



To Kill a Mockingbird



Vocabulary Preview

Preview 1

These sentences contain information from the readings. Fill in the blanks with the word that best completes each sentence.

classic intervenes published seeks summary themes

1. The book *To Kill a Mockingbird* became popular soon after it was _____.
2. Today the book is considered to be a _____.
3. The writer uses the voice of a girl to tell a story that explores the _____ of tolerance and justice.
4. The girl's father, Atticus Finch, is an attorney who _____ to prove that a black man is innocent of a crime.
5. An opponent in the trial tries to kill the girl and her brother. Boo Radley, the children's strange friend, _____ and saves them.
6. To give a _____ of the book, it is necessary to tell the main points of two intersecting stories.

Preview 2

Look at the way the underlined words are used in the sentences. Match each word with its meaning or definition.

1. The author, Nelle Harper Lee, has never wanted fame or attention.
2. Harper Lee didn't grant interviews, except around the time that *To Kill a Mockingbird* became available to readers.
3. Atticus Finch, the attorney in the novel, tries to illustrate the impossibility of the accused man's guilt.
4. Students' essays on *To Kill a Mockingbird* show that the book often leads readers to new insight.
5. In a 1991 survey, the Book-of-the-Month Club found that only the *Bible* ranked higher than *To Kill a Mockingbird* "as making a difference in people's lives."

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. author | a. to give, fulfill, or agree to |
| _____ 2. grant | b. an understanding of the true meaning or the hidden nature of things |
| _____ 3. illustrate | c. the writer of a book, article, poem, etc. |
| _____ 4. insight | d. a sample of data or opinions that can be used to represent what the complete data might show |
| _____ 5. survey | e. to make clear using examples or comparisons, etc. |



Reading Preview: What Do You Already Know?

Circle the correct answer. If you don't know the answer, guess.

1. Harper Lee, the writer of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, wrote
 - a. many novels
 - b. only one novel
 - c. a play
2. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a famous
 - a. book about birds that are extinct
 - b. painting
 - c. best-selling novel and classic movie
3. The plot of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is about
 - a. race and injustice before the Civil Rights movement
 - b. life and a killing in a small Southern town
 - c. a little girl who loves a bird and her brother
4. In the story, an unusual friendship develops between
 - a. two children and a strange neighbor
 - b. an African-American child and a white child
 - c. an attorney and a criminal
5. The father of the children in the story is
 - a. an attorney who proves to be greedy
 - b. an attorney who proves to be prejudiced
 - c. an attorney who proves to be courageous
6. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was
 - a. required reading in U.S. high schools for many years
 - b. banned by many schools
 - c. both a and b



Introduction to the Readings

(1) *To Kill a Mockingbird* was **published** more than 40 years ago, and its American **author** has lived as a virtual recluse ever since, but according to librarians (Museum, Libraries and Archives Council 2004), Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the one book that everyone should read. It is widely considered the 20th century's most widely read American novel. It has sold more than 30 million copies and, according to many sources, still sells one million copies each year.

(2) The Pulitzer Prize–Winner of 1961 is now considered to be a **classic** novel. It has routinely been at the top of a World Book Day poll **conducted** by the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) that asked U.S. librarians which book all adults should read before they die. This novel has been required reading by many U.S. schools for many years. It also did well on another poll about books with favorite happy endings. *To Kill a Mockingbird* explores issues of race and class in the U.S. South in the 1930s through a dramatic court case of an African-American man charged with the rape of white girl.

(3) According to one of the librarians who voted for the book, it “has all the factors of a great read. It is touching and funny but has a serious message about prejudice, fighting for justice, and coming of age.” It's a simple story about life in Alabama, but one that has universal appeal. Harper Lee reportedly considered her book to be a love story. More than 40 years later, many regard it as an American masterpiece.

(4) The two readings come from an unauthorized biography of Nelle Harper Lee called *Mockingbird*. The **author**, Charles Shield, tried without success to interview Lee for his book. Lee repeatedly denied requests to **grant** an interview. In the first reading, he explains why he wrote the book and what he hopes readers will learn about Lee and the writing of her novel from his biography. Reading 1 also contains a brief **summary** of the novel.

(5) The fact that Harper Lee never wrote another book and remained out of the public eye for the majority of her life has created speculation and interest in her. According to Shields,

“I had every intention of writing many novels,” [Lee] reportedly said, “but I never could have imagined the success *To Kill a Mockingbird* would enjoy. I became overwhelmed.” Every waking hour seemed devoted to the promotion and publicity surrounding the book. Time passed and she retreated from the spotlight, she said. She claimed to be inherently shy and was never comfortable in the limelight. Fame had never meant anything to her, and she was not prepared for what *To Kill a Mockingbird* achieved. Before she knew it, nearly a decade had passed and she was nowhere near finishing a new book. Rather than allow herself to be eternally frustrated, . . . she refused to pressure herself into writing another novel unless the muse* came to her naturally.

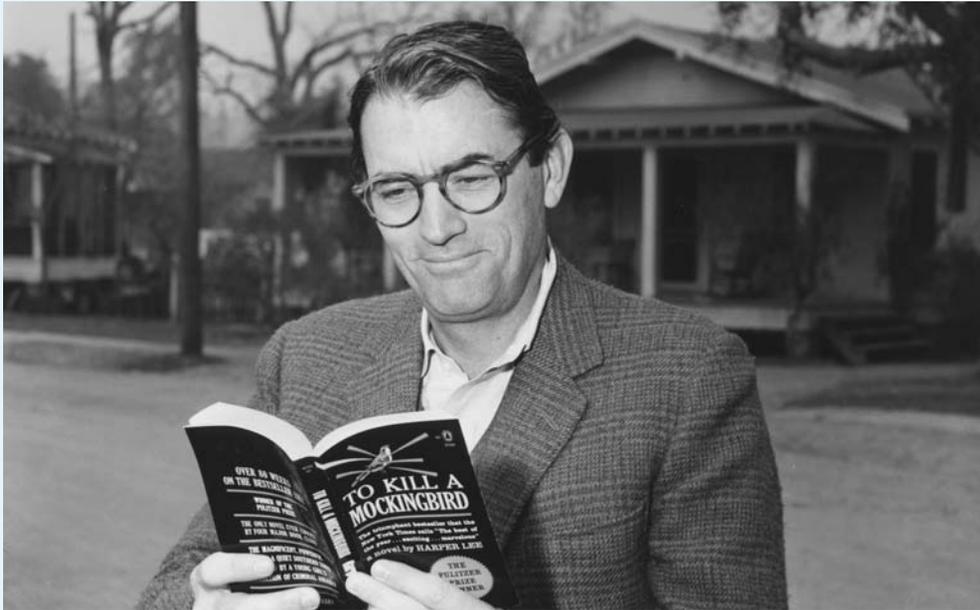
***muse**: an inspiration (when lowercased)

(6) In Reading 2, Shields discusses the impact that the book and movie (released in 1962) *To Kill a Mockingbird* had on U.S. society.

Reading 1: Who Is Harper Lee?

Excerpt from *Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee*
by Charles J. Shields (New York: Henry Holt, 2006), pp. 1–5.

(7) Nelle Harper Lee . . . is the woman who gave the world *To Kill a Mockingbird*, one of the most influential pieces of fiction produced in the United States. In a “**Survey** of Lifetime Reading Habits” **conducted** by the Book-of-the-Month Club in 1991, researchers found that *To Kill a Mockingbird* ranked second only to the *Bible* “as making a difference in people’s lives.” [More than] 45 years after its **publication**, the novel still draws almost a million readers annually. Maybe that is because its lessons of human dignity and respect for others remain fundamental and universal.



Gregory Peck refers to the best-selling novel on the set of To Kill a Mockingbird.

(8) Despite her novel's huge impact, Lee's writing life has been brief, and her personal life has been intensely private. She wrote only one book, her Pulitzer Prize-winning perennial bestseller, and then, after a brief moment in the spotlight, disappeared from the public eye. She has not **sought** fame, then or since, although around the time of *To Kill a Mockingbird's* **publication** she did **grant** interviews.

(9) Unlike her lifelong friend Truman Capote (perhaps even because of his example and experience), Harper Lee has never appeared comfortable in the limelight. In fact, not only does she not solicit attention, she also actively discourages it, refusing to speak in public and turning down all requests for interviews and all forms of cooperation with writers and reporters. In our era of

***prurient:** extreme and unsound; not positive

relentless and often prurient* self-exposure by some approval-hungry personalities, Lee prefers silence and self-respect. That is not to say she is furtively reclusive; though she enjoys her solitude, she is not some modern-day Emily Dickinson. She lives a normal life, replete with community activities, many related to her church. Lee is "like someone you'd

meet in any small town," as Professor William Smart of Sweet Briar College, in Virginia, expressed it. And Smart has known Lee for [more than] 40 years.

(10) I want readers to be introduced to the **author** and get a sense of what makes her tick: the things that influenced her when she was growing up during the Depression in Monroeville, Alabama, for example; the reasons why classmates regarded her with awe; the traits of non-**conformity** and almost ferocious independence that distinguished her in college; the steps that led to her dropping out of law school and moving to New York to write; the sense of loyalty that drew her to Truman Capote's* side when he was researching his "nonfiction novel," *In Cold Blood*;* the sense of humor that sustained her while she was scrutinized by the media because of the success of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the film based on it; and finally, the reasons why she never wrote another novel.

(11) As I was researching this book, I tended to be asked the same questions by interested friends. The first was, "Is Harper Lee still alive?" Yes. "Nail Har-puh," as her name is pronounced in her hometown, spends most of the year in Monroeville, and a few months in New York in the apartment she has maintained for the [more than] 45 years. Her eldest sister, Alice . . . who is one of the most highly regarded attorneys in Alabama, shares a house with Nelle in Monroeville.

(12) Residents are accustomed to seeing the two ladies puttering around the First United Methodist Church, where they have been members all their lives; at the country club where they enjoy the lunch buffet and the opportunity to see friends; and at various favorite diners around town. Nelle refuses to talk about *To Kill a Mockingbird* in social situations, and friends warn strangers not to bring it up. She has been known to leave the room if pestered about the novel.

(13) The second question I was asked was, "Is she married?" The answer is no. . . . I am not sure what labels Lee would apply to herself, except "woman," "Southerner," and perhaps "writer."

***Truman Capote/
In Cold Blood:**
Truman Capote wrote this groundbreaking book in 1966; it was the first non-fiction novel because Capote as a reporter got so close to the story that he wrote about events and conversations as if he were there.

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(14) The final question I was continually asked was, “Why didn’t she write another novel?” This was the big question I had asked myself in the first place, and which led to the adventure of writing this book. After reading it, I hope you will come away with at least some idea of why she never **published** another novel after *To Kill a Mockingbird*.



(15) Years ago, when I was an English teacher in a large high school near Chicago, I taught *To Kill a Mockingbird* to [9th graders]. That’s a good time to be introduced to it, because students at that age are crossing the bridge from childhood to young adulthood, as the young characters in Lee’s novel are. In-class discussions of the novel tend to be lively, and assigned essays are weighty with **insights** and opinions. It’s a very rich text to teach.

(16) If you don’t remember much about the novel, here’s a **summary**:

(17) *To Kill a Mockingbird* is really two stories. One is a coming-of-age tale told from the point of view of Scout Finch, a girl of about nine, and her slightly older brother, Jem. The second story concerns their father, attorney Atticus Finch, who has been appointed to defend a black man, Tom Robinson, falsely accused of raping a white woman.

(18) There are also two broad **themes**: tolerance and justice. The first is treated through the children’s interactions with Arthur “Boo” Radley, their mysterious and maligned neighbor; the second is **illustrated** by Atticus’s courageous moral stance in defending Tom Robinson to the best of his ability, despite the racial prejudices of the town. Tying the **themes** together is a homespun piece of advice that Atticus gives Scout: “If you just learn a single trick, Scout, you’ll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view. Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it.” This appeal to recognize the humanity in everyone is practicable in normal day-to-day relations with people, even those we dislike, and, as Atticus powerfully demonstrates, in courtrooms where juries must sit in judgment of their fellow men and women.



Gregory Peck starred as Atticus Finch in the movie version of To Kill a Mockingbird.

(19) The plot of the coming-of-age story revolves around Boo Radley, who is rumored to be a kind of monster living in a shuttered house down the street from the Finches. Scout, Jem, and their next-door neighbor Dill Harris engage in pranks to make Boo show himself. Unexpectedly, however, Boo responds to their interest by reciprocating with small acts of kindness and consideration. They come to feel affectionate about their unseen friend.

(20) The Tom Robinson plot is fairly straightforward. As a black man, Tom doesn't have a ghost of a chance* of being acquitted* of raping a white woman, and Atticus knows he will lose the case. Still, the attorney faces up to the challenge, even stepping between a lynch mob and his client, though racist taunts are directed at Atticus's children.

***ghost of a chance:**
very small, if any

***acquitted:** found
innocent

(21) The two plots intersect on a Halloween night not long after the trial is concluded. The drunk father of the girl Tom was accused of having

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raped ambushes the Finch children because Atticus exposed his ignorance and vices during the trial. He intends to kill the children, but they are saved by the angelic **intervention** of Boo Radley. Atticus is persuaded by the sheriff not to involve Radley in a homicide case (the children's attacker was killed during the struggle), because it would be cruel, he argues, to subject a pathologically shy man to a sensational trial that would, in any case, end in his acquittal. Atticus is unsure of the moral **implications** until Scout likens the choice to something her father once said: it's a sin to kill a mockingbird "because mockingbirds don't do anything but make music for us to enjoy." Scout escorts Radley back to his home and safety.

Reading 2: *To Kill a Mockingbird* and U.S. American Society

Excerpt from *Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee*
by Charles J. Shields (New York: Henry Holt, 2006), pp. 254–55.

(22) Concern over law and order and civil rights was adding to *To Kill a Mockingbird's* foothold in public schools. Eight percent of public junior high schools and high schools nationally had added the novel to their reading lists only three years after its **publication**. [Lee] marveled at the book's appeal to youngsters: "I find that hard to understand. The novel is about a former generation, and I don't see how this younger generation can like it." . . .

(23) In 1966, the Hanover County School Board in Richmond, Virginia, ordered all copies of *To Kill a Mockingbird* removed from the county's school library shelves. In the board's opinion, the novel was "immoral literature." The episode began when a prominent local physician, W.C. Boshier, the father of a Hanover County student and a county Board of Education trustee, protested that a novel about rape was "improper for our children to read." On the strength of his criticism, the board voted to ban *To Kill a Mockingbird* from the county schools. The next day, the *Richmond News-Leader* editorialized about

the board’s “asinine performance.” . . . The first fifty students of the local high school who requested a copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird* would receive one gratis, courtesy of the newspaper.

(24) For almost two weeks, the controversy went back and forth on the letters-to-the-editors page, until the *News-Leader* called a halt by allowing [Lee] to have the last word. . . . Eventually, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was restored to Hanover County school libraries because of a technicality in board policy. But the Richmond debate over the book’s suitability for young readers was the first of many in the ensuing years. As more schools added *To Kill a Mockingbird* to their reading lists (it reached 74% in 1988), the book also joined the list of the one hundred novels most often **targeted** for banning. . . .

(25) In American culture, *To Kill a Mockingbird* would become like *Catch-22*,* *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*,* *Portnoy’s Complaint*,* *On the Road*,* *The Bell Jar*,* *Soul on Ice*,* and *The Feminist Mystique**—books that seized the imagination of the post-World War II generation—a novel that figured in changing “the system.”

***Catch-22**: written by Joseph Heller in 1961, this book satirized World War II and the bureaucracy of war.

***One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest**: written by Ken Kesey in 1962, it is considered a study of institutions and their effect on the human mind.

***Portnoy’s Complaint**: written by Philip Roth in 1969, it is representative of the coming sexual revolution of the 1960s.

***On the Road**: written by Jack Kerouac in 1951, this is considered the defining book of the “beat” generation.

***The Bell Jar**: written by Sylvia Plath in 1963, it was the first semi-autobiographical book about mental illness.

***Soul on Ice**: written by Eldridge Cleaver in 1968, it established the radical Black writing movement.

***The Feminist Mystique**: written by Betty Friedan in 1964, this book described “the female problem” and led to women’s rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s.



Comprehension Check

Did you understand the readings? Mark these sentences true (T) or false (F).

- _____ 1. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is told from the point of view of a young girl.
- _____ 2. Scout and her brother Jem are the children of an attorney named Atticus Finch.
- _____ 3. Boo Radley is an African-American man falsely accused of raping a woman.
- _____ 4. Scout and Jem develop positive feelings for Boo Radley because he shows them kindness and consideration.
- _____ 5. Atticus Finch defends the children's friend, Boo Radley, in court.
- _____ 6. Atticus Finch must face hostility from the town for defending his client.
- _____ 7. Racism is an important issue in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
- _____ 8. Many copies of *To Kill a Mockingbird* are still sold every year.
- _____ 9. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was made into a film.
- _____ 10. Author Nelle Harper Lee died before her book became successful.
- _____ 11. Harper Lee wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird* after writing many unsuccessful books.
- _____ 12. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was banned in some high schools but taught in many others.



Word Study

Target Vocabulary

author	illustrate	seek
classic	implicate (implications)	summary
conduct	insight	survey
conform (conformity)	intervene (intervention)	target
grant	publish (publication)	theme

Word Parts

Exercise 1: Roots

The roots *-duc-*, *-duce-*, and *-duct-* come from the Latin word *ducere*, which means “lead.” Look at the way the underlined words are used in the sentences. Then answer the questions on page 104 using complete sentences.

1. Although they may be considered crazy, even by friends and family members, some people insist that they have been abducted by space aliens.
2. Some students study best while listening to music. Others find that listening to music is not conducive to learning.
3. Book clubs sometimes conduct surveys and polls to find out about habits and preferences of readers.
4. There is no such thing as a good orchestra without a good conductor.
5. Companies usually deduct federal and state income tax from employees’ paychecks.
6. It is important to educate people about health and nutrition.
7. Meditation can induce very deep relaxation.
8. The government will be taking a greater role in developing a productive workforce.

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1. Do you believe in alien abductions?

2. For you, what things are conducive to studying?

3. Have you ever conducted a science experiment? If so, describe it. If not, what would you like to try?

4. What do you think are some characteristics of a good orchestra conductor?

5. Do you have a job? If so, is anything deducted from your paycheck? What deductions have you heard about?

6. Do you think moral education is primarily the responsibility of parents or of schools?

7. How you ever taken a drug or a food product to induce weight loss?

8. What do children need to learn to be productive members of society?

Exercise 2: Suffixes

The suffix *-ic* means “of,” “having,” or “pertaining to,” and it can be added to some roots and words to form adjectives. For example, the word *idealistic* describes a person who has ideals—an idealist.

A. Match the words with their meanings.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| _____ 1. acid | a. a person who writes poems, often as an occupation |
| _____ 2. altruist | b. a special group or rank |
| _____ 3. class | c. a solid with six equal square sides |
| _____ 4. cube | d. a substance (usually in a solution) that has a sour taste and that can react with other substances to form salt |
| _____ 5. meteor | e. an unselfish person devoted to the good of others |
| _____ 6. patriot | f. a “shooting star” (a meteoroid lighting the sky as it goes through the earth’s atmosphere), or any person who moves or progresses with amazing speed |
| _____ 7. poet | g. a group of interrelated or interconnected elements that form something larger and more complex |
| _____ 8. Satan | h. a person who loves, supports, and defends his or her country |
| _____ 9. system | i. in biblical sources, the chief evil spirit; the enemy of God and humanity |

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B. Add the suffix *-ic* to the words listed on page 105 to complete the sentences. Follow spelling rules as necessary when adding suffixes.

1. Only novels of the highest quality win awards and continue to rank as bestsellers year after year. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is in this category. It is a _____ novel.
2. To make health care affordable, it's not enough to ask hospitals and doctors to cut fees. We need to look at insurance and drug industries and at other factors. Our health care problems are _____.
3. The music is important in writing a good song, but so are the words, or lyrics. In the best songs, the lyrics are _____.
4. Some people believe that the pentagram and other geometric shapes are _____ symbols and that they are used in black or evil magic.
5. If you use too much vinegar in a salad dressing, it can taste _____.
6. Many _____ young people want to work for peace and social justice.
7. The rental price of some moving trucks depends on how many _____ feet of space the trucks contain.
8. Even many people who are not especially _____ believe that military men and women should be appreciated and supported when they return after serving in a war.
9. Sometimes a person who enjoys a _____ rise to fame will also experience a sudden crash.

Word Relationships

Exercise 3: Synonyms

Three of the words in each series have similar meanings. Cross out the word that has a different meaning.

1. grant	give	take	allow
2. insight	assistance	knowledge	wisdom
3. author	composer	artist	salesperson
4. survey	article	poll	questionnaire
5. theme	idea	topic	criticism
6. target	select	collect	aim
7. illustrate	show	demonstrate	interrupt
8. implicate	connect	value	relate
9. seek	pursue	search	show

Exercise 4: Analogies

Complete each analogy with one of these target words from the unit: *author*, *conduct*, *conform*, *grant*, *intervene*, *publish*, or *seek*. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. **tolerate** : **agree** is like **yield** : conform
2. **programmer** : **gamer** is like _____ : **reader**
3. **deny** : **refuse** is like _____ : **allow**
4. **ignore** : **permit** is like _____ : **stop**
5. **cook** : **serve** is like **write** : _____
6. **perform** : **dance** is like _____ : **poll**
7. **want** : **have** is like _____ : **find**

The Grammar of Words and Word Families

Exercise 5: Word Families

Use these words to fill in the word family chart. Some words will be used more than once.

author (2x)

authorial
authorize
authorless

classic (2x)

classical
classically
classicalness

conduct (2x)

conducive
conduciveness

conform

conforming
conformist
conformity

grant (2x)

grantable
grantedly
granter

illustrate

illustratable
illustration
illustrative
illustrator

implicate

implication
implicational

insight

insightful

intervene

intervening
intervention

publish

publication
publishable
publisher

seek

seeker

summary (2x)

summarily
summarize
summation

survey (2x)

surveyable
surveyor

target (3x)

targetable
targetless

theme (2x)

thematic
thematically

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Noun	Noun (person)	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
—	author			—
classic	—	—		
	—	conduct		—
		conform		—
		grant		
		illustrate		—
	—	implicate		—
insight	—	—		—
	—	intervene		—
		publish		—
—		seek	—	—
summary	—			
survey				—
target	—			—
theme	—	—		

Exercise 6: Word Forms

Complete each sentence with the correct form of the word in parentheses. Add prefixes and suffixes as necessary, and follow spelling rules.

1. (conform) In many ways, Martin Luther King, Jr., was a _____.
2. (grant) The Queen of England has been the _____ of many audiences with actors, film stars, athletes, and other famous people.
3. (illustrate) Many language textbooks include _____ artwork and graphics.
4. (publish) Sales of hard copies of books are forecasted to decline as online _____ of e-books increases.
5. (intervene) Police _____ is often necessary in cases where domestic violence or child abuse is reported.
6. (seek) Einstein was right about many things and may have been wrong about some things. What is clear is that he always _____ the truth.



Understanding Words in Context

Exercise 7: Words in Context

Complete each sentence with one of these words. Change the word form by adding *-s*, *-ed*, *-ize*, or *-tion*, or a combination of these, if necessary.

conform illustrate implicate insight summary target

1. Before agreeing to spray anything into the atmosphere, it is important to understand all environmental, financial, and health _____ of such actions on global warming.
2. The 1960s was a decade when young adults did not wish to _____ to the social rules established by their parents' generation.
3. These days, most TV reporters try to _____ the news in as few words as possible.
4. Because of her good grades, high test scores, and impressive extra-curricular activities, she was _____ by several companies before she graduated.
5. Meditation is not only recognized as a valuable tool for achieving relaxation and reducing stress. Many people claim that meditating gives them important _____ into their own behavior and emotions.
6. Einstein _____ his theory of relativity with mathematical equations and diagrams.

Exercise 8: Multiple Meanings of a Word/Parts of Speech

Several of the target words in this unit have more than one meaning. Read the sets of sentences, paying attention to the underlined word. Write N for noun or V for verb on the blank before each sentence. The word endings and word forms of all the words in a sentence can be used to help determine the parts of speech of other words. What word endings did you use as clues to help you determine the part of speech? For example, which words provided clues?

1. a. ____ Leo Tolstoy is the famous author of *War and Peace*.
b. ____ Some Internet sites invite people to author short articles for payment or for royalties.

Clues: _____

2. a. ____ Every year, many nonprofit organizations receive grants from the federal government to fund their work.
b. ____ After his death, the rock star's family decided to grant a few interviews to the media.

Clues: _____

3. a. ____ The Census is a sort of government survey that collects information such as how many people live in the districts of each state.
b. ____ During the time just before elections, political parties usually survey people to find out which issues are most important to them.

Clues: _____

4. a. ____ The military claims that it carefully tries to target terrorists and enemy forces when it carries out air strikes, but sometimes civilians are killed.
b. ____ Children are the target of many marketing campaigns.

Clues: _____



Using Words in Communication

Exercise 9: Reading

Read at least two short biographies of one of your favorite authors. You can find short biographies online or in reference books in the library. If you choose to find your information online, be sure you use reputable, legitimate sources. Write a short outline on a separate piece of paper or write notes on index cards. Include the information listed and any other interesting facts. Be prepared to share your information with the class.

- full name
- nationality (and countries the person lived in, if important)
- dates of birth and death
- names of major works
- things or people that influenced his or her work (if any are mentioned)
- brief personal information
- awards or honors received

Exercise 10: Writing

Write a three-paragraph summary of the plot of your favorite book by the author you researched in Exercise 9. Check one or more references to refresh your memory, if you need to, but be sure you do not plagiarize. Your summary must be your own words.

Exercise 11: Critical Thinking

These questions will help you develop your critical-thinking skills. Critical thinking helps you evaluate information and reach logical conclusions using the information that is given. Ask yourself the questions as you work on your answers: What information in the reading supports my answer? What other information do I have to support my conclusion? Where can I get more information about the topic?

First, answer the questions by yourself. Then share your answers with a partner. Decide on one answer for each question. Be prepared to explain your answers to the class.

1. According to the first reading in this unit, the MLA conducted a poll in which librarians were asked, “Which book should every adult read before they die?” What would your answer to this question be? Why?
2. Do you think novels are as important today as stories told in other media—for example in movies or in online blogs? Why or why not?
3. Several groups attempted to ban *To Kill a Mockingbird* from high school reading lists and from high school libraries. Do you think that a book dealing with the topic of rape should be banned? Do you think there is other content that should be banned in print or online? If yes, what? Defend your answer.