

Roll of Thunder,

Hear My Cry

by Mildred Taylor

Teaching Unit

by Amy Rodas

Teacher's notes

Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry is a powerful book. It really makes anyone who reads it open their eyes and realize that their own lives are fare better than that of the Logans.

There are twelve lessons to this book. Each lesson is accompanied with a worksheet to go over vocabulary terms and comprehension for each chapter. The lessons themselves are very simplistic. This was done on purpose to allow the teacher to teach each lesson the way he felt the class can best learn form this book. there are no written out quizzes or an ending test. However, if the teacher does decide to give quizzes it is suggested to be done every three chapters. There are also four suggested projects as follows:

- * Build a replica of the Logan homestead by he descriptions in the book
- * Make cornbread from scratch
- * Keep a journal the whole time while reading the book, making entries s if one of the Logan children.
- * write a letter to the State asking for funds to obtain bus.

These projects can be done throughout the book or at the end. The teacher can also make up new ones.

The teacher should also be aware of two words that are used in the book that may not be suitable for children. How the teacher deals with thee words is up to him. The word hell is found on page 150. The word nigger is found on the following pages: 39, 40, 48, 84, 111, 114, 180, 225, 226, 247, 251, 254, and 255.

Intro: Pass out the books to the class. Have a student read the title of the book and its author. Give the class a brief summation of the life of Mildred Taylor. Have a student read the Author's Note on the inside of the book. Ask another student to read the story summary on the back of the book cover. Ask the students to think about the title of the book and what it might mean in the connection of the story.

Have the students tell you what they know about the Depression. Explain that many families, white and black, were extremely poor during this time in history because the economy was not doing well at all. Explain that people were so poor, that they could not afford to buy new clothes when they were needed. Also give a little background on the position the farmers were in and how they had to sell their land because they could not afford to keep up on the payments.

Now jump to the fact that after the civil war there was still a lot of hatred towards black people and the prejudice continues on to this day (however, not as severe). Tell the class, "By reading this book, we will open up a chapter in the past and get a look at how it was like to live during the depression as a white person and as a black person. I think it will show us that we take many things for granted today, things that people like the Logan family, in our story, try so hard to obtain and keep, like freedom". Ask the class to name some other things that the Logan family might have to work hard for that we now a days don't.

Lesson: Tell the class that today we will read part of chapter one in class. This chapter introduces the 4 Logan children, Stacey, Cassie, Christopher-John, and Little Man, on their way to school. Note to the children that the dialog in this book has a lot of broken English and might be a little difficult to get use to at first.

Name _____

Class _____ Grade _____

Roll Of Thunder Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor

I. Vocabulary Words

Find the definition of the following words, write it out, and then use each word in a sentence.

1. Billowed (p.5)

13. Monotonously (p.22)

2. Vast (p.6)

14. Temerity (p.23)

3. Mortgage (p.6)

15. Indignant (p.24)

4. Emaciated (p.8)

16. Indignation (p.29)

5. Sharecropped (p.8)

17. Maverick (p.30)

6. Jauntily (p.8)

18. Imperiously (p.31)

7. Morosely (p.11)

8. Loitering (p.15)

9. Knell (p.15)

10. Tarpaulin (p.19)

11. Dubious (p.21)

12. Penchant (p.22)

II. Comprehension

Answer the following questions from chapter one.

1. Why does Cassie's father feel that the land they own is so important?
2. Name the people that are in Cassie's family.
3. What news did T.J. Avery have to tell Stacey and the others?
4. What did T.J. say to his mother that got Claude in trouble?
5. Why do you think the students of Great Faith Elementary don't have a bus to ride on?
6. Why does Jillian Jean always yell at Jeremy when he is talking to Stacey?
7. Why does Great Faith Elementary school start in October and end in March?
8. Why doesn't Little Man want his book? Why does he end up throwing it down on the floor and stopping on it?
9. How does Mrs. Logan react to what Miss Crocker's report on Cassie and Little Man? Why?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 2

Introduction:

- Collect worksheet from chapter one. (1 minute)
- Go over what the children read last night (the rest of chapter 1) by going over the worksheet.
(10 - 15 minutes)
- Discussion question (5 minutes) At the end of the chapter Mrs.Logan was “messing up” the books. Do you think she was right to do that? Why? What would you do?

Lesson: Read chapter two. The teacher should start to read the chapter (the first couple of pages). This is important because it shows the students that it is important to read because even you, the teacher, are doing it. Also, it helps the children read the dialect in this book better by hearing the teacher say it.

Name _____

worksheet chapter two

Vocabulary. For the following words, write the definition and write a sentence using the word correctly. The definition can be found on the page in parentheses.

1. Ginned (page 33)
2. Gait (page 33)
3. Formidable- looking (page 34)
4. Gusto (page 35)
5. Kin (page 39)

Answer the following questions from the story:

1. What were the Logan children, Big Ma, and Mama (Mary) doing when Cassie saw the two figures?
2. Who was the man with Papa (David)?
Why was he staying with the Logans?
3. Why were the Berry's burned?
4. Why do you think the sheriff called Henrietta a liar and sent her home without looking into the matter?
5. On page forty-one Papa (David) says something that does not seem to go with the present conversation. What did he say?
Why do you think he said it?
6. Make a prediction, do you think the Wallaces are white or black?
Why?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 3

Introduction:

- Collect worksheet from chapter two. (1 minute)
- Go over what class read by going over the worksheet. (10-15 minutes)
- Discussion Question (5 minutes) What would you have done if you were Henrietta? Do you think the men who did it will be punished?

Lesson: Start to read chapter three. The teacher should read the first few pages.

Name _____

worksheet lesson 3

Vocabulary. For the following words, write the definition and write a sentence using the word correctly. The definition can be found on the page in parentheses.

1. Resiliency (page 42)
2. Dejected (page 44)
3. Ignorant (page 45)
4. Sodden (page 46)
5. Conspiratorially (page 50)
6. Precariously (page 66)

Answer the following question from the story:

1. Most white people during this time period did not like blacks. However, Jeremy likes Stacey and the other. Why do you think he does?
2. Why did Little Man want revenge?
What had happened to him?
3. Is it right for us to seek revenge?
Who is responsible for that?
4. Why do you think Mama (Mary) and Big Ma were somewhat glad the bus broke?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 4

Introduction:

- Collect worksheet from chapter three. (1 minute)
- Go over what the children read in chapter three by going over the worksheet (10-15 minutes)
- Discussion Question (5 minutes) How did the bus really break? Do you think it was right for Stacey and the others to do what they did?

Lesson: Tell the students that chapter four is a long chapter. The teacher should start reading the first few pages in class. Assign the students to start reading the next chapter.

Name _____

worksheet chapter four

Vocabulary. For the following words, write the definition and write a sentence using the word correctly. The definition can be found on the page in parentheses.

1. Discreetly (page 78)
2. Vex (page 94)

Answer the following questions from the story:

1. What was the news T.J. told about?
2. What was T.J. really looking for when he went back for his cup?
3. On page 78, Cassie talks about Mr.Morrison to Stacey and says, "...you know how come he is really here." What is the reason that Cassie thinks Mr.Morrison is there?
4. How did It come about that Stacey got a whoopin?
5. Why wasn't Mr.Morrison going to tell on Stacey, Cassie, Christopher John, and Little Man?
6. Why do you think that Stacey decided he would tell Mama?
7. Why won't Big Ma sell the land to Mr.Granger?
8. Who did Mama take the children to see one Saturday morning?
9. Who do you think Mama (Mary) could get to sign for Mr.Turner?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 5

Introduction:

- Collect the worksheet from chapter 4 (1 minute)
- Go over what the students read by going over the worksheet. (10 - 15 minutes)
- Discussion question (5 minutes) What was Mama's (Mary's) point that she was trying to get across to everyone about the Wallaces? Did it work?

Lesson: Start reading the next chapter in class. Assign the rest of the chapter to be read and the

worksheet to be done.

Name _____

worksheet chapter 5

Vocabulary. For the following words, write the definition and write a sentence using the word correctly. The definition can be found on the page in parentheses.

1. Obnoxious (page 103)
2. Cockatoo (page 104)
3. Verandas (page 105)
4. Malerolently (page 112)

Answer the following questions from the story.

1. What was it that T.J. wanted to do to them at the Mercantile?
2. Do you think it was wise for Cassie to “remind” Mr. Barnett?

Why or Why not?

3. How did Mr. Barnett react to her “reminder”?

Would you have acted the same way as Cassie?

Explain your reasoning.

4. Explain what happened when Cassie bumped into Lillian Jean.
5. What would be a good word to describe Cassie’s feelings at the end of the day?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 6

Introduction:

- Collect the worksheet from chapter five. (1 minute)
- Go over what the students read by going over the worksheet. (10 - 15 minutes)
- Discussion question (5 minutes) Do you think Lillian and her father did the right thing by making Cassie apologize? What would you have done if you were Big Ma?

Lesson: The teacher should read the first couple pages of chapter six. Read through chapter six in class. (5 - 10 minutes)

Name _____

worksheet chapter 6

Vocabulary. For the following words, write the definition and write a sentence using the word correctly. The definition can be found on the page in parentheses.

1. Dumbfounded (page 119)
2. Nattily (page 119)
3. Ominously (page 124)
4. Reverently (page 135)

Answer the following questions from the story:

1. Who is Uncle Hammer?

Give a brief description of him.

2. Why was Big Ma so nervous for Cassie to tell Uncle Hammer about the happenings in Strawberry?
3. If Mr. Morrison hadn't been with Uncle Hammer, what do you think could have happened?
4. What had Uncle Hammer given Stacey?
5. Why did everyone at church react the way they did when Uncle Hammer and the rest of the Logan family drove up?
6. What funny incident happened at Soldiers Bridge?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 7

Introduction:

- Collect worksheet from chapter six (1 minute)
- Go over what the children read in chapter six by going over the worksheet (10-15 minutes)
- Discussion Question (5 minutes) Pretend you are Cassie and it was just explained to you why Mr.Simons acted the way he did. What would you feel, say or do? Is it fair?

Lesson: Begin to read chapter seven in class. The teacher should read the first couple pages.

Name _____

worksheet chapter seven

Vocabulary. For the following words, write the definition and write a sentence using the word correctly. The definition can be found on the page in parentheses.

1. Admonished (page 141)
2. Interminable (page 144)
3. Faltering (page 144)
4. Caldron (page 150)
5. Malevolently (page 156)
6. Eviction (page 163)

Answer the following questions from the story:

1. What happened to Stacey's coat?
2. Uncle Hammer told Stacey that, "there's a lotta folks don't want you to make it." What folks was he talking about? Support your answer.
3. Why did Big Ma have to talk to Papa (David) and Uncle Hammer about the land?
4. Why is the land so important?
5. What did the children receive for Christmas that compared to nothing else?
6. Is Jeremy like his father?

Why or why not?

7. What was Papa's advise to Stacey about being good friends with Jeremy?

Do you agree?

Why or why not?

8. Why did Big Ma have Mr. Jamison come down to have Papa and Uncle Hammer sign a bunch of papers about the land?

Chapter seven worksheet continued

9. Why did Mr. Jamison say he would back the credit for the black families to be able to shop in Vicksburg?
10. Why does Harlan Granger want the Logan land so badly?
11. Why did Mr. Granger come down to speak with Papa and Uncle Hammer?
12. How do you think Mr. Granger is going to stop Papa and the others from shopping in Vicksburg?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 8

Introduction:

- Collect worksheet from chapter seven. (1 minute)
- Go over what the children read last night (the rest of chapter 7) by going over the worksheet.
(10 - 15 minutes)
- Discussion question (5 minutes) Do you think Mr.Grenger will be able to take the land away from the Logans? Explain your answer.

Lesson: Read chapter nine. Start reading the chapter in class. The teacher should read the first couple of pages.

Name _____

worksheet chapter eight

Vocabulary. For the following words, write the definition and write a sentence using the word correctly. The definition can be found on the page in parentheses.

1. Feigned (page 174)
2. Jovial (page 177)
3. Banished (page 182)
4. Indignant (page 182)
5. Morosely (page 188)
6. Fallow (page 191)

Answer the following questions from the story:

1. What is Papa's advice to Cassie about Lillian Jean?
2. What was Cassie's surprise for Lillian Jean?
3. Why did Mr. Granger, Kaleb Wallace and the other white man come to Great Faith?
4. What does Mr. Morrison consider his pay?
5. How did Mr. Granger know that Mama had covered the books?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 9

Introduction:

- Collect worksheet from chapter eight. (1 minute)
- Go over what the children read last night by going over the worksheet. (10 - 15 minutes)
- Discussion question (5 minutes) Have you ever known someone who lost something they loved very much? How did that person feel? How did you feel? Do you think they were right in firing Mama? Support your answer.

Lesson: Start to read chapter nine in class. The teacher should read the first few pages. Assign the rest of chapter nine and the worksheet.

Name _____

worksheet chapter nine

Vocabulary. For the following words, write the definition and write a sentence using the word correctly. The definition can be found on the page in parentheses.

1. Furrowed (page 196)
2. Amenities (page 203)
3. Exasperation (page 208)

Answer the following questions from the story:

1. Who are T.J.'s new friends now?
2. Where does the money come from to live on and pay the taxes/mortgage now that Mama can't teach?
3. Why did Mr. Jamison come to see Papa?
4. Why don't Mr. Avery and Mr. Lanier want to shop in Vicksburg anymore?
5. What makes the Logan family so different from the other black families that Stacey and Cassie are now learning about?
6. What was the lesson Papa spoke about concerning the fig tree?
7. Why does Papa want to take Stacey to Vicksburg with him?
8. What does Mama think about Mr. Avery's problem with T.J.?
9. What happened to Papa?

How did it happen?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 10

Introduction:

- Collect the worksheet from chapter nine (1 minute)
- Go over what the students read by going over the worksheet. (10 - 15 minutes)
- Discussion question (5 minutes) It doesn't seem fair that Mr.Granger and the Wallaces can just tell people where to shop. Why don't the black people get the sheriff involved?

Lesson: Start reading the next chapter in class. Assign the rest of the chapter to be read and the

worksheet to be done.

Name _____

worksheet lesson 10

Vocabulary. For the following words, write the definition and write a sentence using the word correctly. The definition can be found on the page in parentheses.

1. Despondently (page 223)
2. Lethargically (page 227)
3. Shroud (page 227)

Answer the following question from the story:

1. Why doesn't Papa want to borrow money from Uncle Hammer?
2. Why does Mama feel Mr.Morrison should leave?
3. What happened on the way back from the Wiggins farm?
4. What has T.J. been doing lately?
5. Why did Papa and Mr.Morrison go up to Strawberry?
6. What was "the revival"?
7. How do you think Uncle Hammer got the money?
8. Do you think R.W. And Melvin are really T.J.'s friends?
Why or why not?

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 11

Introduction:

- Collect worksheet from chapter ten. (1 minute)
- Go over what class read by going over the worksheet. (10-15 minutes)
- Discussion Question (5 minutes) How is T.J. being foolish? Why do you think he is acting that way?

Lesson: Start to read chapter eleven. The teacher should read the first few pages. What is not finished in class should be done for homework along with chapter eleven worksheet.

Name _____

worksheet lesson 11

Answer the following question from the story:

1. Why did Mr.Morrison watch and wait each night?
2. Why did T.J. come tapping on the boy's door late at night?
3. What did R.W. and Melvin do to T.J.?

Why?

4. What happened when they brought T.J. home? Use as many details as you can.

Reading Class

30 minutes

5th and 6th grade

Lesson 12

Introduction:

- Collect worksheet from chapter eleven. (1 minute)
- Go over what class read by going over the worksheet. (10-15 minutes)
- Discussion Question (5 minutes) What do you think the poem on page 242 means? Why?

Lesson: Read chapter twelve.

Name _____

worksheet lesson 12

Answer the following question from the story:

1. What happened when Papa and Mr.Morrison left?
2. Who came to help fight the fire?
3. What happened after Cassie left Stacey to get Papa and Mr.Morrison?
4. How did the fire really start?

Why?

5. What could happen to T.J.? Do you think that is fair?

Why or why not?