Raising Ourselves
by
Velma Wallis

Nonfiction Study
English 130

October 2006
English 130

Nonfiction Study
Raising Ourselves by Velma Wallis

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NWT Literacy Council

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Contact the NWT Literacy Council to get copies of the English 130 Resource Manual. You can also download it from our website.

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Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study

Introduction

Raising Ourselves by Velma Wallis

Raising Ourselves is a wonderful book to share with learners. Velma Wallis writes honestly and with passion about her people’s struggle with alcoholism and cultural loss.

Born in 1960, the sixth of thirteen children, Velma Wallis comes of age in a two-room log cabin in remote Fort Yukon, Alaska. Velma grows up in the raw, unsettled aftermath of a cultural invasion of her village on the Yukon River. The author’s great aunts still speak Gwich’in but their children, the generation of Velma’s mother and father, speak only English because the Native language was forbidden in schools run by white outsiders.

In this Novel Study you will find:

- Prereading Section
- Chapters 1 – 19
  - Vocabulary for each chapter
  - Comprehension questions with answers from each chapter
  - Reflection and journal writing
  - Discussion questions
  - Extended activities
- Epilogue and Review

Prereading

- The first section sets the stage for reading the novel.
- Learners read the preface and make predictions about the novel.
- Learners draw on their own life experiences to answer questions.

Chapters 1 – 19

- Vocabulary
  - Each chapter has an activity for reviewing vocabulary.
Some of the activities include: looking up words in the dictionary, matching definitions and words, reading words in context and guessing definition of words, etc.

Chapters 5, 10 and 15 review the words from the previous 5 chapters.

**Comprehension Questions**

- The comprehension questions are mostly factual and do not demand critical thinking. Comprehension questions help the instructor evaluate learners’ understanding of the novel.
- The learners’ answers should be similar to the answers in the instructor’s guide.

**Reflection and Journal Writing**

- Provide learners with a journal for the novel study.
- Ask them to was least one journal piece for each chapter.
- Encourage them to share their writing with others in the class.
- Give learners a guide for journal writing that they can follow for each entry.

**Discussion and Extended Activities**

- The discussion questions and activities ask learners to think critically and relate the novel to their own lives.
- Have learners work in pairs or small groups to respond to discussion questions.
- Ask learners to share their opinions.
- Set-up a debate and have groups defend opposing points of view.
- Use discression, some questions may be personal or sensitive to your learners.
- Use extended activities to broaden learners’ understanding of the chapter and topics presented in the chapter.

**Epilogue and Review**

- Questions
- Essay questions
- Group projects
Please Note
This nonfiction study is very in-depth and provides a variety of activities for learners to do. Instructors can use all the questions, activities and ideas or can pick and choose from each chapter.

Each section has a list of learning activities and handouts.

**Learning Activities** give instructors detailed ideas on how to use the learning strategy.

**Handouts** are pages you can copy for learners to use during the learning activities. Some activities have no handouts. Some activities have several handouts.
Prereading
Learning Activities

4 Handouts

Activity 1 – Look at the Title
Ask learners what they think the book is about by looking at the title and front cover. List their responses on flipchart paper. Ask learners to check out the book by using Handout 1. Ask them to share their ideas and predictions.

Activity 2 – How to Read a Family Tree?
Ask learners to look at Velma’s family tree and answer the questions on Handout 2.

Activity 3 – Draw Your Family Tree
Ask learners to draw their family tree using the outlines on Handout 3. They may need to ask their parents or grandparents information about their family in order to complete their family tree. Encourage them to find out as much as they can about their family history.

Activity 4 – Preface Questions
Ask learners to read the preface in Raising Ourselves on pages 12 and 13 and answer the questions on Handout 4 in groups.

Activity 5 – Agree/Disagree
Put up agree and disagree signs in the classroom. Read out the statements below and ask learners to decide if they agree with them or not. Ask them to stand by the sign they chose and discuss the topic with other learners.

- Education is the key to success.
- People must heal themselves first, before they can move on with their lives.
- Alcohol ruins lives.
Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study

- People should not tell their stories if it hurts other people.
- Being truthful at all times is the right thing to do.
- Your loved ones almost always cause people the greatest amount of pain.

Activity 6 – Writing Activity
The author states, “When you grow up in an environment of addiction, it is always your loved ones who cause you the greatest pain.” Ask learners to write a one page journal on what this statement means to them.
### Check out the Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items to Check Out</th>
<th>Record Information and/or Reaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title:</strong> Any predictions, questions, clues, or connections?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author:</strong> Are you familiar with the author? Is the author still living? Do you know any interesting facts about the author?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Art work on Cover:</strong> Any clues or guesses? What are your predictions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blurb on the Back:</strong> Any interesting facts? Any descriptive words that catch your attention? What are your predictions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table of Contents:</strong> What chapter titles sound interesting?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Source: [http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/checking%20out%20the%20framework.htm](http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/checking%20out%20the%20framework.htm)
Prereading
Handout 2

Velma’s Family Tree

Look at Velma’s family tree at the beginning of the book and answer the following questions in point form.

1. How many brothers and sisters does she have? ________________

2. What is her mother’s name? ________________________________

3. What is her father’s name? ________________________________

4. Who was her father’s first wife? ____________________________

5. What was their daughter’s name? __________________________

6. What’s her paternal grandmother’s name? _________________

7. What’s her maternal grandmother’s name? _________________

8. Where does their family name come from? _________________
Your Family Tree
Family Tree²

² Source: From Culture and Traditions How to Kit by the NWT Literacy Council
Preface

Read the preface in Raising Ourselves on pages 12 and 13 and work in groups to answer the following questions. Take the time to discuss.

1. Why was it so hard for Velma Wallis to write down her story of her childhood?

2. What event triggered Harold Napoleon to research his past? What did he find? Do you think this is true of the Dene and Inuit people?

3. How does Velma think her people can heal themselves? What do you think?

4. Is this book a fiction or nonfiction? Why? What are the differences? How can you tell?
Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study
Chapter One: Fort Yukon

Learning Activities

4 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

remnants descriptive beaten capture
overgrowth language eerie languid

Learners look these words up and use them in sentences to show the meaning of
the word (Handout 1).

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on
Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p. 16-18

1. What event does Velma remember from her childhood? *Getting up at 6am
   and going with her dad in their Evinrude boat to check the fish nets.*
   - Who was she with? *Her dad.*
   - Where did she go? *Up the river in Fort Yukon.*
   - What season was it? *Summer.*
   - How old was she? *6.*

2. Where and when was Velma born? *Fort Yukon, Alaska, 1960.*

3. What was happening at that time with young Native men? *They were
   beginning to rally for their rights in Alaska.*

4. What certificate do tourists get when they go to Fort Yukon? *A certificate
   that they have crossed the Arctic Circle.*

5. How many kids did women raise in those days? *From ten to thirteen
   children or around a dozen.*
Questions: p. 19-23


7. What does trahtrayll tsul mean? Crybaby in Gwich’in.

8. Does the author speak her native language, Gwich’in? No or not very much.

9. Why did Velma and her brothers and sisters love to visit Laura? She was an ageless soul who got along with people of every generation. She would knit socks, smoke cigarettes and tell stories.

10. What were the tasks and activities in each season in Fort Yukon? Winter they would go to school, snare rabbits, go sledding and haul wood. In the spring they expected muskrat tails and beaver meat to feed the whole family. In the summer they would stay up late playing with neighbourhood friends. In the fall, they would do the same things as the previous year: father haul wood and kill moose, older brothers cut dried grass as bedding for sled dogs.

Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing

• Describe the sensory perceptions of going to check the nets. What sights, sounds and smells did Velma experience?

• Write a journal page about your first memory of your community store.

Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

• Can you relate to this book? Did you have similar experiences of growing up in a small community?

• How are things different today?

Extended Activities

• Draw Harry Caroll’s house or Mary Thompson’s house.

• Who is telling the story? Learners examine some stories, books, magazine articles, fables, legends, etc. and decide what point of view they are written in. They write down at least 3 examples for each point of view on
Handout 3. Then they discuss what the point of view of *Raising Ourselves* is.

- Research Fort Yukon today. Check out this website for information on Fort Yukon. Look at the photos and information on the website. Does anything surprise you about Fort Yukon?
  [http://www.alaskacommercial.com/Cities/FortYukon/FortYukon.html](http://www.alaskacommercial.com/Cities/FortYukon/FortYukon.html)

- The author gives many dates in this chapter. Create a timeline of events as you read. Use Handout 3 for your timeline. For example:
  
  - Early 1900s orphanage run by Episcopal church in Fort Yukon
  - 1940s received generator in Fort Yukon (p.20)
  - 1960, Velma was born
# Chapter One Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>remnants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overgrowth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beaten</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eerie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>languid</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Look these words up and write the definition and then write a sentence that shows the meaning of the word.

**Word 1:**

Definition:

Sentence:

**Word 2:**

Definition:

Sentence:

**Word 3:**

Definition:

 Sentence:

**Word 4:**

Definition:

Sentence:
Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study

Word 5: __________
Definition: __________________________________________________________
Sentence: _____________________________________________________________

Word 6: __________
Definition: __________________________________________________________
Sentence: _____________________________________________________________

Word 7: __________
Definition: __________________________________________________________
Sentence: _____________________________________________________________

Word 8: __________
Definition: __________________________________________________________
Sentence: _____________________________________________________________
Chapter One Questions

1. What event is Velma remembering from her childhood? ________________
   - Who was she with? ____________________________
   - Where did she go? ____________________________
   - What season was it? ____________________________
   - How old was she? ____________________________

2. Where and when was Velma born? ____________________________

3. What was happening at that time with young Native men?
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

4. What certificate do tourists get when they go to Fort Yukon?
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

5. How many kids did women raise in those days? ________________

6. What does brush people mean? What do we say here?
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
7. What does **trahtryll tsul** mean? ____________________________

8. Does the author speak her native language, Gwich’in? __________________

9. Why did Velma and her brothers and sisters love to visit Laura?

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

10. What were the tasks and activities in each season in Fort Yukon?

    ________________________________________________________________

    ________________________________________________________________
# Point of View

Examine some stories, books, magazine articles, fables, legends, etc. and decide what point of view they are written in. Write down at least 3 examples for each point of view. What is the point of view of *Raising Ourselves*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of View</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innocent Eye</td>
<td>The story is told through the eyes of a child.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stream of Consciousness</td>
<td>The story is told so that the reader feels as if they are inside the head of one character and knows all their thoughts and reactions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Person</td>
<td>The story is told by the protagonist or one of the characters who interacts closely with the protagonist or other characters (using pronouns I, me, we, etc).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Person</td>
<td>Here the narrator does not participate in the action of the story as one of the characters, but lets us know exactly how the characters feel. We learn about the characters through this outside voice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omniscient</td>
<td>The author can move from character to character, event to event, having free access to the thoughts, feelings and motivations of his characters and he introduces information where and when he chooses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One: Timeline

Early 1900's

2000

Innocent Eye
The story is told through the eyes of a child.

Stream of Consciousness
The story is told so that the reader feels as if they are inside the head of one character and knows all their thoughts and reactions.

First Person
The story is told by the protagonist or one of the characters who interacts closely with the protagonist or other characters (using pronouns I, me, we, etc).

3rd Person
Here the narrator does not participate in the action of the story as one of the characters, but lets us know exactly how the characters feel. We learn about the characters through this outside voice.
Chapter Two: Itchoo
Learning Activities

5 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>heathen</th>
<th>loyalty</th>
<th>confluence</th>
<th>rituals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>enigma</td>
<td>meager</td>
<td>contentedly</td>
<td>diminishing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learners read the sentences from the chapter on Handout 1. They write their own definition for each word and then use a dictionary to check their definitions. Then, they write another sentence for each word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p. 26

1. What were the language barriers between grandmother Itchoo and her grandchildren? *She spoke mostly Gwich’in and they spoke mostly English.*

2. What were the strict rules that people followed? *Hunters fed before women and children because of their hunting. Women cooked, sewed, dried meat, raised children without complaint. Everyone knew their roles for group survival.*

Questions: p. 27

3. Who adopted Itchoo and her aunt? Why? *A man named Shanatti in a group of roaming Gwich’in. It was customary for a chief to take orphans and widows under his wing.*

4. How was Itchoo introduced to western culture? *When white traders met Shanatti. What did she trade? She traded her mooseskin clothing for a pretty calico dress.*
Questions: p. 28-29

5. How does Velma describe Shamanism? *A belief system that acknowledges the spirit within everything.*

6. As Velma grew up what were the two belief systems in Fort Yukon? *Christianity and Shamanism.*

7. Were old beliefs taught to children? *No.*

8. What did Velma get on Christmas day from the preacher’s wife? *A mirror, brush and comb set?*

9. Did she show her present to her dad? Why? *No. Her father didn’t want to take anything from anyone else.*

Questions: p.30-31

10. How did Itchoo get her name Martha? *When she was baptised as an adult into the church.*

11. What did men and women do for the preacher? *Men provided wood, water and food and women sewed and tanned.*

12. What was happening to nomadic life? *It was coming to an end as people were drawn to the church and Fort Yukon.*

Questions: p. 32-33

13. What was Martha and David’s arrangement in marriage? *They raised their kids together and they had an understanding that they lived separate lives or had affairs.*

14. Did their children know about their arrangement? *No.*

15. Why did Nina go to the shaman? *She wanted her parents to change their behaviour.*

Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing

- Velma says that her grandparents, Martha and David, did not feel *undying love* for one another. What is *undying love*?

- Describe Itchoo.

- What is the mood of the book? How does the book make you feel?
Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- The author says “the Gwich’in and their counterparts throughout North America had been made tough as leather by what they had to endure, living only by their skills and their wits.” (p.26) What do you think? Is this true for Dene and Inuit people?

- “When the missionaries preached Hell and brimstone, the Gwich’in did a quick about-face and accepted the white’s mans version of religion although they already believed in a higher power. They learned the white man’s rituals. No one wanted to burn in an eternal lake of fire….. As I grew up, two belief systems existed in Fort Yukon. In the open we attended either the Episcopal church or the Assembly of God church. Other beliefs were whispered among the older people.” In your community are there two belief systems? How have they been integrated?

Extended Activities

- Look at the family tree. Who has been introduced so far?

- What are some character traits of Martha? Ask learners to refer to the list of character traits on Handout 3, and write a BIO Poem for Martha. An example of a BIO Poem is on Handout 4.

- Talk to learners about the language barriers between youth and Elders in the book. Ask them if these barriers exist in their community. Talk about how the loss of language affects culture and tradition. Read Handout 5 together and then ask learners to write a short piece on how the loss of language has affected culture and traditions in their community.
Chapter Two
Handout 1

Chapter Two Vocabulary

heathen    loyalty    confluence    rituals
enigma     meager     contentedly     diminishing

Read the sentences below from the chapter. Write down what you think the word in **bold** means. Check your definition in the dictionary. Write the definition down from the dictionary. Write a new sentence for each word.

1. Itchoo was always an **enigma**. She didn’t speak fluent English, and her values differed greatly from ours.

   Your definition: ____________________________________________________________

   Dictionary: _______________________________________________________________

   Sentence: _________________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

2. Before the white people came, the Gwich’in people lived **meager** lives. Their existence depended on the animals that roamed the land.

   Your definition: ____________________________________________________________

   Dictionary: _______________________________________________________________

   Sentence: _________________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________
3. Finally only she and her aunt were left. Their hopes of survival were fast **diminishing** along with their energy.

Your definition: __________________________________________

Dictionary: __________________________________________

Sentence: __________________________________________

4. In time the small, roughly hewn fort by the **confluence** of the Yukon and Porcupine rivers became a town of trade and commerce.

Your definition: __________________________________________

Dictionary: __________________________________________

Sentence: __________________________________________

5. When the missionaries preached Hell and brimstone, the Gwich’in did a quick about-face and accepted the white’s mans version of religion although they already believed in a higher power. They learned the white man’s **rituals**. No one wanted to burn in an eternal lake of fire.

Your definition: __________________________________________

Dictionary: __________________________________________

Sentence: __________________________________________
6. As I grew up, two belief systems existed in Fort Yukon. In the open we attended either the Episcopal church of the Assembly of God church. My father, however, spoke of being a heathen.

Your definition: ____________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ________________________________________________________________

Sentence: ________________________________________________________________

7. When it came to the Episcopal church, we attended out of loyalty but we never could understand the rituals of the preaching.

Your definition: ____________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ________________________________________________________________

Sentence: ________________________________________________________________

8. Once as David drank with a bunch of cronies, he notices Martha sewing contentedly. It aggravated him to no end that she gave the appearance of being an obedient wife when he knew otherwise.

Your definition: ____________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ________________________________________________________________

Sentence: ________________________________________________________________
Chapter Two Questions

1. What were the language barriers between grandmother Itchoo and her grandchildren?

2. What were the strict rules that people followed?

3. Who adopted Itchoo and her aunt? Why?

4. How was Itchoo introduced to western culture? What did she trade?

5. How does Velma describe Shamanism?

6. As Velma grew up what were the two belief systems in Fort Yukon?

7. Were old beliefs taught to children? Why or why not?

8. What did Velma get on Christmas day from the preacher’s wife?
9. Did she show her present to her dad? Why? ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

10. How did Itchoo get her name Martha? ______________________________
    ______________________________

11. What did men and women do for the preacher? ______________________
    ______________________________
    ______________________________

12. What was happening to nomadic life? ______________________________
    ______________________________

13. What was their arrangement in marriage? ____________________________
    ______________________________
    ______________________________

14. Did their children know about their arrangement? ____________________
    ______________________________
    ______________________________

15. Why did Nina go to the shaman? ________________________________
    ______________________________
# Chapter Two

**Handout 3**

## Character Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Traits</th>
<th>Negative Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Honest</td>
<td>• Bright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Light-Hearted</td>
<td>• Courageous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leader</td>
<td>• Serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expert</td>
<td>• Serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Brave</td>
<td>• Funny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conceited</td>
<td>• Humorous</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mischievous</td>
<td>• Sad</td>
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<td>• Demanding</td>
<td>• Poor</td>
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<td>• Bossy</td>
<td>• Lazy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Witty</td>
<td>• Dreamer</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fighter</td>
<td>• Simple-Minded</td>
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<td>• Helpful</td>
<td>• Loyal</td>
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<td>• Kind</td>
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Chapter Two
Handout 4

**BIO Poem**

Use the character traits on Handout 3 to write a BIO Poem for Martha. An example BIO poem is below.

**Snow White**
Beautiful, giving, loving, unhappy
The Queen, her wicked stepmother
The seven dwarfs
Safe in the forest
The love of a Prince
Love to the seven dwarfs
Goodness throughout the kingdom
The forest

**BIO Poem**

First name

Four traits

Related to

Cares deeply for

Who feels

Who needs

Who gives

Who would like to see

Resident of
Chapter Two
Handout 5

Language and Culture

Aboriginal language loss is increasing at a rapid rate. The NWT has eleven official languages—nine of these are Aboriginal: Gwich’in, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun, North Slavey, South Slavey, Dogrib, Chipewyan and Cree. The health of these languages varies greatly, but unfortunately most are declining.

Language is connected to culture and one’s roots and identity. Elders tell us that it is important to speak your Aboriginal language because “languages are tied to knowing who you are in the core of your soul.” (First Nations Congress 1991)³ Culture and language are important parts of who we are. Culture shapes the way we look at the world. Language represents culture, and shows which cultural group we belong to. We use language to pass on our culture from one generation to the next. Through language, we learn about the culture and traditions of our ancestors; and we learn our stories.

For many years, Aboriginal parents and educators were told that education in an Aboriginal language, whether through immersion or bilingual education, would be harmful to the children’s education. Basically, they were told that if they taught their children their Aboriginal language at home it would ‘hold them back’ in school. The result of this was that Aboriginal parents were told to teach their children English at home so they could get their children off to a good start in school.

³ Source: Handbook for Aboriginal Language Program Planning in British Columbia, First Nations Education Steering Committee, Vancouver by Marianne B. Ignace Phd Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, Simon Fraser University
As linguists and specialists in education now know, the opposite is actually true. Learning an Aboriginal language from an early age in the home, daycare, preschool or community enhances the social, emotional and intellectual development as well as the academic achievement of children. It turns out that learning to speak and understand, as well as read and write, in an Aboriginal language provides many benefits. 4

For a language to survive, it needs to pass from generation to generation. Ideally, this happens in the home and the community, where family members learn the language from birth and use it as part of their everyday lives. However, everyone in the community can be involved in culture and language activities. You don’t have to be fluent in the language yourself.

4 Source: *Handbook for Aboriginal Language Program Planning in British Columbia*, First Nations Education Steering Committee, Vancouver by Marianne B. Ignace Phd Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, Simon Fraser University
Chapter Three – Nina
Learning Activities

2 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

- bootlegging
- attire
- epidemics
- sibling rivalry
- vigil
- trod
- eccentric

Learners look these words up in a dictionary and use them in sentences to show the meaning of the word (Handout 1).

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.36-37

1. How many children did David and Martha have? 6
2. What did the preacher think of Shamanism? *People who practised it would be punished.*
3. What epidemics came to that region? *Measles, smallpox, diphtheria, typhoid, tuberculosis, and influenza.*
5. What belief did Aunt Nina follow which her sisters Minnie and Ethel didn’t? *She sat in a tent alone during her first menses, a tradition to not jinx the man’s hunt.*
6. Why did Aunt Nina believe that she survived the epidemics and her sisters didn’t? *Because she followed tradition.*
7. Who did Aunt Nina have a sibling rivalry with? *Velma’s father.*
8. What did Aunt Nina wear on her head? *A doilie. Coloured ones to match her clothes.* Why? *Velma’s mother said she was balding and felt self-conscious.*
9. How old was Velma when she became Aunt Nina’s companion? 17.

Questions: p.38-39

10. What happened when Velma and Aunt Nina tried to keep Baldy’s bootlegging business going? Aunt Nina started drinking the alcohol and they ran out of money.

11. What did Velma find in the cache? A dress, a lock of hair and some other personal belonging in a cloth.

12. What’s the invisible boundary between elders and youth? Youth had no emotional claims on elders. Physically close but spiritually apart.

13. What was the hardest thing Aunt Nina ever had to do? Bury her young daughter.

Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing

- Reflect on how Aunt Nina felt when her only daughter died of typhoid fever. Write a letter to Aunt Nina expressing your sympathy over her daughter’s death.
- Write an obituary for Baldy.

Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- How was Gwich’in life slowly being destroy?
- Why was Aunt Nina a source of mystery?
- How did the epidemics affect the Gwich’in people? How was Aunt Nina affected?

Extended Activities

- Add to your timeline: 1910s Gwich’in wearing trousers, white shirts, shiny black shoes (Western clothing)
- Research the different epidemics from the early 1900’s: measles, smallpox, diphtheria, typhoid, tuberculosis and influenza. Choose one disease and research it on the Internet. Write a one page essay on the history of the
disease. Make sure you the answers to the following questions in your essay:

- Give an overview of the disease.
- Where does it come from?
- How is it transmitted?
- What are the signs and symptoms of the disease?
- Why was the disease so deadly in the early 1900’s to Aboriginal people?
- Have they found a treatment or vaccination for it? When?
Chapter Three Vocabulary

bootlegging  attire  epidemics  sibling rivalry
vigil  trod  eccentric

Look these words up and write the definition and then write a sentence that shows the meaning of the word.

Word 1: __________
Definition: _____________________________
Sentence: _____________________________

Word 2: __________
Definition: _____________________________
Sentence: _____________________________

Word 3: __________
Definition: _____________________________
Sentence: _____________________________

Word 4: __________
Definition: _____________________________
Sentence: _____________________________
Word 5: __________
Definition: ____________________________________________
Sentence: ____________________________________________

Word 6: __________
Definition: ____________________________________________
Sentence: ____________________________________________

Word 7: __________
Definition: ____________________________________________
Sentence: ____________________________________________

Word 8: __________
Definition: ____________________________________________
Sentence: ____________________________________________
Chapter Three Questions

1. How many children did David and Martha have? ________________

2. What did the preacher think of Shamanism?

3. What epidemics came to that region? _____________________________

4. What did epidemics do to Native people? ________________________

5. What belief did Auntie Nina follow which her sisters Minnie and Ethel didn’t?

6. Why did Auntie Nina believe that she survived the epidemics and her sisters didn’t?

7. Who did Auntie Nina have a sibling rivalry with? ________________

8. What did Auntie Nina wear on her head? _________________________

9. How old was Velma when she became Auntie Nina’s companion? ______

10. What happened when Velma and Auntie Nina tried to keep Baldy’s bootlegging business going?

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
11. What did Velma find in the cache? 

12. What’s the invisible boundary between elders and youth?

13. What was the hardest thing Auntie Nina ever had to do?
Raising Ourselves Novel Study
Chapter Four – Pete
Learning Activities

3 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

vagrant       ridicule       scourge       prejudices
quandary      cynical        inundated

Learners read the sentences from the chapter on Handout 1. They write their own definition for each word and then use a dictionary to check their definitions. Then, they write another sentence for each word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.42-43

1. What was Velma’s dad’s name?  *Peter “Pete”*

2. How did Velma learn about her dad’s life?  *Through her Auntie Nina’s stories and her mother after her father died.*

3. Why didn’t he teach his kids Gwich’in?  *He learned to feel ashamed of being Native when he was in school. Instructors slapped his hand if he spoke his language.*

4. Why was he strict with his children?  *He was afraid that if they were exposed to other people they would be exposed to diseases like he witnessed in the epidemics and he was afraid of losing more loved ones.* Give an example of an event that his kids weren’t supposed to attend: *Potlucks.*

5. Why did Native people have “no chance” against the sicknesses?  *There was new bacteria brought by white people and the Native people had a low resistance.*

6. Why were children left alone?  *Because parents were dying.*

7. How many children did Velma’s grandmother lose?  *3*
Questions: p.44-45

8. Describe why Velma was confused. *She heard her father say “dirty Indian”. She thought they were Indians. So when she saw a drunk Indian she thought this might be who her father was referring to.*


10. What two aspects of village life aren’t likely to change, in the author’s opinion? *1) people will always have huge store bills to pay off and 2) there will always be bootleggers.*

11. What did Pete spend his money on? How old was he? *Alcohol. 16.*

12. How did Velma find out about her father’s youth? *Her brother worked for the court system and discovered a long record of times her father was put in jail for vagrancy.*

Questions: p.46-47

13. What happened to his first wife? *She died in an epidemic.*

14. Why was he afraid to love his other children? *Because he lost his first wife and child and was afraid to risk feeling the pain of loss again.*

**Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing**

Respond to these in your journal.

- “Yet in their overwhelming love for those who lived, they often coddled and spoiled the remaining children with abandon, for tomorrow those children might die. This mentality clings to our culture even today.” Do you think this is true?

- How do you think Pete’s life would be different if he went to England to live with his grandfather George Wallis and attended school there? Explain.
Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- What does “point a finger and four point back at you” mean?
- What does it mean to have a “to hell with it” mentality? Do you know anyone that has that attitude? Why do you think people have this attitude?
- Pete had a saying for white men and another for Native men. What does each saying mean? His words were bitter to both cultures. Why?
  - “If you can’t impress a white man with your intellect, then dazzle him with your bull.”
  - “Give them a hand and they try to take the whole arm.”

Extended activity

- Add to timeline--father born in 1916. What other dates and events have you added to timeline in these chapters?
- Ask learners “Did you know that 4 million Canadians, that’s one in six, have been victims of racism? Ask learners to fill in Handout 3 on racism and share their responses with others.”
Chapter Four Vocabulary

vagrant
quandary
ridicule
cynical
scourge
prejudices
inundated

Read the sentences below from the chapter. Write down what you think the word in bold means. Check your definition in the dictionary. Write the definition down from the dictionary. Write a new sentence for each word.

1. Instructors slapped their hands with a switch whenever they were caught using the Gwich’in language. Eventually Peter realized that to be Gwich’in meant pain and ridicule.

Your definition: ________________________________________________________________

Dictionary: _________________________________________________________________

Sentence: ________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________

2. The people tending the sick were too busy to check on many of their patients. They were losing a war against this scourge, for when the germs entered the body the sickness took a firm hold.

Your definition: ________________________________________________________________

Dictionary: _________________________________________________________________

Sentence: ________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________
3. This was the time when the Gwich’in people of our area fine-tuned their **prejudices**. The term “dirty Indians” was learned and used by our people.

Your definition: ____________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

Sentence: _________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________

4. There he discovered a long record of times my father had been thrown in jail for **vagrancy**.

Your definition: __________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

Sentence: _________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________

5. When the missionaries said don’t do this and don’t do that, people who were prone to doing this and that, often pointed a finger and found four pointing back. It was a moral **quandary** for men and women, most of whom had been matched up in arranged marriages at a young age.

Your definition: __________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

Sentence: _________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________
6. Despite his **cynical** attitude toward all the races that **inundated** Fort Yukon, Pete had many friends.

Your definition: __________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

Sentence: ________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

Your definition: __________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

Sentence: ________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________
Chapter Four Questions

1. What was Velma’s dad’s name? ________________________________

2. How did Velma learn about her dad’s life? ________________________________
   ________________________________

3. Why didn’t he teach his kids Gwich’in? ________________________________
   ________________________________

4. Why was he strict with his children? ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

5. Why did Native people have “no chance” against the sicknesses? ________________________________

6. Why were children left alone? ________________________________

7. How many children did Velma’s grandmother lose? ________________________________

8. Describe why Velma was confused about her people. ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

9. Who taught Pete to trap? ________________________________
10. What two aspects of village life aren’t likely to change, in the author’s opinion?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

11. What did Pete spend his money on? How old was he? ________________

12. How did Velma find out about her father’s youth? ____________________

__________________________________________________________

13. What happened to Pete’s first wife and child?

__________________________________________________________

14. Why was he afraid to love his other children? _____________________

__________________________________________________________
Raising Ourselves Novel Study

Chapter Four
Handout 3

Racism

Did you know that 4 million Canadians, that’s one in six, have been victims of racism?

1. What does racism mean to you?

2. Have you ever experienced racism yourself, or seen it somewhere. Tell us about it.

3. How did people in the book internalize racism? What term did people use describe their people? Why was Velma confused?

4. Do you think that racism has changed in the last 30 years? If so how? If not, why?
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Chapter Five – Hannah
Learning Activities

4 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary
spiteful    sultry    resilient    boisterous

Learners look these words up and use them in sentences to show the meaning of the word (Handout 1).

Activity 2 – Review of Vocabulary
Learners find the words from Chapters 1 – 5 in the word search.

Activity 3 – Chapter Questions
Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 3. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.50-51

1. What does jalgisick mean? Fishhook in Gwich’in.
2. How did Moses Peter wed Hannah William? It was an arranged marriage.
3. Did Hannah love Moses? No.
4. Why did she marry him? It was tradition.
5. Why did Moses regret Edison? Because Hannah said he was someone else’s son out of spite.
7. What two treasures did Edison and Mae inherit at grandmother Maggie’s house? Stories and biscuits.
8. Why do you think Maggie didn’t approach Hannah about her behaviour? It was not the tradition of the people to scold or tell others what to do.
Questions: p.52-53


10. Why was it hard for the other children when Mary visited? Because Mary was given special treatment by her parents and the others took the blame for what Mary did. Mary looked down on them.

Questions: p.54-55

11. Where did children learn about Santa Claus, Easter Bunny and Christopher Columbus? At school.

12. What did Velma’s mom and other children do to pass their days? Play and hunt for small game along the lakes. Older children would pick berries, check snares and traps with their mothers.

Questions: p.56-57

13. There is an old Gwich’in belief that before people leave this world, sometimes strange things happen. Give examples (p.56) Snowy white owls would come to tell a person that his time was near, people saw visions, or heard music.

14. What happened to Hannah and what did Mae realize? Both Hannah and Mae heard music when they were picking berries. Then Hannah hung her head. When Mae asked her what was wrong she wouldn’t say. When Mae mentioned it to her grandmother Maggie, she has a knowing look but shielded her emotions. Mae realized that older people had beliefs that had become taboo. Then Hannah died in childbirth.

Activity 4 – Reflection and Journal Writing

Respond to these in your journal.

• What would you say to Hannah about her behaviour if you were her friend? Write Hannah a letter.

• Describe life in Chalkyitsik.
Activity 5 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

• What do you think of arranged marriages? What do you think about honouring tradition?

• The Gwich’in Elders held many beliefs, but would not speak of them to children. What is a belief in your culture? or What is an old belief you heard from elders?

• How do you think Edison would have faired as an adult? How do you think the abuse affected his life?

Extended activity

• Add to your timeline—July 4, 1927, mother Mae born.

• When Edison was dying of cancer, Velma’s mom saw “the rejected boy he had been”. Role-play: If you were Mae, what would you say to Edison?

• Draw a character map of Hannah. Use Handout 4 as a guide.
**Chapter Five Vocabulary**

- spiteful
- sultry
- resilient
- boisterous

Look these words up and then write a sentence that shows the meaning of the word.

**Word 1:**

Sentence: __________________________

**Word 2:**

Sentence: __________________________

**Word 3:**

Sentence: __________________________

**Word 4:**

Sentence: __________________________
Chapter Five
Handout 2

Vocabulary Review:  Chapter 1-5

Find the words below in the word search.

attire  beaten  boisterous  bootlegging  capture  confluence  contentedly  cynical  descriptive  diminishing  eccentric  eerie  enigma  epidemics  heathen  inundated  language  languid  loyalty  meager  overgrowth  prejudices  quandary  remnants  resilient  ridicule  rituals  rivalry  scourge  shed  sibling  spiteful  sultry  trod  vagrant  vigil
Chapter Five Questions

1. What does jalgisick mean? ____________________________

2. How did Moses Peter wed Hannah William? ____________________________

3. Did Hannah love Moses? ____________________________

4. Why did she marry him? ____________________________

5. Why did Moses regret Edison? ____________________________

6. What kind of temper did Hannah have? Give examples. ____________________________

7. What two treasures did Edison and Mae inherit at grandmother Maggie’s house? ____________________________

8. Why do you think Maggie didn’t approach Hannah about her behaviour? ____________________________

10. Why was it hard for the other children when Mary visited?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

11. Where did children learn about Santa Claus, Easter Bunny and Christopher Columbus?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

12. What did Velma’s mom and other children do to pass their days?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

13. There is an old Gwich’in belief that before people leave this world, sometimes strange things happen. Give examples (p.56)

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

14. What happened to Hannah and what did Mae realize?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Character Map – Hannah

Develop a character map for Hannah. Write one character trait in each oval. Write one supporting detail in each of the rectangles.
Chapter Six – Mae
Learning Activities

2 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

incomprehensible  bereft  quarantine  contagious
stench  irony  nonchalance  balefully

Learners read the sentences from the chapter on Handout 1. They write their own definition for each word and then use a dictionary to check their definitions. Then, they write another sentence for each word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.60-61

2. What happened to the children?  *Older ones shipped off to school and younger ones sent to orphanage where they later died.*
3. Where did Mae work?  *Hudson Stuck Memorial Hospital*

Questions: p.62-63

4. What was Mae’s salary?  *15 dollars a month.*
5. Why was it difficult for Mae to save money?  *Even though it was a lot of money, her money dwindled. Especially when she bought into the idea of dressing as well as her peers.*
6. What was every girl’s romantic dream?  *To have a Carey Grant look-a-like light their cigarette.*
7. Where did she first see Pete?  *On one of her breaks at the hospital*

Questions: p.64-65

8. What does it mean “Mae was captivated from the moment she saw him”.

Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study
9. What did his mother Nina and grandmother Martha want? *A good woman to look after Peter and his daughter Ethel-Marie.*

10. What did Peter think of Mae? *A young girl. His pal.*

11. How many years difference was there between Peter and Mae? *11 years.*

12. What did Mae’s mother tell her about kissing? *That you can get pregnant.*

13. What did Mae realize about being an unwed mother? *It was socially unacceptable and people whispered about her.*

14. Before he announced the wedding, they had a big fight. What happened? *Peter hit Mae.*

15. How did Velma feel about her dad? *Angry “I would glare at him balefully with clenched fists.”*

**Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing**

Respond to these in your journal.

- What does irony mean? What is ironic about Mary and Mae’s situation?
- Why was Peter’s nonchalance appealing to women? What traits do you look for in a partner?
- Velma says her mother always told the truth no matter how much it hurt. This affects how Velma tells stories. Are there times when the truth is better kept secret?

**Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities**

**Discussion**

- Why do you think that Mae and her father could only show deep emotions when they were drunk?
- Why don’t you think that any of the girls took Dr. Disosway up on her offer to go for further schooling in medicine?
- Discuss this statement: “It is possible to miss someone when they die when you didn’t get along with them.”
Extended activities

- Pretend you are Dr. Lulu Disasway. Write a letter to a family member describing your experiences in Fort Yukon.
- Pretend you are Dr. Lulu Disasway. Write three journal entries about your experiences in Fort Yukon.
Chapter Six Vocabulary

incomprehensible  
bereft  
quarantine  
contagious

stench  
vulnerability  
nonchalance  
balefully

Read the sentences below from the chapter. Write down what you think the word in **bold** means. Check your definition in the dictionary. Write the definition down from the dictionary. Write a new sentence for each word.

1. After all the years of living with his **incomprehensible** wife, arguing with her, loving her, Moses Peter was **bereft** at Hannah’s death. Her buried his wife in numbed grief, then allowed the local instructors to make arrangements for the care of his children.

   Your definition: ____________________________________________

   Dictionary: __________________________________________________

   Sentence: _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

   Your definition: _____________________________________________

   Dictionary: __________________________________________________

   Sentence: _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
2. Dr. Lulu Disosway was a small, fiery woman. It was said that she once had quarantined Fort Yukon just before all the white trappers returned to town. At that time, the hospital had the authority to **quarantine** the village to control the spread of **contagious** disease.

Your definition: __________________________

Dictionary: __________________________

Sentence: __________________________

____________________________________

3. My mother recalled that working at the hospital was a good job, but when Dr. Disosway performed any kind of surgery, mother wanted to gag from the **stench** of the blood.

Your definition: __________________________

Dictionary: __________________________

Sentence: __________________________

____________________________________
4. Pete was handsome, like many of the men, but his air of nonchalance always struck women as vulnerability and innocence.

Your definition: __________________________________________________________________________

Dictionary: _______________________________________________________________________________

Sentence: __________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Your definition: __________________________________________________________________________

Dictionary: _______________________________________________________________________________

Sentence: __________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

5. I was saddened that my father had spoiled the story by hitting her. Even then, I knew it healed my mother to talk to us about her painful past. We loved her very much, and when my father came home I would glare balefully at him with clenched fists.

Your definition: __________________________________________________________________________

Dictionary: _______________________________________________________________________________

Sentence: __________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
Chapter Six Questions

1. How did Moses feel when Hannah died? _____________________________

2. What happened to the children? _________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

3. Where did Mae work? _________________________________________

4. What was Mae’s salary? _______________________________________

5. Why was it difficult for Mae to save money? ______________________
   ______________________________________________________________

6. What was every girl’s romantic dream? ___________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

7. Where did she first see Pete? ___________________________________

8. What does it mean “Mae was captivated from the moment she saw him”.
   ______________________________________________________________

9. What did his mother Nina and grandmother Martha want? 
   ______________________________________________________________

10. What did Peter think of Mae? _________________________________

11. How many years difference was there between Peter and Mae? ________
12. What did Mae’s mother tell her about kissing? 

13. What did Mae realize about being an unwed mother? 

14. Before he announced the wedding, they had a big fight. What happened? 

15. How did Velma feel about her dad?
Chapter Seven – Siblings and Seasonal Friends
Learning Activities

3 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary
precarious  nomadic  mischievous  sympathetic
contaminate  catapult  lynched

Learners look these words up and use them in sentences to show the meaning of the word (Handout 1).

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions
Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.68-69

1. Why were males favoured in the tribe? Because they are the hunters and provide food for the family.
2. How many siblings did Velma have? How did she describe their relationships with one another?
3. What are Velma’s mom’s best memories of life with Pete? Living in the bush together.
4. What happened to her father in town? He would go out with the guys and drink.
5. How did Velma feel about her dolls? What did she do for her dolls each night? They were like children to her. She protected them. She would cover them up to keep them warm.
6. Why was the outhouse scary for children? The seat was up high and the hole was dark and deep.
Questions: p. 72-73

8. What pranks did Martha play on Velma? She locked the outhouse door and pretended that she was inside and had fallen down the hole. She also threw Velma’s doll down the outhouse.

9. What smells does Velma remember in the house? Fish, moosemeat and cooking on the stove; frozen laundry; and the fresh scent of outdoors in blankets.


Questions: p. 76-79

11. What trick did their mom use to get them to go to sleep? Tell them the mouse would get them.

12. What homemade toys did their parents make them? Mother made paper cut-outs of people or dog teams. Father carved wooden boats for the boys.

13. Why did their parents let them stay up late in the summer? To get sunshine.

Questions: p. 80-81

14. What is neetsi? Rosehips in Gwich’in.

15. How did they know summer was ending? The sun started to go down and friends and their parents prepared to leave Fort Yukon.

Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing

Respond to these in your journal.

- You don’t always need money to have clothes or to have fun. Give examples from this chapter.

- Why were they afraid of the Northern lights? What were you afraid of when you were a child?
Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

• Even though their dad spanked them, Barry and Velma still went near the river. Why do you think kids sometimes do what they are told not to?
• What did you eat when you were young? What was a treat for you?
• How were Indians shown in the movies? How did Velma feel about those Indians? Do you remember movies about cowboy and Indians? What did you think of them?

Extended activities

• Draw a picture of their log cabin.
• List the activities the children did in the winter and summer on Handout 3.
Chapter Seven Vocabulary

precarious   nomadic   mischievous   sympathetic
contaminate  catapult  lynched

Look these words up and then write a sentence that shows the meaning of the word.

Word 1: ____________________________
Sentence: ____________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Word 2: ____________________________
Sentence: ____________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Word 3: ____________________________
Sentence: ____________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Word 4: ____________________________
Sentence: ____________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Word 5: ____________________________
Sentence: ____________________________________________
____________________________________________________
Word 6: ______________________
Sentence: _______________________________________________________

Word 7: ______________________
Sentence: _______________________________________________________

Chapter Seven Questions

1. Why were males favoured in the tribe?

2. How many siblings did Velma have? How did she describe their relationships with one another?

3. What are Velma’s mom’s best memories of life with Pete? What happened to her father in town?

4. How did Velma feel about her dolls? What did she do for her dolls each night?

5. Why was the outhouse scary for children?

6. What did they use for toilet paper?
7. What pranks did Martha play on Velma? ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

8. What smells does Velma remember in the house? ______________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

9. How many rooms in their log cabin? Where did they play? __________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

10. What trick did their mom use to get them to go to sleep?
    ____________________________
    ____________________________
    ____________________________
    ____________________________

11. What homemade toys did their parents make them? _________________
    ____________________________
    ____________________________
    ____________________________
    ____________________________

12. Why did their parents let them stay up late in the summer? __________
    ____________________________
    ____________________________
    ____________________________
    ____________________________

13. What is neetsi in Gwich’in?
    ____________________________
    ____________________________

14. How did they know summer was ending? ____________________________
    ____________________________
    ____________________________
# Summer and Winter Activities

List the summer and winter activities that Velma and her sibling did. List some activities that you did in the summer and winter when you were young.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the book</strong></td>
<td>• Red Over, Red Over</td>
<td>• Dig tunnels and mazes in snow berms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From your</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>childhood</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Eight – Uptown and School
Learning Activities

2 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hostile</td>
<td>pummel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assailant</td>
<td>individuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cowardice</td>
<td>disintegrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>validated</td>
<td>chaos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learners match the word and the meaning on Handout 1 and then write a sentence for each word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.84-85

1. Describe the local school. A long structure with kindergarten to grade twelve.

2. What's Velma's earliest memory of the school? Being three or four and walking up town with her older sister, dusty streets in summer and hot fumes making it hard to breath.

3. Describe Ms. Beasley. What was different about her clothes? Short skirt.

4. Velma remembered being different from the uptown children. What two things happened at school where Velma felt different? 1) When the instructor's aide tried to pull her back in line and pulled her roughly by the collar, Velma started fighting with her. The other kids stared in shock. 2) When she was late, the other children laughed at her on the playground.

5. What did Ms. Beasley give her one summer? A “Three Bears” book shaped as a bear.

6. How did Velma face the bullies? By talking, she told them her brothers and father would kill them. Later she told the bully he would go to jail.
Questions: p.88-89

7. On page 89 Velma is faced with a decision. Which side does she choose? The half-breed boys. The three big boys who were beating up one small boy.

8. How did her actions affect her now? She cannot snare rabbits for food without thinking of that boy’s eyes and how he looked like a rabbit before it’s being choked.

Questions: p.90-91

9. What were children learning from the adults? To be racist or prejudiced. To hate Natives.

10. What happened to the bully? He died from an alcoholic-related illness.

Questions: p.92-93

11. Describe Velma’s bad experiences in grade one and two. How was grade three different? She was punished for not following the rules or behaving differently. In grade three her individuality was encouraged.

12. What is Velma’s only memory of being protected? When her sister Clara went after the older guy who stole her candy.

Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing

Respond in your journal.

- Velma says: “In my adult years I would see how the cycles of negative behaviour from our upbringing would determine the patterns our lives would take.” What does this mean? Have you seen this happen before?

- What were your early school years like? Did you enjoy school? Or did you dislike going to school?

Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- What were the three main groups in school? Indians, half-breeds, whites. Where did the Wallis children fit in? Somewhere in the middle. What are the terms we use nowadays? First Nations, Metis, White/Northerner or Aboriginal (First Nations, Metis, Inuit.) Discuss why the names have changed.
“Miss McMullin acknowledged our individuality”. How important is this in school?

Why did kids play such pranks on the instructors? Did you ever play pranks on instructors?

Extended activities

Think back to your early school days. Write a letter to your favourite teacher/instructor thanking them for their kindness and inspiration. Now write a letter to your least favourite teacher/instructor telling them how they affected your education.

Bullying is a big issue for many children in school. Ask learners to put together a presentation for school-age children about bullying. They can use PowerPoint to make an interesting presentation. Encourage them to go to the school to present their presentations. Some questions to get learners started are:

- What is bullying?
- Who bullies?
- What can you do to stop being bullied?
- Why do some children resort to bullying?
- Are you bullied?

Use these websites to research the topic bullying.

- [http://loveourchildrenusa.org/bullying.php](http://loveourchildrenusa.org/bullying.php)
- [http://www.safecanada.ca/link_e.asp?category=28&topic=165](http://www.safecanada.ca/link_e.asp?category=28&topic=165)
- [http://www.lfcc.on.ca/bully.htm](http://www.lfcc.on.ca/bully.htm)
# Chapter Eight Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hostile</td>
<td>1. The trait of lacking courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assailant</td>
<td>2. The distinct personality of an individual, the uniqueness of a person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pummel</td>
<td>3. A state of extreme confusion and disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individuality</td>
<td>4. To strike, usually with the fist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cowardice</td>
<td>5. To support or corroborate on a sound or authoritative basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disintegrate</td>
<td>6. Attacker; someone who attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>validated</td>
<td>7. To break into parts or components or lose cohesion or unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaos</td>
<td>8. Very unfriendly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ____________________________

2. ____________________________
3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

Raising Ourselves Novel Study
Chapter Eight Questions

1. Describe the local school. __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

2. What is Velma’s earliest memory of the school? ______________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

3. Describe Ms. Beasley. What was different about her clothes? __________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

4. Velma remembered being different from the uptown children. What two things happened at school where Velma felt different?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

5. What did Ms. Beasley give her one summer? _________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

6. How did Velma face the bullies? ____________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

7. On page 89 Velma is faced with a decision. Which side does she choose?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
8. How did her actions affect her now? ________________________________

______________________________________________________________

9. What were children learning from the adults? ______________________

________________________________________________________________

10. What happened to the bully? _________________________________

________________________________________________________________

11. Describe Velma’s bad experiences in grade one and two. How was grade three different?

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

12. What is Velma’s only memory of being protected? ________________

________________________________________________________________
Raising Ourselves Novel Study
Chapter Nine – Life in the Sixties
Learning Activities

3 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>livelihood</th>
<th>concocting</th>
<th>vaguely</th>
<th>perplexed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>solace</td>
<td>foreboding</td>
<td>stoically</td>
<td>reluctantly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learners read the sentences from the chapter on Handout 1. They write their own definition for each word and then use a dictionary to check their definitions. Then, they write another sentence for each word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.98-99

1. What happened when the Air Force sent a black Santa? No one wanted to sit on his lap because they all knew Santa was white.
2. What was the only connection to the outside world in the 1960s? AFRN, radio station from Elmendorf Air Force Base outside Anchorage.
3. Why did Velma volunteer to wash dishes at night? So that she could listen to the radio at 11pm played by disk jockey Pete Smith.

Questions: p.100-101

4. How was her father earning a living? He would trap in the winter.
5. What furs did he come home with? What did they use the money for? Lynx, marten, mink, fox and weasels. Food, electricity and other items to raise 13 children.
6. What two things did they do to help their mother? Scrape baby “dah” off diapers with a table knife and wash green wine bottles in a big tub for homebrew.
Questions: p.102-103

7. Were the dogs pets? What did the dogs eat? No, they were workers. Fish, water and other scraps.

8. What chores did the older brothers have? Cut, shop and stack 17 cords of wood, enough to heat two stoves all winter, with no shortage. And keep the fifty-gallon galvanized water barrel filled. The rule was that the barrel had to be filled high enough that we little ones could dip out water.

Questions: p. 104-105

9. Describe what they used to haul water in: Buckets made out of square five-gallon Chevron cans. The gas smell was burnt out of the cans, which were then washed with soapy water, and carried by handles woven out of bailing wire.

10. What three meals does Velma describe?
   i) Muskrat tails toasted on top of the woodstove
   ii) Beaver meat willowy flavour
   iii) Duck soup with dried vegetable flakes adding rice and macaroni.

Questions: p.106-107

11. What smell told Velma it would be a long Christmas? The smell of home-brew.

12. How does Velma describe her parents sober relationship? Strange. Like business partners who happened to have children together and each intended to contribute a fair share raising them. They worked well side by side, cutting fish or moose meat, or preparing other Native foods.

13. What were the dark days and what were the sunny days? Drinking were dark days and periods of sobriety were sunny days.

14. When did her mother start drinking? In 1964 when Grafton was killed in an accident with a truck.

15. How does being around people who drink into the night affect Velma now? She feels an indescribable pain.

Questions: p.110-112

16. Did the children notice when their mom was pregnant? No.
Raising Ourselves Novel Study

17. Did she change her routine when she was pregnant? No, her routine didn’t change and she always seemed round.


Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing

Respond to these in your journal.

- What do these two sentences mean:
  - “The scent filled our noses vaguely warning us that the happiness would not come.”
  - “The air was filled with tension, exciting yet foreboding.”

Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- The children saw their father beat their mother with his fists. Velma says there was a war in the cabin. What does she mean?

- How did Pete cheat the buyer of his furs? What do you think of this?

- Children now-a-days do not have chores like they used to. Do you think that children should have more responsibilities and do more things around the house?

Extended activities

- Except for our few connections to the outside world—the school, the Air Force station, and its radio station—Fort Yukon was a three-road town. Compare this to your community. Use the Venn diagram on Handout 3 to compare and contrast.

- What’s a country food recipe of your own? Share this recipe with your class. Make a country food cookbook.

- In the evening when the adults were drinking, what would happen? Draw a cycle.
Chapter Nine Vocabulary

livelihood  concocting  vaguely  perplexed
solace  foreboding  stoically  reluctantly

Read the sentences below from the chapter. Write down what you think the word in **bold** means. Check your definition in the dictionary. Write the definition down from the dictionary. Write a new sentence for each word.

1) These animal skins were the **livelihood** of our family. The money they brought in allowed us to buy food, electricity, and other items necessary to raise thirteen children.

   Your definition: ____________________________________________________________

   Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

   Sentence: ________________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________________________

2. The tree was put up, and the adults were heard whispering, filling us little ones with excitement. All the while the home-brew was slowly **concocting** in the wooden barrel.

   Your definition: ________________________________

   Dictionary: ________________________________

   Sentence: ________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________
3. The scent filled out noses, **vaguely** warning us that the happiness would not come.

   Your definition: ______________________________________________________

   Dictionary: __________________________________________________________

   Sentence: ____________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

4. None of us could sleep for the air was always filled with tension, exciting yet **foreboding**.

   Your definition: ______________________________________________________

   Dictionary: __________________________________________________________

   Sentence: ____________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

5. More often we were **perplexed** by this woman and her blue glass eye, and we would peek at her only to be shooed away when she caught us.

   Your definition: ______________________________________________________

   Dictionary: __________________________________________________________

   Sentence: ____________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________
6. Sometimes Martha and Jimmy would do it, but occasionally I was selected, and my head would do little frightened flip-flops at the thought of spending a night alone with my strange grandmother. I would beg Barry to accompany me, and he would do so **reluctantly**.

   Your definition: __________________________________________________________

   Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

   Sentence: ________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

7. I referred to the periods of drinking as the dark days and the periods of sobriety as the sunny days. Many times Barry and I sought **solace** from the violence of our drunken parents by pretending we were the children of a man and woman whose faces we had cut out of a wig advertisement.

   Your definition: __________________________________________________________

   Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

   Sentence: ________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

8. Whey they sobered, the pain was still there, but they faced the daily drudgery of their lives **stoically** until the next alcoholic episode.

   Your definition: __________________________________________________________

   Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

   Sentence: ________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
Chapter Nine Questions

1. What happened when the Air Force sent a black Santa?

2. What was the only connection to the outside world in the 1960s?

3. Why did Velma volunteer to wash dishes at night?

4. How did her father earning a living?

5. What furs did he come home with? What did they use the money for?

6. What two things did they do to help their mother?

7. Were the dogs pets? What did the dogs eat?

8. What chores did the older brothers have?
9. Describe what they used to haul water in: ____________________________

10. What three meals does Velma describe? ____________________________

11. What smell told Velma it would be a long Christmas? __________________

12. How does Velma describe her parents sober relationship? ________________

13. What were the dark days and what were the sunny days? __________________

14. When did her mother start drinking? ________________________________

15. How does being around people who drink into the night affect Velma now?

16. Did the children notice when their mom was pregnant? ________________

17. Did she change her routine when she was pregnant? ________________

18. Who helped with her childbirth? ________________________________
Compare and Contrast

Compare and contrast your community to Fort Yukon. Write down the similarities between your community and Fort Yukon in the middle and the differences on the outside.
Chapter Ten – Times of Change
Learning Activities

3 Handouts

Activity 1 – Vocabulary
frantically determination unresponsive flabbergasted

Learners look these words up and use them in sentences to show the meaning of the word (Handout 1).

Activity 2 – Vocabulary Review Crossword Puzzle
Learners find the correct word for each definition in the crossword puzzle. The words are from Chapters 6 – 10.

Activity 3 – Chapter Questions
Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.116-117

1. What happened in the summer of 1968? A forest fire in Chalkyitsik that headed towards Fort Yukon.

2. Why was Itchoo so upset? This was her hunting and trapping land and she wanted her son to stop the fire.

3. Why did Velma pray frantically? She wanted her dad to rush up to the land and save the tree so that Itchoo wouldn’t die.

4. Describe Itchoo’s house when Velma’s mother went to give her breakfast. It was a mess. Her bible open on the floor and papers and other personal items strewn about. Itchoo was laying their breathing but unresponsive.

5. A part of Velma knew that Ichoo would die but it was hard to believe. Why? She had a powerful presence, it was Velma’s first encounter with death.
Questions: p.118-119

6. Velma knew a change had occurred. What happened in the weather? A rainbow appeared and soft drops of rain fell on her face.

7. In 1970 in Fort Yukon what did the villagers receive in the mail? Why were they confused? Papers were sent to the villagers asking them to select land because there would be allotments for corporations in the future. They didn’t know how to select a piece of land when they were used to using land as needed for thousands of years. Without papers, people knew who hunted and trapped on certain lands and out of respect no one trespassed.

Questions: p.120-121

8. What happened when father and uncle Tim found two men at their spring camping spot? Would this have happened in the old days? Uncle Tim kicked their teapot over and stomped out their fire. They quietly packed up and left. In the old days this would have provoked tribal war.

9. How did her father feel when he received shares in the Doyon Native Corporation? He was flabbergasted that all of Alaska’s Interior Native lands were lumped together in one Native corporation with headquarters in Fairbanks.

10. What were the new issues about land use that her father described? People downriver have equal shares to land up here. A local corporation under a larger Native corporation. If the corporation owes money the IRS can take land away.

11. What is the Canadian equivalent to the IRS? Canada Revenue Agency.

12. What did the woman want to sign up the family for? Welfare.

Activity 4 – Reflection and Journal Writing

Respond to these in your journal.

- “Itchoo had left the spirit of independence in all the female members of our family.” What does this mean?
- “My father was like a stone that was hard to carve.” What does this mean? Write about a person in your life that is like this.
Activity 5 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- When Velma asked her mother why Itchoo was trying to save the land, her mother said that Itchoo had planted a tree. Explain. *There is an old Gwich’in belief that if you tend and care for a tree throughout your life, you will live as long as that tree.*

- Velma’s mother blamed her father for allowing Itchoo to die by not saving her tree. Do you think it was his fault?

- There have been documented cases when a twin knows the precise moment when her or his twin dies or is in trouble. They can just feel it. Have you ever had a *feeling* or *premonition* about something that is about to happened or just happened?

Extended activities

- What are the land claims in your region?

- Add to your timeline the events that happened in this chapter and previous chapters.

- What does Shamanism mean? Research Shamanism on the Internet and write a one page report on it.
Chapter Ten
Handout 1

Chapter Vocabulary

frantically    determination    unresponsive    flabbergasted

Look up each word in the dictionary and write the definition down. Write a sentence for each word showing the meaning.

1. **Word:** _____________
   
   **Definition:** ______________________________________________________
   
   **Sentence:** ______________________________________________________

2. **Word:** _____________
   
   **Definition:** ______________________________________________________
   
   **Sentence:** ______________________________________________________

3. **Word:** _____________
   
   **Definition:** ______________________________________________________
   
   **Sentence:** ______________________________________________________

4. **Word:** _____________
   
   **Definition:** ______________________________________________________
   
   **Sentence:** ______________________________________________________
Chapter Ten
Handout 2

Vocabulary Review Crossword
Chapters 6 – 10

Use the clues below to fill in the crossword on the next page. All the words are from chapters 6 – 10.

Across
4. in a state in which it is impossible to keep feelings or behavior under control, usually through fear, worry, or frustration
5. A state of complete disorder and confusion
7. Not clear in meaning or intention
10. Firmness of purpose, will, or intention
11. Feeling sense of loss: filled with a sense of loss
13. Dangerously unstable, unsteady, uncertain, or insecure
14. To hit somebody or something with repeated blows, especially using the fists
16. Showing admirable patience and endurance in the face of adversity without complaining or getting upset
17. Showing, having, or resulting from shared feelings, pity, or compassion
18. Comfort at a time of sadness, grief, or disappointment

Down
1. A very strong unpleasant smell
2. To confirm or establish the truthfulness or soundness of something
3. Behaving or likely to behave in a naughty or troublesome way, but in fun and not meaning serious harm
4. To amaze or astonish somebody completely
6. A feeling that something bad is going to happen
8. Showing or feeling hatred, enmity, antagonism, or anger toward somebody
9. Quickly spread from one person to another
12. Threatening, or seeming to threaten, harm or misfortune
13. To puzzle or confuse somebody, especially causing doubt
15. Somebody who wanders from place to place
Words in the crossword puzzle

vague, perplexed, stoic, solace, foreboding, flabbergasted, determination, frantic, bereft, stench, contagious, balefully, nomadic, sympathetic, precarious, mischievous, pummel, chaos, hostile, validated
Chapter Ten
Handout 3

Chapter Questions

1. What happened in the summer of 1968?

2. Why was Itchoo so upset?

3. Why did Velma pray frantically?

4. Describe Itchoo’s house when Velma’s mother went to give her breakfast.

5. A part of Velma knew that Ichoo would die but it was hard to believe, why?

6. Velma knew a change had occurred. What happened in the weather?

7. In 1970 in Fort Yukon what did the villagers receive in the mail? Why were they confused?
8. What happened when father and uncle Tim found two men at their spring camping spot? Would this have happened in the old days?

9. How did her father feel when he received shares in the Doyon Native Corporation?

10. What were the new issues about land use that her father described?

11. What is the Canadian equivalent to the IRS? 

12. What did the woman want to sign up the family for?
Chapter Eleven – Turning Points
Learning Activities

3 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary
procrastinate audacious sheath conjure
morose ornery ire assuage

Learners match the definition with the word and then write a sentence for each word showing the meaning of the word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions
Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.124-125
2. Why did Velma say “I finally would meet the queen from the black-and-white glossy.” This was the only picture she had of her cousin, wearing a crown and looking so beautiful. She imagined that Kay was a queen from another land.
3. What happened when Velma’s father went to Fairbanks with Ruth? The doctor found a cyst that had to be removed surgically. He came home half-drunk with cases of whiskey.

Questions: p.126-127
4. How old was Velma when the Social Security benefits arrived? Social Security in Canada is Income Support. 12
5. What did Velma ask her father in a letter? To give her money to go to Fairbanks.
6. What message did Velma’s mother have for cousin Tim? His uncle is trying to kill himself with drink, we need your help.
7. List all the things that shocked Velma in Fairbanks.
8. Why didn’t Velma deliver the message to uncle Tim? *Because she was shy and she saw her father drinking most of her life.*

9. For months, the children had to be quiet while their dad was drunk. What did he threaten when they weren’t quiet? *To tie them to an oil drum and roll them down a hill.*

Questions: p.128-129

10. Where did the children spend all their time? Why? *They gathered at the community centre to get away from drinking parents or unhappy homes.*

11. What is a *bingo orphan*? *Children left alone because their parents are playing bingo.*

12. Why was school difficult? *Because homelife was stressful, they couldn’t concentrate.*

13. Why was Velma’s scarf so long? *Because she skipped the day they learned how to cast off.*

14. What act of rebellion did Velma show her dad? *She procrastinated when he asked her to get oranges.*

15. What did the children do the night their father was medivaced out? *They washed his bedding, jumped on his bed, played late into the night.*


**Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing**

Respond to these in your journal.

- What does it mean to “walk on eggshells”? Write about a time you felt that you had to “walk on eggshells.”
- Pretend you are Velma. Write a diary page about her father dying.

**Activity 5 – Discussion and Extended Activities**

Discussion

- Velma says that most women from the villages were stronger than the men around them. Why?
By Christmas the children thought of their dad as the angry thing in the front room. Do you think they understood what he was doing to himself?

Extended activities

- Learners look at the character wheel on Handout 3 and choose a person from the novel that has one of the character traits. They write a paragraph describing why that person has that trait.
- Add to your timeline.
## Chapter Eleven Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>procrastinate</td>
<td>Extremely bold or daring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audacious</td>
<td>To effect, produce, bring, etc., by or as by magic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheath</td>
<td>Gloomily or sullenly ill-humored, as a person or mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjure</td>
<td>To effect, produce, bring, etc., by or as by magic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morose</td>
<td>To put off till another day or time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ornery</td>
<td>To make milder or less severe; relieve; ease; mitigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ire</td>
<td>A close-fitting dress, skirt, or coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assuage</td>
<td>Intense anger; wrath</td>
</tr>
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</table>

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
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1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________
Raising Ourselves Novel Study

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

Chapter Eleven Questions

1. Who came to visit in July, 1972? _____________________________

2. Why did Velma say “I finally would meet the queen from the black-and-white glossy.”
   ________________________________

3. What happened when Velma’s father went to Fairbanks with Ruth?
   ________________________________

4. How old was Velma when the Social Security benefits arrived? (Social Security in Canada is Income Support.) ________________

5. What did Velma ask her father in a letter? _____________________________
   ________________________________

6. What message did Velma’s mother have for cousin Tim? ________________
   ________________________________

7. List all the things that shocked Velma in Fairbanks. _____________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

8. Why didn’t Velma deliver the message to uncle Tim? ________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
9. For months, the children had to be quiet while their dad was drunk. What did he threaten when they weren’t quiet?

___________________________________________________________________________

10. Where did the children spend all their time? Why?

___________________________________________________________________________

11. What is a bingo orphan?

___________________________________________________________________________

12. Why was school difficult?

___________________________________________________________________________

13. Why was Velma’s scarf so long?

___________________________________________________________________________

14. What act of rebellion did Velma show her dad?

___________________________________________________________________________

15. What did the children do the night their father was medivaced out?

___________________________________________________________________________

16. What happened the next morning, January 4, 1973?

___________________________________________________________________________
Character Wheel

Look at the character traits on the character wheel. Choose a person from the novel that has one of these traits. Write a paragraph describing the person and give examples from the book that illustrate this character trait.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Character</th>
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</table>
Chapter Twelve – Back and Forth
Learning Activities

2 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

overwhelming           gnashing           alleviate          heady
carte blanche           emulate            diligently          jovial

Learners find the word in the dictionary and write a sentence that shows the meaning of the word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.133-134

1. Even though he was miserable, their father kept them together. What happened after he died? The boys drank and listened to music uptown instead of doing their chores. Everyone slacked off.

2. What happened to their mother? Describe her mood and actions. She became quiet and depressed. She was overwhelmed with the responsibilities. She started drinking again.

3. Who did Velma start hanging out with in grade six? The rowdy kids with drunken parents.

Questions: p.136-137


5. What did the tax from liquor pay for? A police department, cable television, and village administrators.

6. Why wouldn’t Velma smoke, drink or do drugs? She made a pact with God to protect her mother.
7. Why wasn’t Velma comfortable becoming a woman? Her mother wasn’t around to explain things to her. Womanhood represented getting married, having children, and doing all the things she watched her mother do.

Questions: p.138-139

8. Where did Velma go in the summer and who did she stay with? Her aunt Dorothy (her mother’s sister) in Anchorage.

9. What was she doing in Anchorage? Looking after the two grandchildren that her aunt adopted.

10. What did Velma do the night she was alone in the house? She locked all the windows and doors, found the hammer and put it under her pillow.

11. Give some examples of Aunt Dorothy’s racist attitude.

12. Why did Velma go home? She thought Aunt Dorothy wanted her to be a permanent nanny.

Questions: p.140-141

13. Why did the family move to Eagle? How long did they stay? Sister Hannah and husband Tony invited them. 3 months.

14. Why did their mother send Velma and Barry to live with Grandpa Mo? Because she was drinking on and off and couldn’t handle them. They were skipping school and she wanted them to stay in school.

15. What happened at Grandpa Mo’s? How did they behave? Give examples. A lot of things happened at Grandpa Mo’s. They misbehaved, wouldn’t eat their eggs, overfed the dogs, got in trouble at school, etc.

Questions: p.142-143

16. Why was Grandpa Mo so sad? His dogs died one by one.

17. Why did Velma think she killed them? Do you think that she killed them? She fed them twice a day instead of once.

18. What did she do for her grandfather? She cleaned, cooked, packed water and tried to behave herself.

19. What happened the first time Velma drank? She got drunk, threw up in her grandpa’s bathroom, and lied to him about her hangover.
Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing

Respond to these in your journal.

- Velma says it took years to realize that her mother had every right to be her own person. How do you see your mother? What is her role? Do you expect her to have her own goals and dreams?
- What is ironic about Aunt Dorothy thinking that white people were okay and that people of colour were not?
- The last line of the chapter says, “Awaiting there was more responsibility than I had ever known.” What are your predictions for chapter 13?

Activity 5 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- Discuss the phrase: “Being unsupervised at home, it never occurred to us that in the outside world there were rules we were expected to obey.”
- When Velma’s dad was still alive, there were strict rules. Now, there were no rules. Her mother was using the welfare check at the local liquor store. With adults drinking, young people were free to do what they want. What problems can happen in this situation?
- Barry did the indoor chores and Velma did the outdoor chores. Kids teased them about this. When you were young, were there different chores for boys and girls?
- What’s the significance of Velma’s mother wearing pants?

Extended activities

- Debate: Around the room put up two signs: Dry Community and Not Dry Community. Explain that a dry community is a community that does not allow alcohol. Ask learners to decide which community they would prefer to live in. Ask them to present their arguments to the rest of the class.
Chapter Twelve Vocabulary

overwhelming  gnashing  alleviate  heady
carte blanche  emulate  diligently  jovial

Look these words up in the dictionary and write a sentence that shows the meaning of the word.

1. __________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________________
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3. __________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________
Chapter Twelve Questions

1. Even though he was miserable, their father kept them together. What happened after he died?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

2. What happened to their mother? Describe her mood and actions.

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

3. Who did Velma start hanging out with in grade six? ______________

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

4. What store opened in Fort Yukon?

________________________________________________________________________________

5. What did the tax from liquor pay for?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

6. Why wouldn’t Velma smoke, drink or do drugs?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

7. Why wasn’t Velma comfortable becoming a woman?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

8. Where did Velma go in the summer and who did she stay with?

________________________________________________________________________________
9. What was she doing in Anchorage? ___________________________________________________________________

10. What did Velma do the night she was alone in the house? ______________
______________________________________________________________________

11. Give some examples of Aunt Dorothy’s racist attitude.
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

12. Why did Velma go home? ____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

13. Why did the family move to Eagle? How long did they stay? ____________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

14. Why did their mother send Velma and Barry to live with Grandpa Mo?
______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

16. Why was Grandpa Mo so sad? ________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
17. Why did Velma think killed them? Do you think that she killed them?


18. What did she do for her grandfather? 


19. What happened the first time Velma drank? 


Chapter Thirteen – Back Home
Learning Activities

4 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

rationalized  plight  akin  exertion
scrutiny  intrigued  endeavours

Learners read the sentences from the chapter on Handout 1. They write their own definition for each word and then use a dictionary to check their definitions. Then, they write another sentence for each word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.146-147

1. What role did Velma take on? Why? *She became the mother to her younger siblings. Her mother was drinking too much and there was no one to take care of her younger siblings.*

2. How did the family’s diet change? *No more wild meat and unbalanced food from the grocery store that left them hungry and gaining weight.*

3. Velma’s mother had a pattern each month. Describe her monthly pattern.

4. What did Velma’s mother do when she was drunk? *She would bully the kids like her husband used to. She would fight and accuse them of stealing. She would cry about the past and threaten to throw them out.*

Questions: p.148-149

5. What happened when Velma’s mother brought her street friends home? *They would drink, fight, and mess up the house.*

6. When her mother was sober, how did Velma feel about her? How did she feel about her when she was drunk? *She loved her. She hated her.*
7. How did Velma feel about alcohol? *She hated it with a passion.*
8. Why did they run for their lives to the clinic to call the police? *Their older brother was on drugs and chasing them with a chainsaw.*
10. What did her younger siblings do that made her cry? *They ate scraps from the pots and pans because they were hungry.*
11. What did Barry and Velma do one year? *Ordered gifts from the Sears catalogue one month ahead for the kids.*

**Questions: p.150-152**

12. What program did Velma work for when she was sixteen? What was her job? *Homehelpers. Clean the house of an old woman named Blanche Strom.*
13. What did Blanche tell Velma to do? *Use her father’s land.*

**Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing**

Respond to these in your journal.

- “The less we had in the way of a family, the more we tried to fill the void with material goods.” Do you think people try to buy happiness? Give some examples.
- Describe Blanche Strom.

**Activity 5 – Discussion and Extended Activities**

**Discussion**

- Why do you think the nurse and the police were burnt out and bitter?
- Why did Velma hope her brother would stab her?
- Velma paints a clear picture of poverty. How do you think poverty affects people’s lives?
Extended activities

- Read the second and third paragraph on p.148. Do you think alcoholism is a disease? Research alcoholism on the Internet. Write a short report on the causes and effects of alcoholism. Use the reference cards on Handout 3 to keep track of the websites you use for your research.

- What are the characteristics of Velma’s mother when she is drunk and when she is sober? Use the chart on Handout 4 to record your answer.
Chapter Thirteen Vocabulary

rationalized  plight  akin  exertion
scrutiny  intrigued  endeavours

Read the sentences below from the chapter. Write down what you think the word in bold means. Check your definition in the dictionary. Write the definition down from the dictionary. Write a new sentence for each word.

1. Those were the times I wished they would all die, including my mother. I rationalized that they were better off dead.

Your definition: ____________________________________________

Dictionary: __________________________________________________

Sentence: _____________________________________________________

2. We sat on pins and needles, right up until midnight on Christmas Eve. The postmaster was a young man who understood our plight. He kept the post office open late for those who were still waiting for our packages to arrive. I thought it was akin to a miracle when our box arrived that night.

Your definition: ____________________________________________

Dictionary: __________________________________________________

Sentence: _____________________________________________________
3. One day, Blanche sat eyeing me as I mopped her floor. Sweat dripped down my nose, and my face was red with exertion. I was trying to get the job done quickly so I could escape her scrutiny.

Your definition: ____________________________

Dictionary: ________________________________

Sentence: _________________________________

__________________________

__________________________

4. Blanche had set in my mind a romantic notion about Itchoo’s land. I was intrigued that it belonged to us, for we had nothing.

Your definition: ____________________________

Dictionary: ________________________________

Sentence: _________________________________

__________________________
Raising Ourselves Novel Study

Sentence: 

5. Billy was a reluctant participant in all my **endeavours** only because he was tender-hearted toward to those who came up with nutty ideas.

Your definition: 

Dictionary: 

Sentence: 

Chapter Thirteen Questions

1. What role did Velma take on? Why? ________________________________

2. How did the family’s diet change? ________________________________

3. Velma’s mother had a pattern each month. Describe her monthly pattern.

4. What did Velma’s mother do when she was drunk? ________________

5. What happened when Velma’s mother brought her street friends home?

6. When her mother was sober, how did Velma feel about her? How did she feel about her when she was drunk?

7. How did Velma feel about alcohol? Why did Velma start locking the doors?
8. Why did they run for their lives to the clinic to call the police?

9. How does Velma describe Christmas?

10. What did her younger siblings do that made her cry?

11. What did Barry and Velma do one year?

12. What program did Velma work for when she was sixteen? What was her job?

13. What did Blanche tell Velma to do?

14. What did Velma want to do?
Reference Cards

Websites

“The Wolverine”  www.blindkat.tripod.com/zoo/wolverine.html  April 1, 2005

- Title of article in quotation marks
- Website address
- Date you found the article

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference card</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Website address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
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</table>
Character Portrait
Mae Wallis

What are the character traits of Mae Wallis (Velma’s mother) when she is sober and when she is drunk?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sober</th>
<th>Drunk</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

Why do you think people change so much when they are drinking?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

What do you think Mae’s true personality is like?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Chapter Fourteen – Neegoogwandah
Learning Activities

3 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

ominously  petrified  pacified  eerily

Learners look up each word in the dictionary and write the definition down. Then they write a sentence for each word showing the meaning.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.158-159

1. Who went with Velma to set up camp on Spider Island? Her brother Jimmy.
2. What did Jimmy expect when he came back with the second load? The tent up and a pot of tea.
3. How did Velma feel about being out there alone? Petrified.
5. What was the problem with her food rations? She had dry goods but no meat. She would have to snare rabbits if she wanted meat.

Questions: p.160-162

6. As days passed, how did she feel about cutting firewood? What did she build to help her with cutting wood? She grew to enjoy her time at the saw. A sawhorse.
7. Why did she go back to Fort Yukon? How long is the walk to Fort Yukon? To get Billy. 6 miles.
8. What was Billy doing when she arrived at their cabin? Watching television.
Questions: p.163-165

9. How long did Velma rest her foot at home? *One week.*

10. What did she and Billy use for transportation to Neegoogwandah? What happened on their trip? *Three huskies and a small Rider sled. They dogs became out of control and ran towards other dogs and got in fight.*

11. How did Velma learn to trap? *Her father’s trapping book and her brother’s knowledge.*

12. What kind of tracks did Billy find? *He said marten but later his mother said they were ptarmigan tracks.*


14. What did Velma realize? *If she wanted to do anything with her family’s land, she would have to face the wilderness on her own.*

**Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing**

Respond to these in your journal.

- In the old days people used to travel by dog teams. How do they travel now? How has this changed the way people live?
- Television changed many things in small northern communities. How do you think television has affected your community?

**Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities**

Discussion

- Velma says: “In our family we had a way of saying yes when we wanted to say no and vice versa. We didn’t know how to be blunt.” Are many families like this?
- Why didn’t Velma want neighbours to see her leaving town?
Extended activities

- Draw a picture of Velma’s camp.
- The first paragraph of the chapter is full of descriptive words. Learners use Handout 3 to help them write a descriptive paragraph about going camping or out on the land.
Chapter Fourteen Vocabulary

ominously  petrified  pacified  eerily

Look up each word in the dictionary and write the definition down. Write a sentence for each word showing the meaning.

Word 1: ____________
Definition: _____________________________________________________________
Sentence: ______________________________________________________________

Word 2: ____________
Definition: _____________________________________________________________
Sentence: ______________________________________________________________

Word 3: ____________
Definition: _____________________________________________________________
Sentence: ______________________________________________________________

Word 4: ____________
Definition: _____________________________________________________________
Sentence: ______________________________________________________________
Chapter Fourteen Questions

1. Who went with Velma to set up camp on Spider Island? ________________

2. What did Jimmy expect when he came back with the second load?
   ______________________________________________________________________

3. How did Velma feel about being out there alone? ________________

4. What did Velma do her first day alone? ________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

5. What was the problem with her food rations? ________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

6. As days passed, how did she feel about cutting firewood? What did she build to help her with cutting wood?
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

7. Why did she go back to Fort Yukon? How long is the walk to Fort Yukon?
   ______________________________________________________________________

8. What was Billy doing when she arrived at their cabin? ________________

9. How long did Velma rest her foot at home? ________________
10. What did she and Billy use for transportation to Neegoogwandah? What happened on their trip?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

11. How did Velma learn to trap?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

12. What kind of tracks did Billy find?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

13. Why did Billy leave? Was it for supplies?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

14. What did Velma realize?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Descriptive Writing

The author is really good at painting a vivid picture in the mind of the reader. Read the paragraph below and look at the descriptive words used. Write your own descriptive paragraph about camping or going out on the land.

The November day was sunny and warm as I stood on the back of the narrow sled and fought off the willows and thorns that slapped at my face. The land was void of trees except for these hulking skeletons that stood ominously against the sky. I felt as if I have traveled to another planet.
Raising Ourselves Novel Study
Chapter Fifteen – Learning New Skills

Learning Activities

4 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

embarked omnipresent hues avid

Ask learners to do a word map for each word using the word map diagram on Handout 1.

Activity 2 – Vocabulary Review

Play word bingo with the words from chapters 11-15. Handout 2 has most of the words from these chapters and a bingo card. Make sure learners write down the words in random order on the bingo card. As you say each word ask learners to say a sentence that shows the meaning of the word.

Activity 3 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.168-169

1. What did Velma have nightmares about? The animal hobbling on one foot screeching.
2. Why did she walk back to Fort Yukon? She was curious about the animal.
3. What did her mother think about Velma living in the woods alone? She thought women shouldn’t live out there alone especially since she had lived a sheltered life.
4. What was the temperature in January and February? Minus 50.

Questions: p.170-173

5. How did Velma find her mother that spring? Drinking too much, on a binge.
6. What did Velma do? Bought her mom a small bottle of whiskey and took her to the trapping camp.
Raising Ourselves Novel Study

7. Why did her mother cry? The land used to look like the Garden of Eden and now it’s desolate.

8. What did her mother teach her? How to make a muskrat trap.

9. Before her father died, her mother did everything for her. After her father died, her mother left them on their own. What is happening now that they are in the bush together? Velma is learning her mother’s skills and seeing her as a person.

10. Did they enjoy their spring in the tent? Yes.

11. How did they pass their time? They passed their time doing daily chores, and spending quiet time in the tent.

12. Why did they go back to Fort Yukon in the summer? Because they couldn’t melt snow and boil water.

Activity 4 – Reflection and Journal Writing

Respond to these in your journal.

- Velma was drawn to the strange beauty of Neegoogwandah. Has this ever happened to you in your life?
- What does this mean: “A whispering silence hovered over the omnipresent stillness of this land that had been ravaged and was slowly being healed by time.”

Activity 5 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- After Velma trapped, did she enjoy eating her wild meat? Why or why not?
- Why was being on the land a healthy choice for her mom?

Extended activities

- Write and expository paragraph on how to set a muskrat trap. Handout 4 has an example of an expository paragraph.
Chapter Fifteen
Handout 1

Chapter Fifteen Vocabulary

Do a word map for each of these words: embarked, omnipresent, hues, avid.

Word

Definition in your own words

Dictionary definition

Write a sentence

Draw a picture

Source: http://www.teach.virginia.edu/go/readquest/pdf/wordmap_2.pdf  Raymond C. Jones
Vocabulary Review – Word Bingo
Chapters 11 - 15

Write the words above on the bingo card below. Make sure you write the words in random order.
Chapter Fifteen Questions

1. What did Velma have nightmares about? ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

2. Why did she walk back to Fort Yukon? ________________________________

3. What did her mother think about Velma living in the woods alone?
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

4. What was the temperature in January and February? __________________

5. How did Velma find her mother that spring? __________________________

6. What did Velma do? ________________________________
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7. Why did her mother cry? ________________________________
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8. What did her mother teach her? ________________________________
   ________________________________
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   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
9. Before her father died, her mother did everything for her. After her father died, her mother left them on their own. What is happening now that they are in the bush together?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

10. Did they enjoy their spring in the tent? How did it help Velma’s mother?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

11. How did they pass their time? ____________________________________

________________________________________________________

12. Why did they go back to Fort Yukon in the summer? __________________________

________________________________________________________
Chapter Fifteen
Handout 4

Expository Paragraph

An expository paragraph presents information, opinions, or ideas. It exposes something about a topic. There are two types of expository paragraphs:

- To explain facts or convey information
- To persuade or argue an opinion

Write an expository paragraph on how to set muskrat snares. An example how to paragraph is below.

How to:    Have you ever made bannock on a stick? To begin, mix the flour and the lard together in a large bowl. Then add the salt, baking powder and raisins, if you like. Once this is done, add water and mix the ingredients using your hand or a fork. Next, divide the dough into four sections. Wrap the dough around one end of a long stick. Make sure it is securely fastened by overlapping the end. Finally, hold the stick over an open fire until it is lightly browned.

Make sure you use transition words to help your paragraph flow. Some transition words are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>consequently</th>
<th>in addition</th>
<th>also</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clearly, then</td>
<td>moreover</td>
<td>pursuing this further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furthermore</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>in the light of the... it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additionally</td>
<td>besides that</td>
<td>easy to see that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>in the same way</td>
<td>following this further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>nevertheless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the other hand</td>
<td>yet</td>
<td>on the contrary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>admittedly</td>
<td>nobody denies</td>
<td>undoubtedly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assuredly</td>
<td>obviously</td>
<td>unquestionably</td>
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<tr>
<td>certainly</td>
<td>of course</td>
<td>generally speaking</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Write an expository paragraph on how to set muskrat traps.

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Chapter Sixteen – Struggles
Learning Activities

3 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

hypocrite  squalor  contemplated  eccentric
subtle  succumbed  inconsolable  recluse

Learners write a story using each of the vocabulary words above.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.176-177

1. What did her brothers make in the fall? How big was it?  *A cabin at Neegoogwandah. 12 by 12 foot.*

2. What did her brothers shoot out of a season?  *A moose.*

3. Why was their mother unhappy and Velma worried?  *The fish and game wardens could get them in serious trouble for hunting out of season.*

4. What did Velma’s mother devote her sober time to?  *Teaching her kids how to hunt, fish and survive.*

5. Velma says they started to feel the connection to the land and see their mother in a new light.  Give examples.

6. Why wouldn’t Velma let her mom have the welfare checks? How did the postmaster help them?  *Because she would spend them on alcohol and they wouldn’t have food.  He would wait for Velma before he put the check in their mailbox.*

7. Why did Velma contemplate suicide? Why did she put the gun down?  *She was depressed about living in a town full of alcohol.  She thought of her siblings and the shame.*
Questions: p.178-179

8. Why was Diane concerned for Velma? *She was worried that Velma was not taking care of herself.*

9. What happened to two of her younger brothers? *They started drinking.*

10. What did Velma start doing when she was 18? Was she a fun drunk? *Drinking. No, she cried and told sad stories.*

11. What made Velma decide to take control of her behaviour? *She saw a girl her age stumbling out of a man’s house with her zipper open. She knew that could happen to her.*

Questions: p.180-183

12. Who did she spend her time with? *Her brother Barry and sister Becky.*

13. What did women call Velma in Gwich’in and what does it mean? Why do you think they called her this? *Na’in – the outsider. They called her this because Velma was different — she was eccentric and did her own thing.*

14. How did Barry cheer Velma up? *He gave her talks about how her difference is a positive thing.*

15. Why did Becky and Velma move out of their mom’s house? *Because their mom and brothers were drinking.*

16. What happened when the city manager saw Velma haul wood? *He thought she was poor and offered her a job as a police dispatcher.*

17. What happened Velma’s first night on the job? *The police wouldn’t respond to her calls.*

**Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing**

Respond to these in your journal.

- Look at the picture in the chapter of *The Neegoogwandah Cabin*. What do you see? How does this picture make you feel?
- Velma said she was an angry teenager trapped in an alcoholic village, stuck in the squalor of public housing and orange pee stains on the snow left by local drunks. How was living on the land different? Describe.
Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- What did alcohol do to Velma? Why can’t people let their emotions out when they are sober?

- Velma decided to stay away from the people who introduced her to the drinking scene. Velma said: “They seemed to enjoy adding new people to their drinking circles.” Is it possible to spend time with people who are drinking when you don’t drink?

Extended activities

- Write 10 interview questions you would like to ask Velma. Do a mock interview with another learner in the class. Answer the questions the way you think Velma would answer them.

- Ask learners why Velma’s mother was so upset with her sons for killing a moose out of season. What do people know about moose hunting? Do a K-W-L on moose hunting. Use the chart on Handout 3 and ask learners what they know about moose hunting. Ask them what they would like to learn. Then ask them to do an Internet search on moose hunting to answer their questions.
Chapter Sixteen Vocabulary

hypocrite  squalor  contemplated  eccentric
subtle  succumbed  inconsolable  recluse

Write a story using each of the vocabulary words. Show the meaning in your sentences for each word.

For example:

I contemplated going to Fort Smith for school but I decided against it because I wanted to stay in my community. My mother was inconsolable when she thought that I would be away for an extended period of time. I finally succumbed to the subtle pressure that my family put on me to stay in my community. I hope that I don't become a recluse and spend all my time in my house. My town is really nice but sometimes there is so much squalor that it is hard to see its beauty. I don't like the hypocrites who say one thing and then do another. I do like the eccentric people in the community who are unique and follow their own path.
Chapter Sixteen Questions

1. What did her brothers make in the fall? How big was it? __________________

2. What did her brothers shoot out of a season? ____________________________

3. Why was their mother unhappy and Velma worried? ________________________

4. What did Velma’s mother devote her sober time to? _________________________

5. Velma says they started to feel the connection to the land and see their mother in a new light. Give examples.

__________________________________________________________

6. Why wouldn’t Velma let her mom have the welfare checks? How did the postmaster help them?

__________________________________________________________

7. Why did Velma contemplate suicide? Why did she put the gun down?

__________________________________________________________

8. Why was Diane concerned for Velma? _________________________________

__________________________________________________________
9. What happened to two of her younger brothers? __________________________

10. What did Velma start doing when she was 18? Was she a fun drunk?

11. What made Velma decide to take control of her behaviour?

12. Who did she spend her time with? ________________________________

13. What did women call Velma in Gwich’in and what does it mean? Why do you think they called her this?

14. How did Barry cheer Velma up? ________________________________

15. Why did Becky and Velma move out of their mom’s house? ___________

16. What happened when the city manager saw Velma haul wood?

17. What happened Velma’s first night on the job?
### K-W-L

**Moose Hunting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know</th>
<th>Want</th>
<th>Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do I already <strong>know</strong> about moose hunting?</td>
<td>What do I <strong>want</strong> to know about moose hunting?</td>
<td>What have I <strong>learned</strong> about this topic?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Seventeen– Going to Oregon

Learning Activities

3 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

imploringly threadbare alienated acquaintance
navette tirade intimidate turmoil

Learners look up each word and write down what the meaning is and what part of speech it is (noun, verb, adjective or adverb). Then they write a sentence for the word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.186-188

1. What did Barry arrange for Velma? Did Velma want to go? To attend a Job Corps school in Oregon. No
2. What other things did Barry do for Velma? Bought her clothes, shampoo, and books. Looked out for her. Tried to better her life.
3. Was Velma ready to leave on the airplane? No. She wasn’t ready emotionally to leave her family and she didn’t have the clothes.
4. Even though Velma was alone at their cabin, she didn’t feel lonely like she did at the bus station full of people. Explain.
5. What does Velma compare the school to? A jail.
6. How many roommates did she have? 3. Why did Velma feel different than them? She was a tomboy. They were very feminine. She didn’t want to be an abused woman.
7. What experience made Velma embarrassed? Not knowing the two girls were a couple.
Questions: p.190-192

8. What does it mean: “I was easy prey.” Give examples.

9. What course did Velma choose? What was the instructor’s opinion about women in this job? *Telephone repair. He thought is was a man’s job and a man’s world.*

10. What happened when Velma was depressed? *She ate more and gained weight.*

11. Who became her friends? *Two Eskimo girls, Lana and Alene.*

12. What happened when Velma tried to sneak a pint of whiskey into school? *The guards caught her.*

13. Why did she feel shame? *For letting down friends, guards and counselors and having her peers decide whether she stays at the school or not.*

Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing

Respond to these in your journal.

- What are your predictions for the next chapter? Why?
- Have you ever experienced culture shock? Write a short piece about your experiences. Share your story with others in the class.

Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- When Velma goes to the school she experiences a form of culture shock. What is culture shock? How is her life different to the other girls at school?
- Have you ever experience peer pressure before? What did you do? What does Velma do?

Extended activities

- What are the signs and symptoms of depression? Fill in the chart on Handout 3. Research information about depression on the Internet.
Chapter Seventeen Vocabulary

imploringly threadbare alienated acquaintance
naïveté tirade intimidate turmoil

Look up each word and write down what the meaning is and what part of speech it is (noun, verb, adjective or adverb). Then they write a sentence for the word.

Word 1: ______________ Part of Speech: ______________
Sentence: __________________________________________
_________________________________________________

Word 2: ______________ Part of Speech: ______________
Sentence: __________________________________________
_________________________________________________

Word 3: ______________ Part of Speech: ______________
Sentence: __________________________________________
_________________________________________________

Word 4: ______________ Part of Speech: ______________
Sentence: __________________________________________
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Word 5: ______________ Part of Speech: ______________
Sentence: __________________________________________
_________________________________________________
Raising Ourselves Novel Study

Word 6: _______________ Part of Speech: ___________________
Sentence: ___________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Word 7: _______________ Part of Speech: ___________________
Sentence: ___________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Word 8: _______________ Part of Speech: ___________________
Sentence: ___________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
Chapter Seventeen Questions

1. What did Barry arrange for Velma? Did Velma want to go? ________________
   ________________
   ________________
   ________________

2. What other things did Barry do for Velma? ________________
   ________________
   ________________
   ________________

3. Was Velma ready to leave on the airplane? Why? ________________
   ________________
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4. Even though Velma was alone at their cabin, she didn’t feel lonely like she did at the bus station full of people. Explain.
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5. What does Velma compare the school to? ________________
   ________________
   ________________

6. How many roommates did she have? Why did Velma feel different than them?
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7. What experience made Velma embarrassed? ________________
   ________________
   ________________
8. What does it mean: “I was easy prey.” Give examples.

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9. What course did Velma choose? What was the instructor’s opinion about women in this job?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

10. What happened when Velma was depressed?

____________________________________________________________________________

11. Who became her friends?

____________________________________________________________________________

12. What happened when Velma tried to sneak a pint of whiskey into school?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

13. Why did she feel shame?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
**Depression**

Velma has mentioned depression throughout the book. Read the statement below.

Problems and misfortunes are a part of life. Everyone experiences unhappiness, and many people may become depressed temporarily when things don’t go as they would like. Experiences of failure commonly result in temporary feelings of worthlessness and self-blame, while personal losses cause feelings of sadness, disappointment and emptiness. Such feelings are normal, and they usually pass after a short time. This is not the case with depressive illness.\(^6\)

Go to [http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-86-87](http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-86-87) to read about clinical depression. Fill in the chart below. Do you think that Velma was clinically depressed or was just going through a rough patch in her life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\(^6\) **Source:** [http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-86-87](http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-86-87)
Chapter Eighteen– Back to Fort Yukon
Learning Activities

2 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

- predator
- reprimand
- erupted
- existence
- oblivious
- insurmountable

Learners match the word and the meaning on Handout 1 and then write a sentence for each word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.196-197

1. What did Lana and Velma decide to do? Leave the school.
2. How did they travel? Why was this dangerous? By hitchhiking. In the spring of 1980 there were serial killers in that region.
4. What were the girls trying to do? Find a way back to Alaska.
5. Where did they get a job? At the Goodwill store.
6. Why did they call home? Their paychecks were small and it was going to take a long time to earn enough money to get home.
8. What did Velma notice when she got off the plane in Fairbanks? People tanned and healthy.
Questions p. 198-199

9. How did Velma’s mother decide to quit drinking? *She looked in the mirror and knew she didn’t want to die in that condition.*


11. What job did she get and how long did she work? *Janitor at an office building for more than five years.*

12. What was the aftermath of her addiction? *Her children hadn’t grown up.*

13. Has everyone in her family started the healing process? *No.*

Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing

Respond to these in your journal.

- “I saw how the people at the Goodwill store cared for people who needed a helping hand. But I also saw that the people who needed a helping hand were used to getting this kind of help, and therefore they would not help themselves.” What does the author mean by this statement?

- “The people here were just simple souls trying to live a peaceful existence within their comfort zone.” What do you think this statement means?

Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- Do you think we can change other people? Can we help others if they aren’t willing or able to help themselves? Think about how Mae quit drinking? Did she do it for anyone else?

- “Children of alcoholics are stunted mentally, emotionally, and spiritually along with the addicted person. We thought that Mom was the one with the problem. But after she sobered up, we had to begin the same process of gaining sobriety.” What does this mean? Have you seen this happen to other people?
Extended activities

- A **simile** is a comparison between two things (nouns) using specific words such as **like, as or than**. For example:
  - We were like Neegoofgwandah when it had been ravaged by fire back in 1968.

What does Velma mean by this? Can you find more similes in the chapter?
### Chapter Eighteen Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>predator</th>
<th>reprimand</th>
<th>erupted</th>
<th>existence</th>
<th>oblivious</th>
<th>insurmountable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unmindful; unconscious; unaware</td>
<td>Way of living: a way of living, especially a life of severe hardship</td>
<td>Tell somebody off</td>
<td>Too great to overcome: impossible to overcome or deal with successfully</td>
<td>One that victimizes, plunders, or destroys, especially for one's own gain</td>
<td>To emerge violently from restraint or limits; explode</td>
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</table>

1. _______________________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________________

3. _______________________________________________________________________

4. _______________________________________________________________________
5. ________________________________________________________________

6. ________________________________________________________________
Chapter Eighteen Questions

1. What did Lana and Velma decide to do? ___________________________

2. How did they travel? Why was this dangerous? __________________________
   __________________________

3. Who did they stay with in Seattle? __________________________

4. What were the girls trying to do? __________________________

5. Where did they get a job? __________________________

6. Why did they call home? __________________________
   __________________________

7. How did they get home? __________________________
   __________________________

8. What did Velma notice when she got off the plane in Fairbanks?
   __________________________

9. How did Velma’s mother decide to quit drinking? __________________________
   __________________________

10. How did they help their mother stop drinking? __________________________
    __________________________
11. What job did she get and how long did she work? ____________________________

________________________________________________________________________

12. What was the aftermath of her addiction? _________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

13. Has everyone in her family started the healing process? Why or why not?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Raising Ourselves Novel Study
Chapter Nineteen– Barry
Learning Activities

3 Handouts

Activity 1 - Vocabulary

caliber Utopian truisms chasms
dysfunctional atheist agnostic shroud

Learners read the sentences from the chapter on Handout 1. They write their own definition for each word and then use a dictionary to check their definitions. Then, they write another sentence for each word.

Activity 2 – Chapter Questions

Learners answer questions about the chapter. The questions are listed on Handout 2. Below are the questions and answers for the instructor.

Questions: p.202-204


2. Did Barry want to be an administrator all his life? What did he really want to do? No. Be an artist.

3. What did Barry and Velma dream of? Having a good house and getting a good education in a place with no liquor store.

4. Who did Barry and Velma want to make Fort Yukon a better place for? People who didn’t have a father to chart a path for them and for children of alcoholics.

5. Why did Barry say: “Velma, either poop or get off the pot!” Velma was always talking about things but never really doing anything.


7. What award did Velma win? The Western States Book Award.

Questions: p.205-207

9. Velma realized that the problems of Fort Yukon happen in other communities too. What bothered her the most about her people, the Gwich’in, drinking? *They were losing their tradition of caring and knowing one another.*

10. What disease did Barry get? *HIV.*

11. How old was Barry when he died? 35.

12. Velma says that religion scared them and they didn’t trust anyone. How did Barry change near his death? *He looked beyond their reality. He asked questions of those he respected. He became at peace with himself.*

Questions: p.208-209

13. Why did Barry carry his burden alone? *He didn’t want to bother others.*

14. Everyone in his family wished they could trade places with him in the hospital. Why? *Because everyone in the family loved him, he was respected, the honorable one.*

15. What happened outside the window when Barry passed on? *A flock of ravens flew by in a V shape.*

**Activity 3 – Reflection and Journal Writing**

Respond to these in your journal.

- There is a saying “Where ever you are there you are.” Barry is saying the same thing when he says that you can’t leave a problem behind because you actually take it with you. What do you think of this?

- What does this mean: “If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem.”

**Activity 4 – Discussion and Extended Activities**

Discussion

- The author never comes out and actually says that Barry was gay. She alludes to it but never uses the words *gay.* Why?
Why did Barry not tell anyone about his sexuality?

Grandma Itchoo said Barry was a Medicine Man. Looking at his life as described by Velma, do you think Barry was a leader?

Extended activities

- Do a character map of Barry. Use Handout 3 as a guideline.
- Is there a difference between religion and spirituality? Brainstorm ideas with learners on flipchart paper. Ask them to organize their ideas and write a paragraph about region and spirituality.
Chapter Nineteen Vocabulary

- caliber
- Utopian
- truisms
- chasms
- dysfunctional
- atheist
- agnostic
- shroud

Read the sentences below from the chapter. Write down what you think the word in bold means. Check your definition in the dictionary. Write the definition down from the dictionary. Write a new sentence for each word.

1. Barry was determined to make a difference on this earth. I was too. But he was of a different caliber than I was.

   Your definition: ______________________________________________________

   Dictionary: ___________________________________________________________

   Sentence: _____________________________________________________________

   _________________________________________________________________

2. As Barry worked furiously to build our town. I dreamed of a Utopian society. At one point I moved to the Venetie Reservation, thinking that would be the place where Indians were what my ideals told me they should be: sober, self-sufficient, and healthy.

   Your definition: ______________________________________________________

   Dictionary: ___________________________________________________________

   Sentence: _____________________________________________________________

   _________________________________________________________________
3. Other times he would say, “Velma, if you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem.” He loved those one-sentence truisms, and in that way he reminded me of my father.

Your definition: __________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________

Sentence: ________________________________

4. Most of all I hated that we Gwich’in were straying from our tradition of caring and knowing one another. I was bitter that alcohol had created chasms.

Your definition: __________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________

Sentence: ________________________________

5. I did not consider how the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional environment could set you up for some kind of unexpected failure.

Your definition: __________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________

Sentence: ________________________________

6. We had been raised on my father’s non-belief. My father swore he was an **atheist**, but deep down we knew he was an **agnostic**.

Your definition: __________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

Sentence: _________________________________________________________________

Your definition: __________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

Sentence: _________________________________________________________________

7. It was almost as if my observant self had been put to sleep so that I remained blind to what was happening. I believe that Barry knew this, and in some mysterious way he kept the **shroud** over my eyes.

Your definition: __________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

Sentence: _________________________________________________________________

Your definition: __________________________________________________________

Dictionary: ______________________________________________________________

Sentence: _________________________________________________________________
Chapter Nineteen Questions

1. What job did Barry have? ____________________________

2. Did Barry want to be an administrator all his life? What did he really want to do?
   ______________________________________________________

3. What did Barry and Velma dream of? ____________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

4. Who did Barry and Velma want to make Fort Yukon a better place for?
   ______________________________________________________

5. Why did Barry say: “Velma, either poop or get off the pot!”
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

6. What did Barry tell Velma to do with her story “Two Old Women.”
   ______________________________________________________

7. What award did Velma win? ____________________________

8. Velma dreamed of a Utopian society. What did she expect at Venetie Reservation?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
9. Velma realized that the problems of Fort Yukon happen in other communities too. What bothered her the most about her people?

__________________________

__________________________

10. What disease did Barry get? ________________________________

11. How old was Barry when he died? ____________________________

12. Velma says that religion scared them and they didn’t trust anyone. How did Barry change near his death?

__________________________

__________________________

13. Why did Barry carry his burden alone? ________________________

14. Everyone in his family wished they could trade places with him in the hospital. Why?

__________________________

__________________________

15. What happened outside the window when Barry passed on?

__________________________________________
Character Map – Barry

Develop a character map for Barry. Write one character traits in each oval. Write one supporting detail in each of the rectangles.
Epilogue and Review
Learning Activities

2 Handouts

Activity 1 – Epilogue Questions

1. What is being lost each year? *Elders who speak the language and understand the past.*
2. What is Velma’s fear? *That young people will never know the beauty of life that existed once upon a time, before the coming of drinking and drugs.*
3. Velma explains many reasons that are holding back her people. List and explain as many as you can.
   i) Early missionaries saying we aren’t good being who we are.
   ii) Leaders saying past ways are barbaric.
   iii) Reluctant to move into the future with a healthy balance of old and new.
   iv) Need to acknowledge we are proud of our past and want to own some of our past values. *Get rid of feelings of shame for wanting to be Indians instead of cowboys.*
   v) Unhealthy sense of nostalgia.

Activity 2 – Reflection and Journal Writing

- Why is storytelling so important? How can we make sure that stories are passed on from one generation to another?
- Write down some good memories you have from when you were young.
- Do you know any traditional stories? Write them down!

Activity 3 – Discussion and Extended Activities

Discussion

- Velma says, “Our stories, the memories of our people, are the things left to hold us together.” Do you agree?
- What does this mean: “Our culture has become diluted by other value systems.”
Some leaders don’t want the world to know about ancestors survival techniques because they conflict with new values. Do you think these elders are embarrassed or ashamed of the past? What are some other reasons?

What can happen to people who miss the past too much? Why does Velma take life one day at a time?

Extended Activities

Interview an Elder in your community. Ask them to tell you a story about the past. Write the story down. Publish your stories in a community book.

Watch the movie *Smoke Signals*. This movie is about a young man who lives on a reservation. It is about his life on the reservation and how he handles the difficulties of growing up.

Compare two characters in the book. How are they similar/ the same? Use a Venn diagram.

List the characters in order of preference. Give clear reasons for each character’s place on the line.

Which character did you most dislike in the book? Why?

**Activity 4 – Review from the Novel**

Velma says that, “New ways of thinking were forced on us with humiliation and fear and drilled into our minds for one hundred years.” Give examples from the book.

What values and teachings did Velma learn from her parents?

Write a one-page biography on Velma Wallis. An example biography is on Handout 1.

Write a novel review for *Raising Ourselves*. Refer to Handout 2 for sample reviews from other books.

**Activity 5 – Your Opinion**

If you enjoyed the book, write an advertisement for it clearly explaining why others should read it.
If you didn't enjoy the book, write explaining why and give your suggestions to improve the story.

List the main points of the novel. Write a summary of the story that will inspire others to read it.

Activity 6 – Essay
Write a three-page essay. Choose one of the following topics:

- Velma says we need a healthy balance of the old while living in the new. Elizabeth McKenzie from the Tlicho region first coined the expression “We must live like two people.” What does this mean? How can Aboriginal people do this?
- Choose a character from the novel. Describe their background, life experiences, strengths and weaknesses. What did you learn from this character?
- Aboriginal language and culture are intrinsically linked. “Without language, we are warm bodies without a spirit.” says Elder, Mary Lou Fox. Write an essay on the importance of keeping the language alive or reviving the language in your community. An excellent website for this topic is http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/fnesc/toc-e.html
- Look back at the history of your community. Write an essay on the changes that your community has faced in the past 50 years.

Activity 7 – Group Projects
- Barry and Velma had a vision to create a place for youth. Design this building and create the youth programs.
- Create an HIV-AIDS awareness campaign. Design a poster for the Health Centre, a brochure with facts, and information for youth.
- Create a booklet of stories from your community.
Epilogue and Review
Handout 1

Biography

Write a 1-2 page biography on Velma Wallis. Refer to this website for information on Velma:
http://voices.cla.umn.edu/vg/Bios/entries/wallis_velma.html

Below is an example biography for Richard Van Camp an Aboriginal author from the NWT.

Richard Van Camp, the eldest of four boys, is a member of the Dogrib nation (Tlicho) from Canada's Northwest Territories. He graduated from the University of Victoria and the En'owkin International School of Writing. He earned his masters degree at the University of British Columbia. Richard currently teaches Creative Writing for Aboriginal Learners at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC. He is also CBC Radio's Writer in Residence for their North by Northwest Program.

Richard’s poems, short stories and novellas have been published in anthologies and journals since 1992. Richard wrote for CBC’s North of 60 television show for two months under their Writer Internship Program and was a script and cultural consultant with them for four seasons. He recently co-wrote the short movie "The Promise" with Kent Williams and Jason Alexander of Neohaus Filmworks.

Richard is the author of two children's books with the Cree artist, George Littlechild, A Man Called Raven and What’s the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses? He also wrote a novel, The Lesser Blessed, and published a collection of his finest short stories, Angel Wing Splash Pattern. He has performed at many writing festivals throughout Canada and around the world.
Book Review

Read the following reviews. Write your own review for Raising Ourselves. Share your review with others in the class.

**Review of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire ★★★★★**

Certainly, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire is the most intriguing, most complicated, and most satisfying of the Potter series, and author J.K. Rowling deserves the media hype recognition she's received. Besides the immense financial bonus, Rowling's books are achieving notable literary success as well. In Book Four, Harry is entering his fourth year at Hogwarts; he's 14 years old; and he's showing a much more mature side of himself (after all, he's a year older!) In this 700+ pager, Rowling presents themes of young love (Harry and Ron are now noticing the opposite sex!), social significance (Hermione is championing house elves' right to be free), and death (a central character is murdered). Rowling addresses these--and other issues--in a more mature manner as well. Of course, the usual “good v. evil” story continues. Voltemort is back! And he's sending shock waves around the world. Enter even more intrigue (and desperate at that) as Harry and his friends and mentors at Hogwarts continue their “constant vigilance.” But vigilance against evil does not come with a small price and Rowling patiently--and expertly--explores this struggle. Harry's adventures are, indeed, heart stopping. This book is the climax of the four published, but Rowling is on a roll and the anticipation for Book Five is mounting! **Reviewed by Bill Hobbs**


**Review of In Search of April Raintree ★★★½**

This is a moving, if somewhat awkward, account of the life of two Métis sisters as they grow up in a society that frequently treats them quite badly. We have all read about such lives: the broken home, the abuse, the drinking, and the prostitution.
The writer is not as skilful as she eventually will be if she continues to write, but readers will respond to the strength of her emotions. When a writer chooses such topics, particularly within the North American Indian context, it is absolutely essential that he or she avoid stereotyping in action or character. This has not been achieved totally by the author despite her obvious knowledge of her material. She is not in as full control of her material as she might be, and, in places, her piling of horror upon horror weakens rather than strengthens the impact of her story. We begin to feel that she is doing this to shock us rather than to advance the story.

There is no doubt, however, that this is a worthwhile attempt. Distasteful matters are presented honestly. People with an interest in social problems, would find this book very interesting. Reviewed by C.H. Mountford http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/cmarchive/vol12no1/searchaprilraintree.html

**Book Review for Two Old Women ★★★★★**

The winner of the 1993 Western States Book Award in the creative nonfiction category, Wallis recounts the Athabaskan Indian legend of two elderly women who are abandoned when their tribe experiences an unusually harsh winter and runs low on food. The tribe barely survives until spring, and the next winter is just as bad. When the tribe finds itself back in the place where they had abandoned the women, they send out scouts to find traces of them. When found in good health, the women must now decide whether to save those who had betrayed them. A penetrating story, perfect for reading aloud. Reviewed by Steve Brock http://www.kstrom.net/isk/books/ya/ya320.html