***To Kill a Mockingbird* Name:**

**Background Webquest Date:**

**GOAL:**

The goal of this webquest is to have students become experts on a certain topic that relates to *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The topics are: About the Author, The Scottsboro Boys, Jim Crow Laws, Growing up White/Black in the South, and The Great Depression.

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Each student is given a number 1-5. This number corresponds to the group the student is in. Each group covers an area to be investigated. Group 1: About the Author, Group 2: The Scottsboro Boys, Group 3: Jim Crow Laws, Group 4: Growing up White/Black in the South, Group 5: The Great Depression.
2. Students will click on their group number and independently read through the websites and answer the questions provided. If a student finishes early, he/she may click on the "Fun Stuff" link to learn more about *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
3. Tomorrow, each group will get together to discuss what was learned from the websites and answering the questions.
4. After the groups meet, students will jigsaw their information. This means that new groups will be formed that have one student from Group 1, one student from Group 2, one student from Group 3, one student from Group 4, and one student from Group 5. Each student will teach their new groups about their topic of expertise.

**Group 1:**

Your job is to become an expert about Harper Lee. Click on the links below to read her biography. You will need to read both links to answer the questions. When you are finished, answer the questions provided to you. Be sure to read carefully because you will be teaching your classmates everything you know about her.

<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/harperle.htm>

<http://www.biography.com/articles/Harper-Lee-9377021>

Questions:

1. When and where was Harper Lee born? What was her family like?
2. Who was her childhood best friend?
3. What did she study in college? Did she participate in any extra-curricular activities? Why might this be important to consider while reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
4. How did her decision to move to New York make *To Kill a Mockingbird* a reality?
5. What year was *To Kill a Mockingbird* published? When was it adapted to screen?
6. Was Harper Lee honored in any way following the publication of *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
7. Harper Lee's real life influenced many of the characters and events in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Given what have you learned about her life (including personality traits, friends, family, experiences) make a prediction about what kinds of issues might surface in the book. Do you think that your knowledge about Harper Lee will influence your reading of the book? Should it influence your reading of the book? Why or why not?

Group 2:

Your job is to become an expert on the Scottsboro Boys. Click on the link below to start learning about them. When you are finished, answer the questions below. Be sure to read carefully because you will be teaching your classmates everything you know about The Scottsboro Boys and their trials.

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/FTrials/scottsboro/SB_acct.html>

Questions:

1. Who were the Scottsboro Boys? How did they get into so much trouble?
2. Where and when did the Scottsboro Boys' original trial take place? How do you think this affected the outcome of their trial?
3. What does the NAACP acronym stand for? Why did the NAACP decide not to help the Scottsboro Boys?
4. The Communist Party came to the aid of the Scottsboro Boys. How did the South perceive the Communist Party, and how was it similar to the perception of blacks? What was the Communist Party's hidden agenda in providing aid to the Scottsboro Boys?
5. The Scottsboro Boys were not provided with adequate defense lawyers. Please list at least 3 ways in which the defense lawyers were inadequate.
6. Describe the trials. Were they fair or unfair? Please include at least 3 supporting facts to back up your description.
7. Were the Scottsboro Boys ever pardoned of their convictions?
8. The Scottsboro Boys' trial took place during the childhood of *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s author, Harper Lee. Make a prediction about how this trial might be an important impetus for the book.

Group 3:

Your job is to become an expert about the history of Jim Crow laws. Please read the link below. When you are finished, answer the questions provided to you. Be sure to read carefully because you will be teaching your classmates everything you know about Jim Crow Laws.

<http://vastudies.pwnet.org/pdf/jim_crow.pdf>

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/segregation.html>

Questions:

1. Where did the term "Jim Crow" come from? How is the origin of this term offensive? List 3 ways.
2. How did the term "Jim Crow" become synonymous with the segregation laws in the South?
3. What ended Reconstruction in the South, and what effect did that have on southern blacks?
4. How did the Plessy v. Ferguson case (1896) uphold Jim Crow laws? What effect did this case have on the lives (transportation, education, social implications, etc) of southern blacks?
5. Who was Booker T. Washington? Where did he live? What did he believe was the best way for southern African-Americans to survive in the South?
6. Who was W.E.B. DuBois? Where did he live? What did he believe was the best way for southern African-Americans to survive in the South?
7. Why do you think Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois had differing opinions on how to survive in the South? Please give 3 facts to support your opinion.
8. How did many southern blacks escape the South? Where did they go? What was this movement called?

Group 4:

Your job is to become an expert on what it was like to group up white and black in the South in the 1930s. Please read the links below and answer the questions. Be sure to read carefully because you will be teaching your classmates everything you know about what it was like to be white/black in the South.

"Growing up Black in the 1930s"

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12111/mculley.html>

**Things to think about while reading:**

* What does Mrs. Barge know about her ancestry? How does she talk about her family?
* What were her and her family's living conditions like?
* When was the first time she noticed a difference between the lives of black people and the lives of white people? From Mrs. Barge's account, what do you think is the most astounding difference?
* What was school like for Mrs. Barge?
* What kind of jobs were available to black people in the South?
* Were black people allowed to vote?
* Mrs. Barge clearly has a different opinion of white people than her father does. What does she say that proves this? How does her perception of white people differ from her father's? Why do you think that is?

"Growing up White in the 1930s"

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12111/girl.html?tqskip1=1&tqtime=0227>

**Things to think about while reading:**

* What do these three ladies have in common about their ancestry? How do they talk about their families?
* What were the three ladies living conditions like?
* What were these ladies' first experiences with black people?
* Did these white ladies ever play with their black peers?

Questions:

1. Please compare the three ladies' backgrounds from "Growing up White in the 1930s." How do their backgrounds differ from Mrs. Barge's background from "Growing up Black in the 1930s"?
2. The ladies in "Growing up White in the 1930s" talk about what made a "good family" in the South. What do they say makes a "good family"? How do you think Mrs. Barge would describe a "good family"? Compare and contrast the three ladies' families to Mrs. Barges family, explain the similarities and differences. Based on your explanation, would Mrs. Barge's family be considered a "good family"? Why or why not?
3. List the occupations available to black women in the South in the 1930s according to Mrs. Barge's interview. How did these occupations influence Mrs. Barge's perception of white people? How did these occupations influence the perception of black people according to the three ladies' accounts from "Growing up White in the 1930s"?
4. Mrs. Barge ends her interview on a positive note by saying "you shouldn't put people into categories." Make a prediction based on these interviews about how Calpurnia might feel about the Finches. Why?

Group 5:

Your job is to become an expert on the Great Depression. Read through the links provided, and then answer the questions below. Be sure to read carefully because you will be teaching your classmates everything you know about the Great Depression.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression>

Use this website for the first 4 questions.

<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Memories+of+the+dust+bowl:+for+people+of+the+Southern+Plains,+the+...-a0144296833>

Use this website for the last questions.

Questions:

1. What is "Black Tuesday" and why does it mark the beginning of the Great Depression?
2. Many people believe that WWII marked the end of the Great Depression. How did the war affect the economy?
3. What president was inaugurated in 1933? What were some of the changes made by this administration?
4. What was the New Deal? How did the New Deal affect American citizens?
5. What was the Dust Bowl?
6. How did the Dust Bowl affect the Southern Plains?
7. What affect did the Dust Bowl have on agriculture? How would this affect farmers and their employers?
8. Given what you learned about the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, make a prediction about what you think the setting of *To Kill a Mockingbird* will look like. What will the houses look like? What will the characters be wearing? How will the characters act towards each other? How will Scout's classmates act toward Scout knowing that her father is a lawyer?