



Thematic Activities: Kick-Off Activities

Title of Kickoff: *Silent Debate and Spoken Conversation*

Cycle Theme: Growth

Duration: 30 minutes

Gateway: The yearning for meaning and purpose

Materials Needed: Poster paper, question signs, and markers

Connections to the Theme: Studying prejudice and injustice in our society begins with asking questions--often uncomfortable and inconvenient questions--and then demanding answers and requiring action from ourselves and from our society. High school offers a safe place to begin exposing the tough questions to the light, allowing students to start voicing their ideas and working through complicated issues. All growing things require interaction with both nurturing elements and challenging new

experiences. This activity is meant only to plant the seeds of growth that should be encouraged throughout the unit.

Objectives: To allow a brief introduction to the big, complex questions in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Students should leave the discussion knowing that there is a great deal more to say and understanding that opportunities to wrestle with these concepts will arise throughout the study of the novel.

Directions for the activity:

- Grab a marker.
- ***Do this part slowly, thoughtfully, and silently.*** There are nine questions scattered throughout the room. Answer each one in complete sentences and with your honest reactions. Initial all of your comments.
- You can then also add +s or Δs to the comments of other peers if you wish. I recommend one per question. Don't forget to initial your work.
- When you are finished, bring a piece of loose-leaf paper and a clipboard and meet in a circle on the floor. Begin to answer the questions on the white board.
 - Which questions struck a chord with you?
 - Which inspired strong opinions in you?
 - Which led to confusion or uncertainty in your response?
 - Which reminded you of real-world stories or experiences from your own life?

Mini Discussion: I will facilitate the discussion. It is not a seminar but a chance to process ideas briefly before moving on. **We will spend about 20 minutes processing our responses to these questions.**



Group Initiative (To be used only at an appropriate moment in the unit)

Theme: Growth

Duration: 30 minutes

Materials: handouts (grids), colorful paperclips, overhead (for screening questions), ceramic magnets, and a large classroom version of the grid.

Objectives: To show how we all struggle with different experiences and receive different portions of privilege; to link our personal experiences to broader questions of justice and injustice.

Directions:

- Students may not talk. They may not look at others' papers.
- They all place their paperclips in the center of their personal grids.
- Tell students, "You may not speak during this activity at all. I will read all questions and directions aloud. They will also be screened on the board in front of you. Move your paperclip according to the directions and questions. Do not look at others during this exercise, and do not share your reactions."
- Privilege Walk Questions: <https://edge.psu.edu/workshops/mc/power/privilegewalk.shtml>
- After students complete the walk with their paperclips on their grid, they mark where their paperclip ended up. I place the classroom grid in the hallway and ask students to, one by one, draw an X where their clip was located. This way, students don't judge one another's experiences.
- While students are placing their X marks, they should silently journal about their reactions to this experience.
- When everyone is finished with the big grid, students will meet for discussion.

Discussion:

1. What do you notice about our class grid?
2. Which questions stood out to you and why?
3. If you could change this grid, how would you do that and why would you do that?
4. What does this grid tell us about the school? The larger community? The country? The world?



Culminating Activity

Title of Culminating Activity: *Justice Projects* Presentations

Cycle Theme: Growth

Duration: 105 minutes

Gateway: The yearning for meaning and purpose

Materials Needed: typed paper and presentation materials

Connections to the Theme: The theme of growth suggests not only emotional, psychological, and academic growth, but also growth from thought to action. Through this project, students will plan their own social action in order to address a need in their world.

Objectives: To utilize research skills and academic content in order to create a new idea; to apply learning about social justice in a way that could lead to action and service learning; to share learning with

classmates in a meaningful way.

Directions for the activity:

- Bring presentation boards, Google Slides, artistic creations, or other visual aids to share ideas.
- Students will be placed in four groups and will present in 15 minute time slots.
- Between each time slot, students will have 5 minutes to take down/set up their work.
- Reflections: Students not setting up or taking down presentations will write reflective pieces on the presentations they viewed.
- Discussion: During the last 20 minutes of class, students will meet in circle and share one acknowledgement each.

Paper and Presentation Components:

- Six-paragraph argumentative essay:
 - Describe why your solution would work in three parts. Introduce the problem in the introduction (background) and the solution as the thesis/claim. Include a counterclaim after three body paragraphs, just to let your naysayers have a voice.
- Presentation of your choice (five minutes in length):
 - Blueprint, sculpture, detailed drawing, film, Google Slides, poster board, children's book, etc.