

Senior High School English Novel Descriptions

revised March 2018

English 10-1

Print and Online Course

To Kill a Mockingbird
by Harper Lee

A world-famous novel written in 1960. The narrator and main character remembers her experiences as a young girl growing up in a small town in the Southern United States. She and her brother have several adventures when they try to learn more about the mysterious man who lives next door. They discover the real nature of their town when their lawyer father defends a local man. The story is about innocence, loss, and learning to see the world for what it really is. It is about issues of understanding and accepting differences.

Speak by Laurie Halse
Anderson

A mature novel about a grade nine student who is attempting to deal with the trauma of rape. Melinda Sordino is the main character who is struggling with depression and fitting into high school. Confronting her fears allows Melinda to stand up for the injustice.

The Secret Life of Bees
by Sue Monk Kidd

The story of Lily Owens who lives on a farm in South Carolina. The death of her mother, when Lily was four, has devastated and forever shaped her life. Her housekeeper, Rosaleen, cares for Lily, but the setting of the novel during 1964 (Civil Rights era) reveals the racial violence that explodes during that period. Rosaleen is a victim of this violence, causing the two to leave town in search of information about Lily's mother. The story reveals their search for identity and a sense of belonging during this difficult time.

A Monster Calls by
Patrick Ness

The protagonist, Conor O'Malley, is a 13-year-old boy struggling with his mom's terminal cancer. His grandmother, who he has little in common with, tries to mother him, and his father lives far too away to help, leaving Conor feeling alone and helpless. Making his life more difficult is the fact that Harry and his buddies bully Conor almost daily at school. Conor feels alone and helpless, but finds the confidence and courage to go on through "a monster".