

# The Cay

by Theodore Taylor

## A Teaching Guide

by Margaret Whisnant



Sample Pages from  
**Objective Tests**  
with  
**Thinking/Writing Prompts**  
and  
**Answer Keys**  
for

*The Cay*

By Theodore Taylor

**A Teaching Guide**  
by Margaret Whisnant

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# THE CAY

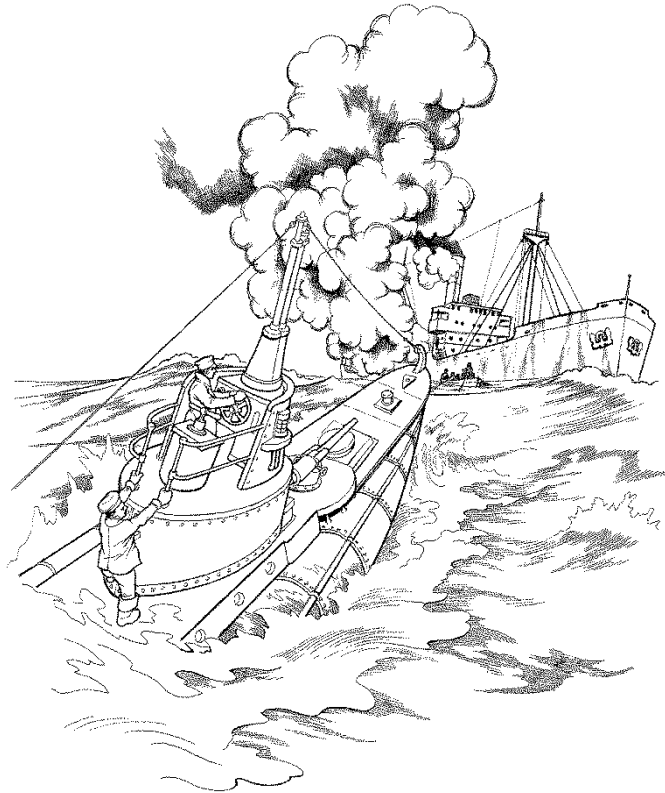
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## Chapter One

Pages 9-17

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Phillip lived on one of the Dutch islands just off the coast of Venezuela.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The purpose of the German submarine attack was to destroy an American military base on one of the main islands.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. It was February, 1942, when the Germans attacked.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The possibility of a German attack on his island terrified Phillip.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Since there was no school because of the Germans, Phillip's mother gave him permission to go down to the old fort and watch for submarines.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Phillip found the fort, which was usually like something out of a storybook, filled with soldiers, rifles, and machine guns.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The German attack on the other islands had not caused much damage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Holland had been captured by the Nazis, but Henrik still believed the Dutch navy would come to the islands.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. An army officer ordered Phillip and Henrik to leave the Queen Emma bridge because they could easily be killed by a torpedo.

# THE CAY

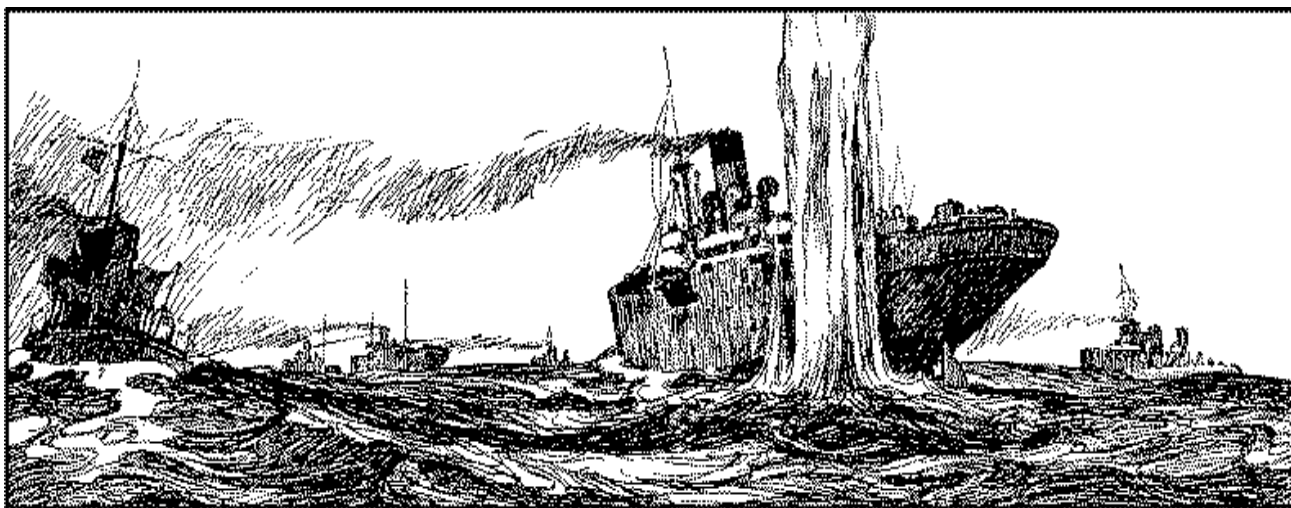
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## Chapter Two

Pages 19-28

Write either **Yes** or **No** in the blank before each question.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Were there blackout curtains on Phillip's house because the governor had ordered that not a light could shine anywhere on the island?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Did Phillip take a hatchet from the tool house to use against the Germans if they attacked during the night?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Did Phillip's father suggest that Phillip and his mother take a boat back to Norfolk and wait until the danger was over?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Was Phillip's mother afraid to fly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Did the thought of leaving the island make Phillip happy?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Was the refinery on Curacao able to ship its precious gas and oil to England and Africa in spite of the German threat?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Did the lack of rain make it necessary for fresh water to be shipped to the island?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Without the movement of ships, were the people of Curacao helpless?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Did Phillip's mother accept their situation without complaining?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Was the British tanker *Empire Tern* equipped with machine guns and loaded with gasoline when it steamed out of the harbor?



- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. As Phillip and many others watched, did the *Empire Tern* vanish in a wall of red flames?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. After the experience with the *Empire Tern*, was Phillip still excited about the war?

# THE CAY

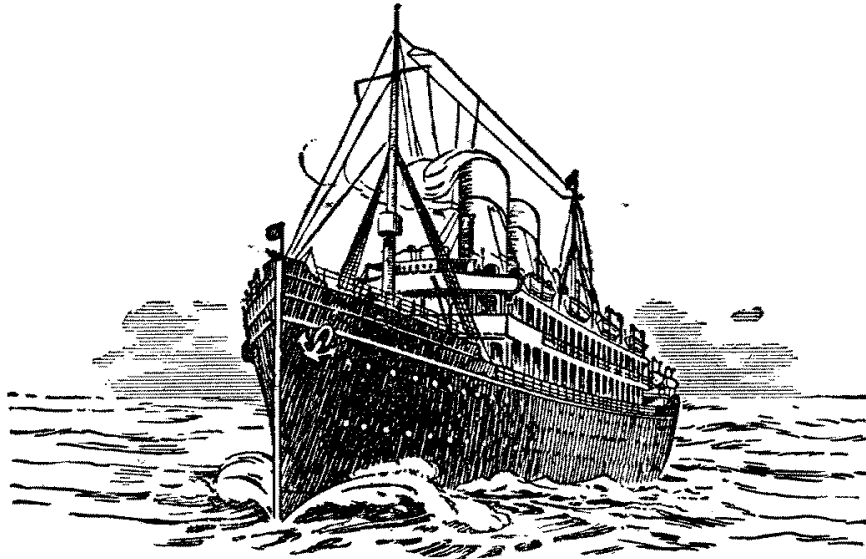
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## Chapter Three

Pages 29-39

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Two days after leaving Panama, in the early morning of April 6, 1942, the *Hato* was (A) torn apart in a storm, (B) torpedoed, (C) accidentally bombed.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. As they prepared to leave the cabin, Phillip's mother was (A) in a panic, (B) crying quietly, (C) very calm.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The lifeboat Phillip and his mother were in spilled its passengers when (A) the *Hato* lurched forward, (B) it broke in half, (C) it became tangled in the anchor line.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In the water, Phillip (A) could no longer see his mother, (B) fainted, (C) was hit on the head from above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which of the following was **not** true of the very old Negro Phillip found sitting on the raft with him? (A) Phillip had never seen him before. (B) His head was a mass of wiry gray hair. (C) Phillip thought he was ugly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. From the old man's appearance, Phillip knew he was (A) American, (B) West Indian, (C) Cuban.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The Negro believed Phillip's mother (A) was safe and sound on a raft or a boat, (B) could have drowned, (C) wasn't far away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The old man thought their location was somewhere (A) near Panama, (B) around the cays, (C) slightly south of the Yucatan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Which of the following was **not** a reason Phillip burst into tears? (A) There was nothing but an empty sea around him. (B) He had sharp pains in his head. (C) He was frightened by the big black man.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The cat's name was (A) Oil, (B) Cook, (C) Stew.

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**Chapter Five:** Pages 49-55

**Chapter Six:** Pages 55-58

Timothy  
sharks  
Stew Cat

Phillip  
the sea  
a "motah"

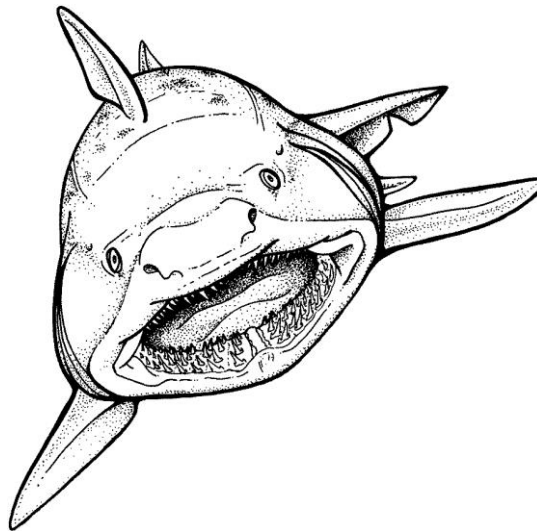
smoke  
birds  
his father

palm  
the small island  
the airplane

a torch  
the raft

From the list above, choose the word, name, or phrase that fits each of the clues below and write it in the blank. **All** answers will be **used at least once**. **Some** answers will be **used more than once**.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Timothy warned Phillip about these when he reached over the edge of the raft to touch the water.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Phillip thought it might be even worse than the raft.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. He thought it would have been awful to have awaken on the raft and not know what his companions looked like.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. It did not come to their rescue as Timothy and Phillip had hoped.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. This was the sound that Timothy heard toward noon on the third day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Timothy saved Phillip from these.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. He went into an angry rage because of the dangerous brush with the sharks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. It became so calm, the raft didn't seem to be drifting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. He was happy they found the island because he wanted to be off the sea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. He shouted when he saw the island.

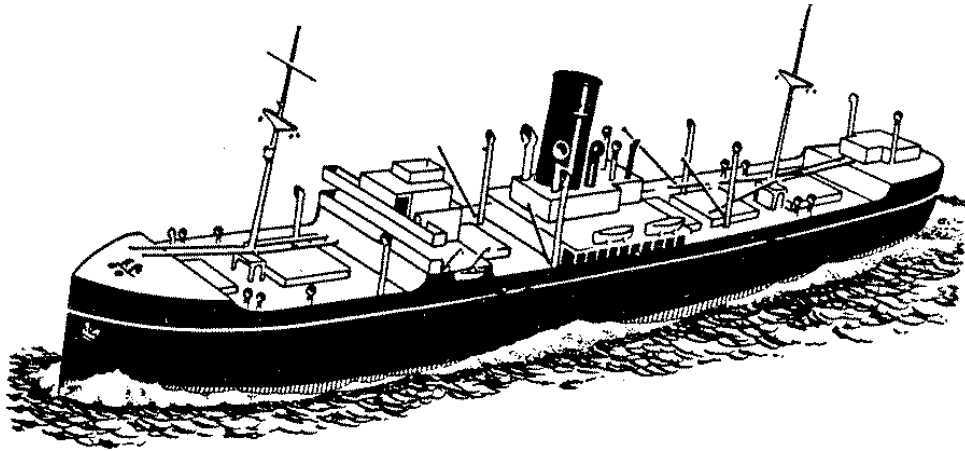
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## WHOLE BOOK TEST

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Phillip and his family lived on the island of Curacao located just off the coast of (A) Panama, (B) California, (C) Venezuela.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. This story took place from February to August in the year (A) 1939, (B) 1942, (C) 1948
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. German submarines were prowling the islands because they wanted to destroy (A) the American military bases located there, (B) the oil and gas refineries as well as the tankers carrying fuel from the islands, (C) the supply ships transporting food and fabrics to England.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Phillip's family was from (A) Virginia, (B) New York, (C) Miami.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Phillip's father had been hired by Royal Dutch Shell because he was an expert in (A) locating new oil wells, (B) tanker design and construction, (C) refineries and gasoline production.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Henrik was Phillip's (A) cousin, (B) next-door neighbor, (C) best friend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Because she thought they weren't safe on the island, Phillip's mother (A) wanted to move to the army base, (B) wouldn't allow Phillip to leave the house, (C) insisted on taking Phillip back to Norfolk.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Phillip's mother (A) didn't like black people, (B) taught him to respect people of all skin colors, (C) wouldn't allow him to go near the black people who worked on the docks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The freighter that Phillip and his mother were aboard sank when (A) the gasoline it was carrying exploded, (B) it was hit by a German Torpedo, (C) it was battered in a furious storm.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The freighter sank two days after leaving Panama on its way to (A) Miami, (B) Cuba, (C) Venezuela.



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## ***Something to Think About. . . Something to Write About. . .***

1. You may have heard someone talk about a person who is “*in denial*” about a situation. From the psychological standpoint, the definition of such denial is *an unconscious defense mechanism characterized by refusal to acknowledge painful realities, thoughts, or feelings.*

- Explain how each of the following quotes from the story is an example of Phillip’s denial about the danger he and his family were in:

*I was not frightened, just terribly excited. War was something I’d heard a lot about, but had never seen.*

*I couldn’t imagine that a shell from an enemy submarine would pick me out from all the buildings, or hit me if I was standing on the famous pontoon bridge. . .*

*“We just wanted to see the submarines,” I said.*

*I put (the hatchet) under the couch. It was the only thing I could think of to use for fighting the Germans.*

- Name a dangerous place or thing in today’s world that can lead people into a state of denial. What are some of the danger signals? Why do you suppose people ignore them?

2.

- How do you know that Phillip’s mother was homesick?
- Do you think Phillip’s father made the right decision in bringing his family to a strange place to help with the war effort? Why or why not? Explain how his choice had been both beneficial and destructive for the family.
- How would you characterize his mother’s decision to take him by ship back to Norfolk? Was it *wise* or *selfish*? Explain.

3. When he said good-bye to Henrik and the other boys, Phillip told them he planned to visit his grandparents, and he would be gone just a short time. But he *had the feeling that it might be a very long time before (he) saw Chraçao and his father again*.
  - Would you say that Phillip had a *premonition* about the journey he was about to take? What information did he have that would have caused him to feel the way he did about leaving?
  - In your opinion, do people have the ability to sometimes know ahead of time when a decision will go wrong? Is it a matter of an unexplained knowing or is it usually based on important clues? Explain your position by giving at least one example from your experiences.
4. Floating on the raft with Phillip, Timothy said they had *rare good luck*.
  - Why did Timothy say they were lucky?
  - How did the situation look different from Timothy's point of view?
  - What is your opinion? Were the two people and the cat lucky or were they unlucky? Explain your answer.
5. Find four clues from the time that Timothy, Phillip, and Stew Cat were on the raft to prove that Timothy was a *kind-hearted, considerate, and wise* man. Do you think Philip saw and understood these clues? How do you know?
6.
  - On the raft, what did Timothy do that seemed to prove Philip's mother was right in saying that black people were "different?"
  - How did Timothy's "difference" lead him to call Phillip "*young bahss*?"
  - From your point of view, how **was** Timothy truly different from Phillip when it came to knowing how to survive? How was his attitude toward responsibility and blame also different?

# About Your Teaching Guide

## Objective Tests

The objective tests have multiple functions. In addition to their obvious application, they also serve as tools that can *improve **comprehension skills** by providing practice in understanding plot structure and recognizing important story elements.*

### **Rationale:**

#### ***Focus on the Plot. . .***

Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot of a novel, and consequently **comprehend** the story. They are in tune with cause and effect, behavior and consequence, sequence—the heartbeat of the narrative.

This “plot rhythm” forms the framework for the objective tests. The chain of events that tell the story have been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of sequential questions, none of which require **interpretation**. They are intended to **draw student attention to the fact that something happened**, not to what the incident means. That comes later.

In addition to their testing function, teachers may use the pages to strengthen their students’ ability to **Summarize**: With only the questions as a guide, have students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven or fewer. When they work with twenty or more questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

**Report the News**: Ask your students to write a newspaper article based on the events identified in a set of questions and the *who, what, when, where, why* elements. Some information needed to complete this assignment may be located in previous chapters.

**Twist the Plot**: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, etc.—to demonstrate how changing a single (or several) events would (or would not) change the story. This process can be used to help students become proficient in distinguishing major plot movers from minor story details.

#### ***The Characters. . .***

Too often, when they are asked to describe a story character’s personality, the only answer many students can muster is “nice.” This portion of the Novel Teaching Pack, coupled with related activities from ***Something to Think About, Something to Write About***, is a well of opportunities for those teachers who wish to eradicate “nice” from their students’ vocabularies!

Questions that identify a character’s personality and/or motivation are purposely and carefully included with the plot movers. Again, the questions do not require **interpretation**. They simply establish that someone did or said something—knowledge that is invaluable when character analysis is required.

#### ***Implied Meaning and Story Clues. . .***

The objective tests include items that establish the existence of story components carrying **implied meaning**. **Story clues** that tantalize the reader with hints of future events also appear as question. At this point in the novel study, as before, **interpretation** is not the goal. **Awareness** of the **facts** is the target.

#### ***Developing/Improving Listening Skills. . .***

Listening skills are rightfully included on every list of state competency requirements. Rather than always requiring students to answer test questions on a printed page, why not surprise them occasionally by doing the test orally and meeting competency goals at the same time?

#### ***Discussion Guide Capability. . .***

The objective tests are helpful discussion guides. Use individual items on these pages to draw student attention to sequence, cause and effect, story clues (foreshadowing), character traits, recognizing and interpreting implied meanings, etc. These “thinking out loud” sessions are an **important building block** for the next learning phase.

# Something to Think About. . .

# Something to Write About. . .

In this section, students pack up what they already know about the novel and go exploring into its every nook and cranny. Some activities require the simplest interpretation or application, while others will challenge the most proficient thinkers.

## **Rationale:**

### **Guidelines. . .**

Most of the items in this section are based on the skills presented in the ***Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom's Taxonomy)***. There are two reasons for this choice. First, it mirrors the Novel Teaching Pack's primary purpose of building a variety of sophisticated thinking skills on a foundation of basic knowledge. Second, in following the taxonomy guidelines, activities that correlate with many state educational standards emerge automatically.

### **Levels of Difficulty. . .**

A broad spectrum of **difficulty levels** to accommodate the needs of individual students, including the gifted, is an integral part of this component. However, **all** items from this section are intended to **challenge** and **sharpen** thinking abilities.

### **Activities. . .**

**Something to Think About/Something to Write About** includes activities that require students to choose and use precise, appropriate, and meaningful **vocabulary**. These exercises involve choosing a word or a group of words to describe a character's personality or behavior. The following example is from ***Because of Winn-Dixie***.

Opal comforted Winn-Dixie during thunderstorms, holding on to him tight so that he wouldn't run away. She decided that the best way to comfort Gloria was to read a book to her, loud enough to keep the ghosts away.

From the list of words below, all of which can correctly describe Opal's behavior, which *two* do you think are the best? Cite facts from the story and the words' definitions to support your choices.

<i>empathetic</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>nurturing</i>	<i>warmhearted</i>
<i>sympathetic</i>	<i>loving</i>	<i>devoted</i>	<i>benevolent</i>
<i>unselfish</i>	<i>generous</i>	<i>thoughtful</i>	<i>considerate</i>

In each case students work with a given collection of terms, all of which can be correctly applied to the character(s) in question. However, the individual words have varying strengths of meaning. It is the student's task to analyze both the character's behavior and the words, make choices, and then cite events from the story to support his/her selection.

Teachers may opt to narrow the choices to fewer words, choose words for individual students, divide the class into groups and offer a specific set of words to each group, or use the assignment as it is written. Whatever the technique, it is here that the word **nice** can be knocked off the shelf, shattered on the floor, and swept out the door. No longer necessary. Useless. Gone!

**Other possible items** in this section challenge students to . . .

<i>create drawings, diagrams, photos, maps,</i>	<i>make predictions</i>
<i>form opinions and theories</i>	<i>understand point of view</i>
<i>cite "evidence" from the story to support their</i>	<i>imagine</i>
<i>explanations and opinions</i>	<i>categorize</i>
<i>connect personal experience to story situations</i>	<i>engage in research and data gathering</i>
<i>become familiar with and identify literary elements</i>	<i>recognize and perceive story theme(s)</i>
<i>analyze story characters and events</i>	

**Note:** Inclusion of activities will vary with each novel title.

### ***Options. . .***

***Something to Think About, Something to Write About*** can also be used as **pick-and-choose options** for

*individualizing assignments*  
*group work*  
*whole class activities*  
*capitalizing on student interest*

*homework*  
*short-term and long-term projects*  
*differentiating assignments for two or more classes*

### **Final Note**

The Novel Teaching Packets are designed for use as supplementary material. They are not intended to be a total program. I do hope, however, that this work can provide a core resource for busy teachers and eager students as they strive to become more competent readers.

Margaret Whisnant,  
Author