



Get **UP CLOSE** with the series applauded as “not your average biographies... meaty fare... honest and engaging” by *The Horn Book Magazine*. Every Up Close title features in-depth information and remarkable photographs, and is perfect for classrooms, libraries, and history buffs!

**RACHEL CARSON**

by Ellen Levine  
 HC 978-0-670-06220-1  
 PB 978-0-14-241046-2

**JOHNNY CASH**

by Anne E. Neimark  
 HC 978-0-670-06215-7  
 PB 978-0-14-241047-9

**W. E. B. DU BOIS**

by Tonya Bolden  
 HC 978-0-670-06302-4

**ELLA FITZGERALD**

by Tanya Lee Stone  
 HC 978-0-670-06149-5

**BILL GATES**

by Marc Aronson  
 HC 978-0-670-06348-2

**JANE GOODALL**

by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen  
 HC 978-0-670-06263-8

**ROBERT F. KENNEDY**

by Marc Aronson  
 HC 978-0-670-06066-5  
 PB 978-0-14-241044-8

**HARPER LEE**

by Kerry Madden  
 HC 978-0-670-01095-0

**THURGOOD MARSHALL**

by Chris Crowe  
 HC 978-0-670-06228-7

**ELVIS PRESLEY**

by Wilborn Hampton  
 HC 978-0-670-06166-2  
 PB 978-0-14-241148-3

**RONALD REAGAN**

by James Sutherland  
 HC 978-0-670-06345-1

**THEODORE ROOSEVELT**

by Michael Cooper  
 HC 978-0-670-01134-6  
 Available July 2009

**BABE RUTH**

by Wilborn Hampton  
 HC 978-0-670-06305-5

**JOHN STEINBECK**

by Milton Meltzer  
 HC 978-0-670-06139-6

**OPRAH WINFREY**

by Ilene Cooper  
 HC 978-0-670-06162-4  
 PB 978-0-14-241045-5

**FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT**

by Jan Adkins  
 HC 978-0-670-06138-9  
 PB 978-0-14-241244-2

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

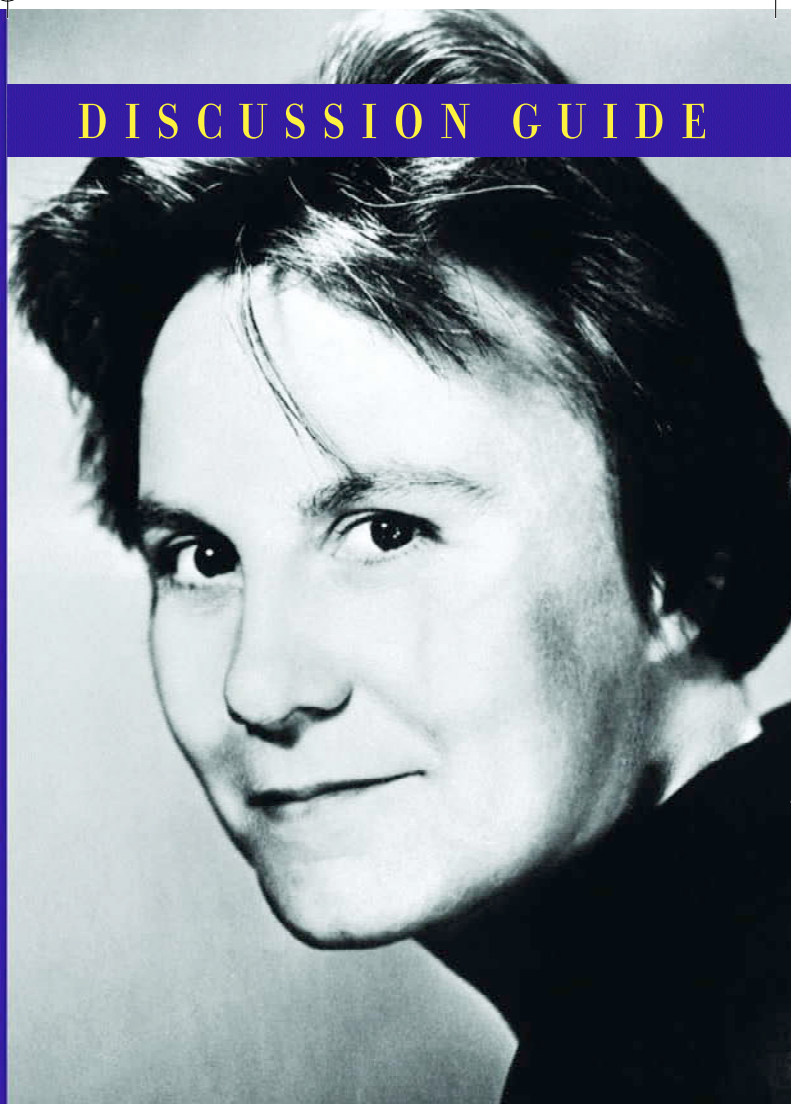


**KERRY MADDEN** ([www.kerrymadden.com](http://www.kerrymadden.com)) grew up on the gridiron in college football towns across the South, including North Carolina and Tennessee. She is the author of numerous books for children, including *Gentle's Holler*, *Louisiana's Song*, and *Jessie's Mountain*. The mother of three children, Kerry lives with her family and pets—two dogs, a cat, three finches, and a hermit crab—in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles, California.



**Viking Children's Books • Puffin Books**  
 Divisions of Penguin Young Readers Group  
[www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians](http://www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians)

This discussion guide has been provided by Penguin Young Readers Group for classroom, library, and book club use. It may be reproduced in its entirety or excerpted for these purposes.



**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**UPclose:** *Harper Lee*  
 AUTHOR  
 a twentieth-century life by **KERRY MADDEN**

While reading **Up Close: Harper Lee**, ask your students to think about the following questions. Answers can either be written individually or discussed in groups to make for an interesting and thought-provoking classroom conversation.

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- According to the foreword, why hasn't Harper Lee authorized this biography? What other ways was Kerry Madden able to gather information about Lee? After reading the book, do you think it hurt the biography that there were no direct interviews with Lee? How might the narrative have been different if Harper Lee had participated?
- Discuss Lee's childhood. Who were the members of her family? How was she affected by the Great Depression?
- In what ways did growing up in Monroeville inspire Lee's writing?
- Who was Son Boulware? What happened to him at Truman's Halloween party? How did this and other racial injustices as depicted in chapter three impact Lee?
- Think about Lee's behavior at both her first and second colleges. Where and when did she interact with other students?
- Which topics did she address in her short stories? Why do you think she chose to write about these areas?
- How did Lee come to the conclusion that she should pursue a writing career?
- What were the early years of Lee's life like in New York City? What does the book say she liked about living in New York? Do you think there is anything she disliked? Why or why not?
- Which two events spurred the creation of stories that would later become parts of *To Kill a Mockingbird*? What "miracle" led to her beginning to write the entire novel?
- Analyze Lee's life as a writer. Examine her writing process, her work ethic, and her social and emotional well-being during the years it took her to write her novel.
- What is *In Cold Blood*? What role did Lee have in its development? Why did people in Kansas respond differently to her than they did to Truman?
- How did Lee hope *To Kill a Mockingbird* would be received? What happened instead? How did the townspeople of Monroeville react to the book?

- Why was it important to treat the sale of rights and the production of the film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird* with extreme sensitivity?
- Who was Gregory Peck? How did he "save" the film?
- Discuss Lee's refusal to grant any more interviews about *Mockingbird*. Why does she behave this way? Do you think she is justified in doing so?
- What ultimately happened to the second novel that Tay hoped to publish with Lee in 1968?
- What became of Truman Capote? How do people believe he and Lee left off?
- Explain the lasting impression of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. According to chapter ten, how has the book continued to impact readers? Do you think Lee is pleased with this legacy?

### CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

- If you have not done so already, read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Discuss the similarities and differences between Scout's story and Harper Lee's own life. Is the book autobiographical? In chapter eight, Lee says her book "has a universal theme. It's not a 'racial' novel. It portrays an aspect of civilization." Do you agree with her reasoning that the story could "happen to anybody, anywhere people live together"? Are the themes and situations present in the novel still relevant today?
- At the end of chapter ten, Lee is quoted as having said "When you have a hit like that, you can't go anywhere but down" in response to why she never wrote another book. Is this true? Brainstorm a few suggestions of stories that Lee might have tackled in a second novel. Do you think she should write about race, children, or a small town again? Would you advise her to try another topic, time period, or genre? Write a letter to Lee expressing your opinion on her statement about hit novels and persuading her to try again with some of your brainstormed ideas. Share your letter with your classmates. What story ideas were most popular? Why? What are some of the most convincing arguments students made for Harper Lee to write another book?
- Why do you think Harper Lee is such a private person? Do you agree that she is right to keep her life private, or do you feel she has an obligation as a public figure to share with her fans? With a partner, create and perform a mock question-and-answer skit that you imagine taking place between a reporter and Lee today, if she were willing to grant such an interview. What questions would you ask? What might she say about her book in modern times?