

# Spelling/Vocabulary List, Lesson Suggestions

By Molly McGovern and Rick Vanderwall

## Overview

This lesson plan provides a list of vocabulary from the novel, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, to help students learn how to spell new words, understand their meanings, and apply the definitions so they understand the words in context. Depending on your class' level and composition, you should apply the vocabulary list to the most appropriate teaching activity. This lesson provides the spelling and vocabulary list as a resource that you can tailor to best meets the needs of your class. Therefore, you should read and edit the list for your specific group.

As the list is organized by chapters, you could use it before, during, or after students read a chapter. Students reading the novel independently, however, should address the meanings of the words before reading of the chapter, while classes reading the book aloud in class could address the words as they encounter them. In addition, the contextual meaning of the words present a wonderful discussion prompt for not only of all aspects of the novel, but also their connection to the Jim Crow System. You can also use this list as a resource to discuss the language spoken by the novel's characters with your students.

Or, you could combine chapter lists with traditional spelling tests that you give periodically during the reading. You should, however teach the definitions as they are used in the context of the novel either before or during the reading selecting vocabulary words depending on your methodology for the reading assignment.

## Student Objectives

Students will:

- Demonstrate they understand the contextual meaning of the vocabulary words.
- Demonstrate they can correctly spell the vocabulary words.

## Skills Attained

Students will be able to:

- Use the dictionary.
- Apply definitions to derive contextual meaning of vocabulary words.

## Materials Needed

- The novel, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
- Copies of the vocabulary word lists
- Access to dictionaries

## The Lesson

This lesson plan does not provide a lesson outline or an assessment rubric, as teachers should use the vocabulary list as best meets your students' needs as they read the book. However, the following is a suggested list of words--with citations using them from the novel and the page numbers for reference--you may want to consider including in your lesson:

## **Spelling/vocabulary List**

### **Chapter 1:**

#### **Attention**

"My youngest brother paid no attention to me." (1)

#### **Interfere**

"Christopher-John, walking between Stacey and me, glanced uneasily at both of us but did not interfere." (2)

#### **Sharecropping, Plantation**

"Beyond the protective fencing of the forest, vast farming fields, worked by a multitude of sharecropping families, covered two-thirds of a ten-square-mile plantation." (3)

#### **Acres**

"In 1887, when the land was up for sale 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." (3)

#### **Emaciated**

"When the fields ended, and the Granger forest fanned both sides of the road with long overhanging branches, a tall, emaciated-looking boy popped suddenly from a forest trail and swung a thin arm around Stacey." (4)

#### **Tormentor**

"In front of it were two yellow buses, our own tormentor and one that brought students from the other direction, and loitering students awaiting the knell of the morning bell." (10)

#### **Indignant**

"He just stood staring down at the open book, shivering with indignant anger." (17)

### **Chapter 2:**

#### **Obvious**

"I glanced at the boys, and it was obvious to me that they were wondering the same things as I: Where had such a being come from?" (25)

#### **Gusto**

"When Papa saw Mama, his square, high-cheek-boned face opened to a wide smile and, lifting Mama with spirited gusto, he swung her around twice before setting her down and kissing her." (25)

#### **Sheriff**

"When Henrietta went to the sheriff and told him what she'd seen, he called her a liar and sent her on home." (29)

### **Chapter 3:**

#### **Resiliency**

"At first, the rain had merely splashed the dust, which seemed to be rejoicing in its own resiliency and laughing at the heavy drops thudding against it; but eventually, the dust was forced to

surrender to the mastery of the rain, and it churned into a fine red mud that oozed between our toes and slopped against our ankles as we marched miserably to and from school." (31)

### **Cruel, Misery**

"But sometimes, the rain pounded so heavily that it was all we could do to stay upright, and we did not look back as often nor listen as carefully as we should; we consequently found ourselves comical objects to cruel eyes that gave no thought to our misery." (32)

### **Ignorant**

"One day, you'll have plenty of clothes and maybe even a car of yo' own to ride 'round in, so don't you pay no mind to them ignorant white folks." (33)

### **Chapter 4:**

### **Sorrowful**

"You sure are takin' a sorrowful long time to churn that butter." (52)

### **Suspicion**

"I knew that if I let the tears fall, Mama's suspicion that something was wrong would be confirmed, for I never cried about such a silly thing as a fall; in fact, I seldom ever cried." (54)

### **Impolite**

"I couldn't be impolite, could I?" (55)

### **Night men**

"Then T.J. said: 'Say, y'all hear the latest 'bout them night men?'" (55)

### **Moment**

"T.J., of course, intended to nurse the moment for as long as he could." (55)

### **Cue, Feigned**

"Taking his cue, I nudged Christopher-John, and Christopher-John nudged Little Man, and the three of us forced ourselves to stare into the fire in feigned disinterest." (55-56)

### **Suspense**

"I poked Christopher-John, and he turned guiltily around, but T.J., triumphant with an assured audience of one, settled back in his chair ready to prolong the suspense." (56)

### **Tarred and feathered**

"Tarred and feathered him!" T.J. announced hastily. 'Poured the blackest tar they could find all over him, then plastered him with chicken feathers.'" (56)

### **Ploy**

"But why?' asked Little Man, forgetting our ploy." (56)

### **Chided**

"Then, thrusting his arm around Stacey's shoulders, he chided, 'Friends gotta trust each other, Stacey, cause ain't nothin' like a true friend.'" (58)

### **Slink**

"And with those words of wisdom, he left the room, leaving us to wonder how he had managed to slink out of this one." (58)

**Objections**

"Little Man, Christopher-John, and I took to Mr. Morrison immediately and had no objections to the cleaning." (58)

**Night men, Burnings**

"Anybody who was a friend of Papa's was all right in our book; besides, when he was near, night men and burnings and midnight tarrings faded into a hazy distance." (58)

**Pursuit**

"Then, he and three other boys dashed away in pursuit of T.J." (60)

**Whipped**

"Little Willie smiled, 'Stacey inside with Miz Logan. He got whipped today.'" (61)

**Crossroads**

"I don't want no whipping!' objected Christopher-John, standing alone in the crossroads." (63)

**Sleepy-eyed**

"A few other men sat around a stove playing checkers, and Jeremy's older brothers, R.W. and Melvin, who had dropped out of school long ago, leaned sleepy-eyed against the counter staring at us." (63)

**Reins**

"Before Mr. Morrison took the reins, he handed Stacey a handkerchief in which to wrap his bruised right hand, but he did not say a word, and it wasn't until we had passed the crossroads leading to Great Faith that the silence was broken." (65)

**Disobey**

"Ain't never no reason good enough to go disobey your mama." (65)

**Chapter 5:****Blue-black, Encircled**

"The blue-black shine that had so nicely encircled T.J.'s left eye for over a week had almost completely faded by the morning. T.J. hopped into the back of the wagon beside Stacey and snuggled in a corner not occupied by the butter, milk, and eggs Big Ma was taking to sell at the market in Strawberry." (77)

**Experience**

"Stacey had actually gone once, but Christopher-John, Little Man, and I had always been flatly denied the experience." (77)

**Foolishness**

"I ain't got no time to be putting up with both you and T.J.'s foolishness.'" (78)

**Obnoxious**

"T.J. was far from her favorite person, and it was quite obvious that Stacey and I owed our good fortune entirely to T.J.'s obnoxious personality." (78)

**Subdued**

"T.J., however, was surprisingly subdued when he settled into the wagon; I suppose that at three-thirty in the morning, even T.J.'s mouth was tired." (78)

**Cockatoo**

"But by dawn, when the December sun was creeping warily upward shooting pale streams of buff-colored light through the forest, he was fully awake and chattering like a cockatoo." (78)

**Gutting disappointment**

"Is this it?' I cried, a gutting disappointment enveloping me as we entered the town." (78)

**Stationed**

"Near the field entrance, several farm wagons and pickups were already parked, but Big Ma drove to the other side of the field where only two wagons were stationed." (79)

**Customers**

"I got me some regular customers, and they'll check to see if I'm here 'fore they buy." (79)

**Clabber milk**

"After we had eaten our cold lunch of oil sausages and cornbread washed down with clabber milk, we did the same." (80)

**Protection**

"T.J. looked at me with disgust. 'Ain't s'pose to hunt with it. It's for protection.'" (82)

**Recoiled**

"He recoiled as if I had struck him." (84)

**Mammy**

"Then you get her out of here,' he said with hateful force. 'And make sure she don't come back till yo' mammy teach her what she is.'" (84)

**Malevolently**

"His dark eyes flashed malevolently as he pushed me in front of him through the crowd."

**Apologize**

"You bumped into me. Now you apologize." (85)

**Chapter 6:****Dumbfounded**

"Throwing open the door to Mama's room, we stood dumbfounded in the doorway." (89)

**Confounded**

"Stacey made me leave, and Mr. Barnett told me I couldn't come back no more, and then I bumped into that confounded Lillian Jean and she tried to make me get off the sidewalk and then her daddy come along and he—" (91-92)

**Haste**

"Christopher-John, Little Man, and I stared after him wonderingly, but Big Ma jumped up from her chair, knocking it over in her haste, and dashed after him." (92)

**Hanging**

"Right now I'd be hanging from that oak over yonder." (93)

**Loomed**

"But just as the Packard roared to life, a huge figure loomed from the darkness and jumped into

the other side, and the car zoomed angrily down the drive into the blackness of the Mississippi night." (93)

### **Reprimand**

"Without a word of reprimand, she picked up my clothes from where I had tossed them at the foot of the bed, and absently draping them over the back of a chair, she'd said, 'Stacey tells me you blame Big Ma for what happened today.'" (94)

### **Slaves, Africa, Preached, Slavery**

"But their grandparents were born in Africa, and when they came there were some white people who thought that it was wrong for any people to be slaves; so the people who needed slaves to work in their fields, and the people who were making money bringing slaves from Africa preached that black people weren't really people like white people were, so slavery was all right." (96)

### **Disobedience, Herbs**

"He had been caught and punished for his disobedience, but his owners had not tried to break him, for he had had a knowledge of herbs and cures." (96)

### **Medicines**

"He had tended both the slaves and the animals of the plantation, and it was from him that Big Ma had learned medicines." (96)

### **Freedom**

"He was hiding in a cave when freedom came, so I understand." (97)

### **Profitable, Folks**

"Well, after a while, slavery became so profitable to people who had slaves and even to those who didn't that most folks decide to believe that black people really weren't people like everybody else." (97)

### **Stomach**

"There was a sinking feeling in my stomach, and I felt as if the world had turned itself upside down with me in it." (97)

### **Retaliated**

"Then I thought of Lillian Jean and a surging anger gurgled upward, and I retaliated, 'Well, they ain't!' But I leaned closer to Mama, anxiously hoping that she would agree with me." (97)

### **Respect, Fear**

"White people may demand our respect, but what we give them is not respect but fear." (97)

### **Chignon**

"As I watched, she shaped the long thickness into a large chignon at the nape of her neck and stuck six sturdy hairpins into it." (98)

### **Whipped**

"You think Uncle Hammer whipped Mr. Simms?" (99)

### **Revenge**

"Ah, shoot!" I exclaimed, my dream of revenge against the Simmses vanishing as Stacey talked." (100)

**Frustration**

"I felt as if my body was not large enough to hold the frustration I felt, nor deep enough to drown the rising anger." (100)

**Engulfed**

"And in a body, the crowd engulfed us." (102)

**Capture, Defend**

"After all, who in his right mind would want to capture Strawberry ... or defend it either for that matter?" (103)

**Foolish**

"Now don't go do something foolish." (104)

**Opportunity**

"The opportunity, dear sister, was too much to resist." (105)

**Chapter 7:****Inaudible**

"Stacey's voice faded into an inaudible whisper as Mama slowly put the sewing box on the table behind her." (107)

**Admonished**

"In quiet anger, she glared at Stacey and admonished, 'In this house we do not give away what loved ones give to us.'" (107)

**Interminable**

"The last days of school before Christmas seemed interminable." (109)

**Misery, Superior**

"Added to the misery of the waiting and the cold was Lillian Jean, who managed to flounce past me with a superior smirk twice that week." (109)

**Negroes**

"And them Southern whites, they was tired of the Northern soldiers and free Negroes, and they was trying to turn things back 'round to how they used to be." (112)

**Colored**

"And the colored folks ... well, we was just tired." (112)

**Breeded stock**

"They was both of them from breeded stock, and they was strong like bulls—." (113)

**Strength**

"My folks was bred for strength like they folks and they grandfolks 'fore 'em." (113)

**Justice**

"It may not be real justice, but it'll hurt them, and we'll have done something." (114)

**Collateral**

"'I didn't say we should back it,' Mama said, 'but we're just about the only family with any collateral at all.'" (115)

**Mulatto**

"His daddy was a mulatto and his grandmamma was a slave down on one of them islands-Mar-ti-nique, it says here." (116)

**Aristocracy**

"I hope you feel better now that that's done, Miz Carline,' he said, his voice a soft mixture of Southern aristocracy and Northern schooling." (121)

**Placid**

"He was a long, thin man in his mid-fifties with a perfect lawyer face, so placid that it was difficult to guess what thoughts lay behind it." (121)

**Resent, Attitude**

"Besides the fact that a number of white folks around here resent this land you've got and your independent attitude, there's Harlan Granger." (123)

**Boycott**

"But even more important than all that, you're pointing a finger right at the Wallaces with this boycott business." (125)

**Denote, Equality**

"That they should be punished just as if they had killed a white man, and punishment of a white man for a wrong done to a black man would denote equality." (124)

**Bootleg**

"Don't need to bootleg,' he said sullenly." (126)

**Roots**

"Y'all got roots in this community." (127)

**Mortgage**

"Course now, with times like they are, that mortgage could come due anytime ... and if it comes due and y'all ain't got the money to pay it, y'all could lose this place." (127)

**Chapter 8:****Destruction, Mourning**

"For a while we stood looking again at the destruction, then, sitting on one of our fallen friends, we talked in quiet, respectful tones, observing the soft mourning of the forest." (132)

**Survive**

"Cassie, there'll be a whole lot of things you ain't gonna wanna do but you'll have to do in this life just so you can survive." (133)

**Prime**

"All I had to do to prime the gossip pump was smile nicely and whisper a 'Miz Lillian Jean' every now and then." (135)

**Incident**

"When I had pinned Lillian Jean securely beneath me, I yanked unmercifully on her long, loose hair and demanded an apology for all the names she had called me, and for the incident in Strawberry." (137)

**Banished**

"Miss Crocker raised her hand, indicating that she did not want to hear another word, and banished me to the very last row in front of the window." (138)

**Economic, Free labor**

"She spoke on the cruelty of it; of the rich economic cycle it generated as slaves produced the raw products for the factories of the North and Europe; how the country profited and grew for the free labor of a people still not free."(139)

**Shunned**

"Avoiding us in the morning, he arrived late, only to be shunned by the other students." (145)

**Chapter 9:****Emerged**

"Mr. Jamison did not stay long. A few minutes later, he emerged from the field alone, got into his car, and left." (151)

**Persuade**

"I looked back at Mama wanting her to speak, to persuade him to stay, but when I saw her face I knew that she would not." (153)

**Amenities**

"'You goin' up to the store tomorrow, David?' Mr. Avery asked after all the amenities had been said." (154)

**Decent**

"Says he tired of us stirrin' up trouble 'gainst decent white folks." (155)

**Debts, Chain gang**

"Said we can't pay our debts, they gonna have the sheriff out to get us ... put us on the chain gang to work it off." (155)

**Chapter 10:****Pester**

"Don't pester him about it." (168)

**Urgency**

"His voice was barely above a friendly whisper, but there was an urgency in it, and I obeyed, scrambling over the seat to join the boys." (169-170)

**Comprehend**

"Kaleb Wallace gazed up at Mr. Morrison, then at the truck as if trying to comprehend the connection between the two." (170)

**Shroud, Lethargically**

"The heat swooped low over the land clinging like an invisible shroud, and through it people moved slowly, lethargically, as if under water."

**Chapter 11:**

**Akimbo**

"Kaleb Wallace and his brother Thurston, his left arm hanging akimbo at his side, pounded the front door with their rifle butts." (191)

**Nauseous**

"'St-Stacey,' I stammered, feeling the same nauseous fear I had felt when the night men had passed and when Papa had come home shot and broken, 'Wh-what they gonna do?'" (191)

**Court**

"'Y'all decide to hold court out here tonight?'" (193)

**Chapter 12:****Stricken**

"'Where have you been?' Mama demanded, her face strangely stricken." (196)

**Traipsing**

"'I'm gonna teach all of y'all 'bout traipsing off in the middle of the night ... and especially Stacey.'" (197)

**Burlap**

"In a few minutes Mama returned, her arms loaded with sacks of burlap. She quickly threw the sacks into the water and ran back out again." (199)

**Hesitated**

"When he got to the road, he stopped suddenly and stood very still; then he put out his hands, hesitated a moment, and spun around wildly as if he were mad." (202)

**Acrid**

"I stood up stiffly, my eyes tearing from the acrid smoke, and looked out across the cotton to the slope, barely visible in the smoggy dawn." (203)

**Adamant**

"Christopher-John set his lips firmly together, folded his plump arms across his chest and was adamant." (203)

**Singed**

"Farther up the road, the stalks were singed, and the fine gray ash of the fire lay thick upon them and the road and the forest trees." (203)

**Oblivious**

"I recognized Mr. Lanier by his floppy blue hat working side by side with Mr. Simms, each oblivious of the other, and Papa near the slope waving orders to two of the townsmen." (204)

**Remnants**

"Before either Little Man or I could answer, Mama and Big Ma emerged from the field with Stacey, the sacks now blackened remnants in their hands." (204)

**Cautious**

"There was a cautious silence as he gazed up at Papa and Mr. Morrison, their faces set in grim, tired lines." (208)

Rick Vanderwall is the Chair of the Language Arts Department at Malcolm Price Laboratory School in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Molly McGovern is an English Education Student at the University of Northern Iowa.