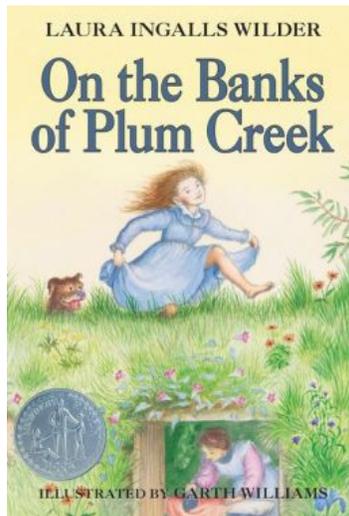


On the Banks Of Plum Creek



By

Laura Ingalls Wilder

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

On the Banks of Plum Creek

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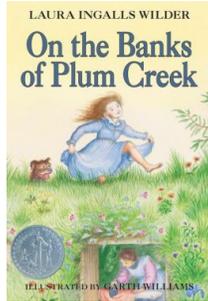


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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. He is also the author of the novel for Young Readers, *Mystery at Red Marsh Lake* (Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2019), available on www.amazon.com. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites www.reedpublications.org and www.novelstudies.org.

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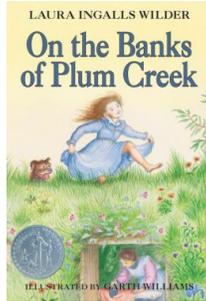
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On the Banks of Plum Creek

By Laura Ingalls Wilder



Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on 4 chapters of *On the Banks of Plum Creek* and is comprised of the following activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

→ A portfolio cover (page 7) as well as a Checklist (page 6) are included so that students may keep track of their completed work.

→ **Every activity need not be completed by all students.**

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to the following:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include pioneer living in the American West, blizzards, grasshoppers and prairie fires, the importance of family and community, courage and sacrifice, friendship, personal growth and perseverance.

On the Banks of Plum Creek

By Laura Ingalls Wilder

List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

On the Banks of Plum Creek

By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Synopsis

The adventures of Laura Ingalls and her family continue as they leave their little house on the prairie and travel in their covered wagon to Minnesota. They settle into a house made of sod on the banks of beautiful Plum Creek. Soon Pa builds them a sturdier house, with real glass windows and a hinged door. Laura and Mary go to school, help with the chores around the house, and fish in the creek. Pa's fiddle lulls them all to sleep at the end of the day. But then disaster strikes—on top of a terrible blizzard, a grasshopper infestation devours their wheat crop. Now the family must work harder than ever to overcome these challenges.

Author Biography *Laura Ingalls Wilder*

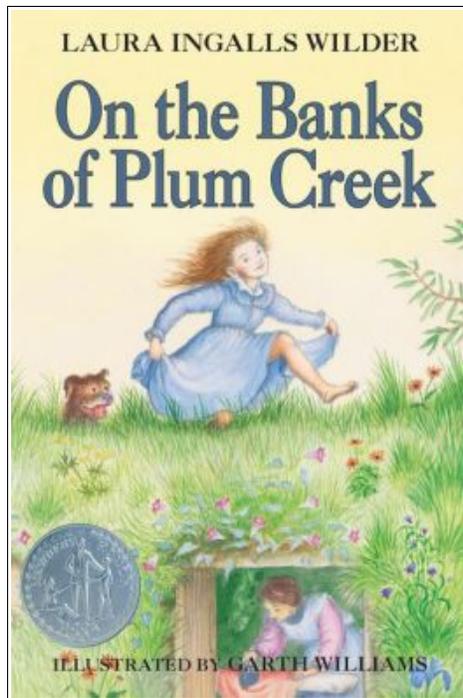
Laura Ingalls Wilder was born February 7, 1867, in Pepin, Wisconsin, the second of four children. She once described her father, Charles Philip Ingalls, as always jolly and sometimes reckless. Her mother, Caroline Lake Quiner, was educated, gentle and proud, according to her daughter. Her sisters were Mary, Carrie, and Grace. Laura also had a younger brother, Charles, Jr. who died at the age of only nine months. As a young girl, Laura moved with her family from place to place. In 1874, the Ingalls family left Wisconsin for Walnut Grove, Minnesota, where they lived at first in a dugout house.



The family finally settled in what would become De Smet, South Dakota, which remained Charles and Caroline's home until they died. Laura attended regular school whenever possible. However, because of her family's frequent moves, she was largely self-taught. In 1882, at the age of fifteen, she received her teaching certificate. For three years, Laura taught at a small country school a dozen miles from her home in De Smet. In 1885 she married a local farmer, Almanzo Manly Wilder. The couple's only surviving child, Rose, was born in 1886. In 1894 the Wilders moved to Mansfield, Missouri, which they would call home for the rest of their lives. Here she sent her account of their travels to the De Smet News. This was her first published writing. In 1932, at the age of sixty-five, Wilder published the first of her eight "Little House" books, *Little House in the Big Woods*, which was a huge hit with readers. Wilder was seventy-six years old when she finished the final book in her "Little House" series. Her husband, Manly, died in 1949 at the age of ninety-two. Wilder was ninety when she died at Rocky Ridge Farm on February 10, 1957.

Courtesy: <http://www.notablebiographies.com/We-Z/Wilder-Laura-Ingalls.html>

On the Banks of Plum Creek



By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Name: _____

On the Banks of Plum Creek

By *Laura Ingalls Wilder*

Chapters 1-4



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *On the Banks of Plum Creek* is seven year old Laura Ingalls, whose family has just moved to Minnesota in a covered wagon in the year 1875. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your *most favorite* character ever? What made you select this character?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

slunk	thickets	rushes (noun)	picket
mustang	smart (verb)	pint	contend

1. It took almost an hour for Charles to lead the frightened _____ into the corral.
2. A prairie homesteader had to _____ with draught and plagues of insects.
3. We waded into the creek and began to collect _____ for our art project.
4. It was difficult to pick wild raspberries because of all the _____ surrounding them.
5. Her finger began to _____ after being pricked by the thorn.
6. The two dogs _____ away from the turmoil and disappeared under the house.
7. She poured about a _____ of water into the canteen.
8. Be sure you _____ the horses for the night or they will wander off.

Questions

1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.

2. There are many unusual expressions in this novel. Put the following sayings in your own words. (You may have to check the context first.)

Laura jumped out of her skin(Chapter One)	
The water was talking to itself (Chapter One)	
On top of the water the water- bugs skated. (Chapter 3)	

3. What had Pa traded for Mr. Hansen's crops and oxen?

4. Answer True or False:

- a) Pa told Ma that after he harvested the first wheat crop he would build her a fine house.

True or False
- b) Pa was sorry to have traded Pet and Patty, for they could have helped with the plowing.

True or False
- c) Ma didn't like the idea of sleeping on the floor of a house.

True or False

5. Describe three things about the description of their dugout home that stood out for you.

1	
2	
3	

6. Why do you think that Hansen built his stable of sod instead of logs?

7. What wouldn't you have enjoyed about living in a dugout like the Ingalls family? What do you think might have been fun?

8. We will discover as we continue to read this novel that the Ingalls family is quite prejudiced with regard to the indigenous people of that area. Find proof of that from this section. Why might the Ingalls have felt this way at this time?

9. Why did Pa tell the girls that they must never go upstream beyond the little willow valley?

10. Describe what Pa did when Laura was in the pool to teach her a lesson.



Language Activities

A. Oxen

Pa is really counting on the two oxen he got from Mr. Hansen to help him plow the fields so he can bring in a great crop of wheat. What do you know about these magnificent beasts? Did you know, for instance, that oxen are very loyal animals that usually won't shy away from even the most demanding task? Did you know that they are usually stronger than a horse? Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, record three additional facts about this mammal in the space below.



1	
2	
3	

B. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:

- read the clue in the right-hand column.
- Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first four chapters of *On the Banks of Plum Creek*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
stable		On which a meal is spread.
ropes		Not poetry.
rushes		Usually seen at a wedding.
slope		Used to propel a raft.
spread		Her feelings were _____ from being hurt.
stove		One does this during an election.
slender		Banks are _____.

C. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Robots.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first four lines of the famous poem, **My Ox**, written by the renowned poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*My ox he lives out back my house
He cranky as can be.
No one dare get close to him,
'Cause he got a million fleas.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A – B – C – B**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first four chapters of our novel (like **mustangs**, **dugouts** or **swimming holes**).

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

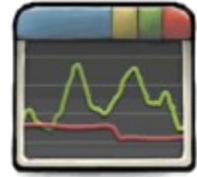
Title: _____

Bonus Question.

In the above poem why do you think the poet chose to skip the odd word (i.e. *back my house*, instead of *back of my house*?)

D. Cliffhanger

Chapter Three contains an important literary device called a **cliffhanger**. A cliffhanger usually occurs at the end of a chapter when the author leaves the reader in suspense. How is this true in Chapter 3? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?



E. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter Three is: . . . *three velvet petals that curved down like a lady's dress over hoops*.

What is being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) the sound of an angry mule

b) the flight of a bumble bee

c) your choice

Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first four chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6

On the Banks of Plum Creek

By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Chapters 5-8



Before you read the chapters:

What do you think would be most difficult for the Ingalls family living in their new home?



Vocabulary:

Many of the words in this Crossword Puzzle are from the first 8 chapters. Use the words in the box to complete the puzzle.

			1		2			3	4		5		6		7		8
	9					10											
								11			12						
13																	
14						15	16			17		18				19	
		20			21				22								
23					24										25		
				26					27		28		29				30
31																	
													32				
33						34		35									
								36					37				
38		39		40							41	42					
								43						44		45	
	46													47			

Across	Down
3. Pioneer head coverings. 9. The Ingalls' new home. 11. Railroad. 12. Asleep. 13. Little House on the ____. 14. Wrestler, Eric Young. 15. The present. 17. A transferrable sticker. 19. A homophone of <i>ore</i> . 20. Mark left from a wound. 22. A type of brush for horses. 23. <i>Peach</i> without the <i>pee</i> . 24. An ox. 27. Okie doke. 29. A type of shrub. 31. An insect. 32. Gung-ho. 33. Shine. 34. Windows (or goalies) are sometimes ____. 36. <i>Yes</i> without the <i>why</i> . 37. A grayish-brown eagle. 38. Antonym of old. 40. The protagonist. 41. Distress signal. 43. End of life. 44. Not out. 46. Mr. ____. 47. Lift vigorously.	1. Release. 2. __, myself and I. 3. Dried stalks of grain. 4. United Arab Republic. 5. An animal Laura encountered. 6. Mr. Hanson was from ____. 7. Earned run averages. 8. Mockery; ridicule. 9. The oldest of Laura's siblings. 10. Homophone of <i>scene</i> . 13. An ox. 16. Money yet to be paid. 17. Responsibility. 18. Weep. 20. An instrument for cutting grain. 21. Rhythm and Blues. 22. Pa. 25. Picture in your mind. 26. Steps on repeatedly. 28. Sincere. 29. Many lived near the Ingalls in Wisconsin. 30. Ma. 31. <i>Car</i> of the 1870s. 34. Reject. 35. Homophone of reeds. 39. Tiny. 42. An exclamation of surprise. 44. Homophone of <i>bee</i> . 45. Intravenous.

WATERBUG	BRIGHT	SCYTHE	LAURA	TRAMPLES	PRAIRIE
CRY	CHARLES	CAROLINE	STRAW	DECAL	SWEDES
UNHITCH	ME	SUNBONNETS	SUMAC	IMAGINE	OR
CURRY	EARNEST	SCREENED	SATIRE	DORMANT	NOW
READS	NELSON	MINNESOTA	SPURN	HEAVE	SOS
WAGON	ERAS	OH	BE	MARY	NEW
ERN	EY	BADGER	RR	WEE	IV
NORWAY	DEATH	AYE	IN	GLEAM	SCAR
SEEN	DUTY	RB	PETE	EAGER	UAR
OWING	EACH	ES			

Questions

1. What evidence do we find in these chapters that Laura sometimes had trouble obeying her parents?

2. What prevented her from going to the pool in Chapter 5?

3. What evidence do we find in this section which demonstrates Laura's courage?

4. Who was Johnny Johnson?

5. How did Pa pay for the cow he got from Nelson?

6. Why would the cow be of such a benefit to the Ingalls' family?

7. Ma decided that they would name the cow _____.
8. Laura blamed herself for allowing Pete to damage the roof of their dugout. Do you think think this guilt was justified? Why or why not?



Language Activities

A. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example taken from Chapter Four: *Tall willows stood up on the other side of the pond.*

Describe how the willows are personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

B. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter Five: *Dust itched on her sweaty skin . . .*

Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The sound of two oxen.	
A full moon on a cloudless night.	
Your choice.	

C. Your Favorite Genre Of Books

On the Banks of Plum Creek is usually classified as an autobiography. What genre of books do you enjoy the most? (i.e. mystery, humor, biography, romance, fantasy, historical fiction, science fiction, poetry, etc.) Why do you especially enjoy this type of book?

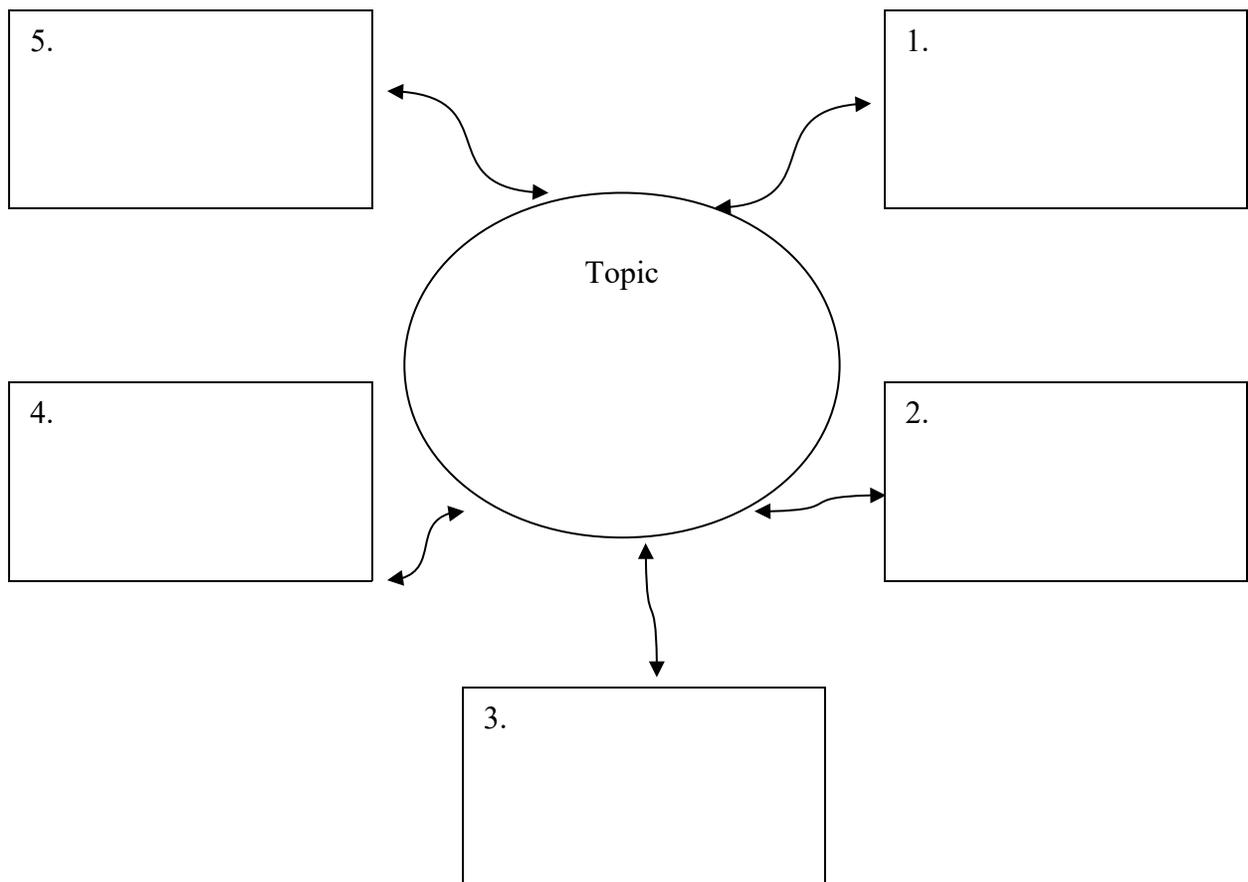


D. Digging Deeper.

In this section the author mentions a number of fascinating creatures that live near the Ingalls' new home. These included **mustangs, oxen, a badger, cattle, ponies, a dog (Jack), butterflies, bumble-bees, and water-bugs.**

Suppose you were asked to research one of these creatures. A useful tool to begin such a research project is an organizer, like the one featured below. Place the topic of your choice in the middle balloon, then in the connecting balloons choose subtopics which would help you to do a thorough investigation of the topic.

For example: if your topic was **George Washington**, subtopics might include birthplace, education, and accomplishments.



Extension Activity

Tell (and Draw) it Like it Is

Use the three boxes to tell and show the beginning, middle and ending of this section.

Beginning Picture	Beginning:
Middle Picture	Middle:
Ending Picture	Conclusion: