

Lesson 8: Dance at Grandpa's

Getting Started

? Questions to Explore

- How were pioneer families dependent on other families who lived nearby?



Facts and Definitions

- Music plays an important role in culture.

⦿ Skills

- Draw conclusions, make generalizations, and gather support by referencing the text. (LA)
- Respond to fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive and evaluative processes.
- Relate plot, setting, and characters to own experiences and ideas. (LA)
- Respond to text by reflecting on learning, gaining new insights, and identifying areas for further study. (LA)
- Interpret, create, and use graphic sources of information, including maps, charts, graphs, and diagrams. (LA)

✂ Materials

- *Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder
- journal
- square dance music

Introduction

Tell your child that Laura's family has some fun in today's chapter. Ask your child to describe what her family does for fun or to celebrate. Discuss how a fun night for Laura's family in the Big Woods might look different than it would today.

Discuss how extended families gather for celebrations. Explain that there were very few people living in the woods near Laura's family. The families depended on one another to help out with big jobs on the farm and also for support and community. They gathered for celebrations as well as for work.

Reading and Questions

Today your child will read the "Dance at Grandpa's" chapter and then answer the following questions.

1. How does Laura describe Grandma's house? Draw a diagram of Grandma's house based on Laura's description.

There is one large room and three smaller rooms: a bedroom for the aunts, one for Uncle George, and the kitchen. Laura says it is very clean, and the floor is polished white. Your child may mention or show the fireplace at one end of the house and the bed at the other end and may show the large cookstove in the kitchen.

2. Why do you think Laura enjoyed going to her grandparents' house?

Answers will vary. Your child may mention seeing the family, playing in the large house, or the wonderful smells.

3. What did Uncle George do for a job?

He was a soldier.

4. In this chapter, Laura goes to a big dance. Have you ever been to a dance? If so, did you enjoy it? If you have never been to a dance, do you think you would like it? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

5. What did everyone do with the maple syrup? Why did they put it over snow?

They put snow on a plate and poured syrup over it. The cold snow mixed with the warm syrup made candy. Your child may also mention that they ate hot hasty pudding with maple syrup for supper.

6. What role does the extended family play in Laura's life? What role does your extended family play in your life?

Answers will vary.

Activities

Activity 1: Life in the Woods vs. Life Today

On the "Life in the Big Woods vs. Life Today" page your child can record one thing that she learned about how life in the woods was different than her own life today.

Activity 2: The Fiddle

Discuss why music is an important part of a culture. Tell your child that cultures around the world listen to different types of music. Different types of instruments are used to play different types of music. Discuss the feelings that Pa's fiddle brought out in the family. Ask your child to describe a time that Pa played his fiddle. He could play soft, slow songs that helped children fall asleep, or he could play fast songs that made people want to get up and dance!

Ask your child what the world would be like without music. Discuss that music can make us feel certain ways, such as nervous, excited, or depressed. For this activity, encourage your child to listen to different types of music. After listening to each song, ask her to record how the song made her feel. Once your child has listened to eight to ten songs, she can select her favorite and create a dance/movement routine that reflects how the song makes her feel.

If your child plays an instrument, you can extend this activity by asking her to play different pieces of music and then to describe the mood of each piece. You can also do this activity if you play an instrument, playing different songs and asking your child to describe the mood.

Activity 3: Square Dancing

Ask your child if she has ever seen a person square dance. Explain that a square dance is done with a large number of people, and everyone has a partner. You can get the whole family involved in this activity. Today, you are going to teach your child some basic square dance moves. Play square dance music — you can get music from a digital music site or find music at the following web link.



Square Dance Music

www.beyondthepage.com/link/9587/

The square dance works best with four people making a square. The person across from you is your partner.

- Circle left (Everyone holds hands in a circle and walks to the left.)
- Circle right (Everyone holds hands in a circle and walks to the right.)
- Forward and back (Every dancer steps forward three, pauses, and steps back three.)
- Dosado (Partners step forward, pass shoulders on the right, and walk back to their spot passing shoulders on the left.)
- Right Arm Turn (Join right arms, circle around once, go back to your spot.)
- Left Arm Turn (Join left arms, circle around once, go back to your spot.)
- Promenade (One partner walks beside the other partner and walks in around the circle clockwise.)



American Square Dancing

www.beyondthepage.com/link/9588/

You can learn more about square dancing at this webpage. If you scroll down the page, the table has links to videos of people square dancing.

Activity 4: Writing a Song or Song Graphing

Explain the following activities to your child and let her select the one that sounds most interesting.

Option 1: Writing a Song

Ask your child to write a song that reflects something about her family. Tell her that the song should have two verses and a chorus. If your child is not familiar with verses and choruses, sing or play examples for her. Ask her to decide on the mood for her song. Will it be an upbeat, fast song or a mellow, slow song? Ask her which instruments would sound right for her song. After she writes her song, she can sing it for her family.

Option 2: Song Graphing

For this activity, your child will create a graph where she lists different genres of music — classical, country, pop, kids' tunes, oldies, jazz, etc. Discuss how the sounds of each type of music vary. Then play a variety of songs and ask your child to identify which genre each song would fit into. Encourage her to create the bar graph herself, labeling the graph and giving it a title. Discuss which type of graph should be used for this scenario.

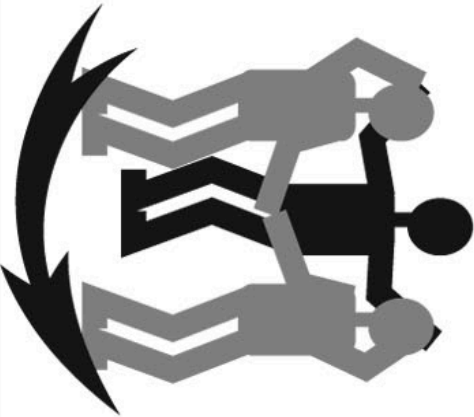
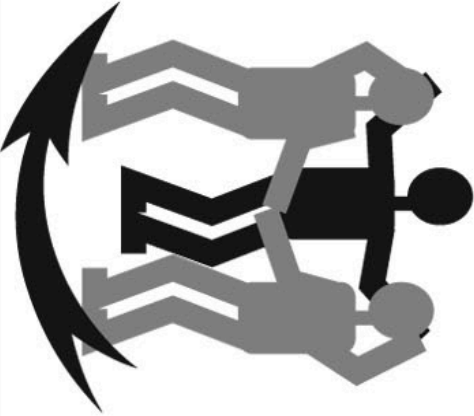
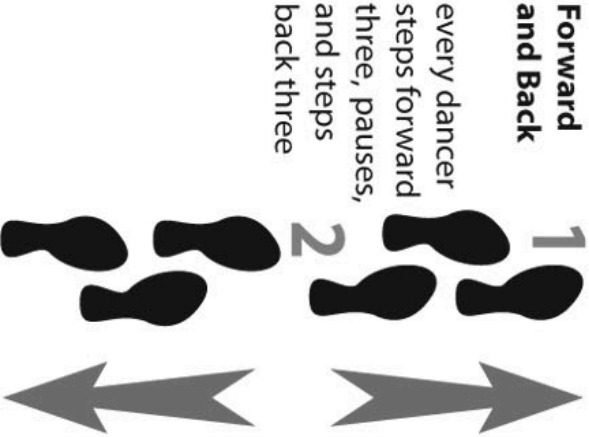
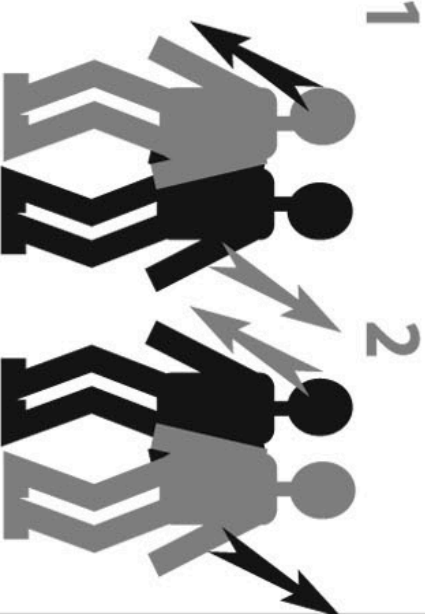
Wrapping Up

Ask your child to describe the importance of music in Laura's family. Then ask your child what role music plays in her own family.

Life Application

Look for a place where your child can watch or participate in a real square dance.

Square Dancing

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Dosado partners step forward, pass shoulders on the right, and walk back to their spot passing shoulders on the left 	Right Arm Turn join right arms, circle around once, go back to your spot 	Left Arm Turn join left arms, circle around once, go back to your spot 	