Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

teacher resource
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

Mildred D. Taylor

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About the Cover
When a young boy is about to be lynched, the only way to avert disaster is to set fire to the fields, which is what Cassie Logan’s father does near the end of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.
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## Supplementary Materials

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Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor introduces the reader to the Logans, a black family struggling to maintain human dignity and personal freedoms in a racist Mississippi during the Great Depression. The story is told from the point of view of Cassie Logan, a nine-year-old black female, as she faces the trials of coming of age and facing reality in rural Mississippi. As first-person narrator, she reveals the struggles, feelings, and perceptions of black families, sharecroppers, white landowners, and poor whites. Through the interactions of characters in each social class, the causes and effects of racism are explored. The plot mirrors a black child’s hopes, fears, and disillusionment, factors that eventually brought about the civil rights movement in the mid-twentieth century.

This novel, based on historical fact, is an example of gritty, realistic fiction. Lynchings, burnings, terror caused by nightmen, sharecropping, and other racist situations were all reality in the South in the 1930s. The characters are the creation of the author’s imagination. Woven into the plot are the economic problems of the Depression. Through their reading, students are introduced to the concepts of buying items on credit along with paying mortgages and property taxes. Taylor shows the grim reality of this time and does not make the novel end with the characters living happily ever after; instead, she implies that T. J. Avery, a troubled young African-American boy, may be lynched for a murder that white men committed.

This work of literature and its author have won several awards. The novel won the American Library Association’s Notable Book Award (1976), was a National Book Award finalist (1977), and won the prestigious Newbery Medal (1977). In addition, Taylor won the 1997 ALAN award for her contributions to young adult literature. While studying this novel, students have opportunities to research these awards. They are also introduced to other award-winning novels in the Logan saga.

Students participate in many activities and experience other genres of literature while reading this novel. They read nonfiction selections with historical information. A poetry lesson is incorporated in the unit, as well as opportunities for presentations, expository writing, and creative narrative writing. A study guide to aid students’ comprehension as they read is provided, along with handouts to assist with literary study for plot and character development, symbolism, conflict, and theme.
This novel teaches numerous important lessons. Although readers realize that life is not fair, they appreciate Taylor’s treatment of difficult topics with honesty. Despite all the conflicts faced by the Logans, they remain steadfast in love, pride, and independence. While not yet achieving equality, they endure as a family unit, leaving readers with a feeling that they and their peers will continue to remove roadblocks to achieve the constitutional right to equality. The importance of family loyalty and the determination to reach goals are perhaps two of the most important lessons that readers take away from their study of this novel.
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is a novel about the black experience in America. Cassie Logan, the protagonist, begins the story with the innocence typical of a nine-year-old child. She has a loving family with parents and a grandmother who protect her from the harsh realities of their lives as best they can. She has three brothers with whom she plays and sometimes argues. Although Cassie knows that her family is poor, she does not at first realize how dire the situation is. As the novel progresses, she becomes disillusioned when she learns of violence directed toward members of her race. Cassie realizes that her family may lose its land when her mother is fired, as the family may not be able to pay its bills. Cassie herself is a victim of racism when she visits Strawberry, a nearby town. There are moments of suspense, anxiety, and heartbreak for the readers as they consider Cassie’s poignant account of her family’s experiences. Although the protagonist is a young female, readers of both genders become emotionally attached to Cassie and her family because Taylor describes their life so vividly.

This novel invites students to become reasoning human beings who can live cooperatively and compassionately in a multicultural society with its democratic promise of equality, its dream of respect for all in the adventure of one nation, indivisible. This unit aims to assist students in developing or extending an understanding of the effects of racism and prejudice and to encourage empathy for the human condition. Lessons focus on exploring existing attitudes and researching information on historical background relative to the setting of the novel. Open-ended questions and group discussions encourage students to analyze and confront their own attitudes and values while studying the literary aspects of this novel.

This novel is geared toward students in middle and junior high school. The vocabulary is rich, and sentence structure is often long and complex. Activities in this unit aid in students’ acquisition of new vocabulary. Activities to be completed during the lessons offer varied levels of difficulty. This novel elicits interest from a wide range of ability levels and lends itself readily to social studies and interdisciplinary courses.

This unit provides a framework of basic information on many subjects for students to explore further. Students read background information about the author and determine how Mildred D. Taylor’s life and family influenced the plot and characterization throughout the novel. Lessons examine the plot, character, themes, and symbols. You may want to give students the opportunity to view the movie adaptation and write a movie review.
Although most lessons can be used at any point of study, the following reading schedule is suggested.

Lesson 1   Prereading
Lesson 2   Prereading
Lesson 3   Chapters 1–3
Lesson 4   Chapters 4–6
Lesson 5   Chapters 7–8
Lesson 6   Chapters 9–10
Lesson 7   Chapter 11
Lesson 8   Chapter 12
Lesson 9   Post-reading
Lesson 10  Post-reading

You may want to use an audio recording of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* to let students hear the spoken dialect. An audio book may relieve some students of the difficulty of reading the dialogue, and it could be helpful if used early in the reading assignments.

Supplementary materials for the novel include a vocabulary activity and a test. Optional activities are provided at the conclusion of most lessons to extend students’ thinking and involvement with the story.

Answers to handouts will vary unless otherwise indicated. Students may need additional paper to complete some handouts.
Lesson 1
Prereading: Defining Prejudice

Objectives
- To define prejudice and stereotyping
- To examine the causes of prejudice
- To recognize and identify individual prejudices
- To research historical aspects of racism

Notes to the Teacher
Lesson 1 is designed to be used before assigning the reading of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. It initiates an examination of prejudice, its definition and causes, and individual attitudes. Responses and discussion direct students toward awareness of their own degrees of prejudice. Since students are likely to react on a variety of levels in accordance with their stage of moral reasoning, you will want to function as a guide to encourage questions and challenge attitudes. At the completion of the unit, the first handout may be referred to and used as a post-test to discover changes in attitudes.

Small group and class discussion activities are included to facilitate students' examination of racism and prejudice in their world (classroom, school, family, community, state, or nation).

Procedure
1. Ask students to define the word prejudice. Point out the Latin root: praejudicium. Prae means “before,” and judicium means “judgment.” Make sure the definition of the term prejudice is not limited to racism. Lead students to see that prejudice involves judgments without sufficient factual support. It includes preconceived judgments and attitudes (positive or negative) toward something or someone. (Ambrose Bierce once said, “Prejudice is a vagrant opinion without visible means of support.”)

2. Distribute Handout 1. Ask students to omit their names on this handout; advise them that you will collect the completed sheets. Ask students to read each statement carefully and then respond as they honestly feel at that moment. (When students have finished, collect the handouts. Tabulate the responses, and analyze their implications, which can be referred to later in the unit at appropriate times.)
3. Establish communities for students to use during this unit. Group together diverse students who will need to interact with and accept others who are different from them.

4. Distribute Handout 2, and have students complete part A as individuals and then discuss it as a community. They should determine similarities and differences within their communities and how they feel within each.

5. In order to form a bond among classmates, have students create an identity for their community by completing part B of Handout 2 as a group.

6. Ask students to list what comes to mind when they think of the colors white, red, and black. What associations do they make with the following: Germans, Irish, Japanese, Mexicans, and Jews? Discuss the implications of their responses in terms of defining stereotypes and overgeneralizations.

7. Distribute Handout 3, and ask students to read part A. Follow the reading of the handout with a class discussion. Emphasize the importance of facing and understanding the source and strength of individual feelings and attitudes. Do students believe deeply rooted feelings can be changed? Can they cite any personal experience of change from a negative to a positive feeling?

8. Ask students to respond frankly in open-ended discussion to the questions in Handout 3, part B. For reinforcement, ask students to bring current examples from local, national, or world news which illustrate the results of prejudice. A group might like to assemble several items illustrating different types of prejudice to share with the class.

9. Distribute Handout 4. Explain the concept of a jigsaw activity to the class by telling students that each one will study one topic regarding a type of discrimination. That student will become an expert on that one topic and will share the research learned with others who study the same topic. Once students feel confident about their individual topics, they will meet with other students who researched different topics. They will be responsible for teaching others what they have learned and will compare and contrast their research results in that small-group setting. Once all discussion is complete, students should have a full-class discussion regarding what they have learned.
Optional Activities

1. Invite students to “mix it up” one day during their lunch period by sitting with students they may not know well. Provide topics that students may want to discuss with one another. Sample topics may include favorite places to travel, family traditions at the holidays, and favorite songs or movies. Visit the Teaching Tolerance Web site (http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up) for more ideas regarding mix-it-up day.

2. Have students create short story picture books in which a character faces discrimination and those inflicting the negativity learn the lesson that it is wrong to treat others poorly just because they may be different. Picture books should be illustrated in color and should provide both narrative and dialogue. If possible, have students read and discuss their stories with younger students in the school.
Prereading: Anticipation Guide

Directions: You will be reading Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, a historical fiction novel about a black family’s experiences during the 1930s in rural Mississippi. In addition to examining the literary qualities and merits of this novel, you will be exploring and discussing topics and issues concerning prejudice and its effects. Before reading the novel, you should examine your personal beliefs and feelings. Read the following statements; choose agree or disagree.

Agree  Disagree  1. All people of all races are equal, as is stated by the Constitution.

Agree  Disagree  2. If people are not happy, it is their own fault.

Agree  Disagree  3. Blue-eyed blondes are the best looking people.

Agree  Disagree  4. Sometimes people are justified in taking the law into their own hands and administering punishment if they feel they have been wronged.

Agree  Disagree  5. Some races are better suited to manual labor than others.

Agree  Disagree  6. It is best for minorities to cluster together in their own neighborhoods.

Agree  Disagree  7. Most people will cheat if they can gain some advantage by doing so.

Agree  Disagree  8. Every race and nationality should fight with any available means to achieve equal rights.

Agree  Disagree  9. I would be uncomfortable if a person of a race different from mine sat next to me on a bus.

Agree  Disagree  10. It is fine for a person to date someone of another race.

Agree  Disagree  11. All schools should be integrated.

Agree  Disagree  12. Racism is not a very serious problem in today’s world.
Community Togetherness

Part A.

Directions: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is a novel in which family and a sense of community are the only elements that allow the main characters to survive many hardships. Answer the questions about your sense of community, and be prepared to discuss your ideas.

1. What are five communities to which you belong?

2. In which community do you feel most comfortable? Why?

3. In which community do you feel least comfortable? Why? What can you do to feel more comfortable there?

4. Which community makes you feel the happiest? Why?

5. What is another type of community you hope to join someday? Why?
Part B.

Directions: In order to form a stronger community during the study of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, create an identity for your group by establishing the features listed below. Then create a flyer on a separate sheet of paper to showcase your community and its members.

1. Community name

2. Community members

3. Similarities of community members

4. Unique traits of community members

5. Special talents of community members

6. Community motto or slogan

7. Community symbol
Prereading: Getting to the Source of Our Bias

Part A.

Directions: Read the following expository piece about personal bias.

Broccoli—youck. You’ve never tasted it, but you don’t like its green color, and you don’t like its
smell, so you’re sure you won’t like the taste either. You’re never going to eat broccoli.

You love blue. Every dress or shirt you buy is a shade of blue. You will never even try on a red
dress or shirt. You hate red.

It’s the first day of school. Last year you really hated your teacher. All teachers are pains. You’ve
heard that this year’s teacher is really mean and hard and gives an hour’s worth of homework every
night. No, there’s no way you’re going to like him.

These are all examples of ideas or attitudes formed without gathering and considering all the
facts. Sometimes we may not even recognize an attitude or feeling as a prejudice. Even when we
do recognize it, we may not have any idea of the source or feeling. The only way to rid ourselves of
such behaviors is first to learn to recognize them and second to identify and analyze their sources.
We also need to determine whether the attitudes are harmful or harmless.

In the initial examples, not liking broccoli or the color red are negative but probably harm-
less feelings. They may limit your diet or wardrobe, but they probably won’t hurt other people.
However, making decisions about other people before you have met and interacted with them can
be harmful. Making negative judgments about individuals based on assumptions about a whole
group will limit your willingness to interact with others different from yourself. It may also cause
them hurt and pain.

None of us are born with prejudices. Prejudice is not an inherent trait; it must be learned.
How do we learn or develop a prejudice? Consider the following explanations or examples of how
prejudice forms and develops. Which ones do you see operating in your own life?

Early impressions or experiences that we have as very young children can plant negative im-
geages in our subconscious which may later take on the form of prejudice. During our formative
years, those people who have the greatest impact on us are our parents, older brothers and sisters,
relatives, and teachers. These are the individuals who are our heroes. They are the ones whom we
will imitate. Those feelings, attitudes, and opinions that they express in our presence will probably
become, almost without our awareness, our feelings, attitudes, and opinions.

Sometimes phrases and images of races reflecting attitudes of an era or nation in literature,
television, film, and theater have contributed to society’s perpetuation of racism. Color played a
role in depicting good and bad. Some roles, such as maids, housekeepers, chauffeurs, and door-
men, were often seen as inferior or comic figures played only by races other than white. In recent
years, concerted efforts have been made to decrease prejudice by avoiding sexist and racist terms
and stereotypes in the media.

Prejudice may also be generated by an error in reasoning called false generalization. This faulty
type of reasoning results from drawing a general conclusion based on only one incident or one
set of facts. If you see a dog with only three legs running through your yard (the dog may have
lost a leg to cancer or to an accident), you probably would not be so foolish as to conclude (false
generalization) that all dogs have three legs; yet we often make a generalization about a whole race, nationality, or religious group based on only one observation of a member of that group.

Feelings of insecurity are often a cause of prejudice or racism. Very insecure people sometimes need someone else to look down upon in order to feel of some worth and to boost their own sagging egos. If they fail to achieve, they need someone to blame so that they will feel less of a failure. If, for instance, you apply for a job and fail to get hired, it is easier to blame that failure on preferential treatment for someone else than to examine your own shortcomings.

Insecurity was one cause of prejudice in the South. The system of sharecropping inflicted almost insurmountable poverty and class distinction for both whites and blacks. White sharecroppers, trapped in a cycle of poverty, had only the power of their skin color to sway over blacks. Instead of directing anger and frustration at the wealthy landowners who perpetuated and benefited from the system, it was far easier to direct negative feelings toward blacks.

When you read *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, you will see this source of prejudice, as well as others, in operation. You will discover that the Harlan Grangers (the big plantation owners) are not the only ones who inflict violence on the black community. White neighbors like the Simms family or small store owners like the Wallaces, dependent themselves on the rich whites for their livelihood, also treat the blacks with hate and violence.

**Part B.**

**Directions:** After reading part A and considering your own experiences, answer the following questions. Then discuss your answers in your community.

1. What are some of your prejudices? Which are harmful, and which are not?
2. What do you feel determines whether a prejudice is harmful or harmless?
3. How do we develop prejudices?
4. List or describe prejudices that you have observed or experienced in your school, community, or nation. What do you believe are the causes?
5. What does prejudice do to the person against whom the prejudice is directed? to the person who holds the prejudice? to society as a whole?
6. List groups of people who have faced prejudice in the past or the present. Why do you believe these groups have been targeted?
7. How do movies and television programs affect racism and discrimination?
8. What do you think of current immigration laws? Do you believe that everyone should be allowed to come to America? Why or why not?
9. Who are some of the people responsible for the progress that has been made in the United States regarding racism and discrimination?
10. When people come to America from different countries, should they be required to learn how to speak English? Provide support for your opinion.
Researching Types of Racism and Discrimination

Directions: Research your assigned topic. Once you feel that you are an expert on that topic, you will share and compare your information with others who studied the same topic. Then you will meet with others who studied different topics in a jigsaw group, and you will teach your research to your group.

Research Topic Options about the 1930s in the South

- Public school segregation and college entrance standards
- Use and availability of public facilities (restaurants, water fountains, bus seats)
- Hiring practices and salary differences
- Treatment of medical conditions and health care opportunities
- Interaction with the police, court systems, and prisons

Questions to Answer in Expert Groups

- What factors in American society caused this problem?
- Which groups of people (children, adults, senior citizens, wealthy, poor) were generally affected by this problem?
- What could individuals do to solve this problem?
- What changes did American society make to solve this problem?

Questions to Answer in Jigsaw Groups

- What were some common factors in society that caused multiple problems?
- Is it easier to find solutions that individuals can accomplish or solutions for all of society?
- As a young person in your community, what are some solutions that you can offer to help everyone who faces discrimination feel better accepted?
Lesson 2

Mildred D. Taylor and Her Achievements

Objectives

- To examine Mildred D. Taylor’s background
- To research literary awards
- To write a persuasive business letter using proper techniques

Notes to the Teacher

Lesson 2 should be introduced prior to students beginning to read the novel, but assignments associated with this lesson may be finished as students read chapter 1. This lesson first focuses on the life and career of Mildred D. Taylor. As students’ literary studies increase, they should look not only at the plots of novels, but also at the driving forces behind these plots; therefore, it is necessary for students to complete author studies. Students will read a biography of Taylor compiled from various sources. Students will notice that Taylor won several awards for her literary works. They will be given a list of these awards and should conduct research and interview librarians to learn the history of the awards and the criteria used to select the winners.

Finally, students select a favorite book to nominate for one of the awards they have researched. They will need to use proper business letter format and persuasive techniques.

Procedure

1. Distribute Handout 5, and have students read the short biography of Mildred D. Taylor. Stress the value of understanding the experiences of an author. Often a writer’s life influences plots and stories. Students should highlight or note information they anticipate could be relevant or important to the story’s plot. At the conclusion of the novel, students may revisit their notes to see whether they chose information that does, in fact, play a part in the novel’s plot.

2. Distribute Handout 6, which lists awards that Taylor has won. Students should conduct their own research to learn how winning books and authors are selected for these awards. They may divide the work among members of their communities established in Lesson 1.

3. Distribute Handout 7, and use it to explain persuasive techniques and to review the proper format for a business letter.
4. Review the proper format for addressing envelopes. If resources allow, students may also use a computer to print address labels or to print the address directly onto the envelope.

5. After letters and envelopes are written correctly, lead a discussion regarding the importance of using the correct format for letter writing. Ask students how letter format could help them to be hired for a job. Ask students why a sloppy or incorrectly formatted letter could prevent them from getting a job. Discuss how improperly addressed or sloppy envelopes could create problems.

6. Assign students to begin reading *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and to try to complete chapters 1–3.

**Optional Activities**

1. There has been some controversy about teaching *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Invite students to research other books that have been banned and reasons why they have been censored.

2. April 2, 2004, was declared Mildred D. Taylor Day in Mississippi by Governor Haley Barbour. Instruct students to write a formal business letter using persuasive techniques to the state governor asking him or her to declare a day in honor of a famous citizen who has positively influenced the state. Remind students to include specific facts and evidence in support of the request. Including testimonials from other people may be helpful.
The Life of Mildred D. Taylor

Directions: Read the following biographical information about Mildred D. Taylor, the author of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Highlight or underline information that you predict will be relevant to the story’s plot.

Childhood, Family, and Early Life

The younger daughter of Wilbert Lee Taylor and Deletha Marie Taylor, Mildred D. Taylor became a spokesperson for African-American equality through her literature. She was born on September 13, 1943, in Jackson, Mississippi, well after slavery ended. The Great Depression was over. As a young child, she heard stories about slavery and overt racism from older generations of her family. Her father’s family owned land in Mississippi for three generations, and it is believed that her great-grandfather, who was the son of an African-Indian slave and white landowner, purchased the land after running away from his father’s home in the 1880s. This would have been a nearly impossible feat for anyone with African-American blood. After all, the Civil War had only recently ended, and tensions ran deep. Despite the obstacles, Taylor’s family was able to add additional land and keep it in the family.

Although Taylor’s father deeply valued the family land, he left it and traveled north with his wife and young daughters because of racist incidents that occurred at the trucking company where he worked in Mississippi. He longed for his daughters to have an easier life away from the bold and direct racism in the South; therefore, his family settled in Toledo, Ohio, where Taylor experienced a pleasant childhood.

Although the northern states were more tolerant of African-American citizens, Taylor was still raised in a segregated country and was one of the first African-American students attending school in an integrated district. In fact, there were only a few African-American students in her fifth grade class, and she was the only African-American student in her sixth grade class. At first, she felt very uncomfortable in this new surrounding because she believed that her white classmates and neighbors would judge her entire race based upon her actions. Also disconcerting to her was that her knowledge of the history of her people was very different from what was conveyed in her history textbooks, which most likely were written by white authors.

Taylor took advantage of her educational opportunities and became a strong reader and student. She was a member of the honor society, held a leadership position in student government, and was a writer for the school newspaper at Scott High School, where she graduated in 1961. Throughout her schooling, Taylor did not experience much racism directly, but when a black homecoming queen was selected at her high school, there were mixed emotions, including anger, which led to violence.

Because having a loving and close-knit family and community was so important to Taylor’s father, he frequently returned to the land in Mississippi. Although Taylor loved visiting the homestead and her family, the car trips to the South were filled with dangers and reminders that she was still living in a racist world. The Taylors and others often had to travel to the South in large groups for protection against racist locals and even racist police officers. She often was exposed to signs outside restrooms, over water fountains, and in restaurant and hotel windows that read “White Only, Colored Not Allowed.”
Taylor loved riding the family mule named Jack and the mare named Lady. She even went into the fields and picked cotton during her visits. Although not formally enrolled, she would go to the small school her father once attended. During these frequent visits to the South, she was influenced by the storytelling of her parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins; therefore, the importance of family loyalty is a strong message that she conveys in all of her writing. The stories that she enjoyed hearing most were those her father and his siblings told about growing up on the family land. These stories ranged in their content from triumph and pride to struggling to maintain dignity and to survive in a racist society. There were both humorous and tragic stories about family and friends. These stories have been incorporated into all of Taylor’s books about the Logan family.

Later Education and Early Career

After high school graduation, Taylor enrolled at the University of Toledo as an English education major, though she longed to major in creative writing or journalism. It was her father’s influence that made her choose a practical major, which served her well when she entered the Peace Corps. Through this service organization, she went to Ethiopia where she taught English and history for two years.

Upon her return to America, Taylor enrolled as a graduate student at the University of Colorado, where she earned her master’s degree in journalism. While a student, she became a strong advocate for other black students, joined the Black Student Alliance, and helped develop a black studies program at the university. This program focused on black culture, politics, and history.

After graduation, she remained at the university for two additional years working as a study skills program coordinator before moving to Los Angeles, California, where she hoped to focus on writing. She entered a contest sponsored by the Council on Interracial Books for Children and won in the African-American category for her novella, *Song of the Trees*, the first story in what would later become the Logan family saga. This story is told by Cassie Logan, an eight-year-old character. This story is based upon an actual incident on the Taylor family property in Mississippi.

Career Developing the Logan Family Saga

After the success of *Song of the Trees*, Taylor decided to further develop the Logan family through multiple short stories and novels. Most of the books are narrated by Cassie Logan, but exceptions include *Mississippi Bridge*, narrated by Jeremy Simms, a white boy who tries to befriend the Logans; *The Well*, told by David Logan, Cassie’s father, when he was a child; and *The Land*, told by Paul-Edward Logan, Cassie’s grandfather, when he was a boy and a young man.

Taylor has earned many literary awards while teaching young readers about the dangers, evils, and effects of racism, and she offers a realistic picture of hope that one day all Americans will enjoy equality regardless of their race. For as many praises as Taylor has earned, she has also experienced much criticism about her pieces because they paint disturbing pictures of real events, including beatings, lynchings, and burnings of innocent African-American victims simply because they are African Americans. She also uses language consistent with the setting. She offers no apology for the realistic scenarios about which she writes. She simply tries to present a true rendering of life in America as she and older members of her family remember it.
Literary Awards

Directions: Review the major awards that Mildred D. Taylor earned for her work. Use an Internet search engine to find and note the history of and the selection process for each award. Then choose one of your favorite books or authors that you think should be nominated for one of these awards.

- Council on Interracial Books for Children contest
- Newbery Medal
- Coretta Scott King Award
- Boston Globe–Horn Book Award
- Jane Addams Book Award
- Jane Addams Peace Council Award
- Scott O’Dell Award
- ALAN Award
- Christopher Award
- NSK Neustadt Prize for Children’s Literature
- American Library Association Notable Book
- National Book Award
- Buxtehuder Bulle Award
Persuasion in Business Letters

Directions: After choosing a favorite book or author that you feel should win a literary award, write a formal business letter using proper persuasive techniques to explain why your choice would make a strong recipient for the award. Review the types of appeals used in persuasion and use both in your letter. A sample format for a business letter is provided.

Appeal to Emotion

Appealing to emotions adds force and color to an argument. Consider your potential readers, and think of which emotions will result in a specific action from them.

For instance, to convince your school to have more dances, you could appeal to the sense of school pride and community that these dances would generate. If students have pride and make new friends in their school, they will feel more comfortable and will work harder to achieve success in all areas associated with school (clubs, academics, and athletics). Another example involving victims of a natural disaster in need of donations would heighten a sense of compassion in people. Perhaps, a few stories telling of a disaster or tragedy in individuals' lives might show people that charitable donations need to be increased to help victims.

When appealing to emotion, use strong language, such as referring to your school as a home or referring to people needing charitable donations as members of an extended family. Use words that evoke positive emotions in support of a topic; miracle, tremendous, and remarkable are a few examples. To speak out against a topic, use negative words, including atrocious, repulsive, and inferior.

Consider three questions in any appeal to emotion. To what emotions are you appealing? How does your choice of words slant your topic? What action is suggested by your emotional appeal?

Appeal to Logic

By using logic, appeal to the reader’s mind or intellect. Focus on facts, statistics, case studies, and quotations. Point out how the reader will benefit from supporting your position and doing as you ask. These benefits could include saving money or time.

For example, to convince the school to host more school dances, a person could use the following appeal to logic. Because students are charged a fee for a ticket and for refreshments, hosting dances is a simple fundraiser. Generally, teacher and parent chaperones are unpaid, so there is no cost for supervision. Because dances are often held in school gyms or auditoriums, the school would not have to pay to rent a building. Asking for a student volunteer to deejay the event would save on the cost of hiring a professional. Therefore, all profits from the dance would go directly into the school's general fund.

When emphasizing logic, use words like free, effective, and bargain. If you try to convince someone against a topic by using logic, use words like disadvantage, irritate, and unreliable.

Consider two questions when using logical reasoning. What are the main reasons for your point of view? What solid evidence can you provide to substantiate your view?
### Business Letter Format

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
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<td>Number and Street</td>
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**Greeting:**

*Skip one line.*

Begin first paragraph without indenting the line. It is called block style and is the proper way to draft business letters. All lines should be aligned evenly using one left-hand margin. Your introduction should state your request and can include your qualifications for making the request.

*Skip one line.*

Your second and third paragraphs should contain appeals to emotion and logic. Provide as many reasons as you can for why the person should listen to you. When possible, elaborate on your appeals. Feel free to use facts and even quotes to support your arguments.

*Skip one line.*

End your letter with a respectful call to action in which you encourage the reader not merely to think about your request, but to take action.

*Skip one line.*

**Closing,**

*Skip two lines.*

**Use a written signature.**

Typewritten Name

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### Business Letter Sample

<table>
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**Selection Committee—John Newbery Medal**

**American Library Association**

50 E. Huron

Chicago, IL 60611

Dear Selection Committee:

I am writing to request that you consider Mildred D. Taylor’s historical fiction novel *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* as next year’s recipient for the Newbery Medal, as it is a powerful book that teaches its readers important lessons about life during the 1930s and about consequences of actions.

This book heightens awareness of a difficult time in American history for both Caucasian and African-American students. The subject matter is handled in a mature and realistic way. The characters are well developed and believable. Young readers can easily relate to them.

Book Selection Committee Members, please select this novel as next year’s winner for this prestigious award. I can think of no other book that is more deserving.

Sincerely,

**Allie Thomas**

Allie Thomas
Lesson 3
Getting to Know the Logans

Objectives

• To examine the author’s development of character
• To identify and classify characters as protagonist, antagonist, round or flat, and dynamic or static
• To develop empathy for the Logan family
• To identify the point of view in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson should be introduced as students read chapters 1–3 but can be revisited as they study later chapters in the novel. Mildred D. Taylor skillfully creates characters, composites drawn from her own family’s experiences, with which readers can empathize. Students come to know the Logan family and their daily struggles to deal with racism. This leads readers to reflect on prejudice and racism and to reflect on the value of cultural diversity.

The very ordinariness of Cassie’s experiences (walking to school, getting along with people, going into a store to buy something) opens a channel for students to sense her indignant reactions because these are familiar daily routines which they share in common. Establishing a common ground or a shared humanity may help to eliminate existing traces of prejudice.

In this lesson, students focus on characters and point of view. You will want to make copies of the reading guide in the supplementary materials section to focus students’ attention.

Procedure

1. Ask students to identify ways in which they become acquainted with people in the neighborhood, at school, at social functions, or on travels. Compare with ways in which a reader becomes acquainted with the characters an author creates.

Suggested Responses

An author’s characters are revealed by

• action—what the character does in various situations
• dialogue—what the character says and how he or she says it
• description—the character’s physical appearance and personality traits
- other characters’ views of the character
- narrative to relate the character’s thoughts
- an author’s direct statements about a character

2. Distribute Handout 8, and explain that Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is part of a saga with many characters. Review the information, and direct students to use the handout as a reference while they read.

3. Distribute Handout 9, a character list for students to track the actions and experiences for the novel’s main characters. Students should fill out this handout as they read each chapter. Random checks should be completed by the teacher to ensure that students are using the list adequately.

4. Distribute the reading guide (see Supplementary Materials), and direct students to answer the study questions as they read each chapter of the book. Explain that periodically the questions will be checked for both completion and accuracy. They will also be used as springboards for discussions.

5. Distribute Handout 10, and use it to review or clarify the literary term point of view, an important element of the novel. Remind students that understanding point of view helps the reader analyze and evaluate his or her reactions to the story. Discuss the points of view provided in part A of the handout, and have students individually answer the questions and then discuss them in their small-group communities. (The novel is written from the first-person point of view. Cassie, a nine-year-old black girl, is intelligent, proud, fiercely independent, creative, prone to act first and think later, and uninitiated into the rules of race in the South. She is a member of a close-knit family.) Select volunteers to share responses to part B.

6. Distribute Handout 11. Have students read the information and complete the assignment.

**Suggested Responses**

1. Cassie Logan is the protagonist.
2. Mr. Granger could be seen as the antagonist; perhaps the antagonist is actually the white racist society of that time and place.
3. Big Ma is a complicated character, both tough and tender.
4. Mr. Simms is a stereotype.
5. Mr. Wallace shows no capacity to change.
7. Ask students to select one character for special attention as they read the novel. Direct them to record quotes, events, and questions.

8. Assign students to read chapters 4–6.

**Optional Activities**

1. Have students illustrate a scene from the story so far, a scene in which the reader gains insight into a character's motivation and personality. Ask students to provide a quote from the story to clarify the picture. Have other students in the class try to guess the scene and the importance of the incident to the story’s plot. Students can also put the pictures in chronological order to create a visual time line.

2. Have students make a family tree for the Logans.
The Saga’s Families and Land

Directions: The Logans, described in novels and stories by Mildred D. Taylor, are a complex family with quite a few members. There are also other multigenerational families in the book. Read the following descriptions to help you determine how the characters are related. A clarification about the acquisition of the land is also provided. Use this information as a reference as you read Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.

Logan Family

- Robert Stacey (Stacey), Cassie Deborah, Christopher-John, and Clayton Chester (Little Man) are the children of Mary (Mama) and David George (Papa) Logan.

- Mary (Mama) had an African-American father and an Indian mother. She has a sister named Lottie, who has a son named Bud. Bud married a white woman named Lydia, and they have a daughter named Suzella.

- David George (Papa) had several siblings. All of them are now deceased with the exception of his brother Luke Hammond (Uncle Hammer). His other brothers were Kevin Edward and Mitchell Thomas. He also had two sisters who are unnamed in the saga. These were all children of Caroline (Big Ma) and Paul-Edward Logan.

- Caroline (Big Ma) had a father named Luke who was a slave. His slave owners called him Sam. Her mother’s name was Rachel, but her slave owners called her either Daughter or Sister. Rachel’s mother was Rose. Caroline had numerous siblings, including Hugh, Eliot, Nathan, Risten, Jonah, Callie, Sylvester, Calvin, a brother who was unnamed, and a baby sibling who was unnamed.

- Paul-Edward was the son of Deborah, who was a slave, and Edward, her white owner. He had a sister named Cassie who married Howard Millhouse, and they had a daughter named Emmaline and two unnamed babies.

- In addition, Edward had a white wife and three sons with her named Robert, George, and Hammond. Edward’s parents were Lindsey and Helen.

- Deborah’s parents were Emmaline and Kanati.
Other Families

- Harlan Granger’s father was Filmore Granger, and his father was Morris Granger.
- Digger and John Wallace are brothers. Kaleb Wallace is the son to John Wallace.
- Wade Jamison is Charles Jamison’s son.
- Horace Avery is T. J. Avery’s grandfather. Horace worked on the Logan land while Paul-Edward was still alive.

Land Clarification

- Morris Granger (original owner) sold some land to J. T. Hollenback (a Yankee) and gave some land to Filmore Granger. He needed the money because his Confederate money was worthless after the Civil War ended.
- J. T. Hollenback sold some land to Paul-Edward Logan and some to Charles Jamison. Filmore Granger kept his portion of the land but also wants back what was sold to Paul-Edward and Charles.
- Charles Jamison died and left his land to Wade Jamison. Filmore Granger died and left his portion of the land to Harlan Granger. Harlan wants all of the land back, including the land that now belongs to Wade Jamison and Paul-Edward Logan.
- Wade Jamison sold his land to Paul-Edward Logan, and Harlan Granger is angry because he wanted to buy it. Paul-Edward bought land twice: once from J. T. Hollenback and once from Wade Jamison. Because all of this land originally was owned by the Granger family, Harlan Granger wants it all back.
The Notable Characters

**Directions:** There are many important characters in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. As you read, take notes about some of the main characters. Include personality traits, main actions, strengths and weaknesses, and questions you would like to ask them. Also, devise a symbol to represent each one.

1. Cassie

2. Mama

3. Papa
4. Big Ma

5. Mr. Morrison

6. Mr. Granger

7. T. J.
Point of View

Part A.

Directions: Read the explanations of different types of point of view, and apply them to the story by answering the questions that follow.

Epistolary Point of View

This type of narration uses a series of letters and other documents to tell the plot of the story. Although epistolary works can be considered multiple-person narratives, they also can be classified separately, as they arguably have no narrator at all—just an author who has gathered the documents together in one place.

First-Person Point of View

The narrator refers to him- or herself as “I” if singular and “we” if plural. First-person stories are usually told in the singular form, but on rare occasions, they may be told from the plural perspective. The reader becomes close to the narrator and often can identify with the plights of this character. In first-person perspective, the audience sees only what this one person is thinking and gets to know that person well. The reader can see and often predict this character’s actions, feelings, opinions, and biases by the story’s conclusion. Readers of a first-person narrative must realize that the story can be subjective. The narrator injects his or her personal feelings into the plot. The first-person narrator is usually the protagonist or someone close to the protagonist.

Third-Person Point of View, Objective/Dramatic

This perspective tells a story without detailing any characters’ thoughts, opinions, or feelings, but instead gives an objective point of view. It can be described as “a fly on the wall” or “the lens of a camera” that can record only observable actions but cannot relay what thoughts are going through the minds of the characters. The third-person objective is preferred in most pieces that are deliberately trying to take a neutral view, as in many newspaper articles. Like the audience of a drama, the narrator is merely an onlooker.

Third-Person Point of View, Omniscient

This point of view occurs when a storyteller who plays no part in the story knows all the facts, including the characters’ thoughts. The primary advantage is that this mode injects the narrator’s own perspective and reputation into the story, creating a greater sense of objectivity for the plot. The third-person omniscient narrator is usually the most reliable narrator; however, the omniscient narrator may offer judgments and express opinions on the behavior of the characters. This creates distance between the audience and the story. The narrator may briefly address the audience.

Third-Person Point of View, Subjunctive/Limited

This point of view uses the pronouns he, she, and they. The narrator is not a character involved in the story and is therefore able to convey what thoughts, feelings, and opinions are occurring in the minds of one or more characters. This is sometimes called the over-the-shoulder perspective; it shows the story as though the narrator can only describe events perceived by one viewpoint. It can be used very objectively, showing what is actually happening without the filter of the protagonist’s personality and allowing the author to reveal information that the protagonist does not know.
1. Which point of view does Mildred D. Taylor use in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*?

2. Describe the person telling this story (the narrator).

3. Do you like the narrator of this story? Why or why not?

4. In what ways might this story be different if another character from the book acted as the narrator?

**Part B.**

**Directions:** Respond on separate paper to the following prompts related to point of view in the novel.

1. Choose one incident in the story, and discuss it from a different character’s point of view. Include that character’s thoughts and feelings. You may also include how that character feels about Cassie.

2. Write a short episode from the story using the epistolary approach.

3. Use the third-person, subjective point of view to write about the scene in which Little Man refuses to take his textbook.
Character Types

Directions: Read the explanation of character types provided below. Identify the characters in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry who fit each character type.

1. **Protagonist**—the major character, central to the story’s plot

2. **Antagonist**—the opponent with whom the protagonist must contend; may be a character or an inanimate thing such as a force of nature

3. **Round character**—a complex, multidimensional character who exhibits a number of personal traits; a character with depth and, usually, the capacity for growth and change

4. **Flat character**—less complex than round characters; represents limited traits, qualities, or ideas; one-dimensional

5. **Static character**—does not exhibit the ability to change; leaves the plot as he or she entered, largely untouched

6. **Dynamic character**—demonstrates the ability to change and grow
Lesson 4
Exploring the Historical Setting

Objectives

- To recognize the characteristics of historical fiction
- To introduce the historical setting of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry
- To read and understand a nonfiction piece on sharecropping
- To write a creative historical fiction piece

Notes to the Teacher

Lesson 4 is designed to coincide with students reading chapters 4–6 of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Its purpose is to provide background information on the setting so that the students can better understand and appreciate the novel’s characters and plot. The focus is on students’ research on the geographical, economic, and social climate of Mississippi. Because this may be some students’ first exposure to historical fiction, it is helpful to introduce the characteristics of historical fiction and provide examples of pieces students may select for reading in the future.

There is much emphasis on informational text on standardized tests. In this lesson, students read a short piece about sharecropping and answer comprehension questions about the text. By studying sharecropping, students will understand how fortunate the Logans are to own their own land and why some of the other characters are jealous. Students also receive terms pertaining to the time period. After each group has defined the terms, the whole class should discuss how these topics affect the Logan family and other characters in the book. Finally, students write a short piece using characteristics specific to the genre of historical fiction.

Procedure

1. Distribute Handout 12, and have students read the information. Emphasize that Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry includes historical elements, but the plot and characters are fictional.

2. Discuss the terms historical fiction and autobiographical fiction. Can students determine what is fact and what is fiction in this novel? Is knowing fact from fiction of any importance? Why does the author not use exact place names in every situation? What other books familiar to students are classified as fiction but have elements of fact? Does fiction have any role in changing people’s views toward each other?
3. Distribute **Handout 13**, and instruct students to read the information and answer the questions.

**Suggested Responses**

1. Many Caucasians did not want African Americans to gain power or confidence because then the white people would no longer be able to control the black people’s actions. Those Caucasians wanted cheap labor to make themselves richer. Some believed that slavery should have never ended; sharecropping was just one step away from slavery.

2. Sharecroppers began to protest after a loophole in the New Deal agreement allowed plantation owners to receive government money if they fired current sharecroppers and hired different ones.

3. Former sharecroppers believed they could find better jobs in the industrial North because of the abundance of factories that needed a large number of workers on assembly lines. Also, many places in the North were less racist, so people believed they might have a better chance of finding steady work.

4. The American Red Cross provides assistance to victims of natural disasters, including hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and tornadoes.

5. With the invention and availability of farm machinery, sharecroppers were less needed in the fields.

4. Distribute **Handout 14**, and assign topics to groups. Have the communities find information and determine how they will delegate the research, the information recording responsibilities, and the method of presenting or sharing information.

5. Distribute **Handout 15**, and use it to prepare students to write their own creative short stories. Using part B of the handout, review the proper format for integrating dialogue.

6. Assign students to read chapters 7 and 8.

**Optional Activities**

1. Suggest that students visit the online exhibit titled “A Photo Dossier on Sharecropping” (http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/brown/photos.htm), which is part of the Modern American Poetry site maintained by the English department of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Have students view the pictures and read the information. Ask students to write a story based on one of the pictures.
2. Have students read the picture book *Henry's Freedom Box* by Ellen Levine (New York: Scholastic, 2007). It is the true story of Henry Brown, a slave who mailed himself in a box to the North to have freedom. Ask students to rewrite and illustrate part of the story from another character’s point of view.
Historical Fiction Characteristics and Examples

Directions: Read the following comments about differences between history and historical fiction and about their similarities. Highlight the ones that apply to Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Then review the titles of novels representing various time periods, and put stars next to the ones that seem interesting to you.

When you pick up a history book, you usually find a chronological presentation of events and important people in the development of a specific area of the world. History books are full of facts, and they often emphasize cause-effect connections. They may include maps, diagrams, and photographs, as well as primary source documents. No part of a history book should be fiction. For example, someone writing the history of the American Civil War is not free to invent imaginary battles and Union generals.

Historical fiction is different, related to but not the same as history. The writer of historical fiction has to know a lot about life at the time during which the novel or story is set, or the piece will be full of anachronisms—details that just do not fit with the time period. The writer definitely has to understand history, but he or she uses that history as a backdrop for a piece of fiction. A short story about the American Civil War might describe the experiences of a fictional young Union soldier on the battlefield at Gettysburg. The setting has to be real; the protagonist is fictional.

Ironically, sometimes people get more hooked on history from historical fiction than from history textbooks. Historical fiction can draw us deep into the thoughts and feelings of people who lived many years ago and experienced things we can only imagine. A novel about a young person in Salem, Massachusetts, during the seventeenth century can inspire a search for information about the history of the Puritan settlers. A short story about a sailor in a submarine during World War II can lead to a search for information about the Pacific theater of the war.

What should we look for in historical fiction?

- A real time period in a real place, with accurate representation of the customs and people of that time and place
- Imaginary characters placed in that time and place and facing conflicts that would have occurred then and there
- Sometimes, references to real historical figures and events
## Examples of Historical Fiction

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<td>Sonia Levitin</td>
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<td>Katherine Paterson</td>
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<td>1950</td>
<td>Sook Nyul Choi</td>
<td>Echoes of the White Giraffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Helen Szablya</td>
<td>The Fall of the Red Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Gary Soto</td>
<td>Buried Onions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Christopher Paul Curtis</td>
<td>The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>S. E. Hinton</td>
<td>The Outsiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Virginia Hamilton</td>
<td>The House of Dies Drear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Walter Dean Meyers</td>
<td>Fallen Angels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Joe Cottonwood</td>
<td>Quake!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Alice Mead</td>
<td>Girl of Kosovo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Life as a Sharecropper

**Directions:** Read the following passage about sharecropping. Then answer the questions.

Before the Civil War, the South had slave-labor plantations. On these large farms, single crops were grown, including cotton, sugar cane, coffee, and fruits. The workers were slaves or indentured servants, who worked long hours in large groups and were barely provided with necessities to survive. When slavery ended in 1865, a new type of work, sharecropping, was created. Free-labor plantations were formed where some workers worked on the land for a salary and returned to their own land to live. Others lived on the plantation and worked for a small percentage of the profit when the crop was harvested and sold. These workers were called sharecroppers.

Sharecroppers lived in poor conditions and performed very difficult labor in the fields. They were always in debt to their landlords because they were rarely paid in cash or by check. Instead, landowners set up accounts for sharecroppers at local general stores. Sharecroppers would buy merchandise on credit from a store owner, who would send a bill to the plantation owner. The store owners overcharged the sharecroppers, which meant that the sharecroppers had to work even harder to pay off their debts.

Many African Americans who lived in the rural South could not afford to buy their own land. Caucasian landowners often refused to sell to members of a different race, despite the fact that the Civil War abolished slavery and supposedly created equality for everyone. Caucasian bankers and authorities could also refuse, based upon race alone, to grant loans to purchase property. Today this practice is illegal.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced the New Deal in the 1930s during the Great Depression, the sharecroppers began to rebel against the plantation owners. They were against one section of the New Deal called the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which stated that owners could keep government money owed to them if they fired their current workers and hired new people to work on their property. Because of this unfair practice, agricultural workers staged a protest in 1939. More than a thousand workers left their homes and began walking along highways in protest.

Rev. Owen Whitfield, a former sharecropper who was dedicated to creating better conditions for workers, organized this protest. Whitfield himself never experienced harsh conditions because he had become friends with Thad Snow, his plantation owner, who helped Whitfield’s family move off the plantation and into government housing in 1937. Because of all his work organizing protests, Whitfield eventually received death threats from plantation owners afraid of losing their workers and power, and he had to go into hiding.

The protest proved dangerous and even deadly, and the protesters did not receive much aid or support. In fact, the American Red Cross refused to assist because this was a man-made disaster. The media became involved and photographed the protesters. The government was embarrassed by this spectacle and forced the protesters to go to less public places, including churches. These approved protesting areas were called concentration camps.
Students from Lincoln University were sympathetic to the sharecroppers, so they raised money and bought ninety-three acres of land in Missouri to give the sharecroppers a place to establish a farming community. It was known as Croppersville and remained a named community for ten years; eventually, its inhabitants left to work in industry. This community was considered a success because it brought attention to the difficult working conditions that were not much better than slavery.

After World War II, sharecropping lost its popularity due to technological developments. Mechanical cotton pickers were used because machines were more effective than paying employees. Sharecroppers eventually left their work on the farms and traveled to the North, generally to work in factories.

Although sharecropping is virtually nonexistent in America today, it still exists in some parts of the world. The landowners are members of the ruling class, while sharecroppers continue to lack freedom and financial security.

1. Why did white people try to prevent African Americans from owning their own land? How did they do this?

2. What events led to the sharecroppers demonstrating against their working conditions by leaving their homes and walking along highways?

3. Why did sharecroppers believe they would have better success looking for work in the North?

4. The American Red Cross refused to assist those in need during this disaster because it was man-made. In what types of disasters does the American Red Cross provide aid?

5. Sharecroppers said that they felt they were being “tractored off” the land after World War II. What did they mean by this phrase?
The Setting of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

**Directions:** Use library sources and the Internet to find as many facts as you can about the topic assigned to your community. Compare sources to verify information and to extend information. Include facts and phrases in sufficient detail, and organize a presentation to the class. This research will help you to visualize and understand the setting of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*.

1. Mississippi (geographic location, nature and character of the state, major agricultural crops and industry, and population)
2. Cotton industry (impact of the Depression during the 1930s)
3. Slavery (how it originated, how it was justified, its effect on black families)
4. “Breeded stock”
5. Lynching
6. Carpetbaggers
7. “Uncle Tomming” (meaning and origin of this phrase)
8. Jim Crow Laws
9. Night riders/nightmen (Ku Klux Klan)
10. Education and segregation in the South during the 1930s
Creative Writing: Historical Fiction

Part A.

Directions: Write a creative short story using the elements common to historical fiction. Your story must be completely original. Before drafting your story, plan it by using the five parts of the plot described below.

1. Exposition
   Because this is a short story, not a longer piece of literature, the main character and primary setting need to be carefully explained in detail early in the story.

2. Rising Action
   Within the first two paragraphs of the story, a clear, solvable conflict must be presented, along with the cause of the conflict.

3. Climax
   There must be a point of suspense in the story at which the main character is in physical or emotional danger caused by the conflict.

4. Falling Action
   This action must occur as a result of the climax. It should happen near the end of the story and be used to allow closure.

5. Resolution
   The end of the story should resolve all conflicts and questions. There should not be a cliffhanger in the last paragraph.
Part B.

Directions: Use realistic dialogue for your characters’ conversations to showcase their personalities. Use vocabulary and speech patterns appropriate to the characters that you create. Read the information and examples of how to integrate dialogue into the story’s text.

- Use quotation marks to indicate the words are spoken by one character to another. Mention the character who is receiving the dialogue within the sentence to increase clarity, and state the name of the character who is speaking at the beginning or end of each line of dialogue.
  
  “Steve, I want to build the boys a swing set,” Stacey excitedly exclaimed.
  Steve replied, “Stacey, I think that we are in for some hard work.”

- Use pronouns correctly but sparingly in dialogue to avoid confusion.
  
  “James and Zach are outside playing with the dog. He is thirsty.”
  This sentence is confusing because the reader does not know if James, Zach, or the dog is the one who is thirsty.

- Start a new, indented paragraph each time a different character speaks.
  
  “Tom, will you please wash the car while I water the flowers and pick up the kids’ toys?” Jen asked.
  “Yes, I am planning to wash both of our cars right now,” Tom replied.
  Noah added, “I want to help, too.”

- Place commas in the appropriate places near quotation marks.
  
  “Lisa, we will meet at your house at 4:00,” Holly said, “and go to Megan’s house next.”
  “Lisa, we will meet at your house at 4:00 and go to Megan’s house next,” Holly said.
  Holly said, “Lisa, we will meet at your house at 4:00 and go to Megan’s house next.”
Lesson 5
Research Paper and Presentation

Objectives

- To become well-educated on one aspect of the 1930s
- To write a research paper using Modern Language Association (MLA) format
- To create and deliver a formal presentation

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson should be introduced as students are reading chapters 7 and 8. Its purpose is for students to become familiar with many aspects of the 1930s.

Students use Handout 16 to choose a topic they want to research. These topics can easily be integrated with units in other content areas, including science and social studies. It would be helpful for students to pick first, second, and third choices. Students should use the expository writing reminders and MLA format as outlined in Handout 17 to document their sources.

To share their findings with the class, students prepare presentations complete with visual aids and use strategies for effective speaking.

Procedure

1. Distribute Handout 16, which provides numerous options for research paper topics. Ask students to select one (and a few alternates) and write a short explanation of their reasons.

2. Distribute Handout 17, and use it to review the proper paragraph structure for expository writing and the correct MLA format for research papers.

3. Distribute Handout 18. Review the guidelines provided on the handout to remind students of strategies for giving formal presentations and using effective visual aids. If possible, show students sample speeches. (Political speeches are easy to obtain via an Internet search.)

4. Assign students to continue reading through chapter 9.

Optional Activities

1. Have students use the information garnered from books or the Internet to create a trivia game about the topic researched, and have the class play the game. This will demonstrate students’ retention of the material from the presentations.
2. Create a Venn diagram for students to compare and contrast a general topic from the 1930s with a comparable topic today. For example, *Gone with the Wind* was a popular movie in the 1930s and won many Academy Awards. How does its plot, cast, and budget compare with those of recent award-winning movies?
Research Paper Topics

Directions: Research one of the following topics relevant to the 1930s, the era in which *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is set. You will write an MLA-formatted research paper and provide a class presentation on your topic. On a separate sheet of paper, list your topic choice, and provide a brief explanation about why you would like to research that selection. Also list a few alternates.

Sports
- The New York Yankees win the World Series five times, and Babe Ruth is a star.
- The 1932 and 1936 Olympics are held in Los Angeles, California, and Berlin, Germany.

Construction
- The Golden Gate Bridge is built.
- The Empire State Building opens.

Science
- The atom is split by British scientists.
- An 8.1 earthquake strikes Japan’s Miyagi Prefecture; 3,064 people are killed.
- Fred Whipple discovers his first comet.
- George F. Keck discovers solar energy.
- Pluto is discovered.

Government/Politics
- Adolf Hitler is named German chancellor, and his Socialists seize control of Germany.
- Prohibition is repealed.
- Social Security Act is enacted.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal is organized.

Crime
- Alcatraz is made a prison.
- Bonnie and Clyde have a crime spree.
- John Dillinger is paroled.
- Al Capone is arrested.

Movies
- *Gone with the Wind* is created.
- *The Wizard of Oz* blends black and white with color.
- Disney produces *The Three Little Pigs* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.
- Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers work together.

Inventions/Business
- The ANT-25 airplane is developed.
- Stereophonic sound is invented.
- The German Volkswagen is created.
Research Paper

Part A.

Directions: Using the guidelines and proper format shown below, draft an essay that highlights one area of the 1930s which fascinates you.

Introduction
1. Begin with a creative, attention-grabbing statement. Use a quote about the topic, a statistic, a fact, a piece of unusual or largely unknown information, or a brief anecdote.
2. Write three sentences to provide a brief background or history about the topic.
3. Write a thesis statement, one general sentence that states what the paper discusses.

Three Body Paragraphs
1. Based upon the thesis statement, create a topic sentence for each body paragraph. A topic sentence includes the main idea of the rest of the sentences in the paragraph.
2. Write three details to support each topic sentence. Include only details that relate to what you mentioned in your topic sentence. In one detail in each paragraph, include a reference to or a quote from one of your sources. If you take a direct line from a source, put the words in quotation marks and list the author’s name in parentheses after the quote. If the source is a book, also list the page number.
3. Write a clincher sentence for each body paragraph to summarize what has been discussed. Use words in the clincher which form a transition to the next paragraph.

Conclusion
1. Write one sentence about why you chose to research this topic.
2. Write three sentences summarizing each body paragraph.
3. Write one sentence that relates to the first sentence of your introduction to connect to your beginning and neatly conclude the essay.

Bibliography
1. On a separate page, in bold print, center the word Bibliography.
2. Include a list of the sources used during research. Include the medium of publication (print, electronic, etc.) at the end of each entry. The format for commonly used sources follows:
   Book—Author. Title. Publication City: Publisher, Year. Print.
   Interview—Name of Interviewee. Personal Interview. Date of Interview. Oral.
   Magazine/Newspaper Article—Author, “Title of Article.” Title of Publication Date of Publication: Page Numbers. Print.
   Web Site—Author (if listed). “Title of Article.” Title of Web Site. Date information was posted or updated. <Web Address> Date information was accessed. Electronic.
3. List the sources alphabetically by authors’ last names. Use correct punctuation. Indent five spaces if the information carries to a second or third line.
Part B.

**Directions:** Use this guide to follow the MLA format for quote integration in your research paper.

**Quote Integration**

To document quotations within your text, put the quoted material within quotation marks, and place the author’s last name and the page number of the source within parentheses. Do not put a comma after the quotation marks or between the author and the page number. Place the period to end the sentence and the quote after the parentheses. If the author’s name is stated within the sentence, it does not need to be placed within the parentheses; only the page number needs to be present.

Examples:

“The Common elements of traditional Cinderella stories include a young person treated badly by his or her family. This young person, while always good and kind, is a victim in need of rescue” (Niles 42).

According to historian Tara Niles, “Common elements of traditional Cinderella stories include a young person treated badly by his or her family. This young person, while always good and kind, is a victim in need of rescue” (42).

**Information Citation**

Use the same pattern that is used for direct quotations, but do not use quotation marks.

Example:

Traditional Cinderella stories typically contain a kind young person who is treated poorly by family members and needs to be rescued (Niles 42).

Part C.

**Directions:** Use the following checklist to review your work. Make changes as necessary.

1. Does my essay have the proper heading my teacher requires? Yes No
2. Does my essay have a title? Yes No
3. Do my sentences begin with capital letters and end with punctuation? Yes No
4. Does each sentence have a subject (noun/pronoun) and predicate (verb)? Yes No
5. Are all my words spelled correctly? Yes No
6. Do I include commas everywhere I need them? Yes No
7. Is each of my main ideas in a separate paragraph? Yes No
8. Does every idea in each paragraph connect to my topic sentence? Yes No
9. Have I put all quoted information in quotation marks? Yes No
10. If handwritten, is my writing neat? If typed, is the text double-spaced? Yes No
Effective Public Speaking and Visual Aids

Directions: Create a formal presentation using the guidelines below to share your research about the 1930s with the class. Prepare a visual aid to complement the presentation.

Formal Speaking Guidelines
1. Capture the audience’s attention. Begin the presentation with a quote or an interesting story about your topic.
2. Be energetic. Show the audience that you are excited to speak about this topic. Even if you did not enjoy the research, show positive emotion as you speak.
3. Stay focused. Speak about one area at a time. Use the same order as your research paper, and do not drift between topics or include unrelated information.
4. Provide transitions between major ideas. Use subtle transitions to guide your audience from one idea to another.
5. Make eye contact, and speak at the appropriate volume and speed. During the presentation, make an effort to look at each member of your audience. Do not look at a back wall or up at the ceiling. If you make eye contact, your audience will know that you care that they understand the topic. Do not write your entire presentation on note cards because you may be tempted to read the material. Be careful to speak loudly enough and slowly enough for the audience to understand you. Practice presenting your speech aloud in front of a mirror.
6. Surprise the audience. At one point in the presentation, say something that the audience will not expect; insert a joke appropriate to the topic or an interesting fact to keep the audience captivated. This may be most helpful at the halfway point of the presentation. Insert humor where appropriate.
7. Make the audience think about what you have to say. Leave a lasting impression by discussing memorable facts, stories, or interesting trivia about your topic.

Visual Aid Guidelines
1. Use a large poster board or trifold board to mount your information. A white board with black lettering or a yellow board with red lettering is usually the most effective color combination. Do not use pastel colors, since they are difficult to see.
2. Mount pictures of the topic with explanations in large, easily readable, neatly written or typed letters. Make all writing large so that it is easy to read from a distance. Use a ruler or yardstick to keep lettering straight.
3. Create a time line of important events related to your topic for use as a guide during your presentation.
4. Create a list of positive and/or negative attributes relevant to the topic.
5. Include information showing contrasts between the topic as it was in the 1930s and how it remains relevant today.
6. Be sure to refer to your visual aid during the presentation. Do not just post it next to you and expect people to look at it while you speak.
Lesson 6

Literary Elements: Plot and Conflict

Objectives

- To identify and examine the elements of the novel’s plot and types of conflict
- To reflect on passages that show the effects of racial prejudice
- To prove reasoning skill by drawing inferences

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson should begin as students read chapter 9 and will continue as they finish the novel. The lesson focuses on plot development and the major elements of plot structure. Students chart that structure as it functions in the conflict and action in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. This may be students’ first exposure to a plot diagram; **Handout 19** provides instruction on the plot elements. If possible as a guided practice, apply the plot diagram elements to a short story or novel with which all students are familiar. This may be helpful to ensure that all students understand the terms.

Following Cassie and the Logan family through this novel’s plot gives students an opportunity to view prejudice as a serious problem, to reflect on its effects, and to empathize and identify with the narrator as she comes of age in the Deep South. In addition, attention is given to increasing reading and reasoning skills through thought questions and developing critical reading skills by interpreting and analyzing quotes and the situations in the novel.

Finally, students learn the types of conflict commonly found in literature and apply them to the story. Again, it may be helpful to model conflict types from literature previously studied.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 19**. Discuss the structure of the chart and the definition of each element of the plot. In addition to the handout, a separate large chart or visual flip chart format might be an effective aid to clarify plot analysis. Assign students to work in their communities to complete the plot analysis as they finish reading the novel. Note: Students who have already finished the book may comment that the story seems unfinished. Mention the sequel, *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*, and encourage students to read it.
**Suggested Responses**

Responses should agree that the novel’s exposition is the Logan children walking to school on a hot October day. The rising action focuses on Mr. Granger trying to take the land and the racist incidents that the Logans encounter. The climax is the capture and near lynching of T. J. The falling action begins as the lynch mob disperses to fight the fire and continues until the Logans are safely reunited after the fire is quenched. Mr. Jamison tells the Logans of Mr. Barnett’s death, and T. J. is taken to jail. The resolution comes with Cassie’s coming of age as she knows her father started the fire as the only way to defuse the lynch mob’s hysteria. At the end of the novel, she is crying.

2. Distribute Handout 20, and have students respond to the questions individually. Then have students discuss the handout material within communities.

**Suggested Responses**

1. Daisy Crocker accepts the idea that black people are inferior. There are two sets of rules in the South—one for blacks and another for whites—and Miss Crocker believes that Cassie must learn to accept her inferior status.

2. Mama is realistic but implies that it may be time for blacks to stop passively accepting prejudice.

3. David Logan tells his family that Mr. Morrison had a little trouble and lost his job on the railroad; however, the major reason for bringing him to live with the Logans is to protect the family from the increasing violence of the night riders.

4. Mama’s statement confirms that it is a comfort to have Mr. Morrison present during a time of increased violence against the black community.

5. Papa is indicating that his family will have as little as possible to do with whites to avoid getting into dangerous situations and being falsely accused of some impropriety against a white.

6. Mr. Turner is letting Mama know how frightened he is of crossing the whites and how dangerous her plan is.

7. Mama is protecting Cassie again from fully learning the consequences of even verbally accosting a white person in Mississippi.

8. Papa is telling his children that in Mississippi in the 1930s it can be physically dangerous to trust or have a friendship with a white.
9. Hammer implies that Mr. Jamison’s help with the boycott and later with T. J.’s case will not make him popular with the other whites in the area. Mr. Jamison risks violence against himself, his business, and his family by attempting to help the black community.

10. This conversation is a veiled threat that Mr. Granger will somehow manage to take back Logan land if they persist in the boycott and that black sharecroppers can also look forward to financial trouble if they continue their support.

11. Granger checks the textbooks, discovers Mary has covered up the county book ownership page, and accuses her of tampering with the books and teaching things that aren’t supposed to be taught. He sees that she is fired from teaching.

12. They are afraid.

3. Distribute Handout 21, and have students individually identify types of conflict used in the novel. Then conduct a class discussion of those mentioned, and determine accuracy. Point out that some conflicts may fit into more than one category.

4. Assign students to continue reading through chapter 11.

Optional Activities

1. Instruct students to use any art medium to depict their choice of scene, topic, or emotion from the novel.

2. In chapter 9, the men are injured in an accident allegedly caused by the Wallaces. Ask students to write a report that might be submitted to the authorities detailing what happened. Have students write it from the point of view of David or Stacey Logan or Mr. Morrison.
The Elements of Plot

Directions: The plot structure of a novel is represented by the diagram below. Each of the five stages of development of the action is explained. Outline the stages in the plot structure of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Use specific examples for each of the stages.

1. **Exposition**—This is at the beginning of the story where the reader gets background information: the locale and time frame; characters; conflicts or the potential for conflicts.

2. **Rising Action**—The characters face a series of conflicts that escalate to a moment of great turmoil.

3. **Climax**—This occurs at that point where the plot reaches its greatest emotional intensity, a major turning point in the novel which accelerates the plot toward resolution.

4. **Falling Action**—The major conflicts and tensions of the complications and crisis subside.

5. **Resolution**—Also referred to as the conclusion or denouement, this part of the plot makes known the outcome of the conflict. The major problem is brought to some degree of solution.

---

1. ____________________

2. ____________________

3. ____________________

4. ____________________

5. ____________________
What Is Not Being Said?

Directions: Careful readers must learn to infer meanings. In many instances in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, the characters say or do one thing, leaving the reader to question what is really meant. For each of the following passages, indicate what you feel is implied by the character’s statement.

1. What is Miss Crocker really saying to Mama when she says, “Well, I just think you’re spoiling those children, Mary. They’ve got to learn how things are sometime”?

2. What does Mama mean when she responds, “But that doesn’t mean they have to accept them . . . and maybe we don’t either”?

3. David Logan, who has had to seek distant employment working on the railroad, comes home unexpectedly, bringing Mr. Morrison to live with his family. What reason does he give for doing this? What is the real reason he has brought him? Support your answer with textual evidence (direct quotes from the novel, including page numbers).

4. What does Mama Logan imply with her statement to Mr. Morrison, “We’re glad to have you here . . . especially now”?

5. After Mr. Lanier tells Papa Logan about the Berrys’ burning and a nearby lynching, Papa makes the following, seemingly disconnected statement: “In this family, we don’t shop at the Wallace store.” Explain his meaning.

6. When Mama Logan asks Mr. Turner to join the boycott of the Wallace store, Mr. Turner answers, “When I was a wee little boy, I got burnt real bad. It healed over but I ain’t never forgot the pain of it. . . . It’s an awful way to die.” What is he saying to the Logans’ request?
7. Cassie questions Mama about what will happen if Uncle Hammer gets to Mr. Simms before Mr. Morrison can stop him. What does Mama mean when she answers, “I think . . . I think you’ve done enough growing up for one day”?

8. Papa Logan discourages Stacey from being friends with Jeremy Simms, who is white, even though he admits that Jeremy might be a better, truer friend than T. J. What does Papa mean when he says, “The trouble is, down here in Mississippi, it costs too much to find out [if a white is a true friend]. . . . So I think you’d better not try”?

9. What does Uncle Hammer mean when he tells Mr. Jamison that he “won’t be the most popular man”?

10. Mr. Granger is supposedly talking to Big Ma about the price of cotton and sharecropping, but what is the real purpose of the conversation? What and whom is he threatening?

11. When Mr. Granger and the school board members come to Mama’s class, Granger says, “Been hearing ’bout your teaching, Mary, so as members of the school board we thought we’d come by and learn something.” Why did they really come, and what do they do?

12. Why do the characters in this book feel they must not openly say what they think, feel, or know to be true?
Literary Conflicts

Directions: Review the types of conflict frequently present in literature, and fully explain on separate paper one example of each type found in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. For each, identify the conflict and the characters involved. Name the cause, resolution, and effect or consequences of the conflict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character/Character</td>
<td>Characters oppose each other.</td>
<td>You and your parents argue about your curfew.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/Self</td>
<td>Character has an internal struggle.</td>
<td>You are unsure of whether to tell on a friend making a bad decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/Nature</td>
<td>Character has trouble with the weather or environment.</td>
<td>You are stranded in the desert without enough water to survive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/Society</td>
<td>Character holds beliefs against others/tradition/government.</td>
<td>You are angry that the driving age may be raised, and you plan to protest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/Fate</td>
<td>Character lacks control of life.</td>
<td>You are upset about your father being transferred and having to move to a different state.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 7

Thematic Poetry

Objectives

- To review the elements of poetry, including spirituals
- To read and analyze poetry with themes relevant to those of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
- To create a poem using a specific style

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson should be introduced as students read chapter 11, which begins with words from the Negro spiritual titled “Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.” Students review literary terms associated with poetry and apply them. They should connect themes in lyrics in a spiritual to themes in the novel. The book’s title is found in the context of the Negro spiritual. The plea to be heard reflects the Logan family’s desperate attempt to save T. J. and the cry of Cassie at the end.

Students also have the opportunity to learn new poetic forms and write poetry related to either the characters or the incidents in the novel.

Procedure

1. Distribute Handout 22, and use it to explain the history and purpose of Negro spirituals. After reading the background, have students turn to the first page of chapter 11 in the novel. Use the questions on the handout to discuss the historical aspects of the poem along with connections to the novel’s plot.

Suggested Responses

1. Mr. Morrison’s voice is compared to thunder.
2. The speaker is a slave.
3. The phrase “over the water” references slave ships coming from Africa to America.
4. The old man would be the plantation owner or manager.
5. In the novel, the old man would be Mr. Granger and any other Caucasian character trying to hurt the Logans.
6. The white men want to take away land and source of income.
7. The lyrics show determination to overcome obstacles.
8. An approaching storm is building to T. J.’s potential lynching, and the characters need to show their resolve.
9. Mr. Morrison has been a victim of racism.
10. The lyrics evoke a powerful desire for freedom.

2. Distribute **Handout 23**. Teach students the common rhyme schemes and stanza types along with the elements found in poetry. Have them read and analyze the spiritual.

3. Distribute **Handout 24**, and review the information. Have students create a poem about the story or characters using one of the three forms. Then have students share results.

4. Assign students to finish reading the novel.

**Optional Activities**


2. Have students write a series of poems from the point of view of the land. Tell students to have the land discuss what it observes happening to the Logans and how it feels knowing that Mr. Granger wants to steal it. Students could include its feelings about knowing how much the Logans love it and want to keep it.
Negro Spirituals

Part A.

Directions: Read the history and purpose of Negro spirituals.

Nearly all of the first Africans who came to America were slaves taken from the African West Coast. Despite their deplorable living and working conditions, slaves were allowed to attend Christian services generally held in the plantation houses of their owners or in churches. They were allowed to sing, but they were not permitted to dance or play drums as they did during their free days in Africa. Thousands of slaves would gather together to sing and listen to preachers.

In addition, slave owners would often allow slaves to sing during their work time as long as the songs were not about the evils of slavery or about the owners themselves. These songs would sometimes be sung by one slave or by groups of slaves as they worked. These songs would provide some entertainment and encouragement as the slaves had to haul heavy loads such as fallen trees away from the plantation.

When the Underground Railroad was established, slaves would often hide information about how to escape in the lyrics of the spirituals. For example, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” mentions Jordan, which would be a reference to a river through which escapees would wade so that the dogs of slave owners would be unable to smell their tracks. “Chariot” is a reference to a mode of transportation that would be used to hide them from slave owners. “Carry me home” is a plea to allow slaves to escape to a place of freedom from the shackles of slavery.

After slavery ended in 1865, many former slaves wanted to forget the spirituals, but during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, these songs enjoyed a resurgence in popularity. When Martin Luther King Jr. Day was first celebrated in 1985 and declared a national holiday in 1992, spirituals again became popular and are now considered part of the American heritage.

Part B.

Directions: Turn to the first page of chapter 11 in your novel, and reread lyrics of the Negro spiritual that Cassie overhears Mr. Morrison singing. Then answer the following questions.

1. Whose voice earlier in the novel is compared to thunder?

2. In the spiritual, what type of person would be the “I” character?

3. What is the historical reference to “over the water”?
4. Historically, who would be the old man referenced in the spiritual?

5. In literary terms connected to the novel, who would the old man be?

6. How do the novel’s antagonists try to whip the characters?

7. What is the theme of this spiritual both for the original singers and for the Logan family?

8. Why did Mildred D. Taylor choose to begin this particular chapter with lyrics of this spiritual?

9. Why is it important that Mr. Morrison is the character who chants this spiritual as he is guarding the family?

10. This spiritual provides the origin for the novel’s title. Explain your opinion about whether this is an appropriate title for the novel.
Poetic Literary Elements

Part A.

Directions: Read the following information about rhyme schemes, stanzas, and literary elements found in poetry.

Rhyme

In poetry, the rhyme scheme is the pattern of rhyming words at the ends of the lines. Each line is represented by a lowercase letter. The first rhyming sounds are “a,” while the second set are “b,” and the letters continue until the end of the stanza.

There are two types of rhymes in poetry. The first is called a perfect (true) rhyme; two or more words begin with different consonant sounds, but they have identical stressed sounds. Examples include ring/sing and cat/bat. A slant (partial) rhyme uses words that have similar sounds but do not completely rhyme.

Stanzas

Many poems are divided into stanzas. These are formal divisions to show breaks in thought or new ideas introduced in the poem, similar to paragraphs in prose. Particular types of poetry contain stanzas with a certain number of lines in them.

- Couplet: two lines
- Tercet: three lines
- Quatrain: four lines
- Cinquain: five lines
- Sestet: six lines

Literary Elements

Poems often use the following devices.

- Alliteration: repetition of the first consonant sounds of words
- Metaphor: comparison of two unlike objects
- Personification: attribution of human characteristics to something not human
- Simile: comparison of two unlike objects using words such as like or as
- Symbol: concrete object or image that represents something else
Part B.

Directions: Using the information provided in part A, analyze the lyrics in the song, and connect its themes to those in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*.

**We’ll Understand It By and By**

We are tossed and driven on the restless sea of time  
Somber skies and howling tempests oft succeed a bright sunshine  
In that land of perfect day, when the mist have rolled away  
We will understand it by and by

By and by, when the morning comes  
When the saints of God are gathered home  
We’ll tell the story how we’ve overcome  
For we’ll understand it by and by

We are often destitute of the things that life demands  
Want of food and want of shelter, thirsty hills and barren lands  
We are trusting in the Lord, and according to God’s Word  
We will understand it by and by

Trials dark on every hand, and we cannot understand  
All the ways that God could lead us to that blessed promised land  
But He guides us with His eye, and we’ll follow till we die  
For we’ll understand it by and by

Temptations, hidden snares often take us unawares  
And our hearts are made to bleed for a thoughtless word or deed  
And we wonder why the test when we try to do our best  
But we’ll understand it by and by

—Charles A. Tindley
Create a Poem

Directions: A poem is a literary form that can describe a character, place, feeling, or incident. After reading the following examples of poetry types, write a poem using a given form.

1. Korean Sijo
   The original form consists of three lines with fourteen to sixteen syllables in a line, with a total of no more than forty-five syllables in the poem. In the English translation, sijo is written in six lines, each line containing six to eight syllables.
   Example:
   Frosty nights turn greens to golds.
   Crisp winds pluck leaves from trees
   To float gently to the ground.
   Adults gather leaves into piles
   Into which laughing tykes will jump,
   Throwing gold to the winds again.

2. Tanka
   This poem has five lines of five, seven, six, seven, and seven syllables.
   Example:
   Snow falling gently
   Covering the ground and trees
   Is peacefully painting
   Perfect portraits in pure white
   A wondrous sight to behold.

3. Diamante
   This seven-line poem conforms to the following format for each line: one noun, two adjectives, three participles, four nouns (the second two having nearly the opposite meaning from the first two), three participles reflecting change, two adjectives, and one noun (an antonym to the first). The words are arranged to form a diamond shape.
   Example:
   Fire
   Secure, comfortable
   Glowing, crackling, warming
   Friend, companion—stranger, enemy
   Raging, spreading, burning
   Dangerous, uncontrolled
   Darkness
Lesson 8
Literary Style

Objectives
- To discover and analyze the author’s use of symbolism and theme
- To select examples of how literature and the media contribute to stereotyping

Notes to the Teacher
This lesson should be introduced as students finish reading the book. Mildred D. Taylor succeeds in drawing a vivid portrait of the rural South of the 1930s for her readers. Her simple, poetic style of writing and use of figurative language enable the reader to see, feel, and experience life in an era of which they are not a part. To accomplish this feat, Taylor uses symbolism and theme.

The novel’s dialogue is realistic and not overburdened with Southern colloquialisms or dialect; however, students need to be aware of regional dialects by discussing their own regional colloquialism because language is a factor in attitudes. Students need to see the dialect in the novel not as an indicator of intelligence or lack of it, but as what was acceptable in that geographic region. Use an audio recording of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* to let students hear the spoken dialect. An audio book may relieve some students of the difficulty of reading the dialogue, and it could be helpful if used in the early reading assignments.

Procedure
1. Distribute *Handout 25*, and use it to explain symbols. Ask students to give examples of symbols used in their own lives. Then use the questions on the handout as a basis for discussion.

Suggested Responses
1. Jefferson Davis was president of the Confederacy; the school’s name symbolizes the South’s rebellion and adherence to the practice of slavery. Many years after the Civil War, he was still seen as a hero. Great Faith Elementary’s name expresses simplicity and hope.

2. The Confederate flag representing slavery is more highly valued than the American flag representing the equality of all Americans.

3. The two suggest the possibility of hope for equality.
4. The Logan land represents determination to overcome all obstacles.
5. The family members symbolize all innocent victims of hatred and racism.
6. The used textbooks for the African-American students show lack of respect for them and disregard for the importance of their education.
7. The fact that only Caucasian students get a school bus shows that they have an easier life and authorities care that they are comfortable.
8. The Logan children dig a ditch to get revenge. This shows that the Logans will not allow themselves to continue to be mistreated.
9. Stacey’s winter coat represents the poverty of the Logans but also the love they feel toward one another. When Stacey gives T. J. the coat, that shows he is easily manipulated.
10. The church revival symbolizes the sense of fellowship and community that the African-American characters feel toward one another.

2. Distribute **Handout 26**, and use it to clarify the difference between topics and themes. Then discuss themes in the novel. (The Logan family in various circumstances demonstrates all of the themes.)

3. Point out that racism is built into our language. When civil rights movement leaders proclaimed, “Black is beautiful,” they were reversing long-held stereotypes. Ask questions to clarify the point.
   - Why is a lily-white reputation good?
   - Why do we refer to villains as black-hearted?
   - In old Western movies, why does the good guy usually wear a white cowboy hat?

**Optional Activities**

1. Have students write several paragraphs where they agree or disagree with Mama’s statement, “We have no choice of what color we’re born or who our parents are or whether we’re rich or poor. What we do have is some choice over what we make of our lives once we’re here.”

2. Have students write about Mama’s conversation regarding respect and contrasting it to fear. Ask them to explain what they think respect is and how people get it from others.
Symbolism

Directions: Read the explanation of symbolism. Then determine what each of the following symbols represents in the novel.

Symbolism appears in a story when the author uses a concrete object, a person, or even a color to demonstrate a connection to something or someone else. Symbols can be used to convey emotions such as greed, generosity, happiness, and anger. Symbols can also be used to advance the plot of the story or to reflect ideals or beliefs. Symbols often appear many times throughout the course of a novel. A conventional symbol is one used universally, while a private symbol is one that a particular author uses for a certain work. A conventional symbol in literature is the ticking of a clock or chiming of bells; this usually means that death is near. An example of a private symbol is Edgar Allan Poe’s use of the color red in his short story “The Masque of the Red Death.” Because many important women in his life, including his wife, “foster” mother, and biological mother passed away from tuberculosis/consumption, he used the color red in many stories to demonstrate their suffering. A common symptom of tuberculosis is coughing up blood.

1. The two schools, Jefferson Davis County School and Great Faith Elementary School, are described. What is symbolic in the names of the schools?

2. In front of the white school, there is a flagpole with the flags of the United States of America and the State of Mississippi (Confederate). What is symbolic about them?

3. What do Mr. Jamison and Jeremy Simms symbolize?

4. How is the setting of the Logan land symbolic? Could this story have been set in another part of the country?
5. What does the burning of the Berry family symbolize?

6. What is symbolic about the textbooks used by the students at Great Faith Elementary School?

7. What does the school bus used by the students at Jefferson Davis County School represent?

8. How is digging a ditch for the school bus symbolic?

9. How is Stacey's winter coat, given to him by Uncle Hammer, a symbol?

10. What is the purpose of including the church revival?
Theme

Directions: Read the following description of themes often found in literature. For each, find an example of its use in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*.

The theme is the controlling idea of the work on which the author wants the reader to concentrate while reading and thinking about the piece. It often reflects the author’s own experience. The theme is not usually directly stated within the text; instead, the reader must surmise the author’s intentions based upon characterization and plot events. The theme is not the main topic of a piece; instead, it is a universal concept that can be applied to many types of literature and can withstand the test of time. For example, a theme from William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* focuses on the concept of forbidden love and how death can come to those who try to love another from a warring faction, different social group, or lifestyle. This theme is still prevalent in modern stories.

**Coming-of-Age**

In many novels, a young protagonist must go through many trials and overcome many obstacles before becoming an adult. Often, the character begins as someone very innocent or even naïve about real-life problems. Throughout the novel, the character may become disillusioned or learn that life is not perfect nor is it simple. The character may sometimes experience cruelty at the hands of people who should love him or her.

**Time Is Precious/Death May Come Too Soon**

Many novels include a realization by the protagonist that he or she must learn to appreciate life in the present because it can be too short. Often, young protagonists spend most of their childhoods daydreaming about the future, and they miss the benefits of this time in their lives. Some characters accept death as a part of life.

**Abandonment/Alienation/Rejection**

Many characters in literature feel alone and isolated from family and friends. They want desperately to fit in but are rejected and/or betrayed by their families. Some characters deliberately choose alienation.

**Believe in Oneself/Take Risks**

Characters sometimes learn to take risks to live fulfilled lives. They take responsibility for their actions. Because characters are often in conflict with others, they may act out in ways that are hurtful. When this happens, they learn from their mistakes but still are brave enough to try new things.

**Ambition/Courage/Self-Esteem**

Characters often must overcome difficulties that are physically or emotionally painful. To do so, they must exhibit ambition and be courageous.
Families/Loyalty

Although most characters wish they came from loving and supportive families, that is sometimes not the case. Sometimes, family members betray one another, manipulate each other, or even profess hatred toward each other. Characters must overcome these negative relationships. Often, these relationships are repaired in later years, but just as often, there are relationships that cannot ever recover from problems.

Individualism/Sense of Identity

Often, young protagonists struggle to establish themselves independently of parents, siblings, and even friends. They often experiment with dangerous situations or situations of which they know others would disapprove. Sometimes these protagonists are successful in making themselves stand apart from their families and friends. Other times, though, they just cause more problems for themselves and are simply labeled as troublemakers.
Lesson 9
Writing about a Media Adaptation

Objectives

- To respond critically to literature through expository writing
- To explore creative license by comparing the book and movie versions of the Logans’ story

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson should be used after all students have read the novel. Allow the class to watch *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and complete the viewing guide. The movie is available in many libraries and can be purchased from companies such as Amazon.

Remind students to share their honest opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the movie. These opinions should be based upon the presentation of character, plot, and setting. Students should note whether there are smooth transitions between scenes and whether any parts are difficult to follow.

After the writing assignment has been completed, have group members read each other’s pieces to see whether they share or have differing opinions with one another. Then have the class informally discuss or debate whether the movie or the book better tells the Logans’ story.

Procedure

1. Obtain a copy of the 1978 film adaptation of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* for the full class to watch. Distribute Handout 27 for students to complete as they watch. Use their answers as the basis for an open-ended discussion.

2. Distribute Handout 28, and discuss the guidelines so that students are aware of how to write a movie review. Encourage students to read professional movie reviews from magazines, newspapers, and the Internet to determine whether these reviews meet the standards and what, if anything, the students would want to change in these already published reviews.

3. Show students the cover for the film adaptation, and instruct them to create a new cover. This project can be done individually or in communities. Students will need access to computer software or art supplies.
4. Ask students informally whether they believe the book or the movie better tells the Logans’ story. Divide students accordingly into two groups. Have students debate the merits and weaknesses of both the book and the movie.

5. Have students select and act out scenes from the story, complete with costumes, props, and effective dialogue.

**Optional Activities**

1. Have students watch Alex Haley’s *Roots* to compare and contrast his history with that provided in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Students may also watch the movie *Places in the Heart* and identify thematic connections to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*.

2. Have students read other books that center on various aspects of problems caused by prejudice. Here are some possibilities.
   - *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
   - *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* by Ernest J. Gaines
   - *A Long Way from Home* by Maureen Wartski
   - *The Friends* by Rosa Guy
   - *Sounder* by William H. Armstrong
   - *Jubilee* by Margaret Walker
   - *Chronicles of Black Protest* by Bradford Chambers
   - *Return to South Town* by Lorenz Graham
   - *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family* by Pauli Murray
   - *The Owl’s Song* by Janet Hale
   - *The Blessing Deer* by Lois Henderson
   - *The Murderer* by Felice Holman
   - *A Frost in the Night* by Edith Baer
   - *Ganesh* by Malcolm J. Bosse
Critical Viewing Guide

Directions: While viewing Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, answer the following questions.

1. Which images seem to repeat multiple times? What happens in the plot when these scenes appear?

2. What kinds of feelings are expressed when you hear each of the following sounds: thunder, singing, laughing, even long moments of silence?

3. What are the primary settings in the movie? How do the characters act or react when they are in these settings?

4. What are the differences in characters or characterization between the book and the movie?

5. What are the differences in plot between the book and the movie?

6. Did you enjoy the book or the movie more? Explain your choice in detail, citing specific scenes or examples.

7. If you were a director about to create a new movie adaptation, what changes in casting would you include? What would any changes in setting look like? Which scenes from the novel would you emphasize? Which scenes from the movie would you delete?
Movie Review

Directions: Read the following guidelines to become familiar with how to write movie reviews.

Introduction (five to seven sentences)

1. Include the author’s name, the movie’s title, the film studio, the date of release, the film’s rating, and the film’s length. Look on the Internet or the back of the DVD cover to find this information.

2. Use formal language but an informal tone. For example, do not use any slang words, but imagine that you are having a conversation with a friend and telling that person about a movie that you just watched.

3. Explain the target audience of this movie.

4. Include brief descriptions of the main characters and a general overview of the story.

5. In your thesis statement, state your overall opinion of the movie. You will expand upon this opinion in your body paragraphs.

Body Paragraph 1: Actors’/Actresses’ Characterization (five to seven sentences)

1. List the names of the actors and actresses playing major roles, and include brief summaries of their careers and other notable roles.

2. Include any awards for which the actors and actresses were nominated for this movie.

3. Did the actors and actresses look how you pictured from reading the novel? Explain any positive or negative changes you noticed.

4. Did the actors and actresses seem realistic in their voices, words, and movements, or was it clear that they were merely acting?

5. Which characters were likable, and which did you dislike after watching the movie? Did your opinion of any characters change from reading about them to watching them?

Body Paragraph 2: Setting/Plot Development (five to seven sentences)

1. Give an overview of when and where the movie occurs. How does the setting of the movie play an important role in the action?

2. How is the setting of the movie similar to or different from your world?

3. Tell readers enough about the plot of the movie so that they can tell whether or not they would be interested in viewing it. Explain the rising action and several conflicts or suspenseful scenes that occur.

4. Explain whether or not the transitions between scenes are clear and relevant.

5. Do not tell the viewer the resolution of the movie.
Body Paragraph 3: Director’s Style (five to seven sentences)

1. Explain the tone of the movie. Is it funny, sad, suspenseful, or boring?

2. List the director’s musical choices. Are the selections appropriate? Does the music ever seem to overshadow the characters or the plot?

3. What special effects are used throughout the movie? Do the special effects add to the enjoyment and understanding of the movie? Do the special effects appear to be forced or irrelevant to the movie’s plot?

Body Paragraph 4: Book Comparison (five to seven sentences)

1. What parts of the movie are not present in the novel? Are any of these added scenes confusing, or do any of them appear irrelevant?

2. Identify any changes in characterization or setting in the two works.

3. How does the plot change from the book to the movie?

Conclusion (five to seven sentences)

1. Explain the main themes or lessons on which the director wants viewers to focus while watching the movie.

2. State specifically what you like and dislike about the movie. Offer some suggestions for how the movie could be improved.

3. Restate your honest opinion of the movie. Is it a movie that you wanted never to end? Is it a movie that you watched only because you had to watch it?

4. Make your recommendation to others. Should they buy the movie to watch multiple times, rent it for one viewing, or avoid it altogether?
Lesson 10
Creating a Newspaper

Objectives
• To apply proper journalism skills for newspaper writing
• To use artistic abilities for newspaper illustrations
• To work cooperatively in small-group communities

Notes to the Teacher
This lesson should be introduced when all students have finished reading the novel. The students will learn the basics of journalistic writing and parts of a newspaper. Then they will name and create a newspaper that details the major events of the novel in news stories. Students should also include other features found in newspapers, such as comics, weather reports, and classified ads. They will need to work together in their communities to assign tasks, lay out pages, draft stories, and edit the work of their peers. Each group will then share the contents of its newspaper with other groups. If possible, classes can even hold a contest to determine which newspaper looks most realistic and professional.

Procedure
1. Distribute **Handout 29**, which lists the major sections of a newspaper. Explain that students will work in communities to produce a newspaper that highlights events from the novel and from the novel’s setting. Review with students the types of articles and features found in a newspaper. Distribute copies of newspapers for students to view the order of the sections and types of information covered in the paper. This handout also provides sample stories and features that students can choose to include in their newspapers.

2. Distribute **Handout 30**, which provides a framework for how to write an effective newspaper story. It would also be helpful for students to view real newspaper stories and evaluate the quality of writing along with effectiveness of headlines, pictures, and captions.

3. Pair students, and have one take on the role of a character from the novel and the other interview that person to gain information for a news story. For example, one student can pretend to be a reporter and another can pretend to be Mr. Granger. The reporter would ask questions that the other student answers as though he or she were Mr. Granger. These answers can then be used when the reporter writes the news story.
4. Allow class time for students to work together in their communities to lay out pages, draft stories, and edit the work of their peers.

5. Invite students to share their completed newspapers with the other class groups.

Optional Activities

1. Invite a local journalist to the class to talk about his or her career, including necessary education, job responsibilities, and advice for entering the profession.

2. Ask students to read another novel in the Logan family saga and report to the class what happens to the characters as they grow and develop.
Sections of a Newspaper

**Directions:** Before creating your own newspaper, it is important to note the types of stories and features found in most newspapers. Using this handout and a sample newspaper, note sections that you feel are of the highest importance. Also indicate sections that you wish to include in your community’s newspaper. A sample headline is also included for each section. While your community may use a few of these ideas for the newspaper you create, most of your paper must consist of original work. You may even gain some ideas from your 1930s research project.

Local News: Fire Rips through One-Fourth of Logan Family Land
State News: Mississippi Lynchings at an All-Time High
National News: New Deal Brings Relief to Plantation Owners, Hurts Sharecroppers
International News: German Parliament Burnt to Ground
Business/Finance/Economy: Mr. Jamison Gives Advice about Buying on Credit
Politics: FDR Becomes President
Sports: New York Giants Win 1933 World Series
Weather: Heat Wave Destroys Cotton Crop
 Classified Ads: Wanted—New Seventh Grade Teacher at Great Faith Elementary School
Interviews: Mr. Granger, Bank President, Tells of His Success
Letters from the Readers: Anger That Great Faith Students Receive Old Textbooks
Opinion/Editorial: Disgust over Price-Gouging at Wallace Store
Entertainment/Comics/Crossword Puzzle/Horoscopes: *King Kong* Tops the Box Office
Arts/Culture/Literature: *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze* by Elizabeth Lewis Wins Newbery Medal
Events: Great Faith Church Revival Draws Crowd
Automobiles: Packards Are Luxury Cars of the Future
Cooking/Cuisine: Big Ma’s Recipes for Chitlins
Health/Medicine: Home Remedies for Burn Victims
Kids/Youth: How to Avoid Blisters on Walk to School
Writing a News Story

Directions: Read the following information about news reporting, and then try your own hand at writing news stories.

News reporters always focus on basic questions. What happened? Where and when did it happen? Who was involved? Why did it happen? How did it happen? Reporters are concerned with the facts, and they do not insert their own personal responses and opinions into news stories.

In a news story, the most important information comes first, the least important last. When stories are too long, editors cut off the last sentences and paragraphs; the inverted pyramid structure assures that the part that gets cut off includes the least vital information.

Reporters get their information by doing research. Often this research includes completing interviews with witnesses and participants in the topic of the story. An effective interview involves devising questions ahead of time and being able to modify them as the conversation proceeds.

A number of events in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* lend themselves to news writing. One is the incident of the Jefferson Davis school bus getting stuck. If you were a reporter writing a news story about that, whom would you interview? What information would you place first in your article? The best interviewees would probably be the bus driver and children on the bus. Unless you had some secret information, you would have no idea of the involvement of the Logan children. Your story would probably include a photograph of the disabled school bus, and the first paragraph would state that the bus became trapped due to unexplained damage to the road, making it necessary for the children to walk home, and that no one was injured.

Consider other important events, such as Mrs. Logan being fired from her teaching job, the robbery at the store, and the fire near the end of the novel. With what people would you want interviews? What would be the most important pieces of information which would come first in your news articles?

Here are a few pointers for news reporting.
- Use simple, clear sentence structures and vocabulary.
- Do not include words or phrases that reflect your own attitudes.
- Make the first paragraph a concise summary of the most important facts.
- Take notes during interviews, and have interviewees verify that you have quoted them correctly.
- Use spell-check, and proofread to catch and correct language errors.
- Make sure that an editor could cut the last part of the story without damaging it.
Vocabulary

Directions: In *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, Mildred D. Taylor uses some advanced vocabulary choices, but she uses them so well that most readers can understand the words from their context. Use the following exercise to see whether those words are now part of your working vocabulary.

**acrid**

**admonish**

**amiable**

**bland**

**coddling**

**despondent**

**dubious**

**emphatic**

**flinch**

**formidable**

**gloat**

**haughty**

**indignant**

**malevolent**

**patronize**

**penchant**

**pensive**

**placid**

**precarious**

**snide**

1. T. J. often makes __________________ comments to Stacey even though they are friends.

2. Mr. and Mrs. Logan give their children a(n) __________________ warning not to go to the Wallaces’ store.

3. The __________________ smell of smoke lingers long after a fire is extinguished.

4. Because of his size and personality, Mr. Morrison is a __________________ presence in the Logans’ household.

5. Big Ma does not believe in __________________ children.

6. It is hard for Mrs. Logan not to be __________________ after she lost her job.

7. Lillian Jean is very __________________, but Cassie manages to get even with her.

8. Christopher-John is more __________________ than his excitable siblings.

9. T. J. is in a very __________________ situation after the robbery at the store.
10. Mrs. Logan manages to keep a(n) ___________________ expression when the men come to observe her class.

11. Unlike his brothers and sister, Jeremy Simms seems to have a(n) ___________________ personality.

12. The Logan children find it hard not to __________________ after they manage to defeat the school bus.

13. Miss Daisy Crocker is ___________________ when Little Man rejects his textbook.

14. Little Man has a(n) ___________________ for being neat and clean at all times.

15. Mr. and Mrs. Logan ___________________ Stacey that it was not right to give away his coat.

16. At the end of the novel, Cassie is tearful and ___________________.

17. Mr. Granger has a(n) ___________________ attitude toward the Logans.

18. Mr. Jamison does not ___________________ from facing danger.

19. Mr. Logan is ___________________ about the possibility of friendship between black and white people.

20. Mrs. Logan tries to organize the people to ___________________ stores in Strawberry.
Test: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

Part A.

Directions: Write the letter of the best answer.

_____ 1. The Logan family’s land was
   a. given to them by a wealthy plantation owner.
   b. purchased by Grandpa from a Yankee who obtained it during the Reconstruction.
   c. previously owned by the Granger family.
   d. both b and c.

_____ 2. In order to earn money to pay taxes on the land and pay off the loan, Papa Logan
   a. shares crops.
   b. allows his children to work for plantation owners in the area.
   c. works out of state on the railroad.
   d. tries to grow crops other than cotton.

_____ 3. Among the white youth, who of the following tries to be a true friend to the Logan children?
   a. Lillian Jean Simms
   b. R. W. Simms
   c. Melvin Simms
   d. Jeremy Simms

_____ 4. The main reason Little Man Logan refuses the textbook given to him by Miss Crocker is that
   a. the book is dirty and he reads the words “condition very poor” and “nigra” inside the book cover.
   b. it is a used book.
   c. he does not want to learn to read.
   d. he wants to upset his teacher.

_____ 5. What is it that Miss Crocker thinks the Logan children most need to learn?
   a. how to read
   b. how to follow school rules
   c. what their place is in society
   d. how to control their tempers
6. The primary reason that Mr. Morrison comes to live with the Logans is
   a. to give the Logans extra rent money.
   b. to help with the farming.
   c. to protect them from the dangers of night riders.
   d. to help discipline the Logan children while Papa is away.

7. In Strawberry, why does Big Ma park her wagon of produce at the rear of the field?
   a. because the spots near the entrance are all for white farmers
   b. because she likes being at the rear
   c. that is her assigned spot
   d. that is the only spot she can afford to rent

8. If you had to select the day in Cassie’s life when she first had to face racism and prejudice, it would be
   a. the day Miss Crocker spanked her concerning the textbooks.
   b. her day in Strawberry with Big Ma, Stacey, and T. J.
   c. the night of the fire in the cotton fields.
   d. the day Mama was fired from teaching.

9. What can we infer about Hammer Logan buying a silver Packard identical to the one owned by Harlan Granger?
   a. He bought it because he got a good deal on it.
   b. He bought it because he liked the color silver.
   c. He purposely bought it to irritate Granger and to make a statement that blacks are really equal to whites.
   d. He just ended up with a car like Granger’s accidentally.

10. Select the statement about T. J. which is false.
    a. He cheats on tests.
    b. He steals things.
    c. He starts running around with the Simms boys.
    d. He kills Mr. Barnett to get the pearl-handled gun.
Part B.
Directions: Match the characters with the descriptions.

_____ 1. Murderer(s) of Mr. Barnett
_____ 2. Organize a boycott against the Wallace store
_____ 3. White lawyer who risks his career by helping the black community
_____ 4. Nearly lynched for robbing Mr. Barnett's store
_____ 5. White boy who befriends the Logan children
_____ 6. Devises plan to disable the white children's school bus
_____ 7. Hates to be dirty
_____ 8. Owned Logan land prior to Reconstruction
_____ 9. Works on railroad to earn tax money
_____ 10. Hot-headed Logan who would like to use violence against whites who mistreat blacks
_____ 11. Lives with Logans as their protection
_____ 12. First-person narrator of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry
_____ 13. Accuses Cassie of deliberately pushing her
_____ 14. Covered with kerosene and set afire
_____ 15. Schoolteacher who punishes Logan children for not accepting the used school texts

Part C.
Directions: Answer each question with complete sentences. Support your answers with proof from your reading.

1. Cassie has a number of coming-of-age experiences which force her to face the bigotry and prejudice around her. Describe any two of the experiences.

2. What is sharecropping? How did the system keep people enslaved?
3. Explain two sources of prejudice in this novel.

4. Why does Papa Logan accept Mr. Jamison as a friend but caution his children not to be friends with Jeremy Simms?

5. Why does Mama take her young children to see the severely burned Mr. Berry?

6. Why would it be dangerous for Uncle Hammer to live with the Logans instead of up North in the city?

7. Compare the actions of Miss Crocker and Mama Logan regarding the textbooks.

8. What two main things cause Stacey to shun T. J.?

9. What are the risks and consequences of the Logans organizing the store boycott?

10. How is T. J. saved from the lynch mob?
Answer Keys

Vocabulary

1. snide  
2. emphatic  
3. acrid  
4. formidable  
5. coddling  
6. despondent  
7. haughty  
8. placid  
9. precarious  
10. bland  
11. amiable  
12. gloat  
13. indignant  
14. penchant  
15. admonish  
16. pensive  
17. malevolent  
18. flinch  
19. dubious  
20. patronize

Test

Part A.

1. d  
2. c  
3. d  
4. a  
5. c  
6. c  
7. a  
8. b  
9. c  
10. d

Part B.

1. g  
2. n  
3. d  
4. h  
5. i  
6. k  
7. l  
8. o  
9. m  
10. d  
11. f  
12. b  
13. j  
14. e  
15. c

Part C.

1. There are many, such as incidents involving the textbook, the bus, the Berry family, Lillian Jean, and T. J.
2. The sharecropper was given a plot of land to farm and a house to live in. The landowner lent the sharecropper money to buy seeds and supplies at the company store. When the crops were sold, the sharecropper had to pay off debts to the landowner. Debts were always more than profits, so sharecroppers could never get ahead to buy their own land or to leave.
3. Students may come up with a variety of ideas. The main source of prejudice in the novel is the history of slavery in the South, which has given the white people an unmerited sense of superiority over their black neighbors. This prejudice is passed down through families and social institutions, causing behaviors such as the school bus driver deliberately causing trouble for black children walking to school. It also engenders a reverse prejudice, as the African Americans are suspicious of all whites, including those who offer genuine friendship.
4. Mr. Logan thinks it is dangerous to trust most whites as friends.
5. Mrs. Logan wants to impress upon the children what can happen to blacks who cross whites in some way.
6. Hammer is independent, proud, and quick-tempered. He would have been in trouble with the local whites if he stayed in Mississippi.
7. Mrs. Logan has a sense of dignity and is a woman of strong principles which she will not deny, even if it means losing her job and depriving her family of much-needed income. She does not want her students to feel like second-class citizens. Miss Crocker is all for accepting things as they are and bowing to white authorities.
8. T. J. cheats and lets Stacey get into trouble, and T. J. mouths off at the Wallace store about Mrs. Logan’s teaching.
9. They risk physical harm and losing their land.
10. Granger tells the lynch mob to run off and fight the fire threatening his land.
Reading Guide

Directions: Answer the following questions as you read each chapter of Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.

Chapter 1
1. Why do Jeremy’s schoolmates ridicule him?
2. Describe the condition of the books that Miss Crocker distributes to the class.
3. Explain why Papa is away working on the railroad.
4. Why does the school bus speed up on the way to school?

Chapter 2
1. Whom does Papa bring home with him? Where did Papa meet this man, and why was he fired?
2. What do the children overhear after church?
3. What does Papa forbid the children from doing? Why?

Chapter 3
1. Why do the black students not have a school bus?
2. What is Stacey’s plan for revenge against the school bus? Why does he not include T. J. in the plan?
3. Why might the night riders leave the Logan house without doing any harm?

Chapter 4
1. According to T. J., why was Sam Tatum tarred and feathered?
2. What does Mama make the children do after they go to the Wallace store?
3. Why does T. J. jump when the others find him in Mama’s study?

Chapter 5
1. Why are Cassie and Stacey allowed to go to Strawberry?
2. What causes the incident with Lillian Jean Simms?
3. How does Mr. Barnett treat Cassie? How does she react?

Chapter 6
1. When they return from Strawberry, whose car do the kids think is in the barn? To whom does it really belong?
2. Why does Big Ma not want Cassie to tell Uncle Hammer what happened in Strawberry? How does Uncle Hammer react when Cassie does tell him?
3. Why does T. J. tell Stacey he looks like a fat preacher in his new coat?
4. Why does Mama say Uncle Hammer should not have forced the Wallaces to let him cross first at the bridge? Is she right?
Chapter 7
1. What is “Uncle Hammer’s Principle”?
2. Does Papa trust Mr. Jamison? Why or why not?
3. What does Mr. Granger’s smile foreshadow at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 8
1. How does Cassie get her revenge on Lillian Jean Simms?
2. What has T. J. told Kaleb Wallace? Why?
3. What is Mama teaching when the school board comes to visit? Why have they come?

Chapter 9
1. What does Jeremy say about how his brothers treat T. J.?
2. What does Mr. Avery tell Papa before the trip to Vicksburg?
3. How is Papa injured?

Chapter 10
1. How does Mr. Morrison deal with Kaleb Wallace’s truck when it is in his way?
2. Why does Uncle Hammer come to the revival?
3. With whom does T. J. arrive at the revival?
4. Why does Cassie almost feel sorry for T. J. at the revival?

Chapter 11
1. Why do R. W. and Melvin Simms wear dark stockings over their faces?
2. What reason does Cassie see for Stacey’s feelings of responsibility for T. J.?
3. Who arrived at the Avery house to stop the night men?

Chapter 12
1. Who comes to check on the Logans while most people are fighting the fire?
2. How do people think the fire started? How did it really start?
3. What do you suspect might happen to T. J.?
Reading Guide Suggested Responses

Chapter 1
1. Jeremy is white, but he treats the Logans with respect. He walks with them each day instead of riding the bus.
2. The books are in very poor condition with offensive wording on the chart.
3. Papa needs to work on the railroad because the family needs money to pay the mortgage on the land and to pay property taxes.
4. The white bus driver purposely tries to splash the Logan children to entertain his white passengers.

Chapter 2
1. Papa brings home Mr. Morrison, who was recently fired from the railroad for fighting with a white man.
2. The children overhear more information about the Berry burnings.
3. Papa forbids the children from going to the Wallace store because people try to tempt the black children into drinking, dancing, and gambling.

Chapter 3
1. The members of their church cannot afford to buy them a school bus.
2. Stacey plans to dig a ditch so that the bus will get stuck. He does not tell T. J. because T. J. cannot keep a secret.
3. The night riders may have been at the wrong house.

Chapter 4
1. Sam Tatum called a white man a liar.
2. Mama makes the children visit Mr. Berry and see how badly he was burned by the Wallaces.
3. T. J. is looking for test answers; he has been caught trying to find them to cheat.

Chapter 5
1. Big Ma does not want to travel that whole way alone with T. J.
2. Cassie does not watch where she is walking and bumps into her.
3. Mr. Barnett first ignores Cassie and then yells at her. Cassie talks back to him as he throws her out of his store.

Chapter 6
1. The kids think that they see Mr. Granger’s car. It really belongs to Uncle Hammer.
2. Big Ma is afraid of how Uncle Hammer will react. Uncle Hammer plans to take a gun and look for Mr. Simms.
3. T. J. is jealous and wants the coat for himself.
4. Mama is afraid that the Wallaces will use this incident as an excuse to mistreat the Logans.
Chapter 7
1. Uncle Hammer believes that people should take responsibility for their actions and mistakes.
2. Papa does trust Mr. Jamison, who has always treated the Logans with respect and helps them with all legal matters.
3. Mr. Granger’s smile foreshadows that he has a plan in mind to hurt the Logans.

Chapter 8
1. Cassie pretends to be friends with Lillian Jean and learns all her secrets. Then she assaults and blackmails her.
2. T. J. told Kaleb Wallace that Mama failed him on purpose and is not teaching what is in the textbooks.
3. Mama is teaching history and the truth about slavery. The school board wants to fire her.

Chapter 9
1. Jeremy says that his brothers make fun of T. J. and call him names.
2. Mr. Avery says that he is afraid to shop in Vicksburg because he can only buy on credit.
3. Papa’s leg is broken, and he is shot on the side of the head.

Chapter 10
1. Mr. Morrison picks up the truck at each end and moves it.
2. Uncle Hammer comes to the revival to give the Logans the money they need. He raised the money by selling his car.
4. Cassie feels sorry for T. J. because when he leaves, he keeps looking back as if he wishes that he could stay or because he wants more attention.

Chapter 11
1. R. W. and Melvin Simms wear dark stockings because they want to look as if they are African American.
2. Stacey and T. J. have always been close friends.
3. The sheriff stops the night men at the Avery house.

Chapter 12
1. Jeremy arrives at the Logans’ house during the fire.
2. People believe that lightning started the fire. Papa really started it.
3. T. J. may go to jail or be executed for the murder of Mr. Barnett.
### Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entire Unit</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RL.8.1</strong></td>
<td>Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RL.8.2</strong></td>
<td>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RL.8.3</strong></td>
<td>Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RL.8.4</strong></td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RL.8.7</strong></td>
<td>Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W.8.2a</strong></td>
<td>Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W.8.2b</strong></td>
<td>Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>W.8.2e</strong></td>
<td>Establish and maintain a formal style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W.8.4</strong></td>
<td>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W.8.5</strong></td>
<td>With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W.8.6</strong></td>
<td>Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
W.8.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

W8.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

SL.8.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

SL.8.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL.8.5 Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

L.8.1a Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.

L.8.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

L.8.5 Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

Source

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