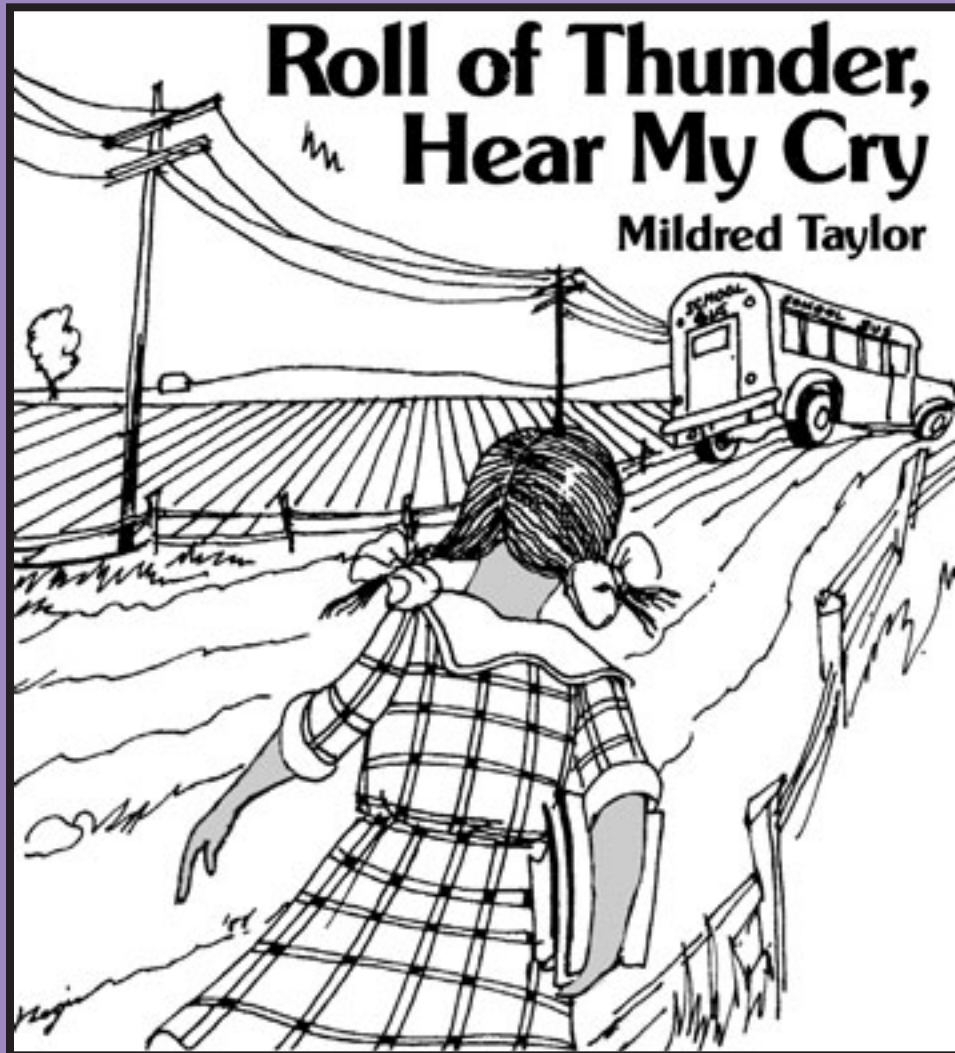


# Novel·Ties



## A Study Guide

Written By Gloria Levine

Edited by Joyce Friedland and Rikki Kessler

**LEARNING LINKS**

P.O. Box 326 • Cranbury • New Jersey 08512

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## For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the book *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the book.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its own reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although this novel is set during the time of the Great Depression, it is the Reconstruction era that defined the way of life for black people in the South until the decade of the 1970s. Ironically, the Emancipation Proclamation marked a new beginning rather than the end of African-Americans' struggle for freedom. Due to custom and an entire body of laws, sometimes referred to as "Jim Crow" laws, black citizens were robbed of their civil rights. Since most of the judges and legislators in the South believed firmly in white control over the black population, there was no place for black people to turn to improve their lives.

After the Civil War, there was a short period of time when African-Americans participated in forming new state governments, and were treated with equality under the law. Their hunger to learn caused them to start their own schools and adult education centers. These years, however, were cut short during President Andrew Johnson's term of office. Eager to be reconciled with southern states, he pardoned former southern politicians who had fought against the Union and delivered power into the hands of the white supremacists, giving tacit approval to groups like the Ku Klux Klan. A wave of terror spread throughout the South. Blacks who had moved into positions of influence, or who were assisting their own people to gain economic independence, were threatened and killed. There was no justice for blacks in southern courts; many black people were imprisoned and sentenced to hard labor on manufactured charges or for minor infractions.

Without the money to buy land for farms, many black men became sharecroppers, renting land from former slaveowners who required large payments either in labor or crops. It was rare for a freed slave to be able to accumulate sufficient capital to acquire land. Blacks were segregated in all public and private places. There were separate schools for black children, separate entrances for stores and public buildings, and black people were required to ride in the back seats of streetcars. Each state developed its own voting qualifications, and some charged a poll tax, which had the effect of denying black men the right to vote.

With no economic base or political strength, and subject to the terror of white supremacists, African-Americans in the South after the Civil War were hardly better off than they were before. A Federal government, now eager to repair the damages to a country split apart by the Civil War, mainly ignored the plight of former slaves. This system of oppression, promoted and tolerated by southern state governments, remained unchanged until the late 1950s when liberal northerners of all races joined with southern blacks to organize for the civil rights of the entire nation.

**CHAPTER 1**

**Vocabulary:** Synonyms are words with similar meanings. Circle the synonym for the underlined word in each of the following sentences.

- Knowing my aunt is meticulously neat, I always wipe my feet at the door and hang up my coat as soon as I come in.  
a. carefully      b. carelessly      c. morosely      d. defensively
- Tired and irritable from staying up late the night before, Sophia responded testily when her teacher asked for her homework.  
a. audibly      b. snappishly      c. willingly      d. humorously
- It was evident that she was daydreaming again by the pensive, faraway look in her eyes.  
a. fiery      b. impish      c. wistful      d. hostile
- The three-year-old, who didn't understand why his question had provoked such laughter, looked at his mother with a quizzical expression.  
a. defiant      b. humorous      c. disdainful      d. puzzled
- The Senator was a maverick within her party, making many enemies among her fellow Democrats.  
a. dissenter      b. follower      c. joke      d. reveler
- Even though she knew her words would be offensive to her workers, she had to scold them for coming to the office in sloppy clothing.  
a. provoking      b. ridiculous      c. complimentary      d. insulting

Read to learn about Cassie's life in the segregated South.

**Questions:**

- What effect has the Depression had upon the Logan family?
- How is Cassie's school different from the one that the white children attend?
- Why are the calendars of the white and black schools different?
- What does the "burning" incident reveal about racial attitudes in Sokane County, Mississippi?
- What is the children's reaction to the school bus that threatens them as they walk to school?
- Why is Jeremy often ridiculed by other children? Why do you think he continues to walk with Cassie's family?