



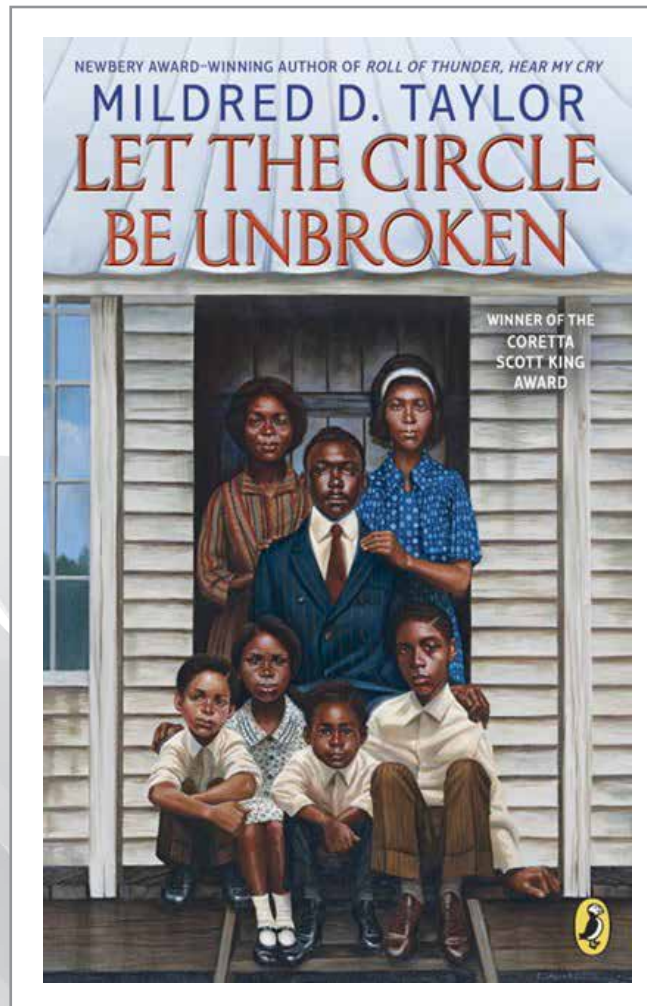
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Let the Circle Be Unbroken

Mildred D. Taylor



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Let the Circle Be Unbroken

Mildred D. Taylor

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,
comparison/contrast, cause-
and-effect, inference

Writing

Journaling, expository,
narrative, pattern writing,
persuasive

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, dramatizing

Thinking

Brainstorming, visualization,
synthesis, research

Vocabulary

Prefixes, suffixes, word
mapping, synonyms, sorting

Literary Elements

Characterization, story
elements, dialogue,
colloquialisms

Summary

The Logan family saga continues from *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. The family of four black children growing up in rural Mississippi during the Depression experience discrimination, racial injustice, and antagonism, hard lean economic times, and a loving supportive family and black community network. The story is told through the only daughter's eyes; Cassie is a 10-year-old whose understanding and perspective are part childlike and part adult.

About the Author

Mildred D. Taylor was born in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1943. She grew up in Toledo, Ohio, but the family's roots were always in the South. The family traveled south as often as possible. Taylor describes these family trips as twenty hour picnics (as blacks were unwelcome in many of the South's restaurants and hotels). Ms. Taylor was graduated from the University of Toledo with a B.Ed. She earned her M.A. from the University of Colorado. Her career experiences include a Peace Corps volunteer, English and history teacher, college instructor, proofreader and editor; but she's really mostly a writer. Her books include:

The Friendship
The Gold Cadillac
Let the Circle Be Unbroken
Mississippi Bridge
The Road to Memphis
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry
Song of the Trees
The Well: David's Story

Born in 1943, she was part of a transitional generation who saw blatant racial discrimination and legislative reform. She also experienced racial climates in the North and South.

Overview of this Guide

Let the Circle Be Unbroken is a sequel to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. The 394-page book of fourteen chapters reads easily. The story of childhood in the deep South Depression days is a series of family reminiscences told from Cassie's viewpoint. Understanding colloquial speech and dialogue will be a mainstay for the reader. The book provides the black view and experience. Matters of inequity, racial discrimination and poverty are woven into a picture of a wonderful, supportive family and community. Each chapter is addressed separately with vocabulary words, plot summary, comprehension questions, and supplementary activities. Vocabulary activities are provided after every three chapters. Initiating activities as well as concluding activities are included.

Initiating Activities

(Several are included from which the teacher may choose.)

1. The cover, title page, and probably anyone recommending this book would say, "It's a sequel to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*." What is a sequel? What do you expect of sequels? What do you predict for this book? (See page 5 of this guide for "Investigating Sequels.")

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2. Free write your ideas on these matters of importance in the book:

Injustice
Race relations in the South of the 1930s
Criminal justice system
Jury trials

3. Complete the Anticipation Guide included herein on page 6 of this guide.
4. Consider these quotes from reviews of the book:

"carefully crafted"
"intense drama"
"historical significance"
"lyrical sensitivity"
"powerful"



Start your predictions about the book.

5. Look for hints about the book. Hints prepare our minds for the reading, set up our expectations, and get us ready for reading. (See page 7 of this guide.)

Chapter 1—Pages 1-25

Plot Summary:

The Logans stop to visit the Ellises and Papa interrupts a marbles game, insisting that the marbles won be returned and the game be banished, lest the children be drawn into gambling. Cassie's desire for an emerald blue marble causes her to disobey. A narrow belfry escape for baby Doris Anne ends the chapter.

Vocabulary:

defile (1)	catercorner (2)	beckoning (7)	hankerin' (8)
wry (8)	disdainfully (12)	deigned (12)	engrossed (14)
dutifully (17)	recoup (17)	haunches (20)	propositioned (21)
caressing (22)	belfry (23)	instinctively (23)	unbridled (24)

Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. Who tells the story? (*Cassie Logan*) What then do you expect of the book?
2. What is the manner and feeling in the conversations at the Ellis's home? (*friendly, comfortable*)
3. Who is Dubé? (*a 16-year-old who is only in the fifth grade*) How does Stacey give Dubé milk? (*by suggesting that Dubé could help with milking the cow in return for the milk*) Why? (*to help Dubé save face, be allowed to keep his pride*)
4. Explain these expressions from the first chapter.
 - "good, lived-in smells" (page 7)
 - "There's some mean white folks everywhere." (page 8)
 - "bit of trouble" (page 9)
 - "Stacey's taking it bad..." (page 13)
 - "The deal was set." (page 19)
5. Why does Cassie find the emerald blue marble so fascinating? (*Answers vary.*)
6. Why is Papa so opposed to marbles? (*fear of gambling*) Is his thinking correct or not and why?
7. Who is Joe McCalister? (page 17, "*a short, bandy-legged man with a face that could have been twenty or forty*")
8. What does Papa understand about Wordell? (*The quiet young man is saving Doris Anne, not hurting her.*)

Supplementary Activities:

1. Begin collecting the details of the story on a story map. (See page 13 of this guide.)
2. How does this author pull you into the story? What other ways of hooking a reader have you encountered? Start a class list.

-
3. Mildred Taylor tells an intriguing tale with appealing characters. Choose a character to explore in your journal:
 - a) I'd like to meet _____ because _____.
 - b) _____ would be a welcome dinner guest because _____.
 - c) I've never met anyone like _____.
 4. Why is Cassie Logan an especially good choice as narrator? Discuss with a partner.
 5. What do you think of the introductory page in the book?

Chapter 2—Pages 26-59

Plot Summary:

News that T.J. Avery will have a trial prompts varied reactions by the book's characters. The Logan children manage to go to the trial.

Vocabulary:

brusquely (27)	disperse (28)	encroachment (29)	discern (29)
hefty (31)	chignon (32)	bewilderment (32)	amenities (37)
fraternization (37)	reproach (39)	precarious (45)	cajoled (45)
dire (45)	tarpaulin (47)	glowered (48)	anguish (48)
verandas (49)	sauntering (49)	dispossessed (50)	serge (51)
gnarled (51)	malevolently (52)		

Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. What is Clarence Hopkins' news? (*that there will be a trial for T.J.*) Why is this matter such news? (*T.J. is a close friend and trials for blacks in this place and time are not the usual thing.*)
2. Plot the different reactions to the news of T.J.'s trial. (See graphic on page 14 of this guide.)