Little House On The Prairie

By

Laura Ingalls Wilder

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed
Little House on the Prairie
By Laura Ingalls Wilder

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Little House on the Prairie
By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Suggestions and Expectations

This 72 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of Little House on the Prairie and is comprised of four different activities:

• Before You Read
• Vocabulary Building
• Comprehension Questions
• Language and Extension Activities

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.

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

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.

Students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A portfolio cover is included as well as a Student Checklist.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include pioneer life, farming and agriculture, the importance of friends and family, perseverance, overcoming difficulty.

Additional icons courtesy of http://www.visualpharm.com
**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 *anagrams*
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identification of a *cliffhanger*

**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. Identify the climax of the novel
4. Five W’s Chart

**Character Activities**

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

**Creative and Critical Thinking**

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

**Art Activities**

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a brochure
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Design an Information Card
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By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Synopsis

Laura Ingalls and her family are moving! They travel from Wisconsin to Kansas, where wide open land stretches as far as the eye can see. Sometimes farm life is difficult, even dangerous, but Laura and her family are kept busy and are happy with the promise of their new life on the prairie. [Courtesy of the publisher]

Author Biography

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Laura Ingalls Wilder was born February 7, 1867, in Pepin, Wisconsin, the second of four children. She once described her father, Charles Philip Ingalls, as always jolly and sometimes reckless. Her mother, Caroline Lake Quiner, was educated, gentle, and proud, according to her daughter. Her sisters were Mary, Carrie, and Grace. Laura also had a younger brother, Charles, Jr. who died at the age of only nine months.

As a young girl, Laura moved with her family from place to place. In 1874, the Ingalls family left Wisconsin for Walnut Grove, Minnesota, where they lived at first in a dugout house. The family finally settled in what would become De Smet, South Dakota, which remained Charles and Caroline's home until they died. Laura attended regular school whenever possible. However, because of her family's frequent moves, she was largely self-taught. In 1882, at the age of fifteen, she received her teaching certificate. For three years, Laura taught at a small country school a dozen miles from her home in De Smet.

In 1885 she married a local farmer, Almanzo Manly Wilder. The couple's only surviving child, Rose, was born in 1886. In 1894 the Wilders moved to Mansfield, Missouri, which they would call home for the rest of their lives. Here she sent her account of their travels to the De Smet News. This was her first published writing. In 1932, at the age of sixty-five, Wilder published the first of her eight "Little House" books, Little House in the Big Woods, which was a huge hit with readers. Wilder was seventy-six years old when she finished the final book in her "Little House" series. Her husband, Manly, died in 1949 at the age of ninety-two. Wilder was ninety when she died at Rocky Ridge Farm on February 10, 1957.

Courtesy: http://www.notablebiographies.com/We-Z/Wilder-Laura-Ingalls.html
Student Checklist

Student Name: _______________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade / Level</th>
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Little House
On The Prairie

By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Name:
Little House on the Prairie
By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Chapters 1 & 2
Going West – Crossing the Creek

Before you read the chapter:

The protagonist in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of Little House on the Prairie is Laura Ingalls, a very likeable young girl, who experiences many exciting adventures as the story unfolds. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting protagonist?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>papoose</th>
<th>molasses</th>
<th>complain</th>
<th>ford</th>
<th>arched</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mourning</td>
<td>enormous</td>
<td>throb</td>
<td>dreadful</td>
<td>shameful</td>
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</table>

1. Pa took an ________________ risk when he crossed the river at break-up time.
2. Jackie ___________ her back painfully after planting trees all morning.
3. After the passing of Grandpa Will, the entire family was in ________________.
4. “I think it is quite ______________ that no one on the team stepped up to defend the injured player,” the coach stated angrily.
5. Where do you think the best place would be to ___________ the river?
6. The young woman placed the ___________ into the cradle and gently rocked him to sleep.
7. I don’t mean to ____________, but this steak is too rare for me.

8. After striking his thumb with the hammer, Mark’s thumb began to __________ painfuly.

9. What a _____________ hop-scotch player she is.

10. Laura and Mary spread ___________ on their bread.

**Questions**

1. What is the setting at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. Match each name with the proper description:

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<tr>
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<td>Patty</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Charles</td>
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<td>Laura</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Caroline</td>
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<td>Mary</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Jack</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Carrie</td>
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3. Why did Pa want to move from the Big Woods? Where did he want to go?

**Test Your Math**

The opening sentence of the novel states: *A long time ago, when all the grandfathers and grandmothers of today were little boys and little girls or very small babies, or perhaps not even born…* If *Little House on the Prairie* was published in 1935, which of the author’s descriptions would apply to you? Your grandparents?
4. Why was it important that they leave right away and not wait until spring?

Good to Know

This novel was written several generations ago, and the actual events took place about 150 years ago. Since then, the manner we refer to many different groups of people has changed. For instance, the author refers to the original peoples of North America as **Indians**, whereas people today often use the terms **First Nations, Native Americans (or Canadians)** or **Aboriginal Peoples** in this regard.

5. According to Pa, what were two positive things about the western mustangs?

6. As they travelled out onto the prairie, Pa realized that trees meant ___________.

7. What is a **ford**? (In this case it isn’t a kind of automobile.)

8. Describe what Pa had to do to make sure they crossed the river safely. What was Ma’s responsibility during this time?

9. What happened during the crossing that caused Laura and the family a great deal of grief later?
A. Wildlife on the Prairie

Living on the great American prairies in the late 1800s would certainly be an exciting (and dangerous) experience. Many different kinds of wildlife inhabited this region at that time. Some are mentioned in the coming chapters: bison, whitetail deer, coyotes, wolves, prairie chickens, whitetail jackrabbits, Canada geese, Phoebe birds, ground squirrels, gophers, grasshoppers, mockingbirds, and many others.

Using resources in your school library or on the Internet investigate one of these animals, or another which is native to the American prairie (and approved by your teacher). Your investigation should uncover at least three facts about the animal of your choice, as well as an appropriate picture.
B. Choose ten words from these chapters with two or more syllables. Indicate the syllables by drawing a line between each syllable. **Example:** good / bye.

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C. **Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. In Chapter Two the author writes, **... Far away the sun’s edge touched the rim of the earth.** In this sentence the sun is given human characteristics (it touches).

a) Why do you think personification is a literary device used by many authors?

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b) Create your own example of personification.

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**Extension Activities**

**Storyboard**

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel.

Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of *Little House on the Prairie*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

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