

Reading Notes

waist	the upper part of a garment, extending from the shoulders to the waistline
moccasins	soft leather slippers
primer	an elementary textbook for teaching children to read
jeering	mocking; taunting

Vocabulary

1. a little boy **trudged** to school _____ walked with heavy feet
2. Five big boys were **scuffling** in the deep snow by the path. wrestling
3. They **boasted** that no teacher could finish the winter term. bragged
4. Mr. Corse **rapped** on his desk with his ruler _____ knocked
5. No whispering was permitted in school, and no **fidgiting**. moving restlessly

Comprehension Questions

1. Give the names and ages of the four Wilder children. _____ The Wilder children are Royal (13), Eliza Jane (12), Alice (10), and Almanzo (8).
2. Briefly describe Eliza Jane. _____ She is bossy. She always knows what is best to do but makes Almanzo and Alice do it.
3. Why does Almanzo have to be the one to carry the dinner-pail to school? _____ He is the youngest in the family.
4. Who is the teacher and why is he staying with the Wilder family at their home? _____ Mr. Corse is the teacher. Each family boards the teacher for two weeks during the school year, and it is the Wilders' turn to host him.
5. Find where Mr. Corse is described and list three characteristics that describe him. _____ Pg. 5
Mr. Corse is slim, pale, young, patient, and gentle.
6. In what way are students punished for not knowing their lessons? _____ Royal's hand was spanked with a ruler. Almanzo has to stay in from recess to study.

Quotations

No whispering was permitted in school, and no fidgeting. Everyone must be perfectly still and keep his eyes fixed on his lesson. Almanzo and Miles held up their primers and tried not to swing their legs. Their legs grew so tired that they ached, dangling from the edge of the seat.

But Mr. Corse never beat a little boy's hand with his ruler. When Almanzo could not spell a word, Mr. Corse said: "Stay in at recess and learn it."

Discussion Questions

1. *Find the title page of the book, then turn the page to see publishing information. In what year did Laura Ingalls Wilder write *Farmer Boy*? Based on this knowledge and the first paragraph of the chapter, figure out the year in which the story is set. Where does the story take place?
2. Locate New York state on a U.S. map. What would the weather be like in that part of the country?
3. Why does Mr. Corse give the Hardscrabble boys another chance after they are tardy?
4. Explain the seating arrangement in the classroom. What do you think is the purpose of this arrangement?

*Discussion questions that have a * are NECESSARY to discuss with students, as they may appear on a test and are generally important in understanding the full flavor of the story.

Enrichment

Focus Passage: Copy the second paragraph beginning on page 1 ("Down a long road ... nine years old"). Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization should be perfect.

Down a long road through the woods a little boy trudged to school, with his big brother Royal and his two sisters, Eliza Jane and Alice. Royal was thirteen years old, Eliza Jane was twelve, and Alice was ten. Almanzo was the youngest of all, and this was his first going-to-school, because he was not quite nine years old.

Reading Notes

eave	the part of a roof that extends out past the wall
fringe	a decorative border or edging of hanging threads attached to a band
haymow	the part of a barn where hay or straw is stored
hoopskirt	a long full skirt belled out with a series of connected circular supports

Vocabulary

1. The wise, sedate work-horses **placidly** munched hay. calmly, peacefully
2. But the colts ran about excited, on their **gangling** legs awkwardly tall, long-limbed
3. a plate of **quivering** headcheese trembling
4. Almanzo ate the sweet, **mellow** baked beans. pleasant, subtle
5. He **demolished** a tall heap of pale mashed turnips destroyed

Comprehension Questions

1. What chores does Almanzo do after school? How are they different from the chores his sisters does? Almanzo's chores include cleaning stalls, feeding hay to the animals, milking cows, and feeding the barn cats. His sisters work in the house, cooking and cleaning, with their mother.
2. Contrast the old work-horses with the young colts. Old horses are calm (experienced and content); young horses are frisky (inquisitive and ready for work).
3. Describe Mother. Mother is short, plump, and pretty. She keeps very busy taking care of the house and the meals.
4. Who gets served a plate of food first? Who gets served last? Why? Mr. Corse (because he is a guest) is served first; Almanzo (because he is youngest) eats last.
5. Why can't Almanzo speak at the table? The rule at table is: "Children must be seen and not heard."