



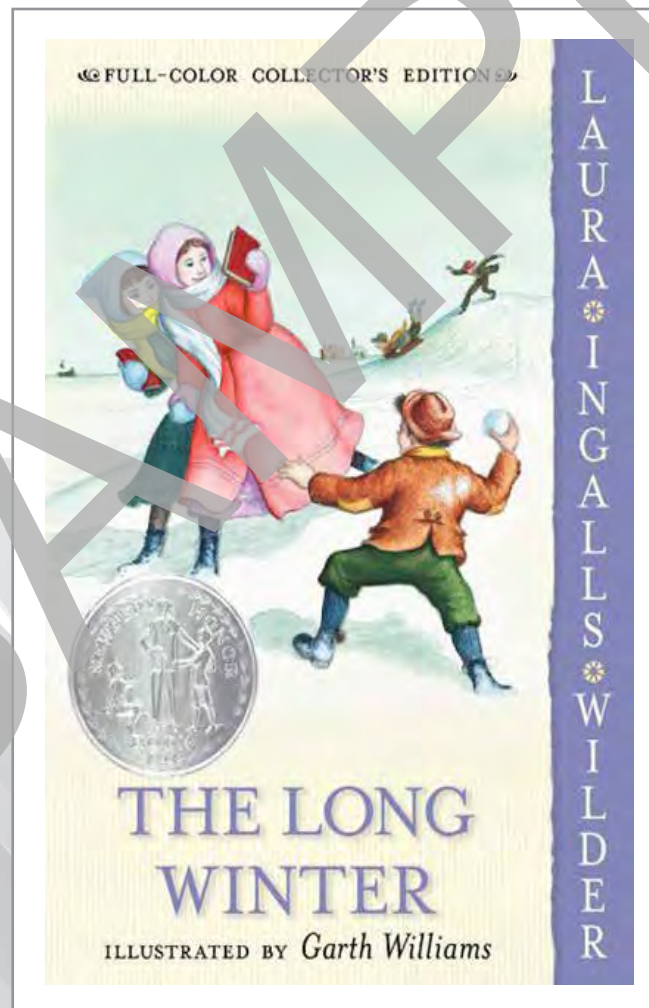
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Long Winter

Laura Ingalls Wilder



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Long Winter

Laura Ingalls Wilder

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

ISBN 978-1-50203-960-6

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Summary

What would it have been like to spend a long, long winter barely staying alive in a small Dakota Territory store converted to living quarters? *The Long Winter* tells such a story. It details the adaptations and disappointments in a prairie town only two blocks long, cut off even from the railroad for a seven-month winter. The support of the family for each other and the sheer survival provide a most engaging story.

About the Author

Laura Ingalls Wilder was born in 1867 in Wisconsin. Her "Little House" books detail her family's pioneering experiences as the family moved from Wisconsin through Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakota Territory. After marrying Almanzo Wilder in 1885, she lived in Florida, Minnesota, and Missouri.

In 1932, when Wilder was 65, *Little House in the Big Woods* was published. Between 1932 and 1943 eight "Little House" books were written while Laura was living at Rocky Ridge Farm. Laura and Almanzo celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1935. Laura Ingalls Wilder died in 1957. The Little House stories were adapted for a television series, "Little House on the Prairie," and a Broadway musical, "Prairie."

Other Children's Books by Laura Ingalls Wilder:

By the Shores of Silver Lake

Little House in the Big Woods

Little House in the Ozarks

Little House on the Prairie

Little Town on the Prairie

On the Banks of Plum Creek

These Happy Golden Years

Farmer Boy

The First Four Years

Using Character Webs

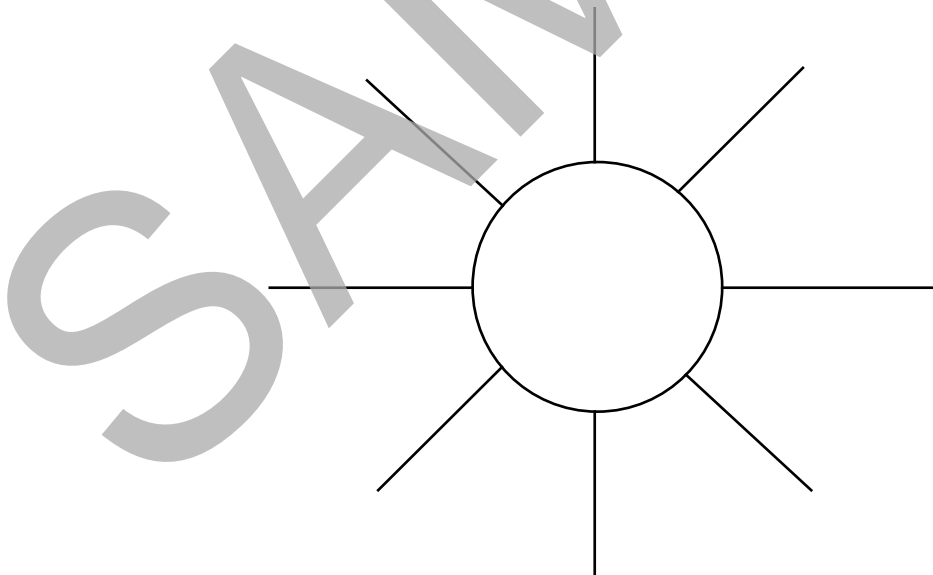
Attribute webs are simply a visual representation of a character from the novel. They provide a systematic way for students to organize and recap the information they have about a particular character. Attribute webs may be used after reading the novel to recapitulate information about a particular character, or completed gradually as information unfolds. They may be completed individually or as a group project.

One type of character attribute web uses these divisions:

- How a character acts and feels. (How does the character act? How do you think the character feels? How would you feel if this happened to you?)
- How a character looks. (Close your eyes and picture the character. Describe him/her to me.)
- Where a character lives. (Where and when does the character live?)
- How others feel about the character. (How does another specific character feel about our character?)

In group discussion about the characters described in student attribute webs, the teacher can ask for backup proof from the novel. Inferential thinking can be included in the discussion.

Attribute webs need not be confined to characters. They may also be used to organize information about a concept, object, or place.



Chapter 1: “Make hay while the sun shines”—Pages 1-14

Laura helps her father stack the hay. Father predicts a hard winter.

Vocabulary

quivering 1	hovered 1	gnat 2	chirruped 2
haycocks 5	prickly 7	slough hay 10	clambering 10
shanty 14			

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What is the setting of the book? How do you know? Cite examples from the book. (*Dakota prairies; page 2—direct statement; page 14—description of shanty*)
2. What is Pa’s theory about muskrats? (*The thicker the muskrats build the walls of their homes, the colder the winter will be.*) Have you ever heard similar ideas about how to predict the winter? Share with a classmate.
3. What does “Make hay while the sun shines” mean? (*Work hard and productively when you have the opportunity.*) What other sayings do you know that have the same message?
4. Why does Laura “beg” her Pa to help with the haying? (*Answers vary. She wants to contribute to the family. It appears to be a fun new adventure to her.*)

Chapter 2: “An Errand to Town”—Pages 15-26

Laura and Carrie go to town to buy a new mowing-machine section. Lost in the slough on the way home, they are assisted by the Wilder boys.

Vocabulary

slough 15	flickering 21	haunches 24	primly 24
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Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. How do Laura and Carrie feel going to town? (*shy, overwhelmed, scared*) Why? (*Answers vary.*)
2. Why does Laura say “all’s well that ends well”? (*Page 26, Laura and Carrie manage to deliver the mowing-machine section though they get lost en route.*)

Chapter 3: “Fall of the Year”—Page 27-36

An early frost sends the ingalls to a hurried harvest. Ma fixes a green pumpkin pie.

Vocabulary

equinoctial 27	threshed 30	winnowed 30	brace 31
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Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What is a shanty? Describe the Ingalls' shanty. (Page 14, *A claim shanty is a very basic shelter to live in while the land is claimed from the government. It will be replaced with a permanent house.*)
2. What does the frost mean to the family? their crops? (*staying inside; no more growth of plants/crops*)
3. What is a green pumpkin pie? (*a "strange" adapted recipe which tastes like apple pie*)
4. How do Laura, Carrie, and Mary spend their days? Compare them to children today.

The Ingalls	Children of Today
Sewing	
Helping with haying	
Walking to town	

Chapter 4: "October Blizzard"—Pages 37-44

An unseasonably early October blizzard keeps the family inside for three days and nights, trying to keep warm and keep spirits high.

Vocabulary

kindled 37 cambric 40 yowl 42

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What is a trouble song? Why does Pa sing it? (*A trouble song appears to be a melody sung when nervous, worried, or concerned. Pa is apprehensive about the severity of the weather and the prospect of a very severe winter.*)
2. What is different about life in the shanty in a blizzard? (*There is a howling noise of the wind outside. Nails are white with frost. Water in the pail is frozen. Snow on the floor is blown in under the door. The whole family is homebound.*)
3. What is special about Pa's fiddling? (*It provides a distraction from troubles. It is good entertainment.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Art: Draw a picture or make a model of the shanty.
2. Writing: Pa's fiddling lifts everyone's spirits. Write a short paragraph to describe other things parents/families do to "lift spirits."
3. Research: What is the Dakota Territory? Locate the area on a map. Investigate the geography, weather, and vegetation of the area.