

99A

A Prairie Home

by Marilee Robin Burton
Leveled Reader 99A
Genre: Historical Fiction
Level: Easy

Summary

Life on the prairie is an adventure, but Meg and her family realize that it is also hard work. Tired of doing so many chores and living in a dark house, Meg longs for her friends and her grandma's beautiful house in Boston. It is not until she becomes lost and afraid that Meg realizes the prairie is now her real home.

At a Glance

Links to the Student Edition

🌀 **Comprehension Skill:** Theme

Selection Vocabulary: *dugout, punish, naughty, bristled, rushes*

Program Theme: The World Around Us

Unit Theme: A Wider View

A move to a new and strange place makes one girl change her view of the meaning of *home*.

Before Reading

Motivating the Reader

Build Background About Life on the Prairie

If possible, show students historical photographs of prairie life. Explain that when people settled the middle and western parts of the United States more than one hundred years ago, some areas where they settled did not have many trees. People built houses out of sod, or big squares of dirt and grass. Sometimes the house was built into the side of a hill. Ask students what they think it would be like to live in a house made out of sod with no heat, electricity, or running water. Encourage students to make a list of "prairie chores" that would need to be done, such as collecting water, building a fire to cook, hunting or gathering food, and so on.

Preview and Predict

Have students scan the cover, text, and illustrations to get an idea of what the book is about. Ask students if they can tell whether the book takes place in the past or in the present and how they can tell. Have students make predictions about what it is like to live in this prairie home. Suggest that students set their own purpose for reading, such as reading to find out what happens to the main character, Meg.

Point out selection vocabulary and any unfamiliar words, such as *soddy, corn mush, guideposts, darted, anxious, and striding*, that might be important to understanding the book.

During Reading

Guiding Comprehension

Use the following questions to support students as they read.

- **Page 2** What kinds of chores does Meg do? (She has to wake her brother, fold the bedding, check for chicken eggs, get water, sweep the dirt floor, and churn butter.)
- **Page 3** How does Meg feel about living on the prairie? (Meg is homesick. She misses her friends and her grandma's house.)
- **Page 5** Why did the family leave Boston? (They wanted their own farmland.)
- **Page 7** What do you think Pa was doing before he came in for breakfast? How do you know? (He was milking a cow. He came in with a bucket of milk.)
- **Pages 9–10** What is a dugout? Use the picture to help you figure it out. (It's a hole dug out of a hill.) What is inside the dugout? (chickens)
- **Page 10** How does Meg find her way to the stream? (She follows guideposts, posts with pieces of colored cloth, that make a path down to the water.)
- **Page 12** Why does Meg run into the rushes? (She wants a playmate, so she follows a rabbit as it runs into the rushes.)
- **Page 14** How does Meg feel? (She is frightened because she is lost. She is afraid she will not see her family again. She begins to cry.)
- **Page 15** What happens on this page? (Pa rescues Meg. He gives her a big hug.)
- **Page 16** Imagine that you ask Meg, "What is home?" What will Meg say? (Home is the place where you live with your family.)
- **Page 16** How is life on the prairie long ago like and unlike your life today? (Students should use story details and their own personal experiences to compare and contrast life in the past with the present.)

Ongoing Assessment

Reading Strategies

If... a student confuses *rushes* (noun) with *rushes* (verb),

Then... have the student use picture and syntax clues to figure out which meaning makes sense in this context.


If... a student has trouble comprehending how Meg's understanding of *home* has changed,

Then... have the student reread pages 3 and 16.

If... a student has trouble identifying the book's theme,

Then... use **Model Your Thinking** below.

Model Your Thinking

 **Comprehension Skill:**
Theme

Think
ALoud

When I read a story, I ask myself, "What is the big idea of the story? What does the author want me to remember about the story?" That "big idea" is called the story's theme. Sometimes a writer states the theme in a sentence or two in the story. Often, readers have to figure out the theme for themselves. I think that the big idea of this story has to do with the idea of home. Meg misses her home in Boston, but she finally realizes that the home on the prairie with her family is her "real" home. The theme could be stated as: *Home is the place where the people you care about live.*

After Reading

Revisiting the Text

Comprehension Students can work in pairs to develop a story sequence chart. Pairs can then create a poster that states the theme in their own words and has an illustration to support that theme.

Name _____

Theme

Read the story *A Prairie Home* and then answer Numbers 1 through 5.

- 1 How does Meg feel about life on the prairie at the beginning of the story?
- A She is afraid she will get lost in the woods.
 - B She is happy about all the new friends she has made.
 - C She thinks it is an adventure but wants to go back to Boston.
 - D She thinks it's easy and enjoys working on the farm.
- 3 What jobs does Meg do on the farm?
- A fold the bedding, fetch the water, sweep the dirt floor
 - B work in the kitchen, build the new school
 - C heat the water, make the soap, wash the dishes
 - D milk the cows, build the fire, gather the eggs

2 How does Meg feel when she is lost?

- F excited and mad
- G lonely and afraid
- H sad and bored
- I brave and secure

4 What important lesson does Meg learn in this story? Use details and examples from the story to explain your answer.

5 What lesson about home does this story teach? Use details and examples from the story to explain your answer.

Name _____

Theme

Read the story *A Prairie Home* and then answer Numbers 1 through 5.

- 1 How does Meg feel about life on the prairie at the beginning of the story?
- A She is afraid she will get lost in the woods.
 - B She is happy about all the new friends she has made.
 - C She thinks it is an adventure but wants to go back to Boston.
 - D She thinks it's easy and enjoys working on the farm.
- 3 What jobs does Meg do on the farm?
- A fold the bedding, fetch the water, sweep the dirt floor
 - B work in the kitchen, build the new school
 - C heat the water, make the soap, wash the dishes
 - D milk the cows, build the fire, gather the eggs

- 2 How does Meg feel when she is lost?

- F excited and mad
- G lonely and afraid
- H sad and bored
- I brave and secure

- 4 What important lesson does Meg learn in this story? Use details and examples from the story to explain your answer.

can be happy if w/ family
(w/ details)

- 5 What lesson about home does this story teach? Use details and examples from the story to explain your answer.

Home = where you are/live
w/ ppl you love &
care about