To Kill a Mockingbird Historical Background Notes and Questions

*To Kill a Mockingbird,* written by Harper Lee, was published in 1960. The racial tensions ran high during the time that she was writing the novel. The novel is set in 1930’s Alabama. Both the setting and the time during which she was writing weigh heavily on the themes of the novel.

Historical Background

1. The Little Rock Nine 1957
2. Emmitt Till 1955
3. Scottsboro Boys 1932 Alabama

Answer the following questions after watching the videos.

Little Rock Nine:

1. What event was this video about?
2. Who decided the black students should not be allowed to enter the school?
3. Who was called to keep those students out?
4. Who was called to make sure the students got into the school?
5. How did the crowd react when they found out the children got into the school?
6. What were the students school days like AFTER they got into the school on a regular basis?

Emmitt Till:

1. Why did the two boys go from Chicago to Money, Mississippi?
2. Describe the incident in the store between Emmitt Till and the white woman.
3. How did the men get/take Emmitt Till?
4. What happened to Emmitt Till?
5. Where was his body found?
6. Why did his mom have an open casket?
7. Who were the two men charged with the murder?
8. How long was the trial?
9. How long did the jury deliberate?
10. What was the outcome of the murder trial?
11. What did the two men who were accused of murder do several months after the murder for $4000?

Scottsboro Boys:

1. What is the background context for this event?
2. What happened on the train to make it stop?
3. What did the two women, Victoria Price and Ruby Bates, say happened to them?
4. How long was the trial for the 9 boys?
5. What were the 9 boys’ sentences?
6. What were three of the main problems with the cases?
7. How long did it take for the last one to escape or be released from jail?
8. When was the last one pardoned?