

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# StoryLines

## The Narrative Arc

The plot is what happens in the story. Each scene happens in a certain order to keep readers interested and entertained. **That order, with its rising, cresting, and dropping levels of excitement, is called the *narrative arc*.** If you drew that arc, it would be shaped like a lopsided mountain.



In most stories, the main character learns and grows through experiences, but in *Little House in the Big Woods*, the whole family experiences everything together. After you read each arc point's definition, pause to label the scene below that belongs on that point.

**The EXPOSITION** is the introduction to the characters and the setting – the *who, where, and when*.

**The CONFLICT** is the first sign that the characters have a *big issue* to deal with.

**The RISING ACTION** consists of the more exciting scenes that follow, as the characters *face* that big issue.

**The CLIMAX** is the point where the big issue comes to a *crisis*, and the characters **MUST** do something **NOW!**

**The RESOLUTION** is how the characters *resolve* the crisis.

**The FALLING ACTION** is the *wrap-up* of all the loose ends – the “how it all turns out” part.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Winter is coming, and the Ingalls must find and store food to survive.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ When it's almost winter again, Pa goes hunting – but he can't bring himself to kill deer or a bear when he gets the chance. Laura goes to bed happy, listening to Pa's fiddle and the wind, and watching Ma knitting. She knows she will never forget this moment, “because now is now.”
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ In late winter, Pa goes to town to trade furs for things the family can't make. He's very late coming home in the dark and snow, and Ma starts to worry about him. While he's gone, Ma and Laura get up close and personal with a bear! As it turns out, Pa did, too – or *thought* he did!
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ Sometime in the nineteenth century, a little girl named Laura lives with her two sisters and parents in a log cabin, deep in the woods of Wisconsin.
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ Pa kills two deer, the family's hog, and a big black bear for meat. The girls and Ma work together to harvest the garden and preserve all the food. Papa entertains the girls, and tells them a scary story about a panther. Cousins come at Christmas, and Laura gets a real rag doll. The family goes to Grandpa's to make maple sugar.
- F. \_\_\_\_\_ Winter ends, and the Ingalls' world is now more secure, sociable, and abundant. The girls make their first trip into town. Lots of neighbors and relatives visit over the summer. As autumn rain approaches, Pa and Uncle Henry work hard to harvest, thresh, and store their grain.

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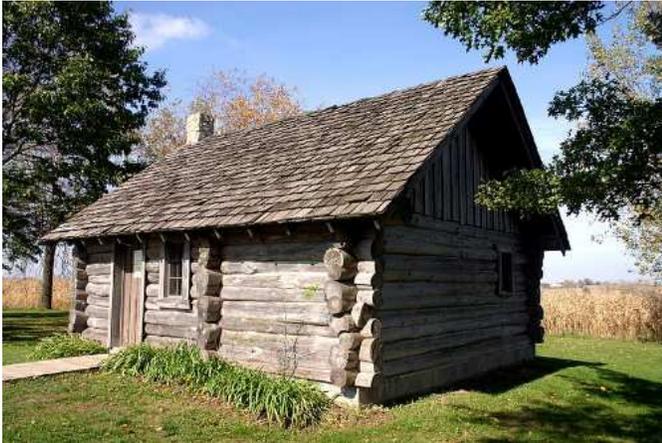
**The FALLING ACTION** is the *wrap-up* of all the loose ends – the “how it all turns out” part.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Conflict \_\_\_\_\_ Winter is coming, and the Ingalls must find and store food to survive.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ Falling Action \_\_\_\_\_ When it's almost winter again, Pa goes hunting – but he can't bring himself to kill deer or a bear when he gets the chance. Laura goes to bed happy, listening to Pa's fiddle and the wind, and watching Ma knitting. She knows she will never forget this moment, “because now is now.”
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Climax \_\_\_\_\_ In late winter, Pa goes to town to trade furs for things the family can't make. He's very late coming home in the dark and snow, and Ma starts to worry about him. While he's gone, Ma and Laura get up close and personal with a bear! As it turns out, Pa did, too – or *thought* he did!
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ Exposition \_\_\_\_\_ Sometime in the nineteenth century, a little girl named Laura lives with her two sisters and parents in a log cabin, deep in the woods of Wisconsin.
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ Rising Action \_\_\_\_\_ Pa kills two deer, the family's hog, and a big black bear for meat. The girls and Ma work together to harvest the garden and preserve all the food. Papa entertains the girls, and tells them a scary story about a panther. Cousins come at Christmas, and Laura gets a real rag doll. The family goes to Grandpa's to make maple sugar.
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# WhenAbouts

## Setting



Reproduction of the Ingalls cabin where Laura was born on February 7, 1867

In the 1870s, the Ingalls family lived in a log cabin in the untamed woods of west central Wisconsin, seven miles northwest of Pepin.

Pa and Uncle Henry had bought their 160 acres for \$335 in 1863. The parcel they bought was thick with trees, but it had a few clearings for planting crops. Pa worked the southern eighty acres of the land, and Uncle Henry worked the northern eighty.

1. On the map below, circle or outline Wisconsin.

2. Which four states border Wisconsin?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

By the time Laura was born, the population of Pepin was growing fast. Nearly five thousand people lived there, most of them from Sweden (like the Petersons, who gave Laura and Mary cookies) and Ireland (like the Huleatts).



3. The town of Pepin is located on the shore of Lake Pepin, which is part of the Mississippi River. Laura and Mary got candy hearts in Pepin, so draw a heart where the town would be.



Lake sturgeon

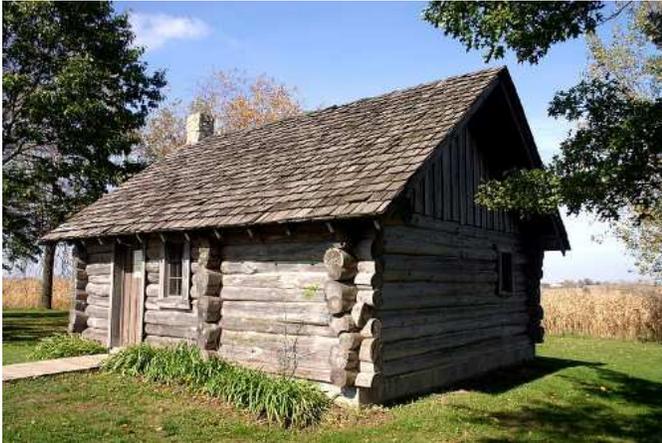
**FUN FACT:** Lake Pepin is where Pa went fishing and came home with a wagonload of fish, some “as big as Laura.” She wasn’t exaggerating – the lake sturgeon native to Lake Pepin can grow up to seven feet long!

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2. Which four states border Wisconsin?

a. Minnesota

b. Iowa

c. Illinois

d. Michigan

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Happenings

## History

*The great, dark trees of the Big Woods stood all around the house, and beyond them were other trees and beyond them were more trees. As far as a man could go to the north in a day, or a week, or a whole month, there was nothing but woods. There were no houses. There were no roads. There were no people. There were only trees and the wild animals who had their homes among them.* – Ch. 1

In *Little House in the Big Woods*, the central Wisconsin woods are still thick with trees: elm, oak, ash, maple, basswood, butternut, and birch. But in the 1870s, when this story takes place, many trees were being cut down. **Read** these excerpts and **circle** the word that tells you some trees have been cut. Then **underline** the word that tells you *why* they were cut.

1. *Once upon a time, sixty years ago, a little girl lived in the Big Woods of Wisconsin, in a little gray house made of logs.* –Ch. 1
2. *... Pa was plowing around the stumps and putting in his crops.* –Ch. 4
3. *... there were more houses than Laura could count. They were not made of logs, either; they were made of boards, like the store.* –Ch. 9
4. *"... Those sprouts are getting waist-high around the stumps in the wheat-field. A man just has to keep everlasting at it, or the woods'll take back the place."* –Ch. 10

Because it was so hard to be a farmer in the woods, many settlers came for logging jobs instead. Wood was a valuable product, and not just for building. **List** six objects in the story that are made from the Big Woods:

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 5. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 6. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 7. _____ | 10. _____ |



Wisconsin Land & Lumber Company Camp 15 (1939) – Wisconsin Historical Society

Beginning in the 1840s, loggers used wagons and rivers to move the cut trees to the sawmills. There the trees were sawn into lumber, which was used to make buildings, furniture, paper, packing crates, and steamships.

After railroad tracks were laid in the 1870s, loggers could move trees even after the rivers froze, and go deeper into the woods to remove larger trees.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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- |          |            |           |             |
|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 5. _____ | smokehouse | 8. _____  | bucket      |
| 6. _____ | sled       | 9. _____  | sap catcher |
| 7. _____ | wagon      | 10. _____ | trundle bed |



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# Write Angles

## Creative Writing

### Animal Stories

In *Little House in the Big Woods*, the adults tell several true stories of animal encounters. Sometimes they're exciting stories about a close call -- for instance, Grandpa galloping away from the panther, and Aunt Eliza being saved from another one by her brave dog. Sometimes they're funny stories about something scary that turned out to be not scary at all -- like Pa hearing the owl as a monster, or seeing the stump as a bear.

Everyone loves a good story -- and good stories are all around us, all the time. They're just waiting for you to make them sound exciting! Think of a time when you, too, had an encounter with an animal. Even a pleasant encounter, like waking up to find your cat on your bed, wanting her breakfast, can be made exciting if you turn it into fiction. Stretch it out, add more, exaggerate what really happened, and embellish the details. For instance:

*I tossed and turned in my sleep last night, unable to escape my nightmare. I was dreaming a panther had slipped through the open back door of our house while we ate dinner, and had been lying in wait for me under my bed all night. In my dream I could hear loud purring, and then a terrifying growl! My eyes flew open. I was staring straight into two golden feline eyes, and sharp claws pressing through my pajamas! I leapt out of bed and screamed, but the wildcat would not disappear! It yowled and jumped down from my bed with a hiss -- and then I started to laugh. It was only Bingo, my ten-pound tabby, wanting her breakfast NOW!*

Now try it yourself. What experience are you going to write about?

I'll write about the time I \_\_\_\_\_

To write that story, follow the narrative arc. 1) Where were you, and when did this happen? 2) What was the first sign of trouble? 3) What happened next? 4) Then what got a lot worse? 5) How did that get resolved, and 6) how did everything work out in the end? When you're finished, add the title.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(title)



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Brave New Words

## Vocabulary

### Don't Waste Words

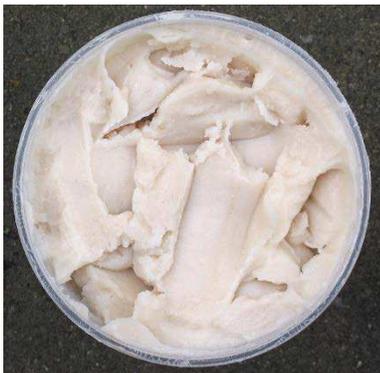
Early settlers had to make do with very little, so they learned how to make the most of things, and how to make things last. That's what the words in bold, below, are about. See if you can match the images on this page to those words. Use the number under the image to label the word.

*The hams and the shoulders were put to pickle in \_\_\_\_\_ **brine**, for they would be smoked, like the venison, in the hollow log. –Ch. 1*

*Ma scraped and cleaned the [pig's] head carefully, and then she boiled it till all the meat fell off the bones. She chopped the meat fine with her chopping knife in the wooden bowl, she seasoned it with pepper and salt and spices. Then she mixed the \_\_\_\_\_ **pot-liquor** with it, and set it away in a pan to cool. When it was cool it would cut in slices, and that was \_\_\_\_\_ **headcheese**. –Ch.1*

*All that day and the next, Ma was trying out the \_\_\_\_\_ **lard** in big iron pots on the cookstove. Laura and Mary carried wood and watched the fire. It must be hot, but not too hot, or the lard would burn. –Ch. 1*

*The big pots simmered and boiled, but they must not smoke. From time to time Ma skimmed out the brown \_\_\_\_\_ **cracklings**. She put them in a cloth and squeezed out every bit of the lard, and then she put the cracklings away. She would use them to flavor johnny-cake later. / Cracklings were very good to eat, but Laura and Mary could have only a taste. They were too rich for little girls, Ma said. –Ch. 1*



1) the soft white fat that comes from cooked flesh



2) water left in a pot after boiling meat or vegetables



3) sausage or jellied loaf made of chopped parts of a pig's head



4) roasted pig skin



5) salt, herbs, and water used for pickling

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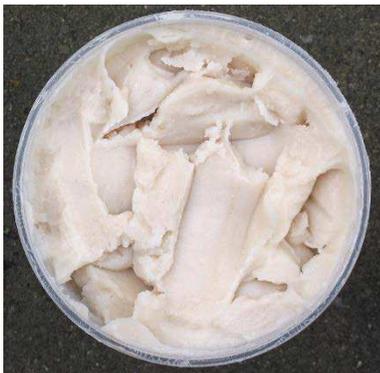
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# Number Crunchers

## Math

### Cookies and Cider

*Laura nibbled away exactly half of hers, and Mary nibbled exactly half of hers, and the other halves they saved for Baby Carrie. Then when they got home, Carrie had two half-cookies, and that was a whole cookie.*

*This wasn't right. All they wanted to do was to divide the cookies fairly with Carrie. Still, if Mary saved half her cookie, while Laura ate the whole of hers, or if Laura saved half, and Mary ate her whole cookies, that wouldn't be fair, either.*

*They didn't know what to do. So each saved half, and gave it to Baby Carrie. But they always felt that somehow that wasn't quite fair. –Ch. 10*

No, it wasn't, was it! Let's help them figure out how to be "quite fair."

1. First, draw lines on Laura's cookie to divide it in three sections, like a peace sign. Then write her name on two of the sections, and write Carrie's name on the third.
2. Now do the same thing on Mary's cookie.
3. How many sections does each sister get, all together? \_\_\_\_\_ of 6
4. In math language, we call that "part of all" number a **fraction**, and we write it by separating the two numbers with a line. Like this: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_



Laura's cookie



Mary's cookie

*[Pa] would come in from his tramping through the snowy woods with tiny icicles hanging on the ends of his mustaches. He would hang his gun on the wall over the door, throw off his fur cap and coat and mittens, and call: "Where's my little half-pint of sweet cider half drunk up?"*

*That was Laura, because she was so small. –Ch. 2*

6. Decide how much cider Pa is comparing Laura to. A pint is two cups, so how many cups is a half-pint? \_\_\_\_\_
7. If that's "half drunk up," how much is left? \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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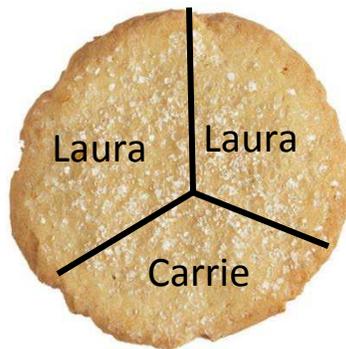
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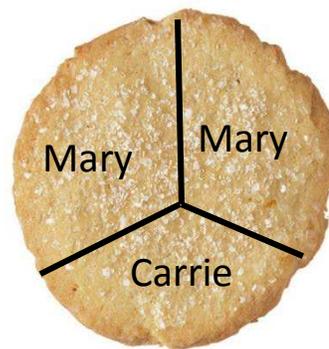
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2. Now do the same thing on Mary's cookie.
3. How many sections does each sister get, all together? 2 of 6
4. In math language, we call that "part of all" number a **fraction**, and we write it by separating the two numbers with a line. Like this: 2 / 6 (you can talk about reducing if your students are ready for that)



Laura's cookie



Mary's cookie

[Pa] would come in from his tramping through the snowy woods with tiny icicles hanging on the ends of his mustaches. He would hang his gun on the wall over the door, throw off his fur cap and coat and mittens, and call: "Where's my little half-pint of sweet cider half drunk up?"

That was Laura, because she was so small. –Ch. 2

6. Decide how much cider Pa is comparing Laura to. A pint is two cups, so how many cups is a half-pint? 1
7. If that's "half drunk up," how much is left? ½ cup