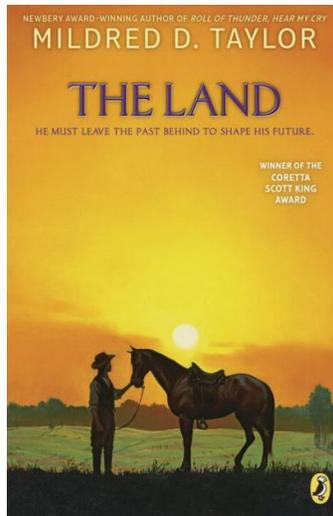


The Land



By

Mildred D. Taylor

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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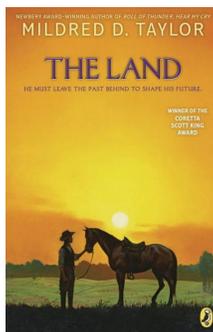


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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites www.reedpublications.org and www.novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of *The Land* and is comprised of five different activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language Activities
5. Extension Activities

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to the following:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. It is important that students be encouraged to relate their own feelings and experiences in certain contexts, and describe their own interpretations of particular passages.

- Students can work on the activities at their own pace.
- Every activity need not be completed by all students.
- A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) to keep a record of completed work.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include racism and tolerance, the importance of community, courage and perseverance, heroism and sacrifice, friendship, personal growth.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

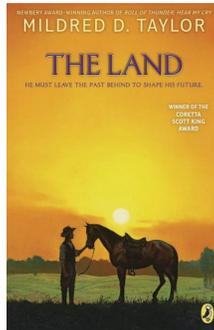
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

The son of a prosperous white landowner and a former slave, Paul has been raised openly by his father – something unusual in post-Civil War Georgia. But as he grows into a man he learns that life for someone like him is not easy. Black people distrust him because he looks white. White people discriminate against him when they learn of his heritage. Even within his own family he faces betrayal and degradation. And when a rash act of youthful rebellion forces Paul-Edward to leave his home behind forever, he has nowhere to go except toward the only dream he has ever had: to find land every bit as good as his father's. And make it his own. [Courtesy of the publisher]

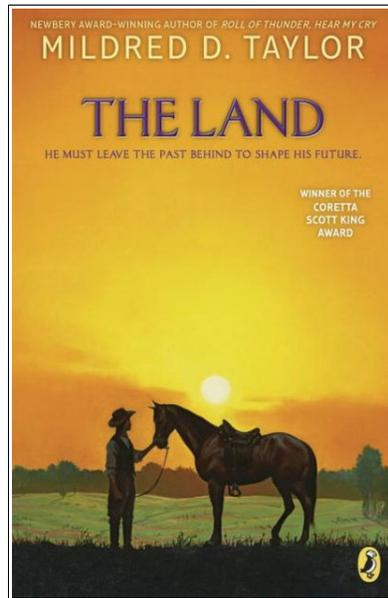
Author Biography

Mildred D. Taylor

Taylor was born in Jackson, Mississippi, but lived there only a short amount of time before moving to Toledo, Ohio with her family. Many of her works are based on stories of her family that she heard while growing up. Once she realized that adults enjoyed talking about the past, "I began to visualize all the family who had once known the land, and I felt as if I knew them, too ..." Many of Taylor's books are steeped in history, and many are set during times of slavery and the years shortly following this era. Taylor's most famous book is ***Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*** (1976). In 1977, the book won the Newbery Medal. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is the middle book, chronologically, in the Logans series that also includes ***Song of the Trees*** (1975), ***Let the Circle Be Unbroken*** (1981), ***The Road to Memphis*** (1992), and ***The Land*** (2001). In 2003 she won the prestigious *NSK Neustadt Prize for Children's Literature*. She now lives in Colorado. [Biography adapted from *Wikipedia*]



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Name: _____

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Chapter 1 - Mitchell



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *The Land* is Paul, who lives in Georgia a century and a half ago. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your *most favorite* character ever? What made you select this character?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

cordial	prosperous	truce	propose
diplomatic	privilege	intervene	solemn

1. The warring parties decided to call a _____ on Christmas day.
2. Those who attended the mayor's funeral were a very _____ bunch.
3. Even when someone is rude to her, my aunt is always _____.
4. The president is about to _____ a new tax to the senate.
5. “It was a real _____ to serve under President Lincoln,” General Grant stated.
6. I thought for sure that the teacher would _____ when the two boys got into a fight.
7. I tried my best to be _____ when she asked if I liked her dress.
8. Canada is a very _____ nation.

Questions

1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.

2. Why do you think the author entitled the first chapter, *Mitchell*?

3. How did Paul and Mitchell's relationship get off to a rocky start? What do you think caused this?

4. What advice did Paul's dad have for him regarding his relationship with Mitchell? What do you think he meant by this?

5. What was unusual about Paul's family?

6. What effect did Paul's brothers' talk have on Mitchell? Why?

7. Was Mitchell white or black? WHITE BLACK
8. How was Paul finally able to establish a truce with Mitchell?



Language Activities

A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:

a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of *The Land*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
truce		Better looking.
teach		A dishonorable act.
slave		Valleys.
worried		More active.
reason		A married Spanish woman.
protest		A gymnast's assistant.
stare		A product of grief.

Now find two additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

B. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Courage.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first four lines of a poem found in Mildred D. Taylor's novel, ***Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry***.

*Roll of thunder
hear my cry
Over the water
bye and bye*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A – B – C – B**. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first chapter of our novel (like **prejudice or fear**).

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

Bonus Question.

In the above poem why do you think the poet is crying out to a roll of thunder?

C. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Read again the poem, *Roll of Thunder* in the last exercise.

Describe how the thunder is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

D. Chapter 1 may contain an example of an important literary device called **foreshadowing**. Foreshadowing is defined as *a warning or indication of a future event*. Near the conclusion of this chapter Mitchell asks Paul, “Ain't you afraid of them night riders comin' to get you, you tryin' to teach me how to do them things?” How might this incident be an example of foreshadowing? Predict what might happen as a result in the next few chapters.



Prediction:

Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6