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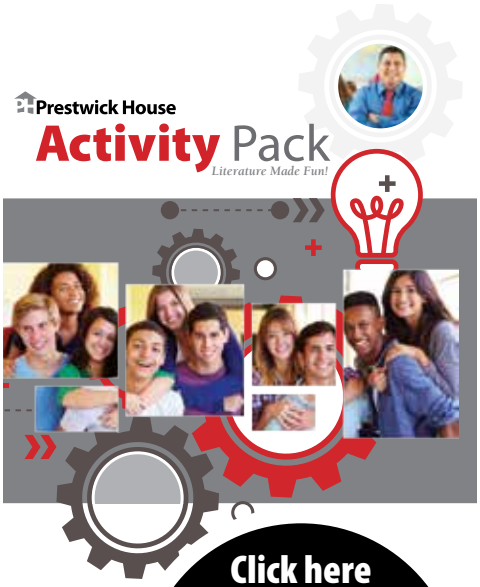

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Activity Pack

Literature Made Fun!

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

BY MILDRED TAYLOR

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Table of Contents

Pre-Reading
Foreshadowing 4

Chapter 1
Characterization, Dialect, and Conflict 8

Chapter 2
Inference and Metaphor 18

Chapter 3
Theme, Figurative Language, Motif, Mood, Symbolism, Suspense, and Poetic Justice 22

Chapter 4
Comic Relief, Conflict, and Description 36

Chapter 5
Mood and Characterization 44

Chapter 6
Symbol, Theme and Characterization 50

Chapter 7
Symbol, Imagery, Characterization, and Theme 54

Chapters 1 – 7
Characterization, Symbol, Theme, and Prediction 60

Chapter 8
Inference, Theme, and Characterization 72

Chapter 9
Inference, Theme, and Metaphor 76

Chapter 10
Characterization, Imagery, and Foreshadowing 84

Chapter 11
Mood and Plot 90

Chapter 12
Characterization 94

Wrap-Up
Characterization, Plot, Conflict, Theme, and Generalization 96

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Appendices

Terms and Definitions 110
Directions for a Debate 112
Newspaper 113
Panel Discussions 115
Small Group Learning 116
Procedures for Small Group Work 118
Small Group Evaluation Sheet 119
Student Roles in Group Discussions 120

All references come from the Puffin Books edition of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, published 1991.

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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.

Name: _____ Date:_____

Chapter 3

Theme, Figurative Language, Motif, Mood, Symbolism, Suspense, and Poetic Justice

Objectives: Responding to theme
Identifying figurative language
Determining mood based on figurative language
Inferring the thematic importance of a symbol
Recognizing suspense created through first-person narration
Recognizing poetic justice
Debating the appropriateness of characters' actions

Activity

The motif of continuing injustice is prevalent throughout this novel. While the characters experience prejudice in almost every aspect of their lives, perhaps the cruelest is that which the children experience, because it robs them of their carefree, youthful innocence.

In small groups, conduct an imaginary interview with the children about the injustices they face. Consider the unfairness they encounter in their education and in their social and economic life, as well as the unjust treatment by the bus driver and the fear instilled by random violence.

1. Decide which characters you will interview. What questions will you ask? List them.

2. Compose realistic answers based on what you have read so far. Be sure to introduce your characters properly and explain the full details of their experiences, including who, what, when, why, and where. The children's feelings should also be emphasized in the interview.

3. Present your findings to the class in one of the following formats:

   • a news talk show interview (5-10 minutes)
   • a newspaper article (150-250 words)
   • an evening news report presented by the television anchor person (3-5 minutes)
   • a speech designed to persuade your community to get involved and create a solution (3-5 minutes)

Name: _____ Date:_____

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.

Name: _____ Date:_____

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.