

Important events

On the next page is a list of events that take place within the novel. We might see Robinson's trial and the revealing of Boo Radley as the two most important, overriding events and these as the smaller happenings that provide the scaffolding for the larger stories. Below are some suggestions of how you might ask students to use the cards on the next page:

1. Ask students to put the events in order (the cards need to be cut up first).
2. Get them to rank the events in order of importance to the novel. You might have to let them use a diamond ranking system so that they do not have to choose each one over another.
3. Ask students which is the single most important event to the story – the one that couldn't possibly be left out. Get them to present their ideas to the rest of the class.
4. Which event could be left out of the novel? Ask students to pick just one event to discard.
5. For the two ideas above you could conduct it as a balloon debate – Which event can be thrown out? – This might be a good speaking and listening exercise.
6. In pairs students are Harper Lee and her editor. Role play a discussion in which the novel is too long and one event has to be left out of the novel. Again this is a good speaking and listening exercise.
7. Pin the events up around the classroom and get students to summarise each one. To ensure students are succinct in exams give them a small word limit (and then make it smaller!).
8. Challenge students to find three pertinent quotations for each event and then make them discard two: useful for revision.
9. Put students into groups and get them to present their understanding of one of the events to the rest of the class.
10. Read out each event and ask the students to prepare a tableau of each one. You can turn this into a revision game by asking some students to leave the room whilst others prepare ideas and then return to guess which scene is being shown and asking them to describe it using language appropriate for an essay.

Scout's first day at school

The start of the friendship with Dill

Christmas at Finch's Landing

Finding the object in the oak tree

The mad dog in the street

Maudie's house catching fire

Jem destroying Mrs Dubose's flowers

Scout and Jem going to church with Calpurnia

Aunt Alexandra coming to stay

Atticus spending the night outside the jail

Scout and Jem going to watch the trial

Heck Tate insisting Bob Ewell fell on his own knife