

# Grade 8 Advanced ELA Summer Reading Assignment

School Year 2023-2024

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor

Your summer assignment is to read Mildred D Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. The graphic organizers in this packet will help you with a follow-up assignment that you will complete during the first weeks of school. Students can purchase their own copy of the text, sign out books from the library or English department (see your English teacher). A hard copy of your completed packet is due on the first day of school.

**SECTION 1** – Prior to reading the novel, explain each of the following terms in the context of the African American experience in the post Civil War era. You can look up these terms online to provide a definition/example of each.

Great Depression	Jim Crow Laws
Lynching	Sharecropping

**SECTION 2:**

Racial tension and generational progress\* play a significant role in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. The Logans represent the African American struggle to achieve the “American Dream.” Whereas Harlan Granger represents the long held beliefs of the racist south, David and Mary Logan represent the hope for a new future for their family as seen through the eyes of Cassie, the main character and protagonist.

For each character, select three instances in which issues concerning racial tension and generational progress arise. Provide concrete text evidence from the novel (including page number) for each instance and comment on what it suggests about the character.

	Concrete Details	What it suggests about his character
Cassie Logan	1.  2.  3.	1.  2.  3.
Harlen Granger	1.  2.  3.	1.  2.  3.

### SECTION 3

Coming of age is the transition from childhood to adulthood. Cassie's trip to Strawberry in Chapter Five marks the awakening of Cassie's realization of the racist south, her identity and family sacrifice essential for survival. As Cassie reminisces about her day in Strawberry, she reflects, "No day in all my life had ever been as cruel as this one." Identify three situations in which Cassie is forced to understand the contrast between the world she thought she knew and the new reality she encounters in Strawberry.

Situations (Chapter 5 Only)	Page Number	How it develops Cassie Logan
1.		
2.		
3.		

**SECTION 4: Comparative Analysis of Cassie and TJ**

**Uncle Tom** is the title character of Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The character was seen by many readers as a ground-breaking humanistic portrayal of a slave, one who uses nonresistance and gives his life to protect others who have escaped from slavery. However, the character also came to be seen, especially based on his portrayal as inexplicably kind to white slaveholders. This led to the use of *Uncle Tom* – sometimes shortened to just *a Tom* as a derogatory term for an exceedingly subservient African American post slavery, particularly one aware of their own lower-class racial status.

**In Chapter Eight**, Mildred D. Taylor introduces an allusion to Uncle Tom as T.J. calls Cassie out for “Uncle Tomming” Lillian Jean. Ironically, Mildred D. Taylor also develops a subtle, but just as significant, connection to this behavior exhibited by T.J. himself.

**Carefully read the following instructions.**

Using details from throughout the novel, compare and contrast Cassie and T.J.’s motivations and outcomes through the use of Mildred D. Taylor’s allusion to Uncle Tom in a well-developed essay of no less than three paragraphs. Please complete the organizer below as part of the planning process for your essay.

	Examples of how Cassie /TJ portrays themselves as an “Uncle Tom” in their dealings with Lillian Jean/Simms boys.	Conclusions that can be drawn about Cassie and TJ’s motivating factors to “Uncle Tom” the Simms children
Cassie / Lillian Simms	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
TJ / RW & Melvin Simms	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

**SECTION 5:** The importance of the Land and family

Characterization: In a 7-10 sentence paragraph, explain how Land plays a major role in the Logan family's identity and how the land is used to both progress and help themselves and others. Provide one concrete detail from the novel which supports how the land helps them progress and one concrete example of evidence from the novel to support how the land helps others. Make sure to embed those concrete details in your explanation and analysis.