

**Source:** [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

**List:** Best Books of the 20th Century

**Title:** To Kill a Mockingbird

**Author:** Harper Lee

**Ranking in the List:** 1

**Rating:** 4.26

**Genres:** Classics, Fiction, Historical Fiction, School, Literature, Young Adult, Historical, Novels, High-School

**Total Word Count:** 538

**Key-Words:** bestseller, town, kill, mockingbird, price, love, human, hate, Alabama, kindness, copies, masterpiece, literature, publish, enjoy.

**Brief Summary:**

The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it. "To Kill A Mockingbird" became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic.

Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, "To Kill A Mockingbird" takes readers to the roots of human behavior - to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humor and pathos. Now with over 18 million copies in print and translated into forty languages, this regional story by a young Alabama woman claims universal appeal. Harper Lee always considered her book to be a simple love story. Today it is regarded as a masterpiece of American literature.

**About the Author:**

Harper Lee, known as Nelle, was born in the Alabama town of Monroeville, the youngest of four children of Amasa Coleman Lee and Frances Cunningham Finch Lee. Her father, a

former newspaper editor and proprietor, was a lawyer who served on the state legislature from 1926 to 1938. As a child, Lee was a tomboy and a precocious reader, and enjoyed the friendship of her schoolmate and neighbor, the young Truman Capote.

After graduating from high school in Monroeville, Lee enrolled at the all-female Huntingdon College in Montgomery (1944-45), and then pursued a law degree at the University of Alabama (1945-50), pledging the Chi Omega sorority. While there, she wrote for several student publications and spent a year as editor of the campus humor magazine, "Ramma-Jamma". Though she did not complete the law degree, she studied for a summer in Oxford, England, before moving to New York in 1950, where she worked as a reservation clerk with Eastern Air Lines and BOAC.

Lee continued as a reservation clerk until the late 50s, when she devoted herself to writing. She lived a frugal life, traveling between her cold-water-only apartment in New York to her family home in Alabama to care for her father.

Having written several long stories, Harper Lee located an agent in November 1956. The following month at the East 50th townhouse of her friends Michael Brown and Joy Williams Brown, she received a gift of a year's wages with a note: "You have one year off from your job to write whatever you please. Merry Christmas."

Within a year, she had a first draft. Working with J. B. Lippincott & Co. editor Tay Hohoff, she completed *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the summer of 1959. Published July 11, 1960, the novel was an immediate bestseller and won great critical acclaim, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1961. It remains a bestseller with more than 30 million copies in print. In 1999, it was voted "Best Novel of the Century" in a poll by the Library Journal.