

SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL

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Promoting Geographic Knowledge Through Literature Workshop
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LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson will act as an introduction to the novel, Sarah, Plain and Tall. Sarah moves to the prairie to become the wife of a widower and mother of two and experiences changes in location and culture.

PURPOSE OF LESSON

The students will demonstrate an awareness of the location of Maine and the prairie of Kansas, the movement necessary to get there, and comparison of those regions.

CONNECTION TO NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

1. World in spatial terms – standard #1
2. Places and Regions – standard #4
3. Human Systems – standard #12

CONNECTION TO ILLINOIS STATE GOALS

State Goals 17A and 17C

THEMES OF GEOGRAPHY – location, movement, and regions

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVELS - 3-5

TIME – 1-2 class periods

PRIMARY QUESTION – What changes are experienced with a move from Maine to the prairies of Kansas?

SECONDARY QUESTIONS

1. Where are the locations mentioned in the novel?
2. How would the movement from Maine to the prairie be made?
3. How does Maine compare with Kansas?

MATERIALS

1. U.S. political map for each student with Portland, ME, and Topeka, KS, marked.
2. Pictures of landscapes of Maine and Kansas.
3. Internet access
4. Almanac of state facts
5. Book – Sarah, Plain and Tall – Patricia MacLachlan – ISBN 0-590-97409-2
6. Book – Travels Across America-The Northeast –Elspeth Leacock, National Geographic – ISBN 0-7922-8693-6
7. Book – Travels Across America – The Midwest – Elspeth Leacock, National Geographic – ISBN 0-7922-8688-X

INTRODUCTION OF SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL

1. Using the U.S. map, locate Maine and Kansas.
2. Display a mixture of pictures of each and have students sort according to state. Tell why decisions were made.

3. Have students use pencil to draw the path of travel through the fewest states, from Portland, ME, to Topeka, KS. Name the states in between.
4. Using the map, pg. 15, from The Northeast (attached), discuss the lack of manufacturing in Maine and predict what people do.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LESSON

1. Use the U.S. map and scale of miles to determine the distance from Portland to Topeka.
2. Discuss methods of travel that could be used from Maine to Kansas in the late 1800's.
3. Use Internet site www.gslis.utexas.edu/~schapa/page.html. Click on prairie, dunes and seashore, and 19th century railroad travel.
4. Using an almanac or the The Northeast and The Midwest books, compare facts of Maine and Kansas, such as size, population, altitude, etc.

ASSESSMENT

1. Class discussion of location, movement, and regions of Maine and Kansas.
2. Evaluate the map path of journey.

EXTENSIONS AFTER READING NOVEL

1. Use Internet sites with activities:

www.ukans.edu/heritage/prairie/

www.gslis.utexas.edu/~schapa/page.html

www.kidsreads.com/series/series-sarah-plain.asp

2. Compare with Little House on the Prairie – Laura Ingalls Wilder

3. Watch movies “Sarah, Plain and Tall” and “Skylark.” Hallmark. Compare the novels to the movies.
4. Read and compare to novel: My Prairie Year by Brett Harvey (ISBN 0-590-46592-9 or All the Places to Love by Patricia MacLachlan , Scholastic Books, ISBN 0-439-05505-9

