#) strategy to annotate article.

### Explain

Students and their partners discuss the Four Corners quotes from different points of view that have been clarified and informed by the reading.

### Extend

Students read excerpts from the text and complete a chart on human nature.

### Evaluate

Students record a [Sentence, Phrase, Word](#) on [Flipgrid](#) that summarizes their points of view on human nature.

## Materials

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# Engage

Use the attached Lesson Slides to guide the lesson. Display **slide 2**. Remind students we are continuing the *To Kill a Mockingbird* Unit. Review the essential questions for the unit on **slide 3**: *How does the author use symbolism to develop characterization and theme? How does inherent human nature impact prejudice?*

Display **slide 4**. Review the learning objective for today's lesson: Students will evaluate character descriptions to answer the question: *Are humans inherently good or evil?*

Have students brainstorm a list of morals or characteristics that would make a person "good," and have them make a second list of morals or characteristics that would make a person "bad." Have students vote on which character in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the best character and which is the worst character.

Move to **slide 5.** Instruct students in the Four Corners strategy.

Have students walk around the room and read each of the mini-posters displayed in each corner of the classroom. Ask each student to think about which quotation most closely expresses their opinion.

Instruct students to consider their own reasoning carefully and to evaluate their thoughts before standing near the poster that best matches their opinions.

> **Print the attached quotations for the Four Corners activity. There are seven quotations available in the attachments. Choose four. Post in the four corners of the room.**

You can also display the quotes using the appropriate **slides 6-12**.

- *Human nature is not of itself vicious.* - Thomas Paine **(slide 6)**

- *Everyone is a moon and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody.* - Mark Twain **(slide 7)**
- *Human nature is evil, and goodness is caused by intentional activity.* - Xun Zi **(slide 8)**
- *Man's nature is not essentially evil.* - Mahatma Gandhi **(slide 9)**
- *Human nature is potentially aggressive and destructive and potentially orderly and constructive.* - Margaret Mead **(slide 10)**
- *All human beings are commingled out of good and evil.* - Robert Louis Stevenson **(slide 11)**
- *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.* - Psalm 51:5 **(slide 12)**

# Explore

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**Teacher's Note**

The article republished from NPR is available as either a link to the original document or an attached copy of the reformatted article. Print a copy of the article for each student.

Linked article: Behind a Halloween Mask, Even 'Good' Kids Can Turn into Candy Thieves

Attachment: Behind a Halloween Mask, Even 'Good' Kids Can Turn into Candy Thieves

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Distribute the article Behind a Halloween Mask **. . .** to each student.

Display **slide 14.** Share the instructional strategy Why-Lighting with students. Instruct them to read and simultaneously highlight quotes that prove or disprove the quote they most identified with in the Four Corners activity. Have them use one color highlighter for information that supports their choice and a different color for information that disproves or disagrees with their choice.

# Explain

Regroup students so that they sit with other students supporting *different* quotes from those they initially chose in the Four Corners activity.

Display **slide 15**. Instruct students to follow the prompts on the slide to drive their discussion. When they have completed their preliminary discussion, show **slide 16**. Ask them if they wish to change their original quotation selection. Ask individuals to share their decisions and reasons behind either changing or keeping their original quotation.

# Extend

# Evaluate

# Resources

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