

Little House on the Prairie

COMPREHENSION GUIDE



LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

Comprehension Guide
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LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

How to Use this Guide

This guide is intended to help you study, understand and enjoy *Little House on the Prairie*. You might ask if a guide is really necessary to read a book. Is the student not just working to improve reading skills while being taught to enjoy reading a book? Certainly it is the case that the more a child reads, the more he should improve his skills, but quantity is not the only issue. Once a child has received adequate phonetic training he should learn how to read a book. Most educators using this guide will be teaching children in the grammar stage, generally understood to be during the elementary years in a classical education. (For a thorough understanding of classical Christian education we recommend reading *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* or *The Case for Classical Christian Education*, both by Douglas Wilson.) The basic goals of reading in the grammar stage are as follows:

The student should be able to:

1. Fluently read a given selection orally.
2. Show an increased desire for reading.
3. Show comprehension on a literal and inferential level.
4. Demonstrate an increased vocabulary.
5. Identify basic biblical values in the literature being read.
6. Identify various styles (myths, poems, fantasy, fiction, nonfiction, etc.)

Answers to the questions are found in the back of the guide. Although the answers in the guide appear in an abbreviated form, the students' answers should be in complete sentences, and they should restate the question in their answer.

Example:

Question: Why didn't Pa take Jack hunting with him?

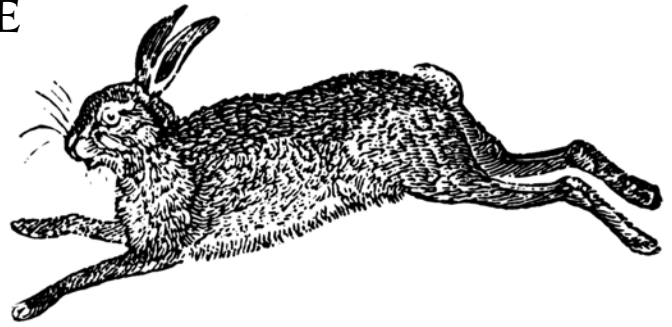
Answer: Pa didn't take Jack because the dog had to stay at the house and guard the place.

Such writing practice trains the student to answer thoroughly, completely and with proper grammar. Another reason is to encourage integration. We want students to understand that how they write something is as important as what they write.

You may wonder how to grade the student's work in this guide. Keep it simple. Unless otherwise indicated you should assume that each question is worth five points.

LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

Chapter One—Going West



1. Why did the Ingalls family leave the little house in the Big Woods?

2. How did Pa describe the Western Country to Ma?

3. What could not see them go when they left?

4. Describe crossing the lake by completing the following sentences.

It looked . . .

It sounded . . .

It felt . . .

5. How was it different when they crossed the Missouri River?

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Chapter One, Project—Crossing the Creek

“... from the Big Woods of Wisconsin, across Minnesota and Iowa and Missouri ... now they set out to go across Kansas.”

Trace the Ingalls family’s route traveling from Wisconsin to Kansas. In addition students may: trace the Mississippi and Missouri rivers with a blue marker and fill in the names of the present day states that are visible, using Audio Memory’s Geography Songs or another resource.



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Chapter Two—Crossing the Creek

1. A ford is a shallow place in a creek or river where one can walk or drive across. Why would Pa want to cross the creek at the ford?

2. How did Pa know where the ford in the creek was located?

3. What did Pa say when Laura said that she wished Jack could ride with them in the wagon?

4. The crossing of the creek ended well. What could have happened?

5. Where did Pa say Jack had gone?

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Chapter Two, Project—Shoe Box Wagon

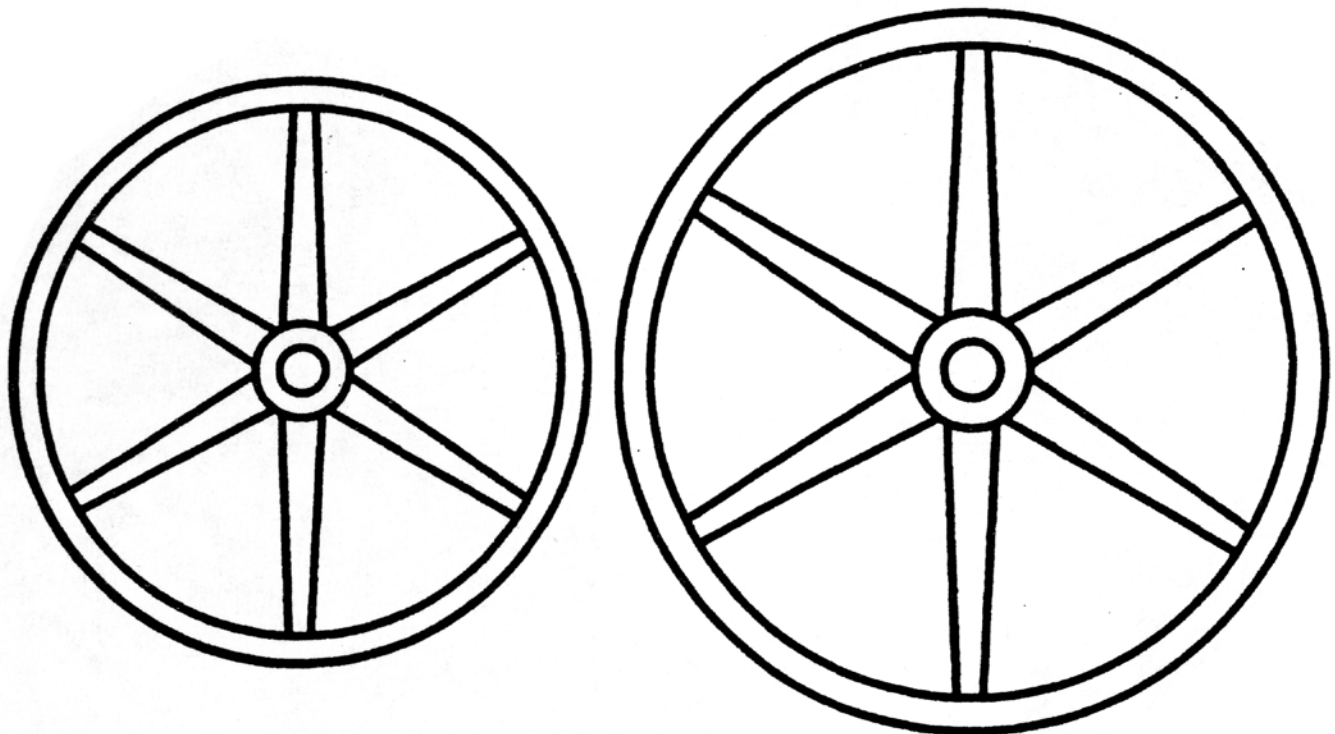
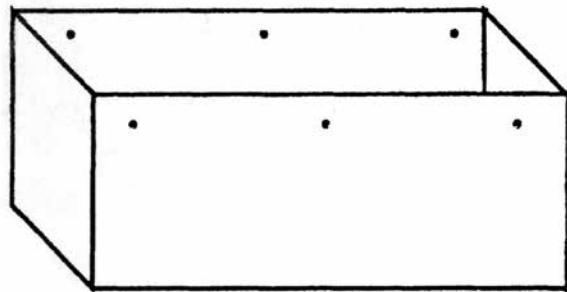
In the first chapter, “Going West,” the Ingalls family sold their house and packed up all their belongings that would fit into a covered wagon. Below you will find instructions to make your own covered wagon. You will begin the wagon in this chapter and complete it in the next.

Supplies

shoe box (one per student)
cardboard (from which to cut wheels)
three 15” pipe cleaners (or floral wire)
15” x 15” white cloth
scissors or knife (to cut cardboard)
glue (hot glue gun preferred)
tempera paint
ice pick or sharp pencil (to poke holes in the cardboard box)

Directions

Discard the shoe box lid and paint the box (inside and out) blue, red or brown. Draw wheels on cardboard from pattern. Cut them out. Paint spokes red. Allow to dry. Poke holes in box as illustrated to fasten wire for support of cloth.



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Chapter Three—Camp on the High Prairie

1. What are picket lines?

2. Why did Pa pull all the dead grass from the area around the campfire?

3. Match the people to their tasks by drawing lines.

Pa measured the coffee beans and set the iron bake oven in the coals

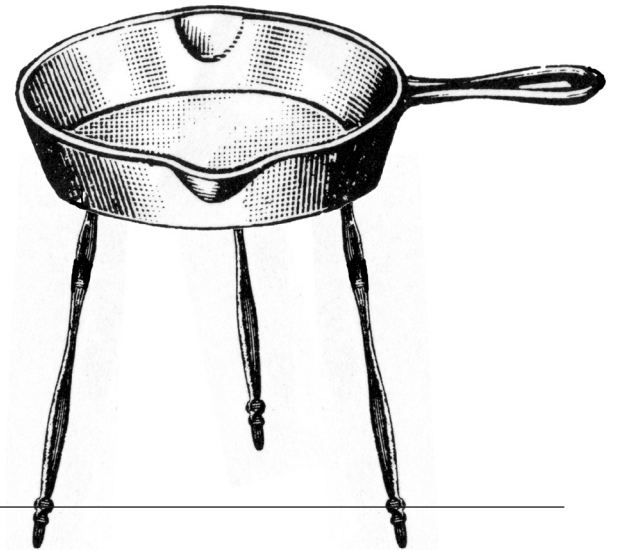
Mary brought water from the creek

Laura filled the coffee-pot with water

Ma ground the coffee beans

4. Whom did the two green lights turn out to be?

5. What sounds did Laura hear as Pet and Patty were eating their corn?



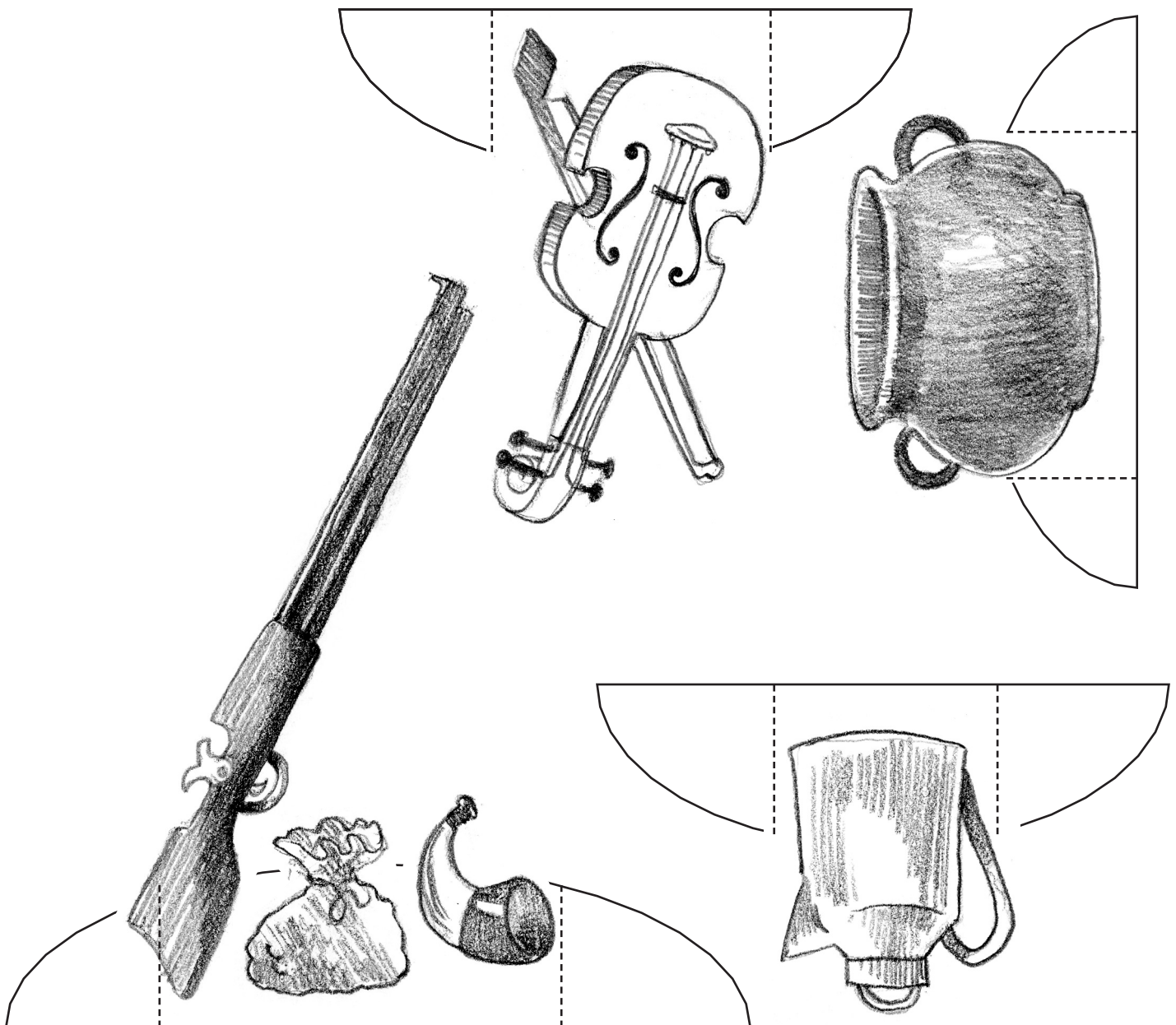
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Chapter Three, Project—Shoe Box Wagon, Part 2

Color and cut out the objects below, then fold back the tabs to set up inside of the wagon. Attach the “canvas” roof of the wagon at the end.

Directions

Insert one end of each wire into one of the holes in the wagon. Glue in place then smoothly bend each wire in an arch and glue the other end. Glue the cloth onto the wire. Glue the wheels onto the box.



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Chapter Four—Prairie Day

1. What did Laura and Mary smell and hear just before they scrambled out of bed?

2. Why was Jack not allowed to hunt his breakfast that day?

3. Whose flowers did Ma admire?

4. Why did Ma not like Indians?

5. What did Laura, Mary and Baby Carrie do in the warm, happy silence?

6. Where did five-year-old Laura think part of the music came from?



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Chapter Four, Project—Prairie Day Breakfast

When Mary and Laura woke up they could smell the bacon and coffee and hear pancakes sizzling.

As you read this chapter enjoy your breakfast. Note: you might enjoy trying molasses instead of syrup, just like Mary and Laura.

Ingredients

1 cup buttermilk
2 Tbs. vegetable oil
2 eggs
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup whole wheat flour
1/2 cup unbleached white flour
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt

Directions

Combine first three ingredients and whisk well. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix until moistened. Fry in a hot, lightly greased skillet. Also fry bacon and brew some coffee to get the full effect of what the girls experienced.



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Chapter Five—House on the Prairie

1. What Latin word do you see in the name of the Verdigris River?

2. What did Laura find in the grass that Pa said was “some old trail?”

3. Describe how Pa built the foundation of the house.

First, he paced off . . .

Second, he dug a shallow little . . .

Third, into these hollows he rolled . . .

Fourth, he chose two more . . .

Fifth, he cut a wide, deep . . .

Last, he rolled . . .

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4. What Providentially saved Ma's foot from being crushed?

5. What could Mr. Edwards do farther than anyone?

6. What sang along with Pa's fiddle?



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Chapter Five, Project—Old Dan Tucker Comic Strip

In this chapter we see how the Ingalls enjoyed when their father played the fiddle and sang songs. One of the songs he played was “Old Dan Tucker.”

This song was written by Daniel Decatur Emmet at the age of fifteen. He was born in Mount Vernon, Ohio, on October 29, 1815. He grew up hearing church hymns, the fife and drums of the militia and the tunes of the fiddle. He taught himself to play the fiddle and began to compose.

Emmet first played the song Old Dan Tucker on July 4, 1830 on the village green in Mount Vernon. Below you will find the lyrics to this song. As you will see it is a rather silly song. How fun it would have been to sing it around the campfire. After reading the stanzas of the song, choose one to illustrate in comic strip form.

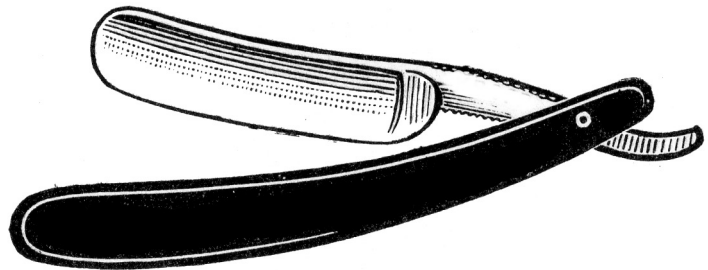
I come to town de udder night,
I hear de noise den saw de fight,
De watchman was a runnin roun,
Cryin Old Dan Tucker's come to town,
So get out de way! Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
You're too late to come to supper.

Tucker is a nice old man,
He used to ride our darby ram,
He sent him whizzin down de hill,
If he hadn't got up he'd laid dar still,
Get out de way! Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
You're too late to come to supper.

Tucker on de wood pile--can't count 'lebben,
Put in a fedder bed--him gwine to hebben,
His nose so flat, his face so full,
De top ob his head like a bag ob wool,
Get out de way! Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
You're too late to come to supper.

High hold on de holler tree,
He poke his bill in for to see,
De lizzard cotch 'im by de snout,
He call old Tucker to pull 'im out,
Get out de way! Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
You're too late to come to supper.

Tucker he had cash a plenty,
Dressed to death—his old trunk empty,
To kiss de galls he thot was useless,
'Cept he kissed wid a sway-back-looseness,
Get out de way! Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
You're too late to come to supper.



Here's my razor in good order,
Magnum-bonum—jis hab bought 'er,
Sheep shell de oats, ole Tucker shell de corn,
I'll shade you all when de water gets warm,
Get out de way! Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
You're too late to come to supper.

I went to meetin de udder day,
To hear old Tucker preach and pray,
Dey all got drunk, but me alone,
I make ole Tucker—walk-jaw-bone,
Get out de way, Get out de way,
Get out de way you harden'd sinner,
You're too late to come to dinner.



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