

Lesson Plan

Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie

Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie

By [Kristiana Gregory](#)

About this book

Grade Level Equivalent: 5.2

Lexile Measure: 940L

Guided Reading Level: T

Age: Age 11, Age 12, Age 13

Genre: Diaries and Journals, Historical Fiction, Series

Subject: Death, Grief, Loss, Westward Exploration and Expansion, Family Life, Determination and Perseverance, Pioneers

To the Discussion Leader

Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: The Oregon Trail Diary of Hattie Campbell is a story of courage, tragedy, kindness, and forgiveness. Thirteen-year-old Hattie Campbell's father dreamed of a new life in Oregon. He dreamed of free land, mild winters, and good soil. He wanted to leave behind a life in Missouri marked by an increased population, high taxes, and sad memories of young children dead from swamp fever. Reluctantly, Augusta Campbell agrees to join her husband, and Hattie and family find themselves on a wagon train traveling the Oregon Trail.

Hattie's diary entries tell a story of daily encounters with death: a baby, an old man, river drownings, dead oxen. Such sadness is countered with Hattie's observations of love, the miracle of new life, and the kindness of people who help each other through desperate times.

The Oregon Trail and Hattie's fellow pioneers help her to face her fears and emerge a stronger young woman. Hattie's exciting journey to Oregon is one marked by geographic peaks and valleys as well as the peaks and valleys of emotions the pioneers experienced on their grueling trip.

From the real life tragedy of the Donner party stranded in the mountains when winter arrived, to the portraits of courageous women and men with dreams of a better life, *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* helps readers attach human faces and emotions to an important part of American history.

Summary

Aunt June "...confided to me that the way their brother Milton's coffin went sailing down the Missouri was 'Splendid! The best amusement in months.' Aunt June and I think alike." These words, from thirteen-year-old Hattie Campbell's journal entry for February 18, 1847, mark the beginning of her journey—an adventure that unfolds over the next ten months and two thousand miles. A sense of amusement, the ability to dream, and a chance to escape sad memories while building a new life motivate Hattie Campbell and her family as they set their sights on the acres of land available to daring settlers at the end of the Oregon Trail.

Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie depicts a world that is drastically different from 20th century America. And yet, as is the case with all insightful historical fiction, Kristiana Gregory discloses the universal emotions and experiences that connect today's readers to their nation's past. Readers sympathize with Hattie's anger as a young boy is killed by a stray bullet. They feel Hattie's sense of guilt when youngsters get sick and die from eating poison hemlock she mistook as a vegetable. Some may even share Hattie's momentary jealousy when her best friend, Pepper, falls in love.

Hattie begins her journey apprehensive of Indians, but eventually concludes that she doesn't need to fear them. "If Indians come maybe we can make friends instead of run." Because of her relationship with miserly Mrs. Kenker and 300 pound Mrs. Bigg, Hattie learns to look deeper than outward appearances and to understand and value people's inner qualities.

Throughout the journey, Aunt June reminds Hattie that the purpose of her new journal is to record the adventure of a lifetime. "Remember, Hattie, tell the good and the bad." Hattie's words offer insight for youthful readers as she learns from her experiences, and just like the wagon train, moves on with her life. Hattie is a survivor and her hope for the future emerges as she describes her new surroundings: "It is so green everywhere, with lush pine trees. A mist makes my face feel soft again."

Thinking About the Book

1. Why was Hattie's mother so reluctant to leave the family home in Booneville, Missouri for a new life in Oregon?
2. Do you think the title *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* accurately describes Hattie's journey? Were the pioneers lonesome? If you could suggest a new title, what would it be?
3. Hattie starts out being afraid of Indians but finally decides that "they're as different among themselves as white folks are." What happened along the way to make her change her mind? Read the "Historical Note" at the end of the book. Do you think that the settlers or the Native Americans had more to fear? Explain your viewpoint.
4. Now that you know some of the dangers that faced travelers on the Oregon Trail, what would you have feared most?
5. By the end of Hattie's diary, have her experiences on the Oregon Trail changed her? Explain.
6. In many ways, *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: The Oregon Trail Diary of Hattie Campbell* is a story about kindness to others. What are some of the acts of kindness you remember from this novel?

7. Mama told Hattie, "Our home is our family, not our possessions." What did she mean by that? Do you agree with Mama?
8. Besides Hattie, who is your favorite character in this book? Why?
9. Hattie's mother tells her, "In order to move on we must forgive the past...We don't have to forget what happened." How does this apply to Mrs. Campbell's life? To Mr. Bigg? Mrs. Kenker?

Student Activities

1. Does the picture on the cover of Hattie's diary look like the girl you pictured in your mind as you read the book? Draw a picture of the Hattie you saw as you read her diary.
2. Travelers on the Oregon Trail were always having to leave their possessions along the way. Pretend that you were going to make the trip with Hattie but you could take any of the things you now own. What three items would you absolutely take with you all the way to Oregon?
3. Hattie's diary is filled with examples of strong, courageous women. List some of their courageous acts. Is there one woman you believe was the most courageous? Why?
4. Who had a harder life on the Oregon Trail, the men or the women? Build a case to support your opinion using the information in Hattie's diary and in the "Historical Note" at the end of the book.
5. Debate the following statement: The first astronauts who flew into orbit around the earth were taking greater risks than pioneers like Hattie's family who traveled across half a continent to find new homes.
6. The Library of Congress has included transcripts of Overland Trail lore and early life in Oregon on its internet web site. Using this primary source material, write a short story about life in a wagon train or the early settlers of the Pacific Northwest.
7. Poison hemlock is the source of much pain during Hattie's trip to Oregon. See what you can find out about this plant? What does it look like? What happens to people and animals who eat it? Where does it grow? Share your report with the class.
8. If you found out that your family was moving to another part of the United States how would you feel? Make a list of all the pros and cons — the good things and the bad. Which list is longer?

Discussion Guide written by Richard F. Abrahamson, Ph.D., Professor of Literature for Children and Young Adults, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, and Linda M. Pavonetti, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Oakland University, Department of Reading and Language Arts, Rochester, Michigan.

1 of 5 stars 2 of 5 stars 3 of 5 stars 4 of 5 stars 5 of 5 stars. Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie (Dear America). Published September 1st 2012 by Scholastic Inc. Kindle Edition, 208 pages. Author(s): Kristiana Gregory (Goodreads Author). ASIN: B0091LYD48. 1954 - Prairie Dog Droopy - Video Dailymotion-1954 - Droopy chien de prairie - Vidéo Dailymotion. 2:19. Frozen Elsa And Jack Frost Oh Dear What Can The Matter Be _ Frozen OH Dear Children Nursery Rhymes. 4:50. Jamey Johnson 'That Lonesome Song'. 2:55. Bill Rinehart sings 'Lonesome Cowboy' Elvis Week 2015. 7:49. Tom And Jerry Episode 10: The Lonesome Mouse 1943 6:07. Pink Panther and Pals episode 73 - Trail of the Lonesome Pink. 2:36. Download Dear America: Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie Free Books. 3 years ago 3 views. Bejajusa. Follow. Read or Download Now <http://readebooksonline.com.e-bookpopular.com/?book=0545350662>. Download Dear America: Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie Free Books. Report. Report this video. Browse 28 sets of across the wide and lonesome prairie flashcards. Study sets Diagrams Classes Users. Advanced. 8 terms. mswong00. Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie - 2. Fiddler. Canteen.