



THEATRE IV
Classroom
Connections

For teachers and students grades K - 5

Patchwork:

The Prairie Quilts of Laura Ingalls Wilder

Book by Bruce Craig Miller

Teacher Resources



In the Classroom

Theatre IV's *Patchwork: The Prairie Quilts of Laura Ingalls Wilder* and the Classroom Connections Study Guide are produced in support of states' standards, as well as those set by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) for students in grades K - 5.



At the Library

Read the "Little House" series by Laura Ingalls Wilder: *Little House in the Big Woods*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Farmer Boy*, *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, *By the Shores of Silver Lake*, *The Long Winter*, *Little Town on the Prairie*, *These Happy Golden Years*, *The First Four Years*



On the Web

U.S. Library of Congress: Quilts & Quiltmaking in America <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/qlthtml/qlthome.html>
Laura Ingalls Wilder www.lauraingallswilder.com
Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Home & Museum www.lauraingallswilderhome.com
Laura Ingalls Wilder Teacher Resources <http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/wilder.htm>
The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Archives - Laura Ingalls Wilder www.hoover.archives.gov/LIW/
National Park Service's Homestead National Monument of America www.nps.gov/home/pdf/activity_guide.pdf



For Teachers: Activities Levels



Activities for students in grades K - 1.



Activities for students in grades 2 - 3.



Activities for students in grades 4 - 5.



In Theatre IV's pioneer adventure, Laura Ingalls Wilder and her family relive the hardships and triumphs of their adventures on America's frontier as recorded in the patterns of their patchwork quilts.

"The Rocky Road to Kansas" recalls their journey west to stake a land claim under the Homestead Act of 1862. Their hope for a better life and sense of adventure sustain them on their long and dangerous trip, whether slipping and sliding in their covered wagon across the frozen Mississippi or almost overturning in the turbulent waters of a roaring creek.

"The Log Cabin" pattern reminds them of how Ma and Pa, with the help of Mr. Edwards, built their log cabin by hand, their own "Little House on the Prairie."

Their courageous pioneer spirit, faith and love of family sustain them as hardships and disappointments force them to return to Minnesota where, as the "Dugout" pattern reminds them, they move to their most unusual house - a dugout in the bank of Plum Creek - where Laura meets a most unusual girl, Nellie Oleson!



Did you know?

Administered by the Association for Library Service to Children, **The Laura Ingalls Wilder Award** was first given to its namesake in 1954. The award honors an author or illustrator whose books have made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children.

A Special Quilt



Easy Activity

If you could create a scrapbook of important events in your life, what events would you include? What things would help you remember those events?

Write down five events that you'd like to remember.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Extra Challenge Activity

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow, using complete sentences.

Quilts of the nineteenth century were often made from separate blocks sewn together and quilted by women at a gathering called a **quilting bee**. This was usually a festive occasion for the entire **community**. The technique of making quilts from individual squares led to the development of a special kind of quilt, known as a signature quilt, (or autograph, **album**, friendship, or presentation quilt) made for a special friend or event. These quilts, popular during the 1840s and 1850s, were made from blocks donated by friends, who would gather at a special quilting bee, called an "**album party**," to piece together and quilt the squares. Album quilts are records of cooperative efforts to honor a **recipient** or to **commemorate** an occasion. In their workmanship, patterns, and cultural significance, they are among the most interesting of American quilts.

- from the National Gallery of Art's Index of American Design, Textiles Tour

1. Why did people make album quilts? What did they commemorate?
2. What would people do at a quilting bee? What about at an album party?
3. Why do you think album quilts are considered "among the most interesting of American quilts?" What makes an album quilt special?



Think about it

A Postplay Discussion

In the play, Laura says, "These quilts are my scrapbook." **What do you think Laura means by that?**

Likewise, Mary says, "The patchwork is like a roadmap, and each pattern tells a story." **Do you agree? How are their quilts like a map?**

Extension:

Read *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*, a story about how a slave used her quilting skills to create a secret map to freedom. A lesson plan for upper elementary students can be found at www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/Socialstd/grade5/Sweet_Clara.html



Challenge Activity

Creating a Memory Quilt

Laura and Mary received a very special gift at the end of the play. Their friends had made them a legacy quilt that included all of their special family stories and memories. Choose one of the five important events in your life from above, and create a memory quilt square that illustrates that event. You will need scissors, glue, and construction paper.

Extension:

Teachers, once each student has created a quilt square, tie them together using a hole punch and yarn to create a class memory quilt.

Vocabulary From the Play



Words in Laura's Life Use the word bank below to label the following pictures.

Laura's Word Bank

- covered wagon
- Indian
- grizzly bear
- sun bonnet
- wheat
- harvest
- log cabin
- china doll



Pioneer Slang Match each of the following slang words from the play with its definition:

Slang

- a hankerin'
- pull up stakes
- a 'mite
- varmint
- licked
- what in tarnation...
- cut up
- 'afore
- 'fetch'
- 'criminy'

Definition

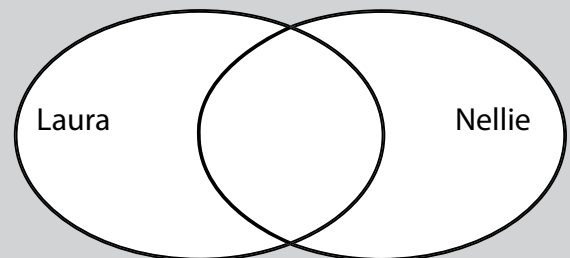
- move to a new place
- creature; animal
- beaten
- joking around
- before
- a craving; a want or need to go get something
- 'yikes!'
- a little
- what in the world...

Definition: Slang (noun) - Language that usually occurs in playful or casual speech; **slang** is usually made up of 'figures of speech' used in place of standard words.



Laura & Nellie

Neither Laura nor Nellie were perfect little girls. They both had character traits that sometimes got them into trouble. Compare and contrast Laura and Nellie's characters. Use the words given and add your own. Remember, use a dictionary if you come across a word that is unfamiliar to you.



prissy

ornery

devious

confident

tomboy

mean

Cowboy Hats & Sun Bonnets

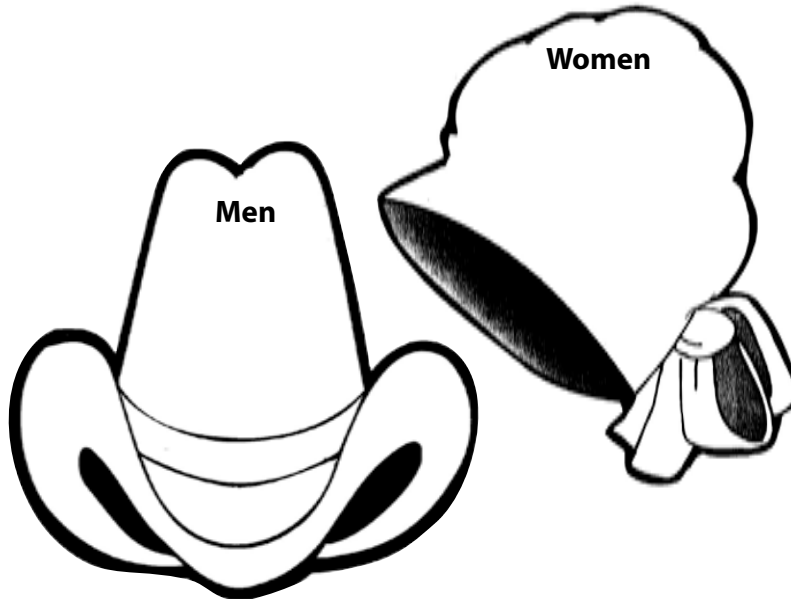


Easy Activity

In the play, set in the late 1800's, female and male roles were much different than they are today. Use the following graphic organizer to place each task in its place; some tasks might belong in more than one category. Discuss the roles of men and women during the 1800's and today.

Tasks

harvesting
cooking
hunting
planting
cleaning
quilting
building
teaching



Think About It

Think about the jobs and roles that men and women have today. How have people's roles changed over the past 125 years? Make a list of the jobs that you are responsible for. What is your role in your family? at school? among friends?



Pioneer Spirit

In the play, Pa Ingalls talks about the *courage* it takes to live a pioneer life. Ma Ingalls adds, "*and the faith it takes to make that kind of courage possible.*"

1. Do you think the Ingalls family was courageous? In what ways?
2. What do you think Ma meant when she talked about *faith* making *courage* possible?
3. The Ingalls had a "*pioneer spirit.*" In the late 1800's in America, that meant that they had the courage, faith, and spirit to move their family west into unknown territory and start a new life. Does the "*pioneer spirit*" still exist? If so, what kinds of pioneers do we have today? Explain.

Reference Tool: Dictionary of Terms

role (noun): A person's expected position, behavior, or job(s).

courage (noun): Bravery; the ability to face danger or fear with confidence.

faith (noun): A confident belief in a person, idea, or thing.

spirit (noun): The most important force within a living being.

Tips for answering essay questions:

1. Read the question carefully. Identify key words and think about their meaning.
2. Plan your writing. Use a pre-writing strategy.
3. Begin your answer by re-stating the question.
4. Re-read your answer. Does it respond to the question?

Social Studies: Using Primary Sources

A letter from **Laura Ingalls Wilder** written in the 1950's (from the Laura Ingalls Wilder House and Museum)

Dear Children,

I was born in the "Little House in the Big Woods" of Wisconsin on February 7 in the year 1867. I lived everything that happened in my books. It was a long story, filled with sunshine and shadow, that we have lived since "These Happy Golden Years." After our marriage Almanzo and I lived for a little while in the little gray house on the tree claim. In the year 1894 we and our little daughter Rose left Dakota in a covered wagon and moved to a farm in the Ozarks. We cleared the land and built our own farmhouse. Eventually we had 200 acres of improved land, and a herd of cows, good hogs, and the best laying flock of hens in the country. For many years we did all our own work, but now almost all of the land has been rented or sold. For recreation we used to ride horseback or in our buggy later on, our Chrysler. We read and played music and attended church socials.

In 1949 Almanzo died at the age of 92. We had been married 63 years. Our daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, the novelist, now lives in Connecticut. You may be interested to know what happened to some of the other people you met in my books. Ma and Pa lived for a while on their homestead then moved into town where Pa did carpentry. After Mary graduated from the College for the Blind she lived at home. She was always cheerful and busy with her work, her books and music. Carrie worked for THE DE SMET NEWS for a while after finishing high school, and then she married a mine owner and moved to the Black Hills. Grace married a farmer and lived a few miles outside DeSmet. All of them have been dead for some years now.

Several years before Almanzo's death he and I took a trip back to DeSmet for a reunion with our old friends. Many of the old buildings had been replaced. Everywhere we went we recognized faces, but we were always surprised to find them old and gray like ourselves, instead of being young as in our memories. There is one thing that will always remain the same to remind people of little Laura's days on the prairie, and that is Pa's fiddle. Every year at a public concert, someone plays on it the songs Pa used to play. The "Little House" books are stories of long ago. Today our way of living and our schools are much different; so many things have made living and learning easier. But the real things haven't changed. It is still best to be honest and truthful; to make the most of what we have; to be happy with the simple pleasures and to be cheerful and have courage when things go wrong. Great improvements in living have been made because every American has always been free to pursue his happiness, and so long as Americans are free they will continue to make our country ever more wonderful.

With love to you all and best wishes for your happiness, I am
Sincerely Your Friend,
Laura Ingalls Wilder



Easy Activity

Read an excerpt from the letter (left) to your students, and discuss. Ask them to draw a picture of Laura Ingalls Wilder at one of her homes. Add details, based on the letter and the play.



Challenge Activity

Read the letter (left). Think about the changes, political, economic, and technological, that Laura witnessed during her life. List some of these changes. Then, talk to your parents or other adults about changes they have witnessed. Write a journal entry predicting how life may change during your lifetime.



Extra Challenge Activity

Read the letter (left). Highlight important events in Laura's life. Create an outline of those events. Choose your favorite event and illustrate it.



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Presents...
Patchwork:
The Prairie Quilts
of Laura
Ingalls Wilder
by Bruce Craig Miller

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More Teacher Resources

Additional Core Curriculum Activities

GRADE K SCIENCE: Categorizing Wildlife of the Prairie

On 3 x 5 cards, distribute the names (and/or pictures) of the following: Birds of the Prairie: meadowlark, red tailed hawk, prairie chicken, bobwhite quail, mourning dove; Mammals of the Prairie: bison, coyote, antelope, badger, prairie dog; Lizards of the Prairie: Great Plains earless lizard, Great Plains skink, prairie racerunner, little brown skink, western green lizard (lizards). Ask students to classify the animals according to whether they are birds, mammals, or lizards. Discuss the characteristics of birds, mammals, and lizards. How are they alike and how are they different?

GRADE 1 SOCIAL STUDIES: A Map of the United States

Introduce students to a map of the United States. Locate your state. Explain that, during the Ingalls' family journeys, there were not as many states in the United States of America. Laura and her family traveled from Wisconsin across the Mississippi River, through Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, and into Kansas. Locate these states and have the students trace the Ingalls' path. Discuss their mode of travel (buggy or covered wagon) and what hardships they would have endured on the trip.

GRADE 2 MATHEMATICS: Shapes and Symmetry in a Quilt

Provide students with colorful shapes to design quilt squares. Review geometric shapes such as triangle, rectangle, circle, square, diamond, star, oval, and parallelogram. Explain the idea of symmetry. Ask the students to arrange their shapes in a symmetrical pattern on their quilt square. Piece together students' symmetrical squares to create a 'Symmetry Quilt.'

GRADE 3 SCIENCE: Animals of the Prairie

Ask students to brainstorm what animals were mentioned in the play (answers may include grizzly bear, lynx, crab, leech, wolf, coyote, grizzly bear, panther). Working in cooperative groups, ask students to research one of the animals mentioned in the play and present information to the class from the following three categories: physical characteristics, habitat, and behavioral characteristics.

GRADE 4 SOCIAL STUDIES: A Pioneer's Life

Based upon the play, ask students to brainstorm a list of items that the Ingalls' family might have taken in the wagon with them on their journeys from one home to the next. Unlike today, they did not have the option of taking all of their belongings with them when they moved. Laura and Mary were choosing important items to take with them to their new homes. Ask students: What were some of the important items that Laura and Mary wanted to take with them? If you had to pack just one backpack for a very long trip away from home, what would you take? Ask students to write a journal entry that explains what they would take on a long journey, and why they chose those items.

GRADE 5 SOCIAL STUDIES: The Homestead Act

Have students research and understand the importance of the Homestead Act in the context of American History. Background information for teachers and a full curriculum of interactive activities for students can be found at the National Park Service's Homestead National Monument of America's website. Visit online at www.nps.gov/home/homestead_act.html. Learn all about the Act, the homesteaders, and homesteading in the United States. See a map of homesteading states, learn about the homesteaders, even read a copy of the Act!

