

LAURA INGALLS WILDER  
READING COMPREHENSION  
NOVEL STUDIES

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LAURA INGALLS WILDER  
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NOVEL STUDIES

Unit Overview

**OVERVIEW**

A series of five exciting and interesting titles provide a framework for this new approach to reading. Comprehension is the main focus, with multiple choice questions designed to ensure students understand what they are reading. The titles include:

- 1) Little House in the Big Woods
- 2) Little House on the Prairie
- 3) On the Banks of Plum Creek
- 4) By the Shores of Silver Lake
- 5) The Long Winter

The high interest – low vocabulary format of these novels is perfect for reluctant readers and is sure to keep students motivated to read. For the teacher, flexibility is key, with students being assigned novels to read individually, in small groups, or as a class.

**SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES**

A number of possible strategies describing how these units might be used in the classroom are given. These include:

- 1) Whole Class Instruction
- 2) Individualized Approach
- 3) Small Group Instruction
- 4) Listening Skills Test

A possible reward system to help motivate student reading is also given.

**STORY SUMMARIES**

A synopsis and bibliographic information for each of the novels has been included for teacher reference.

**ANSWER KEY**

Answer keys for each novel are provided.

LAURA INGALLS WILDER  
READING COMPREHENSION  
Story Summaries

Little House in the Big Woods

**Bibliographic Information**

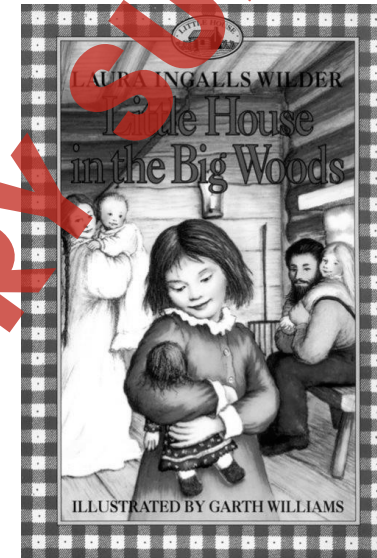
Laura Ingalls Wilder, Scholastic, ©1953

**Story Synopsis**

Laura begins her story in the *Little House in the Big Woods*. There were no neighbours for miles, so Laura's attention focused on all the details of their home and pioneer life. Wild animals, like bears, came right into the farmyard, and wolves howled outside at night. Pa made bullets, hunted, and smoked or salted meat to preserve it. Ma churned butter, cooked endlessly, and so on. Laura hated the dull Sundays because the girls were not permitted to do much at all. But there was always fun, too – Pa telling stories or singing and playing his fiddle, and Ma making paper dolls. There was Christmas-time with candy-making and visitors. There was a dance at Grandpa's to celebrate a good maple syrup season. Going to town was a major event.

Laura includes stories of emotional and personal trial as well. For example, she was so hurt and angered by the constant unfavourable comparisons people made between her brown hair and Mary's golden hair, that she slapped Mary and was whipped for this by Pa.

The chapters called "Harvest" and "The Wonderful Machine", should be read to a class in the fall, especially if a field trip is going to be made to a *Threshing Demonstration*.



LITTLE HOUSE IN THE BIG WOODS

Novel Study

**Chapter 1 – "Little House in the Big Woods"**

1. In the yard was a hollow log standing on one end with a little roof over the top. What did Pa use it for? He used it for:

- a) a house for the chickens.
- b) smoking deer meat.
- c) a store room for grain.

2. Why was Laura sorry that Pa did not kill the bear?

- a) She liked to eat bear meat.
- b) She was afraid the bear would come back and attack one of them.
- c) The bear could come back and kill her pet lamb.

3. Why did Laura hide under the bed the day Uncle Henry was there?

- a) She was shy because she hardly ever saw Uncle Henry.
- b) She had been naughty and was hiding from Pa.
- c) She didn't want to hear the pig squeal.

**Chapter 2 – "Winter Days and Winter Nights"**

1. How did Ma colour the butter in the wintertime?

- a) She put grated carrot into the milk.
- b) She mixed egg yolks into the butter.
- c) She used a few drops of yellow food colouring.

2. Why did Grandpa wait until he got back to his house before he shot the panther?

- a) The panther was leaping from treetop to treetop so he couldn't shoot it.
- b) He didn't have a gun with him.
- c) The panther could run as fast as the horse.



LITTLE HOUSE IN THE BIG WOODS

Novel Study

**Chapter 13 – "The Deer in the Wood"**

1. How did Pa make a "deer-lick?" He made it:

- a) by sprinkling salt all over the ground.
- b) by putting out his hand with sugar on it.
- c) by putting out a pail of milk.
- d) by smearing honey on some tree trunks.

2. Why didn't Pa bring a deer home when he went out to shoot one?

- a) He shot at one but missed.
- b) He fell asleep in the tree.
- c) The deer were so beautiful he just watched them.
- d) He shot a bear instead and that way he got more meat.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTION**

1. Which of these parts of the book did you like best? I liked it:

- a) when Pa was scared by the screech owl in the woods.
- b) when a little girl came to visit Laura and Mary and they had a dolls' tea party.
- c) when Laura got very sick but an old pioneer lady told Ma how to make a special tea out of bark and this saved Laura's life.

**PERSONAL RESPONSE**

1. Did you like this book? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

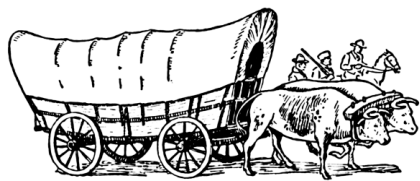


LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

Novel Study

Chapter 1 – “Going West”

- 1. What is the main idea of this chapter?
a) Pa sold the snug little house in the big woods and the family is going West in a wagon.
b) They went across the ice on the lake and were lucky they got across safely.
c) At night Pa slept outside in the wagon to guard it while Ma and the girls slept in a strange little house.
2. Why did the family go west?
a) They wanted to live nearer to their aunts and uncles.
b) Ma liked to travel and she had read that the West was a wonderful place.
c) The farm they had was not doing well and they hoped to find a place where they could make more money and have a better life.
d) Pa thought there were too many people in the big woods.
3. What time of year did they set out in the wagon? It was:
a) summer.
b) fall.
c) at the end of winter.
d) in the spring when it was warm.
e) at the end of summer.
4. Why didn't they take the beds, tables and chairs?
a) Pa could make new ones.
b) They could buy nicer ones.
c) They belonged to Grandpa so they had to give them back when they moved.
5. Ma was worried that the wagon might fall through the ice, but she never said anything to Pa until the next day. What does this tell you about Ma?
a) Ma is afraid to talk to Pa.
b) Ma is brave.
c) Ma is silly.



ON THE BANKS OF PLUM CREEK

Novel Study

Chapter 2 – “The House in the Ground”

- 1. What was the house like?
a) It was one room, all white.
b) The walls were dirt so it was all black.
c) There were two rooms and the walls were lined with wooden planks.
2. The little house in Native Territory was 40 miles from town. How far was the house on Plum Creek from town? It was:
a) 50 miles from town.
b) 30 miles from town.
c) 10 miles from town.
d) 3 miles from town.
3. Why isn't Laura happy?
a) She misses Jack.
b) She misses Mr. Edwards.
c) She doesn't like the house dug under the ground.
4. What else is bothering Laura?
a) She misses Pet and Patty.
b) She misses her friends and going to school.
c) She misses seeing all the wild animals, like the deer, in Native Territory.

Chapter 3 – “Rushes and Flags”

- 1. Where did Laura see flags? She saw flags:
a) on the new school in town.
b) along the creek.
c) at a parade in town.

Chapter 4 – “Deep Water”

- 1. Something under the water grabbed Laura's foot and pulled her under. What was it?
a) It was a root.
b) It was a deep hole.
c) It was Pa.
d) It was a boy named Johnny Johnson.

ON THE BANKS OF PLUM CREEK

Novel Study

Chapter 9 – “Grasshopper Weather”

- 1. In this chapter, why did Ma spread clean cloths on the grass?
a) She wanted them to dry after she had washed them.
b) The family was having a picnic.
c) Laura and Mary put plums on the cloths.



Chapter 10 – “Cattle in the Hay”

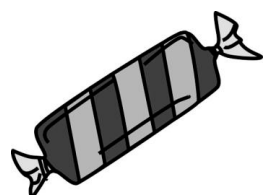
TRUE OR FALSE:

- 1. When Laura, Jack and Mary ran behind the cattle, the cattle just ran around and around the stacks. They wouldn't leave the stacks. T F
2. Laura finally succeeded in chasing the cattle away from the stacks when she ran straight towards a cow from the front. T F
3. Laura and Mary couldn't make the cattle leave the stacks until Johnny Johnson helped them. T F

Chapter 11 – “Runaway”

TRUE OR FALSE:

- 1. Laura told Pa she liked wolves better than cattle. T F
2. Pa brought Laura and Mary some peppermint candy. T F
3. Pa made the oxen pull the wagon very fast because he saw the cattle were eating the haystacks. T F
4. If Pa hadn't hit Bridget so hard, Ma and Carrie could have been badly hurt. T F
5. Pa brought Laura and Mary some horehound candy. T F



THE LONG WINTER

Novel Study

PERSONAL RESPONSE:

- 1. Did you like this book? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was your favourite character? \_\_\_\_\_
Why? \_\_\_\_\_
3. As described in this book, there was no school for most of the winter. Do you think you would like to experience such a winter? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_



THE LONG WINTER

Novel Study

Chapter 7 – “Native Warning”

- 1. What did the Native warn the men about?
  - a) A tribe of Natives were preparing to attack the settlers.
  - b) The supply wagons for the town had been stopped by storms and wouldn't be able to get through.
  - c) Seven months of blizzards were coming.
  - d) There would be no animals around to hunt for food because of the bad weather.

Chapter 8 – “Settled in Town”

TRUE OR FALSE:

- 1. The Ingalls slept on straw ticks filled with hay. T    F
- 2. Pa left the cow and calf in the stable on the farm. T    F
- 3. Laura is afraid of meeting strangers. T    F
- 4. Pa is going to use coal instead of brushwood to heat the house. T    F
- 5. The Wilder boys are going to stay on Pa's farm during the winter to look after everything. T    F

Chapter 9 – “Cap Garland”

- 1. What happened in this chapter?
  - a) Cap Garland made fun of the girls, especially Laura.
  - b) Laura and Carrie nearly got lost in a blizzard.
  - c) Cap Garland got lost in a storm.

Chapter 10 – “Three Days’ Blizzard”

- 1. What did Almanzo decide no one would ever take away from him? It was:
  - a) his coal.
  - b) his horses.
  - c) his seed wheat.



ANSWER KEY

THE LONG WINTER

Answer Key

- (1) c            (2) b            (3) a
- (1) a            (2) b
- (1) b
- (1) d
- (1) b            (2) d
- (1) b
- (1) c
- (1) T            (2) F            (3) T            (4) T            (5) F
- (1) b
- (1) c
- (1) c
- (1) b
- (1) b
- (1) c
- (1) b            (2) c
- (1) d
- (1) b
- (1) c
- (1) a
- (1) c
- (1) b            (2) a
- (1) c            (2) b
- (1) b
- (1) c            (2) b
- (1) b
- (1) c
- (1) b
- (1) F            (2) T            (3) T
- (1) b
- (1) T            (2) T            (3) F
- (1) a
- (1) b
- (1) c

Number of Questions = 49