Little House on the Prairie

The Long Winter

Activity Guide

Who was Laura Ingalls Wilder?

Laura is standing on the right. Mary is sitting and Carrie is on the left.
Photo courtesy of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association, Mansfield, MO.

Laura Elizabeth Ingalls was born February 7, 1867, near Pepin in the "Big Woods" of Wisconsin. Her father, whom she referred to as Pa, moved the family out west after learning about the Homestead Act (see below for more on the Homestead Act). Laura lived with her parents (Charles and Caroline) and three sisters. Their names were Mary, Caroline (but they called her Carrie), and Grace. In 1885, she married Almanzo Wilder. In 1894, they bought property in the Missouri Ozarks. They remained there the rest of their lives. They had one daughter named Rose. When Rose grew up she was a journalist and author. She urged her mother to write down the stories that she had heard growing up about Laura's childhood. In 1932, Laura published the first book in the Little House series, Little House in the Big Woods. She continued writing other stories, all describing her younger years. Laura Ingalls Wilder died in 1957, just a few days after her 90th birthday.

Visit the following site to see a gallery of photos showing Laura and Almanzo's life together.

http://lauraingallswilderhome.com/?page_id=229

View an actual letter from Laura at the following site:
http://lauraingallswilderhome.com/?page_id=28

See an excerpt from Becoming Laura Ingalls Wilder:

http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/m/miller-wilder.html

View a printable map of Laura's travels:

http://lauraingallswilderhome.com/images/travelmap.jpg

What was the Homestead Act?

The Homestead Act was passed by Congress in 1862. It allowed for citizens of the United States to claim 160 acres of land. There were certain conditions that had to be fulfilled in order to file for land.

The person had to:

- ✓ build a home on the land as well as take care of it
- ✓ live on the land at least six months out of the year
- ✓ be 21 years of age
- ✓ be a citizen of the United States

They had to do this for five years, and finalize the claim for the land within two years of fulfilling the five year requirement.

Think about this…

If you were twenty one during this time period, would you try to get land because of the Homestead Act? Why or why not? Discuss.

You might think that the Homestead Act provided an easy way to get your own land, but the fact is, the land had never been farmed before. It would have taken about two years during that time period when there were no tractors or modern farming equipment to get the land ready and produce a good crop. Often the settler had to find other work in addition to preparing their land. They faced other challenges as well. They found that the more desirable land ended up in the hands of the railroad and spectators. That meant that to get really good land, they would have to pay high prices rather than accept the less desirable lands the government offered.

Charles Ingalls was inspired by the Homestead Act of 1862. He chose some land about 14 miles from Independence, Kansas and built a house. In 1870, he and his family were forced to leave because the land they had settled on was Native American territory. They moved to

DeSmet, South Dakota. They were the very first family who settled there. In 1880, they filed another claim (through the Homestead Act) for land that was about three miles from DeSmet. This is where they were living during The Long Winter. Due to severe blizzards, they had to live in town for eight months.

Pioneering Life:

Pioneering life was not easy.

Watch the following YouTube video called Pioneer of the Plains about Western Expansion.

Complete the sheet on the following page entitled, *Compare and Contrast.*

Discuss the following questions after watching the video:

- What was the Western Expansion of the 1800's?
- If your family decided to move and you were limited to being able to take 5 or your own things with you, what would you take?
- What animals carried the pioneers west? (oxen and wagons)
- What do the settles have for supper? (corn meal mush)
- Where are the animals kept at night? (tied to a tethering stick)
- Were the neighbors friendly? (yes; they visit the family and stay until evening)
- What entertainment does the family and the neighbors enjoy? (fiddle music)
- What challenge do they first face? (cattlemen who believe the land is grazing land for their cattle)
- What item shows proof that the land belongs to the settlers? (claim stakes)
- What do they use for their first home? (dugout)
- What has Pa planted already? (corn)
- What kind of homes do they build next? (sod; lumber for window and door frames and for roof)
- What is a fire guard? (2 plowed rings of several furrows each; between the rings, the grass is burned to protect the house from prairie fires)
- The center of the household inside is the __? (little round cookstove)
- What are the children's chores? (collecting prairie grass, twigs, buffalo chips-which will be used for fuel for the fire)
- Who does Pa meet toward the end of the film? (circuit riding minister)
- The minister tells Pa he has heard that they will build a ___. (school)
- How does Pa entertain the minister? (fiddle playing)

COMPARE & CONTRAST

Main Topic

1800's versus 2000's

Subtopic

Pioneering Days

Subtopic

Modern Times

ALIKE

DIFFERENT

Vocabulary:

Pioneer Vocabulary Words:

covered wagon	sodhouse	churn
pioneer	blacksmith	smokehouse
whittle	log cabin	prairie
outhouse		

Print out the following Vocabulary Worksheet. Try to match the vocabulary words with their definitions.

Click here for the Vocabulary worsheet

The Long Winter Vocabulary Words:

Pioneer: (n.) A person who is the first to settle in a new land.

Petticoats: (n.) A woman's slip that is trimmed with ruffles or lace.

Slough: (n.) A shallow muddy swamp.

Prairie: (n.) A large area of treeless grassy plains.

Kerosene: (n.) fuel used in lamps to help light up the area

Muskrat: (n.) An animal or rodent that sleeps through the winter.

Homestead: (n.) The land claimed by a settler.

Territory: (n.) An area of land that is owned by the government.

Muslin: (n.) Any of various sturdy cotton fabrics of plain weave used in sheets.

Whittling: (v.) To cut strips or pieces from wood with a knife.

Trampling: (v.) To flatten, crush, walk in a stepping manner.

Boggy: (n.) A grass covered hill found in the prairie.

Shanty: (n.) A roughly built cabin.

Equinoctial: (adj.) relating to a violent storm of wind and rain occurring at the time of the equinox. This occurs when the length of night and day are equal.

Posse: (n.) A group of people summoned by a sheriff to aid in law enforcement.

Zenith: (adj.) The upper region of the sky.

Partition: (n) The act of dividing something into parts.

Weary: (adj.) Mentally or physically tired.

Source of vocabulary words: http://coolkidlit-4-socialstudies.pbworks.com/w/page/23846236/The%20Long%20Winter%20Vocabulary

Other Vocabulary Activities:

Word Sketches - print out the Word Sketches sheet so that your child(ren) can create pictures to help them memorize the vocabulary.

Click here for the Word Sketches worksheet.

Vocabulary Review Game – print out the following review game idea.

Click here for a Basketball Review Game idea.

Fill in the blank vocabulary worksheet – print out the following blank vocabulary worksheet to be used for study or as an assessment.

Click here for the Fill in the Blank vocabulary sheet.

Journal Writing Ideas:

This site has great stopping points built in throughout the story for your children to complete journal entries: http://mrssmithsfifthgrade.com/LEWWebQuest.htm

Get the Book:

Purchase The Long Winter at your local bookstore or at one of the following sites:

Be advised that websites change and we can't guarantee that these titles will be available at the time of your visit.

Amazon

Christianbook.com

Abe Books

Barnes and Noble

Audio Downloads:

Enjoy a free audio download featuring The Long Winter by visiting the following link. It is from an old radio broadcast sponsored by Hallmark.:

http://homeschoolradioshows.com/

Purchase The Long Winter audio book from Christianbook.com by clicking here.

Maps:

View and print a map showing Laura's travels here: http://www.discoverlaura.org/travels.html

What happened next?

Find out what happened next to Laura by visiting this site:
http://www.discoverlaura.org/history.html

Fieldtrips Online:

Online Exhibits: http://www.discoverlaura.org/exhibits.html

Video historic center: http://www.discoverlaura.org/visit.html

Tours of all the historic sites: http://www.laurasprairiehouse.com/sites/index.html

Arts and Crafts:

Prairie Town – paper houses
http://www.hoover.archives.gov/LIW/pioneertown/activities_pioneertown.html

Homemade butter (with toddler recipe cards) - http://www.teaching-tiny-tots.com/toddler-recipes-making-butter.html

Straw hat craft - http://www.hoover.archives.gov/LIW/strawhat/activities_strawhat.html

Sunbonnet craft - http://www.hoover.archives.gov/LIW/sunbonnet/activities_sunbonnet.html

Corncob dolls:

http://thefruitofherhandstudio.blogspot.com/2008/03/early-american-corncob-doll-tutorial.html

http://www.littlehouseliving.com/living-like-little-house-in-the-big-woods-homemade-dolls.html

Youtube video showing how to make a **corn husk doll**:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAjFhWUWQK4

Make your own **reading journal**:
http://www.littlehousebooks.com/pdf/LittleHouseReadingJournal.pdf

Make your own **fleece scarf**: http://toddlerbitesblog.wordpress.com/2012/01/20/super-easy-fleece-scarf/

Recipes:

http://www.littlehousebooks.com/pdf/lh-craftsandrecipe.pdf

http://www.laurasprairiehouse.com/recipes/index.html

Activities:

- Plant wildflowers. Visit the following link which includes a list with pictures of some of the wildflowers that Laura mentions in her books. You can order them directly from this site or even trade seeds for them. http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/2920/

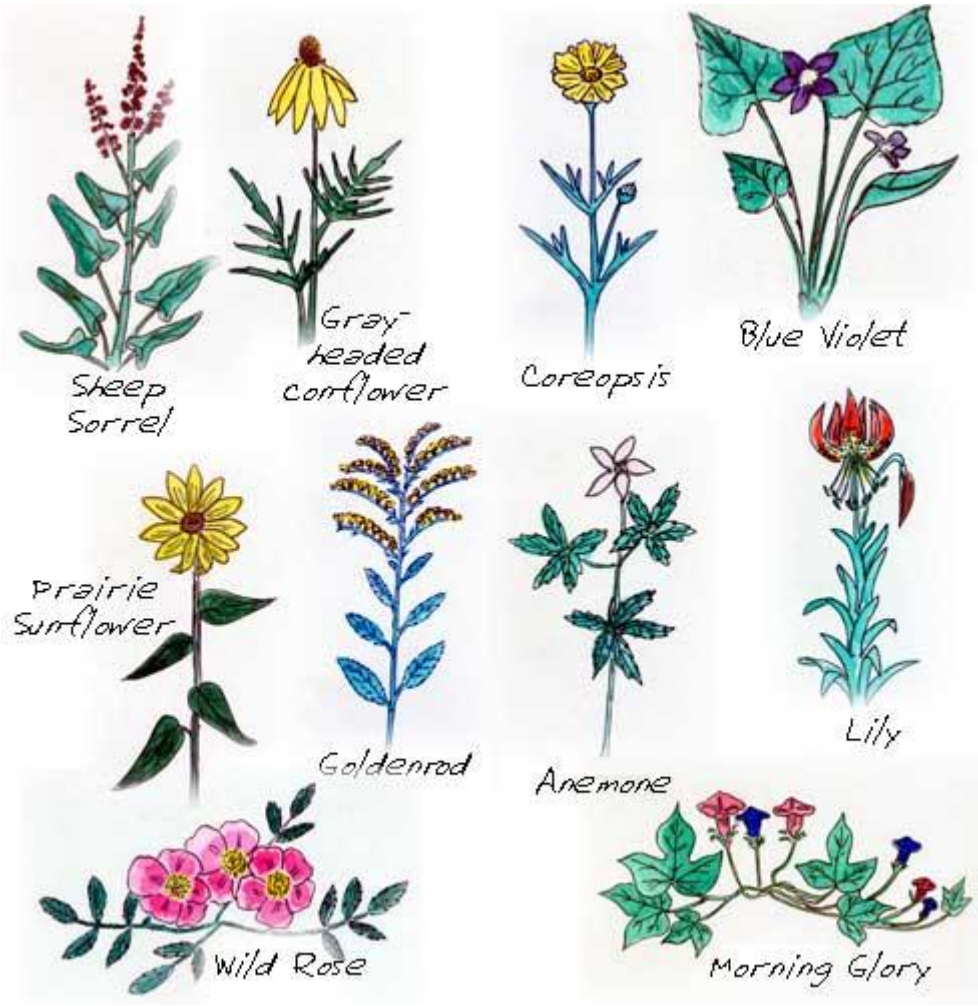


Photo credit: http://www.hoover.archives.gov/LIW/countingbook/ten.html

- Plan a Pioneer Day as a culminating activity for the unit. Homeschool families could share their projects with each other on this day. A pioneer feast could be planned and activities such as butter making, sewing, bread-making, singing, a spelling bee, etc. could take place on this day. http://www.hoover.archives.gov/LIW/liwedu/liw_teaching_unit.html

- Birthday party ideas: http://www.birthdaypartyideas4kids.com/little-house-on-the-prairie-party.htm

Assessments & Quizzes:

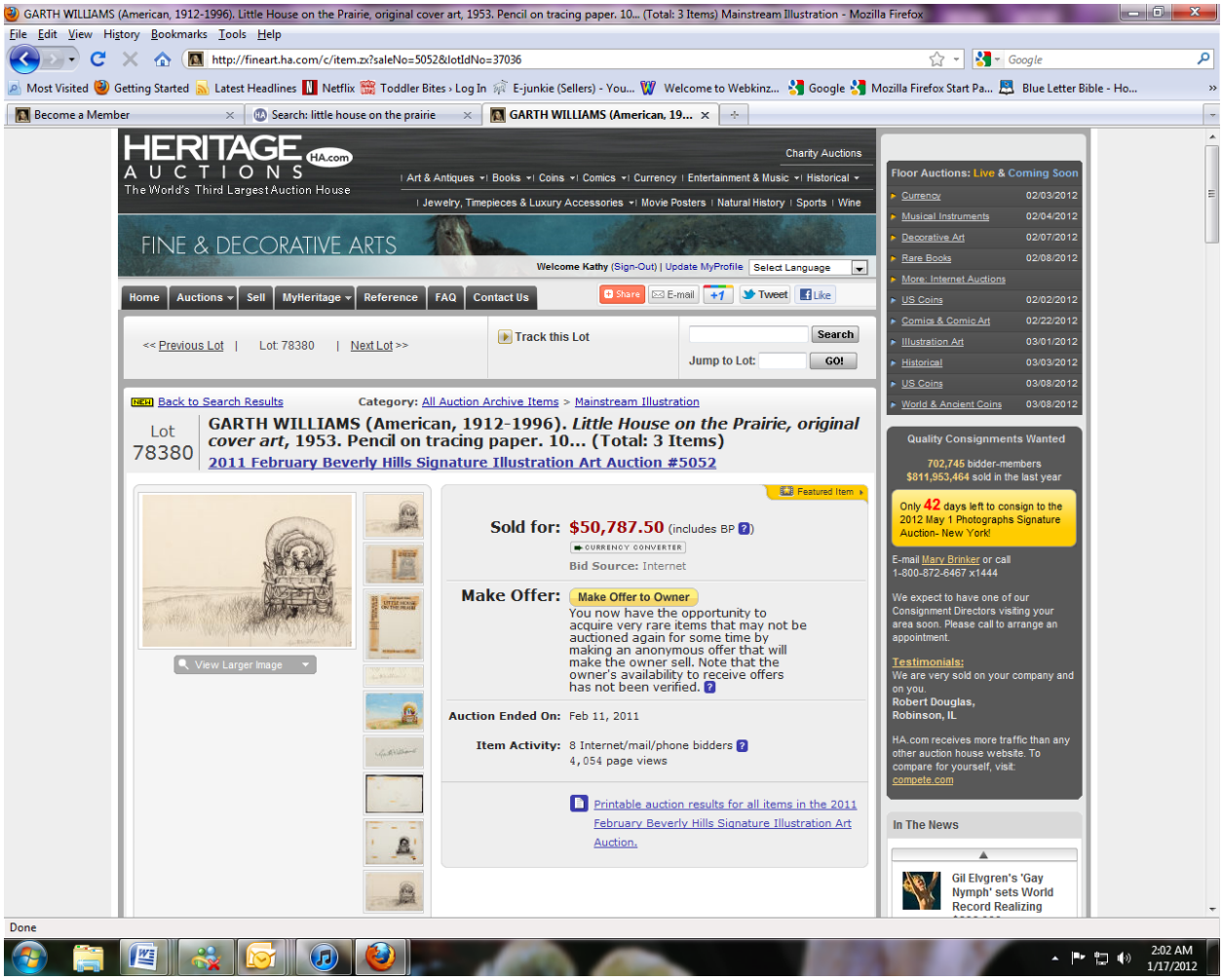
Taka an online quiz when you finish reading, The Long Winter at the following site.

http://www.littlehousebooks.com/fun/longwinter.cfm

Trivia questions: http://coolkidlit-4-socialstudies.pbworks.com/w/page/25061729/The%20Long%20Winter%20Lesson%20Plan

Other:

It will be interesting for your students to learn that some of Garth Williams' original sketches (drawn in 1953) for the Little House series of books have recently been up for auction. The cover for Little House on the Prairie had a pre-auction value of $8,000 to $12,000. The auction was held on February 11, 2011. The piece sold for $50,787.50!



Original cover sketch auction: http://fineart.ha.com/c/item.zx?saleNo=5052&lotNo=78380

Bibliography:

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http://www.discoverlaura.org/discover.html#q2

http://coolkidlit-4-socialstudies.pbworks.com/w/page/25061729/The%20Long%20Winter%20Lesson%20Plan

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http://www.christianbook.com/little-house-prairie-long-winter-audiobook/laura-wilder/9780060565022/pd/65025