

## **Things To Do Before Reading *Lost on the Prairie***

- 1. Peter the main character in this novel is going on an exciting trip! What is the most exciting trip you have ever been on? Where did you go? What did you do? Who was with you? Why do you remember it? How old were you when you went on this trip? Share your trip memories with your friends by showing them some photographs or souvenirs, drawing a sketch, writing a story or having a conversation.**
- 2. Look at the cover of the book and the title. What do you think this novel will be about? Can you write down three specific things that you think might happen in this story? Save these predictions to look at again when you finish reading *Lost on the Prairie*. Based on the cover do you think this story takes place in the past, present or future? Why?**
- 3. Learn more about MaryLou Driedger the author of the book *Lost on the Prairie* at [maryloudriedger.com/author/](http://maryloudriedger.com/author/). Think of three questions you would like to ask her.**

## **Chapter 1**

**Peter finds out he is going to be riding in a boxcar with his family's horses Prince and Gypsy on the long train ride to his family's new home in Drake Saskatchewan. His mother isn't sure this is a good idea, but Peter is delighted about setting off on such a great adventure.**

- 1. Peter takes the book *Captains Courageous* on his trip. What book would you take on a trip if you could only pick one? Why would you choose that particular book?**

2. Peter's mother makes him a lunch full of delicious things. If someone was making a lunch with all your favorite things in it, what would be included? A still life is an artwork of carefully arranged objects. Can you draw and color a still life of Peter's lunch items or your favorite lunch items? Before you start you might want to check out this cool still life of a lunch by artist Floris Van Dyck.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Floris\\_van\\_Dyck\\_002.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Floris_van_Dyck_002.jpg)

3. Peter's younger brother Alvin has epilepsy. People who have epilepsy have seizures. A seizure is when a sudden surge of electrical activity in the brain effects how people act for a short period of time. No one knows exactly why these seizures happen. Think about how you might feel if someone in your family had epilepsy. How might that effect your family's life?
4. Can you recreate the "fierce some racket" at the Newton train station by dividing your class into groups and having one group make pig squealing noises, another make chicken clucking noises and another cow mooing noises? Who will be the loudest? Could you add the sounds of Prince and Gypsy neighing, the train whistle blowing, the conductor shouting, "All Aboard," and people saying good-bye to each other. This might be a good outdoor activity.
5. Some words to think about- *ricochet, rucksack, nicker, dung, conjure and borscht*

## Chapter 2

As Peter's train travels to Omaha Nebraska Peter notices that his horses seem unsettled. He discovers the cause- a huge copperhead snake with a dead baby gopher in its mouth. Peter kills the snake and saves the rest of the gopher family who have made a nest in the hay in his boxcar.

- 1. Peter plays with a puzzle his grandfather made. Look at samples of puzzles made from nails and metal online. Would they make a good gift for someone you know or be a good activity to have in your classroom?**
- 2. Peter describes seven things he liked to do with his brother Herman. Make a list of seven things you like to do with friends. Act out one of those activities and see if your classmates can guess what you are doing.**
- 3. Peter kills a copperhead snake. Make a KWL (Know-Wondering About- Learned) chart for copperhead snakes and then watch a video or read a book about copperheads to check on the accuracy of your prior knowledge and find answers to your wondering questions.**
- 4. What are some of the ways the horses Prince and Gypsy express their fear of the copperhead? Do people show their fear in different ways than horses? Can you make your whole body look fearful?**
- 5. The nail puzzle reminds Peter of his grandfather. What object might remind you of one of your grandparents and why? Can you have a conversation with a classmate about this or draw a picture of the object and write about it? Maybe you could show your friends the actual object or a photograph of it.**

**Read a story author MaryLou Driedger wrote about a musical instrument that reminds her of her grandmother.**

**<https://maryloudriedger2.wordpress.com/2014/05/02/my-grandmother-was-a-guitarist/>**

- 6. The conductor says Peter hasn't been twiddling his thumbs on the trip so far. What does it mean to twiddle your thumbs? Can you twiddle yours?**

## Chapter 3

Peter and his brothers spend time in Omaha, Nebraska while the train has a long stop there. They visit the Krug Amusement Park where Peter rides the roller coaster with a young lady named Annie. The roller coaster is in a horrible accident. Peter escapes and he and his brother rush back to the station to catch the train.

1. In Chapter 1 Peter talked about killing the gophers that were eating his family's crops and in Chapter 2, he saves the life of a gopher family. In Chapter 3 his brothers want him to drown the gophers, but Peter just can't. What has changed Peter's attitude?
2. Do you like the names Prince and Gypsy for Peter's horses? How do you think they got those names? If you had two horses, what would you name them?
3. Watch some television news items about accidents. Can you write the script for a television news report about the roller coaster accident? Remember to answer the 5 W's. What happened? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Who was involved? Why did it happen? Who might you want to interview for your news report? Can you perform your report for the class like a television news reporter would? You might even pretend you are reporting from the Krug Amusement Park grounds.

There is more information at this link about the Krug Amusement Park.

<https://maryloudriedger2.wordpress.com/2020/10/28/riding-the-roller-coaster/>

4. We meet Annie in this chapter. From the things that happen in the chapter what do you learn about Annie? Who do you think the older woman with Annie is? Can you sketch a portrait of Annie's face? Need some tips on drawing a portrait. Check this out.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXIO6ocidiY>

5. Phrases to talk about- *den of sin, shakes my hand like she means it, a crick in my neck, my heart foxtrots with excitement, wash my mouth out with soap, bats swoop out of the root cellar*

## Chapter 4

Peter is trapped in his train car. He manages to escape only to slip down a steep ravine, severely injuring himself. When he looks up from the ravine, he realizes the rest of the train is gone. Somehow his car has detached from the train. He slowly makes his way back up to the top of the ravine to the boxcar and Prince and Gypsy.

1. This chapter starts with a nightmare. A nightmare is a bad dream. Nightmares often happen in the last third of the night. Scary or stressful things that happen to us when we are awake can turn into nightmares when we are asleep. Some experts think that nightmares are a way to help us work through and deal with difficult and challenging things that have happened to us. What are some difficult and challenging things Peter has already faced in the book? If you feel comfortable doing so you might want to talk about nightmares you have had.
2. Peter realizes that there are people and animals counting on him. He is needed. Who are people or animals that count on you? What do they count on you to do?
3. Act out Peter's walk up the steep slope to get back to his boxcar. In between each of these actions take ten steps and rest. Using your hands drag yourself over to an imaginary stick and use it to help yourself stand up. Get down on your bum and use your arms to move yourself about a meter. Sink down and pick gooseberries to eat. Don't forget to wipe the juice off your face with your sleeve. Sit down and take off your shoe and fill it with nuts. You've reached the top so shout hurray. Open the box car door and crawl up into it. This would be a good activity to do in the gym or outside.

4. Alliteration happens when words that start with the same sound are used more than once in a phrase or sentence. The sound is usually a consonant, and the words don't have to be right next to one another. One example of alliteration in this chapter is *crippled crane*. There are at least six other examples of alliteration in this chapter. How many can you find.

## Chapter 5

Peter realizes he will need to leave the boxcar to go and look for help. He takes Prince and heads off riding till he reaches a huge lake. He goes in the water to cool off only to realize the lake is very deep and he can't swim. Luckily Mr. Arden Little Thunder comes to his rescue.

1. Peter has to make some hard choices in this chapter. Talk about two of them. How does Peter decide what to do? Would you have made the same decisions Peter did? Why or why not? What do you do when you have hard decisions to make?
2. A simile is a descriptive technique authors use when they compare two different things usually using the words 'like' or 'as'. One simile in this chapter is 'flips me up on the shore like a netted fish.' There are ten other similes in this chapter. How many of them can you find?
3. Can you draw a picture of Peter surrounded by the things he sees down under the water. Some are mentioned in the book, but you can add your own. Color Peter and the things he sees with crayons and then use thin blue watercolor paint to make a wash that covers the page. The wax in the crayons will resist the paint so you will still be able to see them.
4. You can find lots of images of box cars at the link below.

[http://www.trainweb.org/oldtimetrains/photos/cpr\\_rolling/two.htm](http://www.trainweb.org/oldtimetrains/photos/cpr_rolling/two.htm)

Could you take a cardboard box and turn it into a box car?

5. *Lost on the Prairie* takes place over a hundred years ago. People used some different words and phrases in their everyday language than we do now. You've probably already noticed them as you've been reading. Here are some of those old-fashioned words and phrases from this chapter- *vex, ponder, fretful, plumb tuckered out, notion, wagon and plough horse, walk a spell* and *land sakes*. Using context clues what do you think these words and phrases mean. Be on the look-out for other old-fashioned words like this as you continue reading.

## Chapter 6

As Mr. Little Thunder and Peter talk Mr. Little Thunder realizes that Peter truly is all alone on the prairie and it is clear he is quite ill due to his fall down the ravine and his near drowning. Mr. Little Thunder takes Peter home to his house where his family looks after Peter.

1. The Little Thunders belong to the Sisseton Wahpeton First Nation. Elden Lawrence the former president of the Sisseton Wahpeton College says that long ago elders used to sit children down on the shores of Enemy Swim lake to tell the story of how the lake got its name. Do you remember the story from this chapter about how the lake got its name? Mr. Lawrence says it is important to pass these stories on. Can you research and write a paragraph about how a place in the area where you live got its name? Could you go to that place and have someone record a video of you telling the story there?
2. Learn to greet others in Dakota by going to this link.

<https://dakotalessons.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/dakota-greetings.mp4>

3. Mr. Little Thunder asks questions that show he is concerned about Peter. Can you find some of those questions.
4. Peter says at the beginning of this chapter that Mr. Little Thunder looks like his brother Herman. Peter thinks about lots of memories of his home and family in this chapter. Can you find four of them?

## Chapter 7

Peter and Mr. Little Thunder's son Joe have become good friends and they go off on their horses to have a fun adventure. They climb a high hill and then decide to walk through a forest that is said to be haunted. Joe tells Peter the scary legend of Sica Hollow. Joe is just ahead of Peter as they walk through the forest and he becomes stuck in some quicksand.

1. Gypsy and Peter have a very special relationship. Can you think of other books you have read, movies you have seen or stories you have heard about the friendship between an animal and a person? Have you had an animal friend?
2. Peter and Joe have formed a friendship. What are some things they enjoy doing together? Go back to first chapter and read about the friendship Peter had with his big brother Herman. Compare and contrast it to his friendship with Joe.
3. The hill that Joe and Peter climb is called Coteau des Prairies or The Hill on the Prairie. Today it is the site of the huge wooden Nicollet Tower. From the very top you get a wonderful view of the surrounding countryside and see what Peter and Joe saw from the hilltop. You can learn more about this by reading a blog post the author of *Lost on the Prairie* published after she had climbed the Nicollet Tower.  
<https://maryloudriedger2.wordpress.com/2016/08/06/blown-away-in-south-dakota/>

4. **Sica Hollow** which Peter and Joe explore is a real place. It has been turned into a state park. You can walk through it along **The Trail of the Spirits**. Why do you think the trail has that name? Write down five or six events that happen in the legend of Sica Hollow Joe tells Peter. Then mix them up so they aren't in correct chronological order. See if a friend can number the events correctly as they happened in the legend.
  
5. Peter and Joe see a huge flock of migrating monarch butterflies. Learn more about the migration monarch butterflies make each year from North America to Mexico by watching this video.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFISzpkj\\_bQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFISzpkj_bQ)
  
6. Chapter 7 ends with a cliff-hanger. What is a cliff hanger and why do you think authors use them?

## Chapter 8

Peter tries to get Joe out of the quicksand but realizes he will need to go and get help. He leaves Prince with Joe and takes Joe's horse to ride back to the Little Thunder's home. Joe's family is out looking for him too and they meet Peter and ride back to Sica Hollow with him. They find Joe who has miraculously escaped from the quicksand and head for home.

1. Joe is stuck in quicksand. Quicksand is a deep mass of loose sand mixed with lots of water to form a kind of jelly-like substance in which heavy objects will sink.

Check out this video where a class of kids made their own quicksand with cornstarch and water and then tested it out. Could you try making quicksand?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8t52u2XbpFs>

2. Try drawing a monarch butterfly check out the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOwpNYeW66E>

3. Joe and Peter each repeat a blessing for a good journey in their own languages. Go to the Google translate application. Type in ‘have a good journey.’ Learn to say the words in different languages. Each of your classmates might learn to say it in a different language.
4. Peter hears coyote’s howling as he rides to get help for Joe. Learn more about coyotes and listen to them howl at this link. Can you copy the coyote’s howling? Coyotes howl to draw their families together and to warn other families to stay away from their territory.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Meq4WQUewzU&t=24s>

5. Peter thinks about how his family likes to sing together. Does your family sing together or listen to music together? What are some of your family’s favorite songs?
6. Problem- Action- Outcome. A good story has those three elements. What is the problem in this chapter? What actions are taken to try to deal with the problem? What is the final outcome?

## Chapter 9

Mr. Little Thunder tells Peter he is going to take him to the town of Sisseton where some distant relatives of Peter’s might live and where they can inquire at the train station about Peter’s family. Peter spends one last day with his friend Joe. At the train station Mr. Little Thunder and Peter discover a train will come and pick Peter up in a few days and so Mr. Little Thunder takes Peter to the millinery shop run by his relative Euphemia Schmidt. She agrees Peter can stay with their family till his train arrives.

1. Can you make a schedule for all the things Peter does during his last day with the Little Thunders? He starts with a visit in the barn with Mr. Little Thunder maybe around 9 in the morning. Assuming he goes to bed at 8 to be ready for the next day's adventure think of something he does each hour. Some things are listed in the chapter but think of other things Peter might have done based on what you have learned about him and how he has spent his time with the Little Thunder family.
2. Mr. Little Thunder learns about Peter's relatives in the Sisseton newspaper. Why might you say Mr. Little Thunder's discovery was *coincidental*?
3. Peter is leaving Mr. Little Thunder and his family. Peter has learned to know them fairly well. What kind of person is Mr. Little Thunder? What words might Peter use to describe him and why?
4. You could say that Peter has *mixed feelings* about leaving the Little Thunders. What does that mean?
5. Mrs. Schmidt, Peter's relative, runs a millinery shop. A millinery is a place where hats are made and sold. Look at some paintings of millinery shops created by famous artists who lived around the same time as *Lost on the Prairie* takes place. How are the paintings the same and different? Which one do you like the best?

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:August Macke Hutladen.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:August_Macke_Hutladen.jpg)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edgar Degas - The Millinery Shop - Google Art Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edgar_Degas_-_The_Millinery_Shop_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/paul-signac/the-milliner-1885>

## Chapter 10

The three Schmidt daughters show Peter the barn where he will be sleeping and tell him about their family. They have lots of questions for Peter too. After the Schmidt's cook Violet has made the children lunch Peter spends the afternoon at the mill with Mr. Henry Schmidt. After a delicious supper and some family time with the Schmidt's Peter goes to bed in the barn.

1. Ellie, Eudora and Ettie have some preconceived ideas about Indigenous people. Where do you think they got those ideas? Peter's ideas are very different because of the experience he has had living with an Indigenous family. Can you think of a situation where you had certain ideas about people but once you got to know them your ideas about them changed?
2. Violet has baked a quince pie. Have you heard of a quince fruit? It is kind of like an apple or a pear. Find a picture of one. A quince is different than an apple or a pear because it is almost inedible when it is raw. When you cook it however it is delicious.
3. Mr. Schmidt owns a mill and a blacksmith shop. At the Steinbach Heritage Village Museum, they have a mill that grinds grain into flour much like Mr. Schmidt's mill will have done. You can watch barley being ground into flour for bread and pancake mix on this video.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Z9O9K2xVVE>  
After reading about Peter's afternoon working in the mill do you think you would like to be a miller? Why or why not?
4. The mill has been in Mr. Schmidt's family for three generations. Can you think about some family businesses in your community? How old are they?

5. The story of Joseph and his brothers which Mr. Schmidt reads from the Christian Bible is found in other religions as well including Islam and Bahai. If you don't know the story look for a book or a video that can help you learn what it is about.
6. A good paragraph has a topic sentence, relevant supporting sentences and a closing sentence. Do some research and write a paragraph to answer one of these questions. What is quince fruit? How does a rat trap work? Explain how a mill grinds grain into flour. How do you make peach cobbler? Explain the plot of the story Mr. Schmidt reads about Joseph.

## Chapter 11

Peter wakes up to the smell of smoke and realizes the barn where he is sleeping is on fire. Peter manages to herd the animals in the barn outside to safety. He works together with the Schmidt family and their neighbours to put out the fire. They are losing the battle when it starts to rain.

1. After you read this chapter divide your class into two groups and label one group Peter and other group Ettie. Ettie is the Schmidt's middle daughter. Make pairs with one Peter and one Ettie and have them take turns telling the story of what happened in this chapter from their perspective. Peter tells the story through his eyes and then Ettie tells it through hers. Think about how their perspectives might be the same or different.
2. Mrs. Schmidt takes charge and gets things organized to fight the fire. What are three ideas she has for stopping the fire from doing more damage?
3. Prince has helped Peter in two previous chapters of the book. Do you remember what he did? In this chapter Gypsy is the hero. How does she help Peter?

4. A metaphor is a comparison that doesn't use the word like or as the way a simile does. The author uses a stomping elephant as a metaphor for the fire in this chapter. Can you think of other metaphors she might have used to describe the fire?

## Chapter 12

Mr. Schmidt discovers a corpse in the wreckage of the burned barn. A discussion with the sheriff at church leads to the possibility that the dead man is Mr. Schmidt's brother. Evidence proves this to be true. Peter helps Mr. Schmidt take the body to the undertaker and visit his brother's family to plan for a funeral.

1. Some words and phrases to talk about- curling tongs, cinch, buckskin clothes, ledgers, toting, jabber, teetering, gingham
2. What are three questions you have after reading this chapter? Can you give possible answers to them? Share your questions with a group of your classmates. How would they answer them
3. The people at church are organizing a barn raising for the Schmidt family. This is when many people work together to build a new barn in a very short period of time. This video shows a barn raising.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFaZd0MnUms>

## Chapter 13

After the church service is over and the family goes back to the farm with the sheriff evidence proves that the man in the barn is Mr. Schmidt's brother. Peter helps Mr. Schmidt take the body to the undertaker and visit his brother's family to plan for a funeral.

- 1. During the church service Peter is thinking about how all parents are different. Some parents have problems in their lives that make it hard for them to look after their families. Have you read any books or seen any movies where children's parents are going through a difficult time? Has that happened in your family?**
- 2. Peter thinks about his own parents and what they are like. He has met a number of parents on his adventure so far. Annie's father, Mr. and Mrs. Schmidt and Mr. Little Thunder. What have you've noticed about the kinds of parents they are?**
- 3. During the church service Peter thinks about what kind of grown up he might be. Can you write about what kind of grown up you might be? What kind of job might you have? What kind of family? Where would you like to live or travel? What kind of person do you want to be when you are an adult?**
- 4. Ben's two sons react differently to seeing their father's body. Can you describe what they each do? Why do you think their reactions are different?**
- 5. Peter and Mr. Schmidt take Ben's body to the undertaker. Do you know what an undertaker is? If not, can you find out? In this chapter Peter is present when Henry Schmidt plans his brother Ben's funeral with Ben's wife Martha and his sons. Have you been to a funeral? What happened at the funeral you attended?**
- 6. Read some newspaper reports about fires. Could you write a newspaper story about the fire in the Schmidt barn? You will need a headline for your article. In the first paragraph provide a quick summary of what happened and add more details in the second paragraph. In the third paragraph, talk about what might have caused the fire. End with how the situation has resolved.**

## Chapter 14

Mr. Schmidt takes Peter to the train station and says good-bye. Peter's train car has been recovered and he rides in it to Minneapolis with Prince and Gypsy. In the Minneapolis train station Peter learns that the head of the railway has arranged for him to spend the night in the West Hotel. A boy named Samson takes him there.

1. The author gives a detailed description of Mr. Miller the train engineer. Can you sketch a portrait of him from the description?
2. We meet Denver who works as a fireman on the train Peter is taking to Minneapolis. Watch a short video of a fireman at work.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMpl5M4nYx8>
3. Listen to some of the songs Peter sings in his box car on the way to Minneapolis like *Let Me Call You Sweetheart* and *Down By the Old Mill Stream* or the song *Take A Trip on An Airship* he hears sung in the hotel. You can find different groups performing them online. Could you learn to sing one of them to perform for your friends or family?
4. In this chapter Peter recalls six big adventures he has had so far. Can you get together with five friends and each draw a frame for a comic strip illustrating one of those adventures. Put your frames together in chronological order to create a comic strip story of what has happened to Peter.
5. Peter learns about the Eiffel Tower. Find some pictures of this engineering wonder built about twenty years before the story in *Lost on the Prairie* takes place. Can you build an Eiffel Tower out of Lego? You can also find instructions online for building

an Eiffel Tower out of straws, cardboard, paper, toothpicks, popsicle sticks and wooden skewers.

6. Peter learns about airships. Here is a site where you learn about them too.

<https://kids.kiddle.co/Airship>

Can you make a four- slide power point about airships?

7. Some words and phrases to think about and talk about – her voice can make your worries fly away, batting about, square those horses away, a heap more grown up, all at sixes and sevens.

## Chapter 15

Danny a bell hop who works at the West Hotel ushers Peter onto an elevator to take him to his hotel room. They share the elevator with a man in a white suit. When the elevator stalls the man and Peter begin talking and the man is very interested in what has happened to Peter since his boxcar uncoupled from the train. He invites Peter to join him for dinner in the hotel dining room. Danny tells Peter the man is a famous author Mark Twain.

1. Peter thinks the people dressed in fancy clothes in the West Hotel lobby are very interesting. Using the links below you can see how people dressed in the early 1900s.

<https://stylesmatters.wordpress.com/2014/06/14/women-fashion-1900-1920/>

<https://vintagedancer.com/1900s/1900s-menswear-clothing-ideas/>

You can see a photo of what the uniform Danny the bell hop might have worn here.

<https://cityvoice.typepad.com/.a/6a01156f84c694970c0120a657143c970b-pi>

Danny is called a bell hop because at the turn of the century when hotel guests needed help with something the supervisor at the front desk would ring a bell and the bell hop would hurry or hop over to the hotel guest to assist them.

2. Peter has never been on an elevator before, so Danny explains what it is. Elevators were quite a new thing in 1907 when *Lost on the Prairie* takes place. Some other things that were invented around the same time as the elevator were tea bags, telephones, motorcycles, escalators, cars, radios, movies and playing cards. Pretend you are meeting someone who has never seen one of those inventions. How would you explain what it is to them? How would you describe what it looks like, how it works and what it does?

3. Peter meets a famous writer named Mark Twain in this chapter. You can learn more about him by watching this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGie-vj43iI>

MaryLou Driedger the author of *Lost on the Prairie* once met an actor playing the role of Mark Twain. You can read that story at the link below.

<https://maryloudriedger2.wordpress.com/2020/11/25/mark-twain-is-a-character-in-my-novel/>

4. After Samson helps Peter find The West Hotel he strides away. When Mr. Twain gets out of the elevator he ambles down the hallway. Can you stride across a room or down a hallway and then turn around and amble back? What do striding and ambling look like?

## Chapter 16

Peter and Mr. Twain have supper together. Peter shares more of his adventures with Mr. Twain who says he may include them in his next book. Mr. Twain tells Peter about some sad things that have happened in his life and since Mr. Twain has had too much to drink

Peter helps him to his room. The next morning Mr. Twain has left a copy of his book *Tom Sawyer* at the front desk for Peter with a special inscription inside.

1. Peter receives a letter from the owner of the railroad. Imagine Peter takes a piece of hotel stationery and writes a letter back to Mr. Olsen thanking him for the hotel room and the new clothes and telling him a little bit about the adventures he has had since his box car became uncoupled from the train. Can you write the letter for Peter? Remember a letter has a date, a greeting, several paragraphs of content, a closing and a signature.
2. Mr. Twain tells Peter about some of the books he has written. Watch this movie trailer for a film about his book *The Prince and the Pauper*. From the trailer what do you think the book might be about.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8dWMS0IAiY>
3. Mark Twain's story *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* has been retold in graphic novels, picture books, cartoons, video games, manga comics, theatre productions, television series, ballets, operas, more than a dozen films and in a song by Canadian rock band Rush. Which format do you think would be the best way to retell the story and why?
4. Mr. Twain has written an inscription in Peter's copy of *Tom Sawyer* and Mr. Twain says the last lines in the book aren't just about Tom they are about Peter too. Why do you think these words might describe Peter? *It... being strictly a history of a boy, must stop here; the story could not go much further without becoming the history of a man*
5. Words and phrases to think about and talk about- carpet bag, flyleaf, steward, surmise, condolences, succumbed, spittoon, goodly, whittle

## Chapter 17

The railroad company has arranged for Peter to travel in the first -class section of the train. When he goes to eat lunch in the dining car, he meets Annie the girl he rode with on the roller coaster. He discovers she lives with her grandmother in Drake Saskatchewan where Peter's family will live. Peter reads part of Tom Sawyer aloud to Annie.

1. Peter sees grain elevators for the first time from his train car window. There is a grain elevator on the cover of the book. Peter is moving to Drake Saskatchewan where the first grain elevator was built in 1907, the year Peter moves there. As Peter learned at the West Hotel elevators in buildings move people up from floor to floor. Did you know that grain elevators take grain up? You can learn more about how that works at this site.

<https://medium.com/www-bins-ai/how-grain-elevators-work-3d32105528e7>

There are very few grain elevators left on the prairies but in Inglis Manitoba five have been kept as part of a national historic site. Learn more about it at the link below.

<https://ingliselevators.com>

You can draw a grain elevator using a few simple shapes. Can you sketch one?

2. Peter wonders if his family will treat him any differently when he meets them again. He thinks his adventures have changed him. Do you think they have? In what ways?
3. Personification is when a writer gives something that isn't human the ability to do something a human could. In this chapter the author uses personification when referring to Peter's heart. Can you find that passage? Write some of your own examples of personification.
4. Some words and phrases to think about- sweet nothings, sashaying, valises, dungarees, full of beans, shanties, cotton to him, stows, chaperoned

## Chapter 18

The train makes an early morning stop in Winnipeg. Peter goes out to explore the grand new Winnipeg train station. He nearly gets lost and misses his train. Peter spends the day playing games and visiting with Annie and her grandmother. The train finally arrives in Humboldt Saskatchewan and Peter is reunited with his family.

1. Annie makes her school in Drake sound very interesting, but Peter is worried his father may not let him return to school. In 1907 only about half the children in Canada and the United States went to school at all and those who did often stopped attending when they had finished grade six.

Why do you think that happened?

2. Annie and Peter play Toboggans and Stairs or Snakes and Ladders. Have you ever played Snakes and Ladders? Would you like to try?

3. The letters on the toiletries kit Peter is given say CPR. That stands for the Canadian Pacific Railroad. To write a book like *Lost on the Prairie* the author had to do lots of research. She found this old train schedule from for the CPR in 1907.

<https://www.traingeek.ca/files/19070410-cp-public-timetable.pdf>

She carefully looked through all the train stations listed to find Minneapolis in Minnesota, Winnipeg in Manitoba and Humboldt in Saskatchewan. Can you find them?

The author also read all about the train station that was built in Winnipeg between 1904 and 1906. Scan through the document at the link below to find details the author discovered that she used to write about the train station in the book.

<https://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/Documents/Heritage/ListHistoricalResources/Higgins-181-g.pdf>

The building Peter saw is still standing today although it is no longer used as a train station. You can go and visit since the building is open to the public. Using images online compare how the building looked in 1906 and how it looks now.

4. Peter's family has lots of questions for him. Can you answer some of them for him?
5. Do you know what a sod house is? Watch this video to see what kind of house Peter's family were living in when he arrived to join them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdsCjtkv6ZQ>

### Things to Do After You Read the Book

1. *Captains Courageous* by Rudyard Kipling is Peter's favorite novel. He refers to it frequently throughout *Lost on the Prairie*. There are movies and a television series of *Captains Courageous* available and many different adapted and illustrated versions of the book. After viewing or reading one of these use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast Peter's story in *Lost on the Prairie* with Harvey's in *Captains Courageous*.
2. Prepare a very large map with an outline of Canada and the United States on it showing the provinces and states. Looking at other maps locate and label Newton, Kansas, Omaha Nebraska, Enemy Swim Lake- South Dakota, Sisseton, South Dakota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Humboldt Saskatchewan and Drake Saskatchewan on the map. Would you like to connect those points by drawing railroad tracks that follow Peter's journey? Could you pick a location and draw a small sketch of something that happens to Peter there and glue it onto the map in that spot?
3. Read about the Jacqui Thomas the woman who designed the cover of *Lost on the Prairie* at

<https://maryloudriedger2.wordpress.com/2021/01/15/my-book-has-a-cover/>

Now that you have read the book do you think she did a good job of designing the cover? Why or why not? Can you create your own cover for the book?

4. *Lost on the Prairie* tells the story of one family's immigration to a new country. Does your family have an immigration story? Ask your parents or grandparents to tell you about it. Peter is helped by an Indigenous family whose ancestors had been living in North America for thousands of years. Can you ask your parents or grandparents about any Indigenous roots or connections your family may have?
5. *Lost on the Prairie* takes place in 1907. Make a list of things you noticed were different in 1907 than they are now.
6. Peter becomes separated from his parents on his immigration journey. That is still happening to children today. Read some news stories about children who have been separated from their families during their immigration journey. How are their stories different or the same than Peter's?
7. Pick your favorite paragraph or short section from the book. Practice reading it out loud on your own. Use a steady pace, clear diction, an interesting voice and an expressive face. Once you think you are ready share your favorite passage with your classmates. Tell them why you liked it.
8. A hero is someone who in the face of danger or difficulty shows courage, strength and intelligence. Do you think Peter qualifies to be a hero? Why or why not?

9. **Have you ever written a book review? Check out some book reviews on the Good Reads website. Find *Lost on the Prairie* on the Good Reads site. Write a book review for the novel and publish it. That way the author will know how you felt about the book and so will other people.**

**This study guide was written after carefully examining the outcomes in Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum materials for grades 4, 5 and 6 in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Contact the author if you would like specific links to items in the guide and a specific curriculum in your province and she would be happy to provide them. [maryloudriedger@gmail.com](mailto:maryloudriedger@gmail.com)**