

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



# Activity One

## Montana Brochure

The state of Montana's name was taken from the Spanish word for "mountain", *montaña*. Although it is not mentioned in our novel, the central portion of Montana is covered with mountains. Vida, Montana — the town near Hattie's claim — is in the northeast corner of the state, farming country.

**You can tell you're in Montana  
'cause the snow's up to your butt,  
And you take a breath of springtime air  
And your nose holes both freeze shut.**

(From the website: *Cowboy Fun*)

Your task is to design a brochure advertising the many attractions of this great state. You may wish to check out a few samples of tourist brochures before beginning this task.

Your brochure should include at least one attractive picture as well as pertinent facts that would draw tourists to Montana during different times of the year. Include such information as major cities, recreational activities (and pertinent related information — i.e. price of admission, etc.), sports facilities, museums, art galleries, historical sites, wildlife, natural vegetation, and major sources of employment, etc.

You may wish to have a separate section including information on accommodations, restaurants, and parks for recreational vehicles.

Your brochure should be neat, colorful and designed with enough information to draw the tourists to Montana like a flower draws bees.

**Spending two years on my uncle's ranch in Montana as a young man  
gave me the wisdom and the thrust to do westerns.**

—Robert Duvall, actor

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



# Activity Two

## Compare New York State with Florida

A number of renowned and accomplished people have either come from Montana or made it their home there for a good part of their lives. Below is a partial list of some of these people.

- Alex Lowe**, mountain climber
- Brad Bird**, movie director
- Gary Cooper**, actor
- Myrna Loy**, actor
- Patrick Duffy**, actor
- Dana Carvey**, actor, comedian
- Evel** and **Robbie Knievel**, daredevils
- Loren Acton**, astronaut
- Plenty Coups**, chief, Crow Nation
- Dave McNally**, baseball pitcher
- Shannon Cate-Shweyen**, basketball player
- Ryan Leaf**, NFL quarterback
- Alice Greenough Orr**, rodeo champion
- Dan Mortensen**, rodeo champion
- Leslie Spalding**, LPGA golfer
- Margaret Craven**, author
- Lones Wigger**, Olympic champion
- Chet Huntley**, television broadcaster

Your task is to write a brief biography of one of the people in the above list (or another famous Montanan that is approved by your teacher). With the information you collect, you are to create a "baseball card" for this person. A picture of the person should decorate the front. On the back should be all of the pertinent information you deem worthy of including.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



# Activity Three

## Flora and Fauna of the Big Sky State

Montana is the home of over 100 different breeds of mammals. Not all of these were native to the plains in which Hattie lived; however, listed below are a number of plants and animals native to Montana. Most (but not all) could probably have been found in the vicinity of Vida.



Flora (Plant Life)	Fauna (Animal Life)
prairie rose	wolf
wild iris	bison
gumbo lilies	sidewinder
oyster plant	pocket gopher
prairie coneflower	black bear
cottonwood trees	jumping mice
asters	pronghorns

Your assignment is to choose one of the examples listed in the chart — either from the **Flora** or **Fauna** category.

Write a brief report of the item you have chosen. Your report should be approximately one-half page in length and should include a picture.



# Activity Four

## World War I (1914–1918)

World War One, or **The Great War** as it was known at the time, was indeed the greatest conflict the world had ever seen up to that point in history. It lasted four long years, involved over 100 different countries and 70 million military personnel. During the conflict, more than 9 million combatants were killed (about ten times the present population of Montana). Such was the war for which Charlie volunteered.

Charlie, of course, was just one of many men from Iowa who volunteered for service in the armed forces at this time. Over 500,000 men from Iowa registered for the draft, and about 115,000 served in the military. Of this number, 3,576 died.



Like Charlie, most of these men were soon to learn that army life was not the glamorous adventure they had imagined. It involved weeks of vigorous training, living in the muddy trenches of France, contracting diseases from these horrible conditions, and fighting in some of the most horrific battles imaginable.

Creative and colorful posters were one method used by the government to get the young men to volunteer for military service — posters that appealed to the nationalistic pride of the citizens, luring them with promises of adventure and glory.

Your task is to create your own poster. This poster should be done from the perspective of Charlie and his colleagues who were fighting in France. Your poster should advertise to the young men and women back home just what they should really expect should they enlist. The poster should include a large colorful picture and a short effective message that conveys what you think Charlie would like to say to his friends back in Iowa who might be considering joining Uncle Sam's army.



# Activity Five

## Casting Director

- **This activity can be done with students working in small groups.**

Imagine you are the casting director for a movie company planning to do a film version of this novel. You are to cast all of the major roles for the movie and must choose one of the following two scenarios.

- a)** For the list of characters in the box below, choose an appropriate Hollywood actor to fill each role and write a brief explanation as to why you chose this particular actor.

**OR**

- b)** For the list of characters below, choose an appropriate person from your own school to fill each role and write a brief explanation as to why you chose this particular person. For this assignment, you might choose fellow students (including yourself), teachers, principal, custodian, etc.

### Roles

- **Hattie**
- **Perilee**
- **Leafie**
- **Karl**
- **Uncle Hoyt**
- **Aunt Ivy**
- **Traff Martin**
- **Rooster Jim**
- **Chase**
- **Mattie**
- **Mr. Ebgard**
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



# Activity Six

## An Alternate Ending

- **This activity can be done individually or in small groups.**

The conclusion of **Hattie Big Sky** is very memorable. Not only does it tie-up a few loose ends (i.e. Hattie finds a job so she can begin to pay off her debts), but it is very moving and dramatic as well. The conclusion also leaves the reader wondering about other issues (i.e. will Hattie and Charlie eventually marry? Will Hattie ever see Perilee and her family again? Will Hattie like her new job and be able to pay off her debts? What will happen to Traft Martin and his selfish ambitions?).

What, though, if Kirby Larson had woken up on the wrong side of the bed on the day she wrote the novel's concluding chapters? What if it didn't end the way it is described in these pages, but had taken another turn in the road? What if there had been no hailstorm and Hattie had been successful with her claim? What if the flu epidemic had bypassed their community? What if Charlie wrote to say he was marrying Mildred Powell? What if...? What if...?

Although we will never know the answers to these questions, you will be given the opportunity of putting your imagination to work in coming up with what might have happened if the author's imagination had worked its way in an entirely different direction.

If you work with a group, brainstorm possible alternative endings to the novel. Remember to consider all of the principal characters. From your list of ideas, choose one ending to present to the class. Write a detailed synopsis of your alternate conclusion presenting as much detail as possible. After presenting it to the class, you may wish to get their input as to additional changes that might be made to further improve your alternative ending.

**Have fun!**