American History
Junior High Level

Introduction:
This American History thematic unit incorporates reading, writing and social studies. It is appropriate for seventh or eighth grade students. There are many Arizona standards throughout this unit. Students may take up to six weeks to complete this unit.

Behavioral Objectives:
This unit contains many objectives. One objective is to educate students about United States history through literature. Also, after having finished reading the novel, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, students will demonstrate knowledge of essay writing skills.

Arizona Standards:
- WE-1 Use the writing process to complete a variety of writing tasks.
- RE-2 Use reading strategies such as predicting and summarizing to comprehend written selections. Describe the setting and its relationship to the selection. Analyze selections of literature and identify the plot line. Analyze classic literature.

The Students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of essay structure.
2. Incorporate the Six Traits of writing to complete their essay.
3. Read and follow along in the novel.
4. Participate in class discussion.
5. Analyze literary elements.
6. Incorporate their knowledge of American History in their writing.

Anticipatory Set-The Teacher Will:
1. Write the word DISCRIMINATION on the board.
2. Ask students to think about what that word means.
3. After an appropriate wait time, call on volunteers. Allow each child who raised a hand a chance to verbalize his/her definition of the word DISCRIMINATION.
4. Have one student look up the dictionary definition of the word and have the student write that definition on the board.
5. Ask students to think of a time when they think they might have been discriminated against or saw it happen to someone else.
6. Separate students into groups of three or four and allow them to discuss the particular incident.
7. After about ten minutes have students return to their seats and encourage students who want to share their story to do so.
8. Discuss how that event made them feel. Write the words they say on the board. Some examples may include: angry, hurt, sad, disappointed, etc.
9. Ask students, "At what time in our nation’s history was discrimination at its worst?" Briefly discuss the Civil Rights Movement that they have been learning about in social studies and the decades preceding that time period.
10. Introduce the novel *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. By this point, students will be interested in reading it because you have incorporated the topic into their prior knowledge and you have stirred up their emotions.
Teacher Input:
The teacher will choose a different way to read the material on a daily basis. These ways may include:
- Whole class takes turns reading out loud.
- Students partner up and read.
- Teacher reads to students.
- Students choral read.

Modeling Behavior:
The teacher will continually model correct reading practices as well as listening skills.

Check For Comprehension:
1. Reading this novel will take many weeks. A good way to check for comprehension while reading is to have students summarize the main events of each chapter. This is a state standard that can be implemented easily into this unit. You may also alternate and have them orally summarize one day and write a written summary the next day.
2. At the beginning of each class always have a question for discussion on the board from the previous day’s reading. This allows students to recap what was read the prior day. It also helps PEP students who may have had trouble understanding the context. This procedure also helps students who may have been absent so that they do not feel lost.

Guided Practice:
After having read the entire novel, reintroduce literary elements and how they apply to Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Orally discuss setting, characterization, plot-sequence of events, and resolution. Have students take notes on this important information. It is a good idea to write these elements on the board or overhead. This helps your visual learners as well as your PEP students.

Closure:
Remind students about what was discussed at the beginning of the novel regarding United States history and discrimination. Have students apply that knowledge to the setting of the novel. It is important that students understand that the setting is a critical component in the novel. Remind them that the setting includes the time and place of the novel.

Independent Practice:
The next day each student will begin to write a literary response essay incorporating the literary elements that were discussed the previous day.

Assessment:
Each student's essay will contain two well-written, organized paragraphs describing the setting (one for the time and one for the place). Two or three paragraphs on characterization, they should include physical and personality traits. Students are to write 1-3 paragraphs on the plot and on the sequence of events in the novel (beginning, middle and end). Remind students that they will be scored using the Six Traits Writing Rubric. If necessary, review the traits. They may use their notes and chapter summaries for guidance.

Resources and materials:
The novel Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Another novel that can be read after this one that continues along with the theme is To Kill a Mockingbird.

Modifications for PEP students:
1. Pair up PEP students with a peer who is more fluent. They may submit one essay as long as they work together.
2. If a student is not comfortable working with a partner, reduce the amount of paragraphs that the student needs to write.
3. Allow the PEP student more time to submit the essay.