

**Approved for use in 8<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Summary of the Work:**

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is a powerful novel that leads the reader through the struggles of a nine-year-old girl, Cassie, as she faces discrimination and the difficulties of life as an African-American in the 1930s. Although the novel is set during the Great Depression, it is an accurate portrayal of life for many African-American families from the Civil War through today. The novel adds clear lessons about the importance of self-respect and respecting others, not giving in to peer-pressure, and accepting natural consequences. Young people can identify with the main character as she comes to terms with her anger at injustices she and her family face.

**Rationale:**

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is a product of three different eras of black history. The injustices portrayed have roots in the era of slavery in the United States, which lasted until the Civil War and influenced racial conflict. The book takes place in the South in the 1933, at the time of the Great Depression, when racist sentiments had tangible effect – in the form of segregation, lynch mobs, and economic distribution. Mildred Taylor wrote this novel in the 1970s during a time of the Black Power movement and of increased presence of African-American history in education. Readers develop a greater understanding of how a young person develops self-respect and respect for others as they follow the main character’s experiences from a first-person perspective.

**Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:**

- Davis-Undiano, Robert Con. "Mildred D. Taylor and the Art of Making a Difference." *World Literature Today* (78.2) May-Aug 2004: 11 . MAS Ultra-School Edition . EBSCO Host. 25 Jan 2005. <<http://search.epnet.com>>.
- "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry." Booklist. 1 March 1988. Books in Print.com. Bowker's Books in Print Professional. 25 Jan 2005. <<http://www.booksinprint.com>>.
- "Taylor, Mildred D." Junior High School Library Catalog. Ed. Juliette Yaakov. New York : H. W. Wilson, 1990. 417.
- Walker, Robbie Jean. "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry." *Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults* . Ed. Kirk Beetz and Suzanne Niemeyer. Vol. 3. Washington D. C.: Beacham Publishing, 1990. 1135-1140.

- \* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.
- \* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

**Noted Distinction:**

- Newberry Medal Winner, 1977
- Young Reader's Choice Award, 1979
- William Allen White Reading List, 1978-1979

**Readability:**

- Lexile Score: 920
- Readability Level:

**Learning Resources Guidelines:**

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

**Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)**

**Approval:**

**Submitted to Committee:**

**Approved for Adoption:**

**Notes on the Text:**

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

A family in the novel must deal with the issue of racism. Racial slurs are included realistically and the characters must deal with anger at the discrimination they face.

**Connection to the Curriculum:**

The Logan family survives in rural Mississippi as they try to gain independence in a community where slavery was not far in the past. Character development and interactions are strong in this novel as the internal and external conflicts reveal the depths of racial conflicts experienced in our history. Ms. Logan attempts to teach of slavery and its significance in our history, as she and her family stand up against continued discrimination. Comparing and contrasting of different cultures occurs naturally throughout the plot, as the Logans face the possibility of losing their land while maintaining their self-respect and honor.

**Additional Connections:**

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*