

At a Glance – “Logan Land”

setting + its importance to characters

- **Lesson Objective:** Consider the importance of land to the Logan family.
- **In the Novel:** The Logan children (Stacey, Cassie, Christopher-John, and Little Man) are all walking to the first day of school. Cassie describes the land her family owns and the process by which they acquired it. The family is met by T.J. and Claude Avery, two boys from a family of sharecroppers who attend their school. T.J. teases the other children with information he overheard about the burning of a Black family called the Berrys but doesn't share much information.
- **Key Questions:** Questions 1, 4, 5, and 7 are the most important questions of the day and should not be skipped.
- **Words to Watch For:**

Page	Word/Phrase	Meaning	Page	Word	Meaning
4	mar	ruin or spoil	5	grudgingly	done reluctantly, not willingly
4	exasperation	intense annoyance or frustration	6	pensively	done in a thoughtful or serious way
4	concession	something given up	6	plantation	a large area of land where crops are grown and harvested by laborers
4	intriguing	causing curiosity or interest	7	barren	producing little or no vegetation or fruit
4	testily	done in an irritable or annoyed way	7	threadbare	worn out so much the thread shows
4	disposition	someone's usual attitude or mood	8	emaciated	very thin/weak, often from a lack of food
5	interfere	take part in the concerns of others	8	frail	fragile, weak, or delicate
5	raucous	harsh, unpleasant, rough, or noisy	8	undaunted	fearless; not discouraged or frightened

Homework Options:

- Nightly Reading pp. 11-12 and questions (attached)
- Knowledge Organizer review
- Questions from the lesson that were skipped for time

Agenda:

- Do Now (10 minutes)
- Explicit Vocabulary and Active Practice (10 minutes)
- Introduce *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1 minute)
- Cycle 1 – Read Aloud or FASE Reading: Novel Pages 3-6 and “Sunday Clothes” (20 minutes)
- Cycle 2 – Read Aloud or FASE Reading: Novel Pages 6-8 and Excerpt from “This Land Was Our Land” (25 minutes)
- Cycle 3 – AIR: Pages 8-11 (15 minutes)
- Exit Ticket (10 minutes)

Lesson Plan

Do Now (10 minutes)

- Give students 5-6 minutes to read the excerpt and answer **Q1-Q2**, then review using **Cold Call, Show Call, share out**, or a **brief discussion**.
 - **Q1: Paraphrase this line by writing it in your own words from Taylor's perspective.** *Show Call*
 - I imagined showing a part of American history that I didn't see in the books I was taught when I was a child.
 - **Q2: According to the excerpt above, what did Taylor hope to show in her novel, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*? What are some of her goals for her readers?** *T+T → CC*
 - Responses may vary, but could include:
 - Taylor wanted to show a strong Black family with loving parents who help their children learn to live in a society that treats them unfairly.
 - She wanted to share stories about her own family and their history that weren't often shared or represented in the books she read.
 - Taylor felt that as a child, she didn't see accurate portrayals of American history in what she was taught and she wanted to provide these for her readers.
 - She wants readers to feel as though they know her family and understand them deeply, experiencing this history through their eyes.

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction (10 minutes) — Meticulously, Admonish

- Teach each word to students, one at a time.
- Read or ask a student to read the example sentence that includes the vocabulary word.
- Shift focus to how the picture demonstrates the word (*while projecting the image*).
- Lead Active Practice questions.

Introduce the Novel (1 minute)

- **Frame:** Before beginning to read, give students a 1-2 sentence explanation of the new novel. You may choose to use or adapt the following language:
 - *I'm excited to introduce to you our new novel, Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor. This novel takes place in rural Mississippi in 1933. Our narrator is nine-year old Cassie Logan, and she lives on a farm with her family. As we read in the Do Now, Mildred D. Taylor used many stories about her own family for inspiration as she wrote this novel.*

Cycle 1 (20 minutes) — Pages 3-6

- **Read:** Read Aloud or use FASE Reading to read from the beginning of the novel on p. 3 through “growing as pensively quiet as I” on p. 6). Read the embellishment with students and prepare where you will drop in **implicit vocabulary** definitions. While reading, ask students to **annotate** anything they notice about each new character, their relationships with one another, and their personalities. Students may also jot notes in the box provided.

○ **Potential Annotations**

- My youngest brother paid no attention to me. (p. 3)
- * He lagged several feet behind my other brothers, Stacey and Christopher-John, and me, attempting to keep the rusty Mississippi dust from swelling with each step and drifting back upon his shiny black shoes (p. 3) **Little Man**
- * Always meticulously neat, six-year-old Little Man never allowed dirt or tears or stains to mar anything he owned. (pp. 3-4) **Little Man**
- * I threatened, pulling with exasperation at the high collar of the Sunday dress Mama had made me wear for the first day of school (p. 4)
- * Stacey cut me a wicked look and I grew silent. His disposition had been irritatingly sour lately... “it ain’t my fault you gotta be in Mama’s class this year.” (pp. 4-5) **Stacey**
- * Christopher-John, walking between Stacey and me, glanced uneasily at both of us but did not interfere. A short, round boy of seven, he took little interest in troublesome things, preferring to remain on good terms with everyone. (p. 5) **Christopher-John**
- There was little that could make Christopher-John unhappy for very long, not even the thought of school. (p. 5)
- * I hated the dress. And the shoes. There was little I could do in a dress, and as for shoes, they imprisoned freedom-loving feet accustomed to the feel of warm earth (p. 5) **Cassie (Narr)**

- **Write:** Ask students to **Turn and Task** and use their annotations to respond to Q1.

- **Discuss:** Lead a brief discussion of Q1. You may wish to **Show Call** strong annotations.
- **Q1: Share your first impression of these characters with your partner. Who have we met in these opening pages? What details stand out to you?**

- **Cassie** (narrator): doesn’t want to be dressed up for school, sometimes frustrated with her brothers, would rather be barefoot and playing in the woods
- **Little Man:** youngest brother, very neat, starting school for the first time
- **Stacey:** oldest, annoyed about being in Mama’s class (Mama seems to be a teacher at their school)
- **Christopher-John:** second youngest, cheerful and friendly, a peacemaker in the family

Day 1: Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry
pp. 3-12

- **Read:** Read Aloud or use **FASE Reading** to read the embedded text, "Sunday Clothes."
- **Write:** Ask students to respond independently to Q2.
- **Discuss:** Share out or Cold Call strong answers.
 - **Q2: Complete the following sentences: The Logans are dressed in their Sunday clothes...**
 - **because** it is the first day of school and Mama wanted them to dress up.
 - **but** the road is dusty and it's hard to keep their clothes clean as they walk; **but** Cassie hates the clothes she's wearing.

Cycle 2 (25 minutes) – Pages 6-8

- **Read:** Read Aloud or use **FASE Reading** to read pp. 6-8, beginning with "Before us the narrow..." and pausing after "I wondered" at the top of p. 8. While reading, ask students to **annotate** anything new they learn about the Logan family and the place where they live.
 - **Note:** This section on the Logan land is dense and contains many references that may be unfamiliar to students. You may wish to preview for students that they are going to learn a lot about the Logans' property in these pages, and you will unpack it together. You may also wish to review the included terms from the Knowledge Organizer prior to reading and pause to reinforce during reading.
 - **Potential Annotations**
 - it met the sloping green pasture that signaled the end of our family's four hundred acres. (p. 6)
 - Beyond the protective fencing of the forest, vast farming fields, worked by a multitude of share-cropping families, covered two thirds of a ten-square-mile plantation. (p. 6)
 - * our land had been Granger land too, but the Grangers sold it during Reconstruction to a Yankee for tax money. (p. 6)
 - * In 1887, when the land was up for sell again, Grandpa had bought two hundred acres of it, and in 1918, after the first two hundred acres had been paid off, he had bought another two hundred. (p. 6)
 - * But there was a mortgage on the two hundred acres bought in 1918 and there were taxes on the full four hundred, and for the past three years, there had not been enough money from the cotton to pay both and live on too. (p. 6)
 - That was why Papa had gone to work on the railroad. (p. 6)
 - He worked the remainder of the year away from us (p. 7)
 - * "Look out there, Cassie girl. All that belongs to you. You ain't never had to live on nobody's place but your own and long as I live and the family survives, you'll never have to. That's important." (p. 7)
 - For it he would work the long, hot summer pounding steel; Mama would teach and run the farm; Big Ma, in her sixties, would work like a woman of twenty in the fields and keep the house; and the boys and I

① Preview KO Terms

* Show call

would wear threadbare clothing washed to dishwater color; but always, the taxes and the mortgage would be paid. Papa said that one day I would understand. (pp. 7-8)

- **Write:** Ask students to **Turn and Talk** to respond to Q3.
- **Discuss:** Share out responses to Q3.
 - **Q3: Where is Papa? Why? What else have you noticed about the Logans and where they live?** *Hands*
 - Papa has to leave the family to live in a different place and work on the railroad to make enough money to pay for the land. The Logans own their own farm (they are not sharecroppers or renters) but it seems like a struggle to afford it; they all work hard to pay all of their bills and keep the farm.
- **Write:** Ask students to **Turn and Talk** to respond to Q4a and write responses to Q4b.
- **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** of Q4.
 - CC ○ **Q4a: What does it mean that the first two hundred acres "had been paid off"? Challenge: How long did it take Grandpa to pay off the first two hundred acres?**
 - This means that Grandpa had completely paid for the first 200 acres including the land price and the interest and has no remaining debt on the land. It took him 31 years (from 1887 until 1918) to pay off the first 200 acres.
 - HoD ○ **Q4b: The excerpt above states, "There was a mortgage on the two hundred acres bought in 1918." Using what you learn in your Knowledge Organizer, what does this mean? How has it impacted the family? Include the word debt in your response.**
 - This means that while the first 200 acres was totally paid for, they still had a debt for the second 200 acres, meaning they are still paying for it. They paid money every month towards the cost of that land and the interest to the bank. These bills are high, and the money they earn from the land is not enough to cover it, so Papa had to find another job.
- **Write:** Ask students to respond in writing to Q5.
- **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** of Q5.
 - **Q5a: What does the pronoun "it" (in bold) in the second sentence of this excerpt refer to?**
 - CC • The Logan land *(if needed)*
 - **Q5b: What is the family willing to do for "it"? Why might this be?** *T+T - make sacrifices - live in little, papa works far away*
 - The family is willing to make many sacrifices for the land and work as hard as they can; everyone in the family contributes to ensuring that the family can continue to pay the taxes and the mortgage so they do not lose their land. Papa explains to Cassie that she's "never had to live on nobody's place but [her] own" and even though she does not understand yet, one day, she will understand why that is so important. The family seems to take pride in their independence; they do not live on land that belongs to someone else, so everything they work for is theirs to keep.

LA

- **Read: Read Aloud** or use **FASE Reading** to read the excerpt from "This Land Was Our Land." **Note:** You may wish to point out for students that words in bold are defined in the Knowledge Organizer.
- **Write:** Ask students to **Turn and Task** to respond to Q6.
- **Discuss: Share out** responses to Q6.

- **Q6: Why might the author describe the position of Black landowners as "tenuous" in the first paragraph? In what ways might the Logans' land-ownership be considered tenuous?**

- During Reconstruction, white planters resisted land ownership for formerly enslaved people, and forced many Black laborers into a sharecropping system that was similar to slavery. While some Black families were able to save enough money to buy land (even though the land may have been "marginal and hopeless") their position was not secure or settled and depended on them saving all the money they could. The Logans' position seems tenuous because they are barely making enough money to keep their land from the bank, and Papa even had to leave the family and get a second job to try to maintain the land. It seems as though Black landowners could lose their land without constant work and vigilance.

- **Write:** Ask students to respond in writing to Q7.

- **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** of Q7.

- **Q7: Consider the article on p. 7 of this packet. What is Papa trying to explain to Cassie about the land? Why might he (and the rest of the family) be so willing to make sacrifices to maintain it?**

- Papa is trying to explain the symbolic importance of landownership for their Black family and the significance of living in freedom on property that is theirs. While Black landownership was increasing at this time, Black landowners' footholds were "tenuous," meaning they had to work hard to hang on to what they had. Only a generation removed from slavery, Papa is trying to explain that they are willing to make any sacrifice necessary to maintain their independence and self-sufficiency on the land they own (and were able to purchase through tremendous hard work). For Papa, this is a way to pass on the legacy of land he inherited from his father to his children, building generational wealth and ensuring Cassie and her siblings have the independence and financial security Black families were not able to access during the years of enslavement.

- **Revise:** Give students time to **revise** or add on to their thinking after discussion.

Cycle 3 (15 minutes) – Pages 8-11

- **Read:** Ask students to use **AIR (Accountable Independent Reading)** to read from "When the fields ended" on p. 8 through "that family of yours." on p. 11. While reading, ask students to **annotate** anything they notice about two new characters, T.J. and Claude, especially their personalities and relationships with the Logans.
- **Content Advisory:** In this scene, T.J. teases the Logans with information about "that burnin' last night," the lynching of three members of the Berry family. Cassie and her siblings do not seem to fully understand what T.J. is explaining, and the

events he describes are ambiguous (but will be explained in depth later in the novel). You may wish to preview for students that T.J. alludes to violent events that may not make sense yet, and that Taylor has done this intentionally. Students will have a chance to process and consider this choice in Q9.

o **Potential Annotations**

- [A] tall, emaciated-looking boy popped suddenly from a forest trail and swung a thin arm around Stacey. (p. 8)
- His younger brother Claude emerged a moment later, smiling weakly as if it pained him to do so. (p. 8)
- Neither boy had on shoes, and their Sunday clothing, patched and worn, hung loosely upon their frail frames. (p. 8)
- He had failed Mama's class last year and was now returning for a second try. (p. 8)
- He smiled slyly. "Like what's on all them tests." (p. 8)
- "I betcha I could give y'all an earful 'bout that burnin' last night" ... "Man, don't y'all know nothin'? The Berrys' burnin'." (p. 9)
- In his usual sickening way of nursing a tidbit of information to death ... "It might hurt y'all's little ears" (p. 9)
- He smiled smugly. (p. 10)

• **Write:** Ask students to write responses to Q8 when they finish reading.

• **Discuss: Share out** responses to Q8.

o **Q8a: What do you think Taylor is emphasizing about the Avery boys in this paragraph? Annotate any words or phrases that support your response.**

- **Potential Annotations:** emaciated, thin arm, neither boy had on shoes, patched and worn, hung loosely, frail frames
- Taylor seems to be emphasizing that the boys are hungry (perhaps starving) and donot have what they need; their family seems to be struggling to have enough food or clothing for the children.

o **Q8b: What might this description reveal about differences between the Logan and the Avery families? Begin your response with the phrase, "As sharecroppers..."**

- As sharecroppers, the Avery family seems to be struggling more than the land-owning Logans. The Avery boys are skinny and frail, wearing tattered old clothes and no shoes. Because they own their own land, the Logans seem to be financially better off than the Avery family.

• **Write:** Ask students to **Turn and Task** to respond to Q9.

• **Discuss: Share out** responses to Q9.

Skip
Review
(spacing)

Silent
color →
HOD

- **Q9: What news is T.J. sharing with the Logans? What do you notice about the way he shares it? What questions do you still have?**

Hands

- T.J. explains to the Logans that Mr. Berry and his two nephews were deliberately burned by "some white men." He shares this shocking, horrifying act like it is interesting gossip—he teases the Logans that he will not tell them, and he tries to frighten the younger children with his shocking descriptions.
- Questions may vary, but students will likely have many questions about what might have happened/why people would have done this (or why T.J. knows about it/is entertained by it). You might note that Taylor has left the story ambiguous at this point—she is deliberately leading readers to wonder about the answers to these questions, and we will learn more in chapters to come.

Exit Ticket (10 minutes)

- **Q1. Complete each of the following sentences:**

- The Logan family owns land **because** during Reconstruction, after the end of slavery, Cassie's grandfather bought all the land he could; **because** they work hard and save all their money to preserve the land Cassie's grandfather bought.
- The Logan family owns land, **but** the family must work hard and sacrifice to maintain it and continue to pay the mortgage and taxes.
- **Since** the Logan family owns land, they are more independent/self-sufficient than families forced to sharecrop for other owners.

* look for key terms

Homework Answers

- **Potential Annotations (Nightly Reading pp. 11-12)**

- "I tell ya, Stacey, man," said T.J. morosely, shaking his head, "sometimes I jus' don't know 'bout that family of yours." (p. 11)
- "that Cassie 'bout got me whipped this mornin'" (p. 11)
- He eyed me disdainfully (p. 11)
- "But don't worry, I got out of it though...I jus' said ole Claude was always sneakin' up there to get some of that free candy...Boy did he get it!" (p. 11)
- T.J. laughed. "Mama 'bout wore him out." (p. 11)
- But Claude only smiled in that sickly way of his and I knew he had. He was more afraid of T.J. than of his mother. (p. 12)
- Again Little Man glanced up and I could see his dislike for T.J. growing. (p. 12)
- Stacey, who generally overlooked T.J.'s underhanded stunts, shook his head. "That was dirty." (p. 12)

- *"Well what'd ya expect me to do? I couldn't let her think I was goin' up there 'cause I like to, could I? She'd've killed me!" (p. 12)*
- **Q1:** Cassie told her mom that T.J. went dancing at the Wallace store, and her mother told T.J.'s mother. T.J. got out of trouble by lying and saying he only went to the store to get Claude.
- **Q2:** T.J. escaped a beating by blaming Claude (and Claude took the blame and punishment because he was afraid of his brother). Cassie seems shocked and furious at T.J. for not caring that his quiet brother was punished on his behalf.
- **Q3:** He seems manipulative/underhanded, he tells lies, he tries to shock/scare people, etc.