In the *English Journal* I found an article called “Using To Kill a Mockingbird as a Conduit for Teaching about the School-to-Prison Pipeline” by Maher, Steffany Comfort; Fink, Lisa Storm, RWT. I really like her unit plan approach for studying To Kill a Mockingbird and using it bring about some present day context. The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* is used to fully explore the school-to-prison pipeline dilemma, the text is divided into four relevant cultural studies issues, each of which speaks to this crisis in its own way: single parent homes, lynching and racial discrimination, the criminal justice system, and poverty.

Thus I’d use it as a general guide in creating something similar. I’d also infuse the lessons plans I’d found from the internet.

One lesson plan breaks the class into five groups for hands on activities. I’d modify this lesson plan to have the groups present at different times through the book.

Group 1 would present early on because their activity would be to construct a map of Maycomb County. Include homes of the main characters, and other landmarks of the county.

Whereas groups 2-4 would present during the Lynching and Racial Discrimination because their activities coincide with the part of the unit.

Towards the conclusion of the book I’d like do another lesson I found [Creating Psychological Profiles of Characters in To Kill a Mockingbird](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/creating-psychological-profiles-characters-1184.html). The last group would also present at this time because they activity is Do any of your fellow students remind you of characters in the novel? Photograph them (with their permission) and creatively present your display to the class.

The Lynching and Racial Discrimination section also ties in nicely with the English Journal article I found called “A grand tradition of struggle by Cornel West.” In a speech he conducted he covers (among other things) the relative erosion of the family and community in American society, how race has played a role in socioeconomic status, and how literature can be used a venue to bring knowledge, enlighten, and change.

One Parent Families

Atticus as a single father and address the part these households can play in the school-to-prison pipeline.

* What does a single parent family look like today?
* Socioeconomic Class: Atticus being able to afford care for his children and household duties
* Single mothers vs. Single fathers

Lynching and Racial Discrimination

Teaching about prison issues should confront the reality of racial discrimination in our nation's past and present.

Thus, focus on the second portion of this unit on the lynching of African Americans. Take a close historical look at the issues of discrimination, unequal treatment, and the perversion of justice.

The Criminal Justice System

As the important trial scenes in the novel are examined, I hope to connect our nation's past with its present, revealing how discrimination is still prevalent today-from discrepancies in imprisonment rates to those in school punishments due to race.

Poverty

The final issue we examine with To Kill a Mockingbird is poverty, which is perhaps the most important factor in the school-to-prison pipeline. To transition into a new issue and possibly to expose stereotypes, I first instruct students to write in their journals what they think of when they hear the word poor.