



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY

BY MILDRED TAYLOR



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 1

Characterization, Dialect, and Conflict

Objectives: Understanding how characters' personalities are revealed
 Reading and understanding dialect
 Identifying sources of conflicts

Activity

Mildred Taylor vividly defines many of the novel's characters in this chapter. In order to create a clear picture for the reader, Taylor employs various characterization techniques, including:

- direct descriptions provided by the narrator
- characters' own words and actions
- other characters' opinions of and behavior towards the character

Read the passages in the **Characterization Chart**. Look up the quotations in your book and complete the characterization chart by identifying which characters the quotations discuss. Then, by placing a checkmark in the appropriate column, indicate whether the quotation is a direct description, a character's own words and actions, or another character's opinion or behavior. At times a quotation will fall into two categories; in this case, place a check in each column that applies. The first one has been done for you as an example.

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Chapter 4**Comic Relief, Conflict, and Description**

Objectives: Recognizing how comic relief lightens tension
 Identifying how conflict is exemplified
 Writing an ad for the Logan property

Activity

When tension builds in the plot, Taylor adds comic relief to lighten the mood. Find two instances of comic relief in this chapter. Imagine that a friend, who does not understand why authors use comic relief, asks you how it works. Tell that friend how each situation reduces the tension of the scene. Be sure to include page numbers when you refer to the novel.

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Chapter 6

Symbol, Theme, and Characterization

Objectives: Explaining the significance of a symbol
 Recognizing the key thematic issues of respect and fear
 Defining a character's personality

Activity

In this chapter, Uncle Hammer gives Stacey his Christmas present early. It is a new coat, but not just any coat. This one carries a significant meaning. As a class, brainstorm what the coat might symbolize.

Fear and respect are two recurring issues that play an important part in this novel. Reread Mama's dialogue with Cassie on pages 126 – 130, in which Mama explains why Cassie must call Lillian Jean "Miz" and why Mr. Simms acts as he does. In a carefully planned paragraph, discuss the roles that respect and fear play in Cassie's life. Support your answer with details from the novel.

Often, the reader must interpret clues provided by the author to understand a character's personality clearly. These clues include the character's words and actions, as well as what other characters say about the character and how they act around him or her. If the author were to provide long descriptions instead of showing us the characters in action, the writing would be less entertaining.

In Chapter Six, the author introduces Uncle Hammer. Reread pages 119 – 124, looking for clues that define Uncle Hammer's personality. Complete **Uncle Hammer's Personality Chart**, supplying passages that define him. Be sure to include the page numbers. Then identify the traits that each passage demonstrates. Be prepared to tell your classmates the reasons for your answers. We have completed the first one for you.

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Chapters 1 – 7

Characterization, Symbol, Theme, and Prediction

- Objectives:**
- Understanding a character's emotions
 - Interpreting the thoughts and language of a character
 - Identifying characters according to traits
 - Relating symbols to theme
 - Making predictions based on information presented thus far

Activity

Perhaps the best way to understand a character is to put yourself in his or her situation and think about how you would feel if you were to experience what he or she experiences.

Imagine that you are Cassie after her experiences in Chapters Six and Seven. Mama has just said, "...I think you've done enough growing up for one day, Cassie." (Pg. 130) Think about all that you have been through today, and write a diary entry explaining your thoughts about the day. Be specific about your emotions, explaining why you feel the way you do.

The first time we meet T. J., we learn that Cassie dislikes him. He is loud, opinionated, and quite persuasive.

Imagine that T. J. is asked by a therapist to describe himself in terms of his appearance, personality, attitude, and belief system. Note his answers on **T. J.'s Description of Himself Chart** below.

1. In small groups, take notes on what the group thinks T. J. would say to the therapist. Base your description on what Cassie tells us about him, and on what he does in Chapters One through Seven. You may use direct quotations; if you do, be sure to note the page numbers.
2. Each group will share what they have written on their **T. J.'s Description of Himself Chart**. Be prepared to explain your answers.

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Chapter 9

Inference, Theme, and Metaphor

Objectives: Drawing inferences
 Explaining how the undercurrent of fear advances the plot
 Understanding how figurative language creates meaning

Activity

Rather than narrate every detail, authors frequently imply important information. To understand these inferences, the reader must “read between the lines.” The best way to do this is to observe carefully what the characters do and say to and about each other. Clues can usually be classified in the following categories:

- what characters do to each other
- what characters say to each other
- what characters say about each other
- how characters act in front of other certain characters
- how characters act when other certain characters are not around

For example, when we first meet T. J. in Chapter One, Cassie does not tell us outright that she dislikes him. Instead, we infer this from the textual clues. When she says that “[Little Man doesn’t] like T. J. either,” the word *either* tells us that Little Man is not alone in his opinion. (Pg. 11) Later, after T. J. says his mother would kill him for going to the Wallace store, Cassie proclaims, “And good riddance.” (Pg. 12) She would be happy to see him go. Because of her negative treatment of T. J., we can reasonably assume that Cassie dislikes him.

In this chapter, T. J. associates with R.W. and Melvin Simms. How do you know that R.W. and Melvin are not sincere in their offer of friendship? What do they do that demonstrates their lack of respect for T. J.?

Look for clues that imply that R.W. and Melvin are merely taking advantage of T. J. List the clues and their page numbers on the **Evidence Chart**. Then check the appropriate column to identify the evidence category. The first one has been done for you as an example. Find three more. Be prepared to discuss the reasons for your answers.

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Chapter 10

Characterization, Imagery, and Foreshadowing

Objectives: Explaining a character's purpose in the plot
 Understanding how imagery creates mood
 Recognizing how passages and symbols foretell later events

Activity

Authors frequently include minor characters to help move the story along. This chapter focuses on Mr. Morrison and his purpose in the novel. In Chapter Two, you established that Mr. Morrison is there to protect the family while Papa is away working on the railroad. Now that Papa has been injured, Mr. Morrison takes on the role of provider, as well.

Review this chapter for evidence that Mr. Morrison is taking care of the family. Find three passages that point to his role as protector and provider. Remember to include page numbers with each passage. Be prepared to explain how the evidence demonstrates Mr. Morrison's role.

Taylor uses words that appeal to the senses to cause the reader to experience specific feelings about the characters, the setting, or the action.

Read the following quotations in the **Imagery Chart** below. Identify the sensory words, and list them in the appropriate columns. Then name the emotion or feeling that the words inspire. The first one is done for you as an example.

Name: _____

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Chapter 12

Characterization

Objectives: Categorizing characters according to values
 Identifying and defending characters' values and motivations

Activity

Throughout the novel, prejudice splits the community. The African-American community is subjugated to the will of powerful, outspoken white landowners. These white landowners control their sharecroppers, and detest the Logans because they are African-American landowners. In the novel, the whites that control the African-American community maintain their power through fear and dominance. They do not earn respect, and they certainly do not offer any. Their opinions reflect the attitudes of slave owners and slave traders, who did not acknowledge the humanity of African-Americans. Consequently, lynch mobs assemble to attack and kill innocent victims in order to keep the power structure in place.

Society during the time period covered in the novel contained members of the white community who believed very much in equal rights. Unfortunately, most feared retribution for their words and actions as much as the African-Americans did.

1. In this final chapter, we encounter both noble and shameful characters. Choose two characters from this chapter, and explain why they are either shameful or noble. Include details from the novel to support your opinion, including page numbers for each quotation. Write one paragraph for each character.

2. Considering that the Logan crops are burning, why does everyone, including the mob that wants to kill T. J., work together to fight the blaze? Explain.

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Wrap-Up

Characterization, Plot, Conflict, Theme, and Generalization

- Objectives:**
- Evaluating character behavior and identifying author's tone toward a character
 - Creating a chronological timeline of the significant events in the plot
 - Recognizing how conflict affects characterization and plot
 - Supporting the loss of innocence theme
 - Supporting or refuting generalizations about the characters

Activity

Instead of focusing on just one character, this novel follows the lives and challenges of several. Because of his controversial, and often confusing, actions, T. J. is one of the most intriguing characters.

1. As an important character in the novel, T. J.'s motives and desires are open to interpretation. Different readers form differing opinions of him and his actions. Conduct a poll of your classmates to help define the character of T. J.

T. J. POLL CHART

T. J. is	Agree	Disagree
clever		
a fool		
a victim		

2. Review your T. J.'s **Description of Himself Chart** from the Chapters One through Seven section. Do you still agree with your comments? Would T. J. describe himself any differently? Has your understanding of T. J. changed? Make any corrections to T. J.'s chart using a different color ink. Note your difference in opinion before and after reading the second half of the book.
3. In small groups, review T. J.'s experiences, his decline, the accusations against him, your **T. J. Poll**, your **T. J.'s Description of Himself Chart**, and your group's discussion notes. Use one of the following methods to prepare a class presentation portraying T. J.'s life up to his present situation. Be sure to explain who, what, when, why, where, and how.
 - a newspaper article
 - a television interview
 - a news report
 - the closing arguments in his trial

GROUP GENERALIZATION CHART

Generalization	Level of Agreement	Defense
Harlan Granger is sympathetic to the Logans' situation.	1 2 3 4 5	
Mr. Avery gives up on T. J.	1 2 3 4 5	
Uncle Hammer acts before he thinks.	1 2 3 4 5	
Stacey feels a sense of responsibility for T. J.	1 2 3 4 5	
Cassie's stubbornness puts the family's safety at risk.	1 2 3 4 5	
T. J. acts selfishly.	1 2 3 4 5	