

ANALYZING THE MOCKINGBIRD:

The mockingbird is a bird from the Mimidae family that is best known for mimicking the songs of other birds and the sounds of insects and amphibians, often loudly and in rapid succession. The mockingbird not only imitates other birds, but also other animals and mechanical sounds, such as car alarms. As convincing as these imitations may be to humans, they often fail to fool other birds.



The mockingbird is a harmless creature that does its best to please its hearers by singing, but ultimately it is defenceless against hunters. In fact, hunters with a sense of sport would avoid the bird, as it is seen as too easy a target.

In Harper Lee's famous novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the character of Miss Maudie Atkinson says,

"Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, they don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

Now that you know a little more about mockingbirds, what connections can you make between the image of the mockingbird and Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*? What characters are likened to the mockingbird? What is the thematic significance of the mockingbird?

