Little House in Brookfield: A 4th Grade Literacy Focus Unit
Created by
Sarah Hanson

FEATURED SELECTION:
Title: Little House in Brookfield
Author: Maria D. Wilkes
Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.
Copyright year: 1996
Summary: A part of the Little House series, Maria D. Wilkes’ Little House in Brookfield takes place in 1845 in the frontier town of Brookfield, Wisconsin. The main character is five-year-old Caroline Quiner, who lives with her mother, grandmother, and five brothers and sisters. Her father was lost at sea the year before, and Caroline and her family learn to cope without him. Caroline learns to help out the family as much as she can and discovers new things everyday. This book offers a glimpse into America’s adventurous past during the Pioneer/frontier era.

RELATED MATERIALS:

Title: H is for Hoosier: An Indiana Alphabet
Author: Cynthia Furlong Reynolds
Publisher: Sleeping Bear Press
Copyright year: 2001
- This book provides interesting facts for children about the state of Indiana through poems and text for each letter of the alphabet. This helps students relate to and get facts about the state of Indiana. It also gives information about explorers and natives of Indiana.

Title: Along the Calumet River
Author: Cynthia L. Ogorek
Publisher: Arcadia Publishing
Copyright year: 2004
Along the Calumet River discusses the history and communities that live along the Calumet River, which runs from South Chicago to Northwest Indiana. It provides a glimpse into the history, evolution, and development of this important river in Indiana.

**Title:** Hoosier Heart: A Story about Hoosiers and the Great State of Indiana  
**Author:** Luke Messer  
**Publisher:** Eva Publishing LLC  
**Copyright year:** 2006  
- This book helps answer the question, “What is a Hoosier?” Readers will learn about the state of Indiana and its people, places, and history.

**Title:** A Home in the Woods: Pioneer Life in Indiana  
**Author:** Howard Johnson  
**Publisher:** Indiana University Press  
**Copyright year:** 1991  
- This book is an account of early settler days, focusing mainly on Indianapolis during the 1820’s-1830’s. It will help the students learn more about Pioneer life in Indiana during the Pioneer era.

**Title:** George Rogers Clark: Boy of the Northwest Frontier  
**Author:** Katherine E. Wilkie  
**Publisher:** Patria Press  
**Copyright year:** 2004  
- George Rogers Clark: Boy of the Northwest Frontier is a biography of the older brother of William Clark, who was a part of the Lewis & Clark expedition. It tells of Clark’s boyhood, explorations, and his bravery in helping win the Battle of Vincennes, which ultimately saved what would become Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin from British control.

**Title:** Casper and Catherine Move to America: An Immigrant Family’s Adventures, 1849-1850  
**Author:** Brian Hasler  
**Publisher:** Indiana Historical Society  
**Copyright year:** 2003  
- This book is about the adventures of Casper Hasler, who was a stonecutter that immigrated to Indiana in 1849, leaving his wife and children in Switzerland. Reading this story will help students understand immigration and what it means in Indiana’s history.

**Title:** The Taming of the Wilderness: Indiana’s Transition from Indian Hunting Grounds to Hoosier Farmland: 1800 to 1875  
**Author:** Leon F. Hesser  
**Publisher:** 1st Books Library  
**Copyright year:** 2002
The Taming of the Wilderness tells of the process of transforming Indiana from a hunting ground of Native Americans to commercial agriculture and its industry. The book is divided into three parts and spans over the years 1800-1875, explaining what happened in Indiana during these years and the changes that occurred.

**Title:** Abigail  
**Author:** Portia Howe Sperry  
**Publisher:** Indiana Historical Society  
**Copyright year:** 2000

Abigail is a story about a little girl, Susan Calvin, her doll, Abigail, and the adventures they encounter as Susan’s family travels by covered wagon from Kentucky to Brown County, Indiana in the 1830’s. It will help students further understand people traveling between states during the Pioneer era, and the struggles that came with that.

**Title:** Indiana 1816-1850: The Pioneer Era  
**Author:** Donald F. Carmony  
**Publisher:** Indiana Historical Society  
**Copyright year:** 1998

This book is a good resource for the history of Indiana during the Pioneer era, and Indiana’s advancement into statehood. The chapters are grouped according to years, so students would be able to go to a specific chapter if they know what year(s) they are interested in or looking for.

**Title:** Legendary Hoosier: Famous Folks from the State of Indiana  
**Author:** Nelson Price  
**Publisher:** Emmis Books, Guild Press of Indiana  
**Copyright year:** 2001

This book gives the stories of forty famous Hoosiers, ranging from Johnny Appleseed to David Letterman. It will interest all readers and provide some insight into the history of the Hoosier state by telling of famous people that have come from Indiana.

**GOALS:**

**Five goals:**

- Given the word “Pioneers,” the students will draw what that word means to them on paper with 100% accuracy.
- Using the featured selection, the students will fill out a Venn diagram comparing the main character, Caroline, and another Little House character with 100% accuracy.
- After being given a rubric, the students will write a historical fiction story using the featured selection and/or the related sources with a score of at least 42/50.
In small groups, the students will write a script for a play with the setting of the Pioneer era in Indiana with 100% accuracy.

In partners, the students will write a song about Pioneers using the provided rubric with a score of at least 15/20.

**Specific strategies and skills taught:**
- Character comparisons
- Making predictions
- Cause-and-effect

**Indiana Academic Standards:**
- 4.1.6 Explain how key individuals and events influenced the early growth of the new state of Indiana

**UNIT PLAN:**
**Pre-Reading:**
**Activity:** Have the students draw a scene about what they think of when they hear the word “Pioneers.” *(Art & Fine Motor)*
**Grouping:** Individual
**Assessment:** based on completion

**Activity:** The students will fill out a K-W-L chart about pioneers, only filling out the “Know” and “Want to Know” sections of the chart.
**Grouping:** Individual
**Assessment:** based on completion

**Activity:** Have the students go to this website, http://www.littlehousebooks.com/girls/caroline.cfm, and read about the main character in the featured selection, Caroline, and one of the other Little House girl characters. The student will compare/contrast the two characters to one another using a Venn diagram.
**Grouping:** Individual

**Reading:**
**Activity:** Teacher reads Chapter 1 of Little House in Brookfield aloud to the class.
**Grouping:** Whole-class

**Activity:** Students will keep a reading journal while reading the featured selection. They will write an entry everyday about what they read that day, any questions they have, and/or their response to the reading material. *(Writing)*
**Grouping:** Individual
**Monitor:** Teacher will check reading journals on random days throughout the unit to make sure all students are keeping up on the assignment
Assessment: Teacher will collect the reading journals at the end of the unit make sure there is an entry for every day and that the student comprehended the book.

Responding:
Activity: The students can make the “Town Party Lemonade” and the “Dried-Apple Sauce” from this website, http://www.littlehousebooks.com/pdf/lh-craftsandrecipe.pdf, with adult supervision. (Math)
Grouping: Small-group
Assessment: The teacher will assess by checking students for correct measurements for the recipes.

Activity: The students will complete their K-W-L chart about pioneers by completing the “What I Learned” section of the chart.
Grouping: Individual
Assessment: Teacher will check chart for at least 2 characteristics/questions listed in each category.

Exploring:
Activity: The students will play an activity adapted from the following website: http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Physical_Education/Games/GAM0003.html. They will play game #1, where they jump from behind a line, land on one foot, take a big step, and hop with both feet. Then they mark where they landed to see who can make it the farthest. (Gross Motor)

Activity: The students will create a song in partners for the pioneers to sing around a campfire or during their travels. (Music)
Grouping: Partners

Activity: The students will write a historical-fiction story (3-5 pages long) about living during the pioneer era, using themselves as the main character. They can use any of the additional related sources as resources for their story. They will then read their story to the class during author’s chair. (Writing, Story Telling, & Social Studies)
Grouping: Individual
Assessment: Provided rubric with requirements for paper outlined.

Activity: The students will learn how to test water to make sure it is safe to drink, just like the Pioneers had to do. (Science)
Grouping: Whole-class

Applying:
**Activity:** The students will work in small groups to write a script and act out their play for another class or classes. The setting is the Pioneer era in Indiana. *(Drama & Gross Motor)*

**Grouping:** Small-group

**TIME SCHEDULE:**

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<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
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<th>Day 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>-Pioneer drawing (10 min.)</td>
<td>-Complete Venn diagram (homework)</td>
<td>-Read Chapters 2 &amp; 3 in buddies (35 min.)</td>
<td>-Read Chapter 4 &amp; fill out reading journal (homework)</td>
<td>-Teacher reads Chapters 5 &amp; 6 in class (30 min.)</td>
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<td>-K-W-L Chart (10 min.)</td>
<td>-Read Chapter 1 as a class (20 min.)</td>
<td>-Students fill out journals (10 min.)</td>
<td>-Lemonade &amp; apple sauce activity (20-25 min.)</td>
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<td>-Mini-lesson: character comparisons</td>
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<th>Day 6</th>
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<td>-Students read Chapters 7 &amp; 8 over the weekend (homework)</td>
<td>-Read Chapter 10 independently in class (15 min.)</td>
<td>-Read Chapter 11 (homework)</td>
<td>-Read Chapters 14 &amp; 15 in small groups (35 min.)</td>
<td>-Read Chapter 16 (homework)</td>
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<td>-Read Chapter 9 in pairs (15 min.)</td>
<td>-Play physical activity in the gym or outside (15 min.)</td>
<td>-Students create campfire song (20 min.)</td>
<td>-Begin writing their historical-fiction pioneer stories (homework)</td>
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<td>-Mini-lesson: cause-and-effect</td>
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<td>-Read Chapter 17 as a class (15 min.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Read Chapter 18</td>
<td>-Students begin working on their scripts for drama play (25 min.)</td>
<td>-Students continue work on their small group plays</td>
<td>-Continue work on pioneer plays</td>
<td>-Students will present plays to other classes</td>
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**ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST:**

- Pioneer drawing
K-W-L Chart
Venn diagram
Campfire song
Historical fiction story
Script for pioneer play
Reading Journal