

Little House In The Big Woods



By

Laura Ingalls Wilder

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

Little House in the Big Woods

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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, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This 89 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of *Little House in the Big Woods* and is comprised of these activities

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

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

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.**

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.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
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 cover for the novel
4. Design an Information Card

Little House in the Big Woods

By *Laura Ingalls Wilder*

Synopsis

Wolves and panthers and bears roam the deep Wisconsin woods in the late 1870s. In these same woods, Laura Ingalls lives with Pa and Ma, and her sisters, Mary and Baby Carrie, in a snug little house built of logs. Pa hunts and traps. Ma makes her own cheese and butter. At night, Pa's fiddle-playing brings the family together around the cozy fire. [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 on February 10, 1957.

Courtesy: <http://www.notablebiographies.com/We-Z/Wilder-Laura-Ingalls.html>

Little House In The Big Woods



By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Name: _____

Little House in the Big Woods

By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Chapter 1 – Little House in the Big Woods



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Little House in the Big Woods* is Laura Ingalls, a very likable 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.

venison	smoldered	attic	haste
bladder	thrust	handkerchief	pantry

1. Pa took out his _____ and wiped his brow with it.
2. Do you think that in his _____ he might have misplaced his library book?
3. We have enough _____ stored in our freezer to last the winter.
4. The embers _____ dangerously for several long hours.
5. The old couple began to worry when food in their _____ was almost gone.
6. The baby bird made a feeble _____ with its beak before settling in its nest.
7. The girls made a balloon out of the pig’s _____.
8. Mary and Laura slept in the cabin’s cozy little _____.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of Chapter One?

2. Read the first three paragraphs of Chapter One again. Describe how you would feel if you lived where the Ingalls family lived in this chapter.

3. The names of the five members of the Ingalls family were:

--	--	--	--	--

Test Your Math

The author states that the story happened *sixty years ago*. If ***Little House in the Big Woods*** was published in 1932, in what year did the story take place (show your work)?

4. Pa told the girls that _____ would protect the family from wolves.

5. Why was it so important that the deer venison be saved and not all eaten right away?

6. Describe the unusual place Pa used to hang the deer meat.

7. What interested the bear, and what was the result of his interest?

8. The part of the pig that Laura enjoyed eating the most was the _____.

9. **Research:** one item of the pig that Ma prepared was the **cracklings** (also called port rinds). Using resources in your school library or on the Internet find out more thing about this delicacy.

10. What was unusual about Laura's doll?

Good to Know

A **Trundle Bed** is usually considered a pair of beds, one a twin bed, and the other slightly smaller on rollers or casters so that it may be put beneath the upper twin bed for storage. Trundle beds are a space-saving idea.

Language Activities



A. Wildlife of the Big Woods

Living in the woods of Wisconsin over 100 years ago must have been very exciting – and frightening at times. In Chapter One a number of wild animals of the forest are mentioned by Laura: **wolves, black bear, deer, wild cats (probably lynx), muskrats, foxes, minks, and otters.**



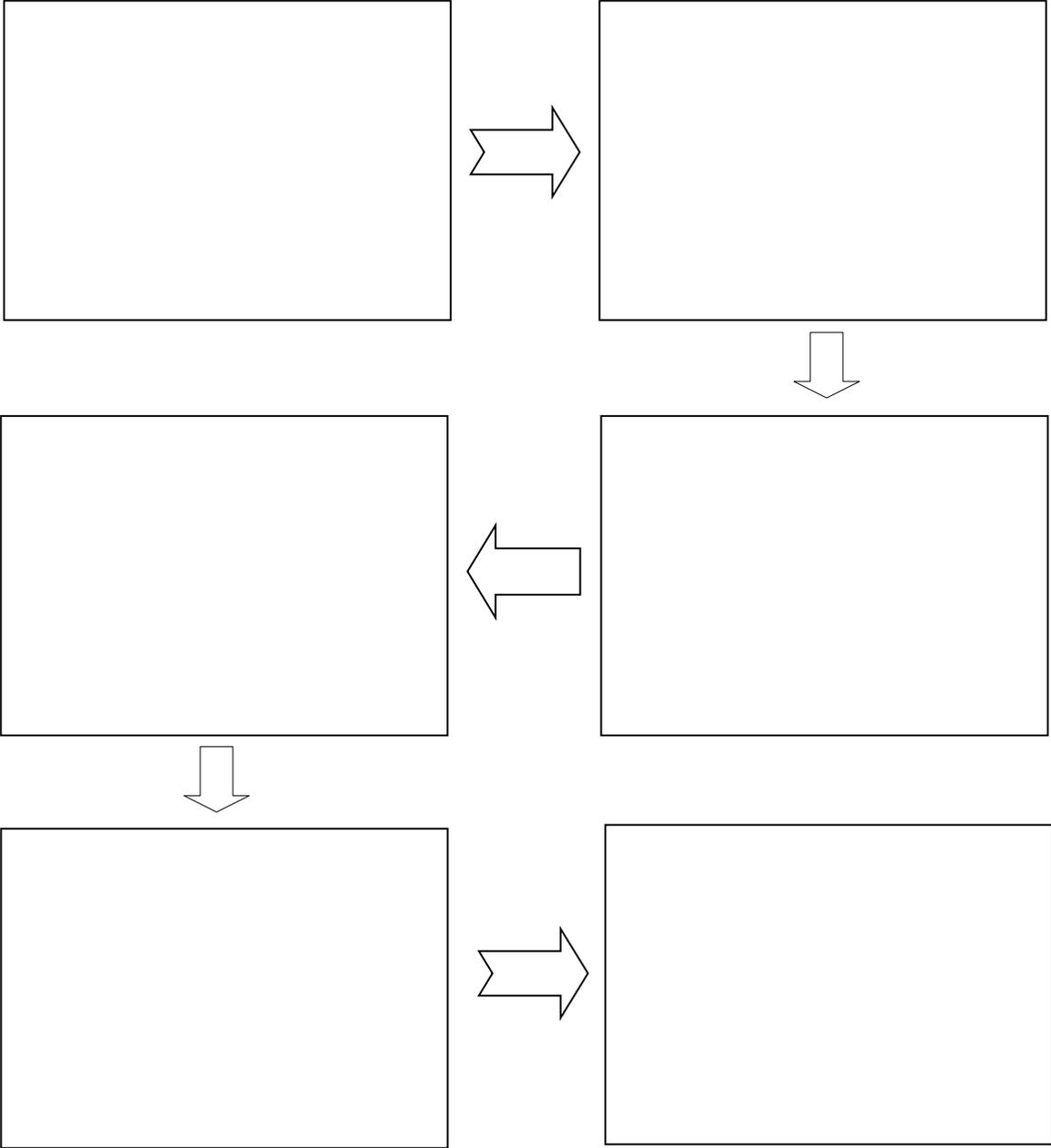
Other animals native to this area are the **raccoons, grouse, hare, badgers and beavers.**

Using resources in your school library or on the Internet investigate one of these animals, or another which is native to Wisconsin. Your investigation should uncover at least three facts about the animal of your choice as well as an appropriate picture.

1	
2	
3	

B. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this chapter. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.



C. Choose ten words from this chapter with two or more **syllables**. Indicate the syllables by drawing a line between each syllable. **Example:** good / bye.

D. Personification

Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. In Chapter One the author writes, ... ***the sound of the trees whispering together***. In this sentence both the trees are given human characteristics (whispering).



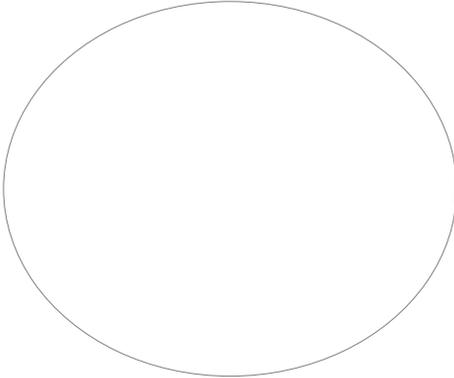
a) Why do you think personification is a literary device used by many authors?

b) Create your own example of personification.

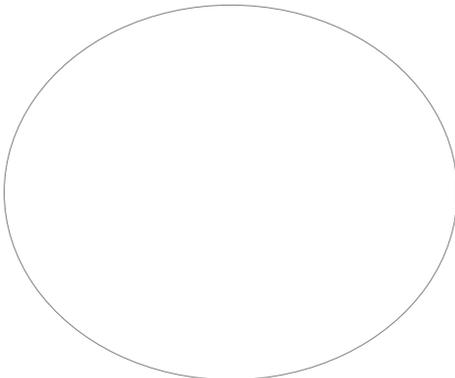
c) If you come across another example of personification return to this question and record it below.

E. 5 Ws and an H.

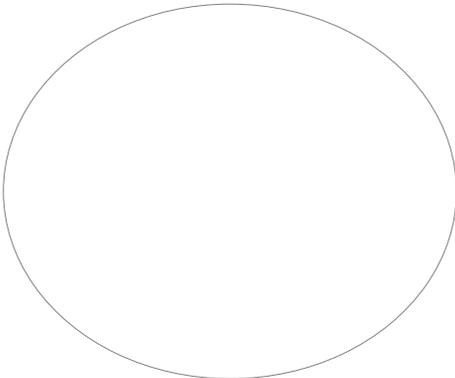
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



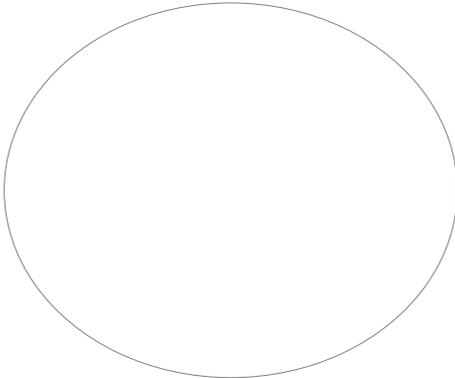
WHO?



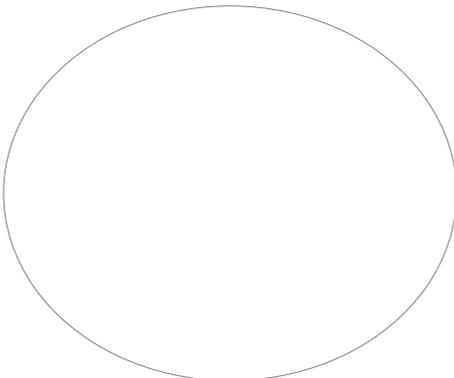
WHAT?



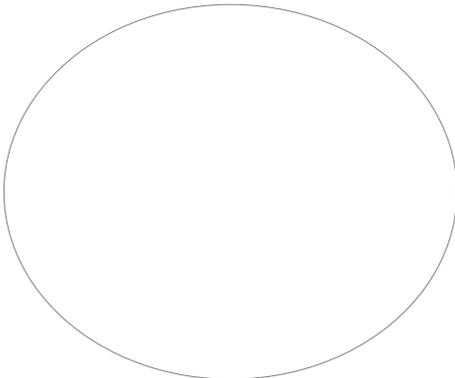
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activity



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 chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6