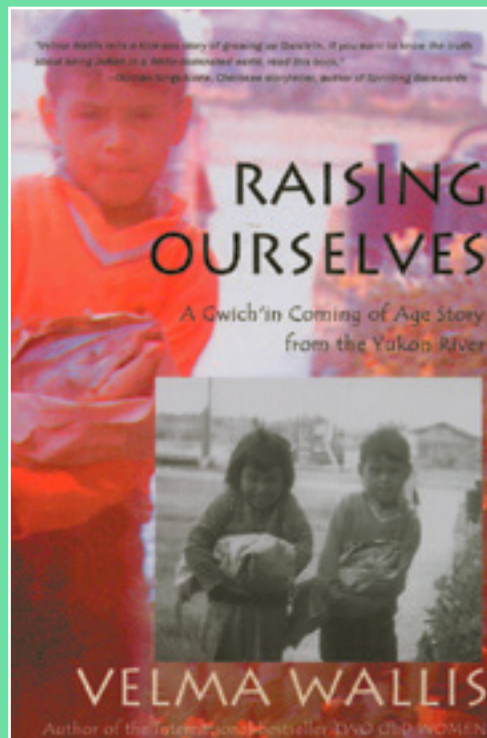


# Raising Ourselves by Velma Wallis



## Nonfiction Study English 130

October 2006

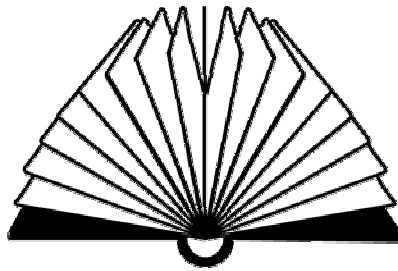
# English 130

## Nonfiction Study

*Raising Ourselves* by Velma Wallis

Developed by

**NWT Literacy Council**



Funded by

**Department of Education, Culture and Employment**



# **Acknowledgements**

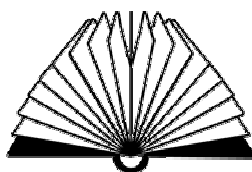
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**Northwest Territories** Education, Culture and Employment

We thank Sarah Wright, from Norman Wells, who developed the questions and some activities for the novel study.

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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## **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.

## ***Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study***

- 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 write at 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 discussion, 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

## ***Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study***

### **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.

## ***Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study***



### **Prereading Handout 1**

## **Check out the Framework<sup>1</sup>**

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

<sup>1</sup> Source: <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**

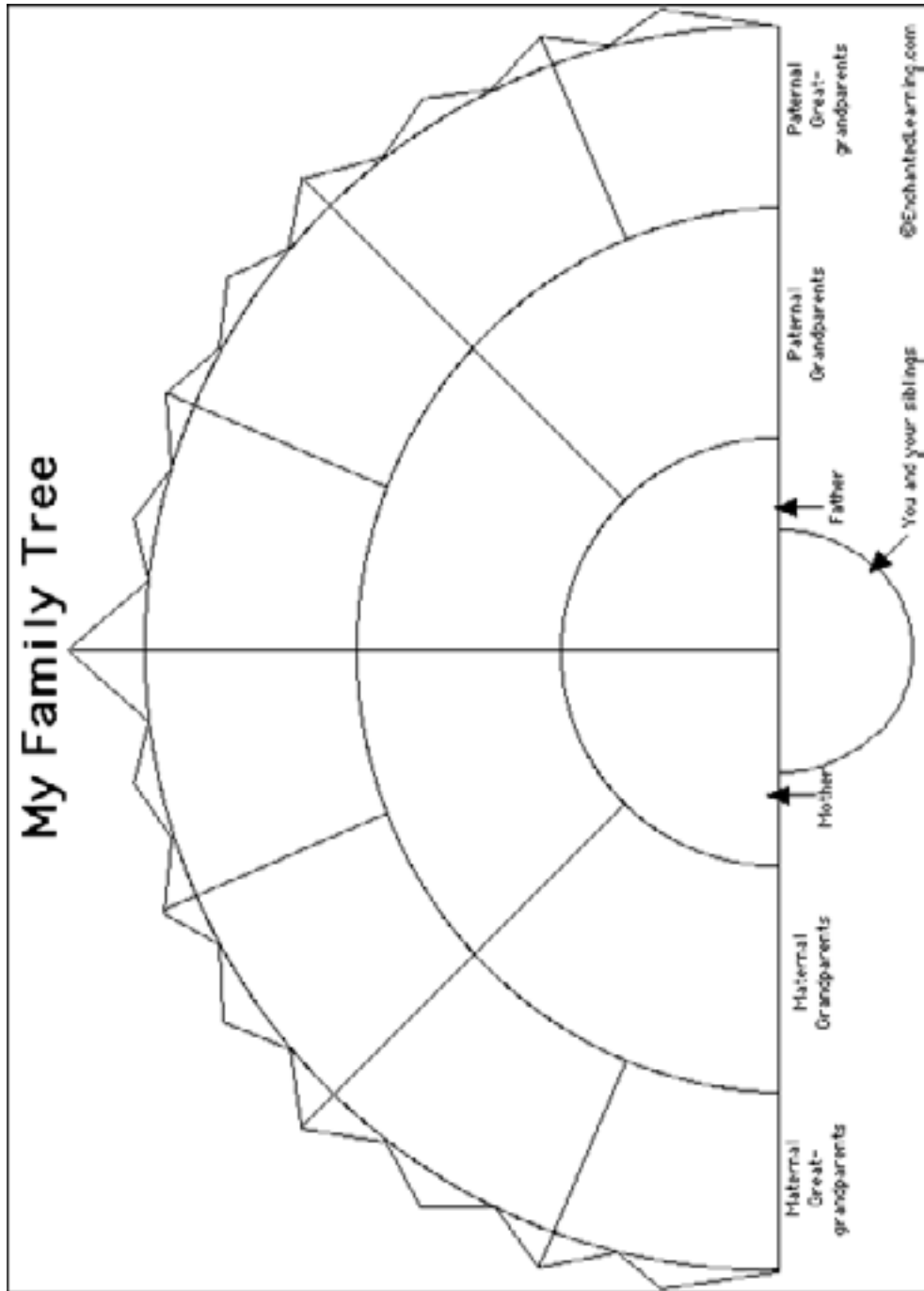
Look at Velma's family tree at the beginning of the book and answer the following questions in point form.

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? \_\_\_\_\_

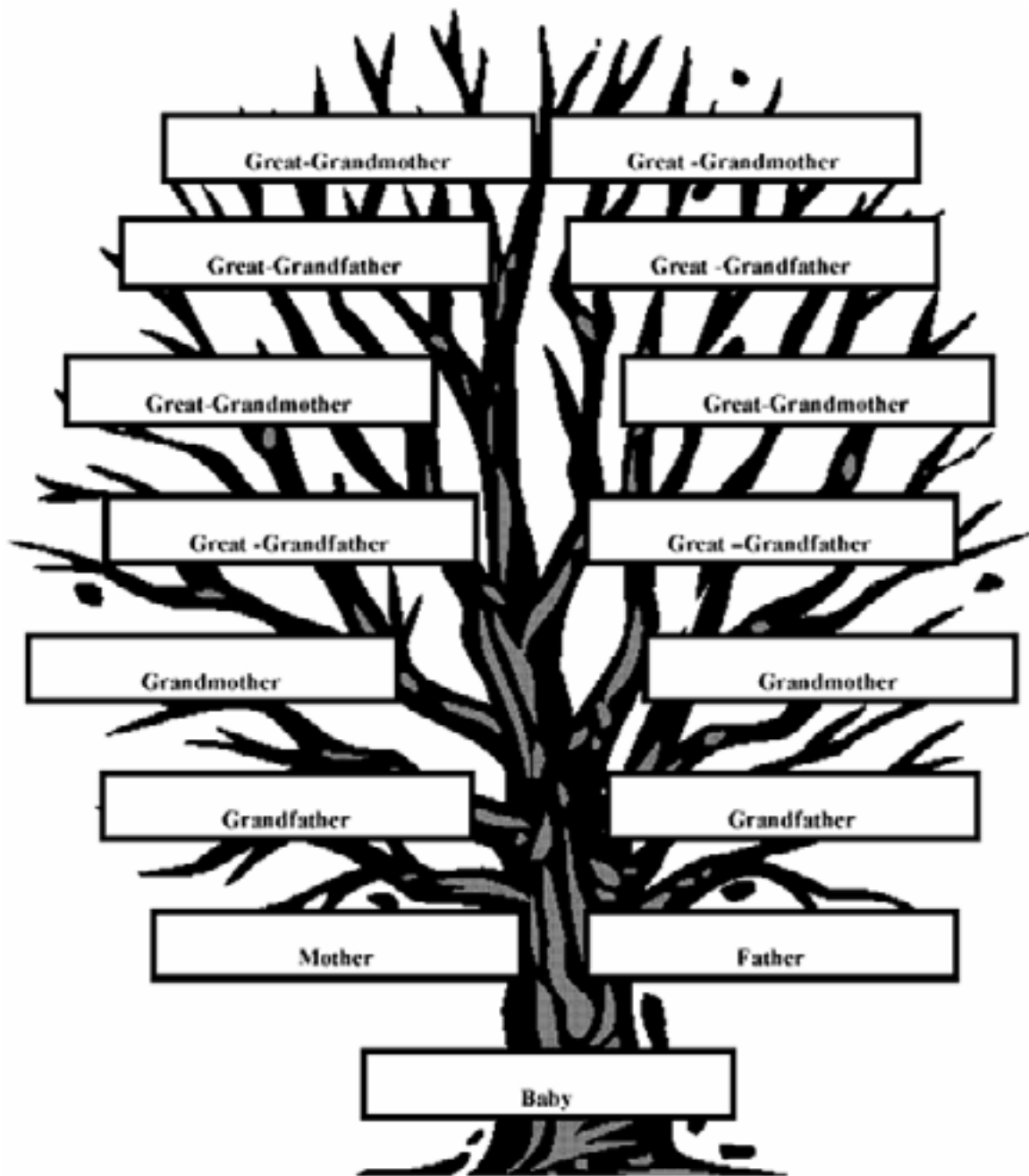


**Prereading**  
Handout 3

## **Your Family Tree**



## **Family Tree<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> Source: From *Culture and Traditions How to Kit* by the NWT Literacy Council



**Prereading**  
Handout 4

## **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  
overgrowth

descriptive  
language

beaten  
eerie

capture  
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.*



## **Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study**

### **Questions: p. 19-23**

6. Discuss: What does **brush people** mean? What do we say here? *Probably bush people.*
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 Carroll'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

## ***Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study***

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>
- 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*

## ***Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study***



### **Chapter One** **Handout 1**

## **Chapter One Vocabulary**

remnants  
overgrowth

descriptive  
language

beaten  
eerie

capture  
languid

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**  
**Handout 2**

**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?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study***

7. What does **trahtrayll 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?

---

---



**Chapter One**  
**Handout 3**

**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*.

<b>Point of View</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Innocent Eye</b>	The story is told through the eyes of a child.	
<b>Stream of Consciousness</b>	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.	
<b>First Person</b>	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).	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Person</b>	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.	

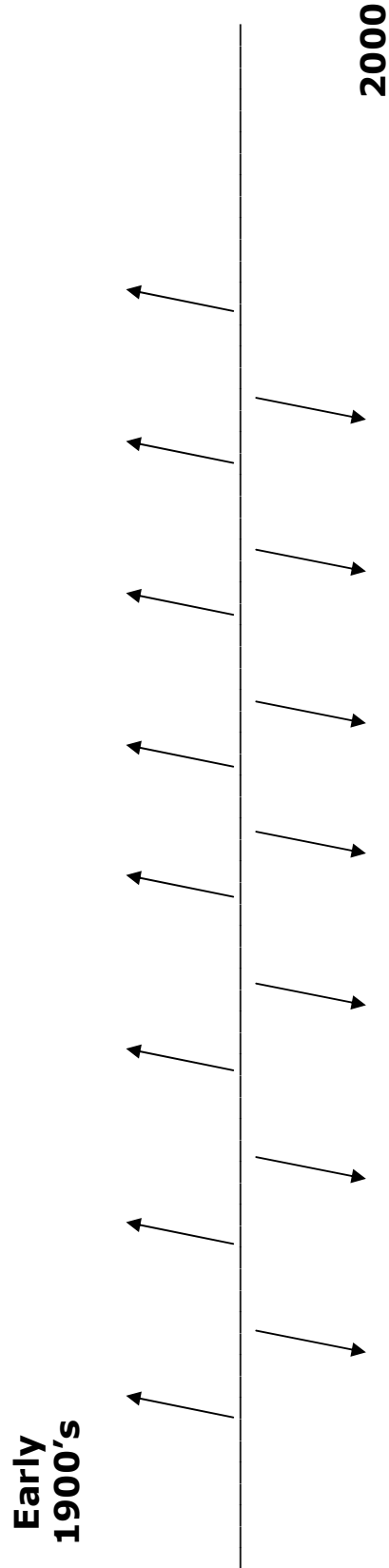
## ***Raising Ourselves Nonfiction Study***

<b>Omniscient</b>	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.	
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## **Timeline**





## **Chapter Two: Itchoo**

### **Learning Activities**

5 Handouts

#### **Activity 1 - Vocabulary**

heathen	loyalty	confluence	rituals
enigma	meager	contentedly	diminishing

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.*

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

### **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?

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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 their 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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

6. 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. 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**  
**Handout 2**

**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? \_\_\_\_\_

---



## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Honest</li><li>• Light-Hearted</li><li>• Leader</li><li>• Expert</li><li>• Brave</li><li>• Conceited</li><li>• Mischievous</li><li>• Demanding</li><li>• Thoughtful</li><li>• Keen</li><li>• Humble</li><li>• Friendly</li><li>• Short</li><li>• Adventurous</li><li>• Hard-Working</li><li>• Timid</li><li>• Shy</li><li>• Bold</li><li>• Daring</li><li>• Dainty</li><li>• Tireless</li><li>• Energetic</li><li>• Cheerful</li><li>• Smart</li><li>• Impulsive</li><li>• Bossy</li><li>• Witty</li><li>• Fighter</li><li>• Helpful</li><li>• Kind</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Happy</li><li>• Disagreeable</li><li>• Simple</li><li>• Fancy</li><li>• Plain</li><li>• Excited</li><li>• Studious</li><li>• Inventive</li><li>• Creative</li><li>• Thrilling</li><li>• Independent</li><li>• Intelligent</li><li>• Compassionate</li><li>• Gentle</li><li>• Proud</li><li>• Wild</li><li>• Messy</li><li>• Neat</li><li>• Joyful</li><li>• Strong</li><li>• Pitiful</li><li>• Cooperative</li><li>• Lovable</li><li>• Prim</li><li>• Proper</li><li>• Ambitious</li><li>• Able</li><li>• Quiet</li><li>• Curious</li><li>• Reserved</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bright</li><li>• Courageous</li><li>• Serious</li><li>• Funny</li><li>• Humorous</li><li>• Sad</li><li>• Poor</li><li>• Rich</li><li>• Tall</li><li>• Dark</li><li>• Light</li><li>• Handsome</li><li>• Pretty</li><li>• Ugly</li><li>• Selfish</li><li>• Unselfish</li><li>• Self-Confident</li><li>• Respectful</li><li>• Considerate</li><li>• Imaginative</li><li>• Busy</li><li>• Patriotic</li><li>• Fun-Loving</li><li>• Popular</li><li>• Successful</li><li>• Responsible</li><li>• Lazy</li><li>• Dreamer</li><li>• Simple-Minded</li><li>• Loyal</li></ul>
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## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***



### **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.



(photo from Holman, courtesy of Jeri Miltenberger, Fort Smith)

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)<sup>3</sup> 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.

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<sup>3</sup> **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

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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, pre-school 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. <sup>4</sup>

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.

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<sup>4</sup> **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.*
4. What did epidemics do to Native people? *Wiped out thousands of Native Alaskans.*
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.*

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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 destroyed?
- 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

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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?



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### **Chapter Three** **Handout 1**

## **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: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Word 5:** \_\_\_\_\_

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

**Word 6:** \_\_\_\_\_

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

**Word 7:** \_\_\_\_\_

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

**Word 8:** \_\_\_\_\_

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_



**Chapter Three**  
Handout 2

**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?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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11. What did Velma find in the cache? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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13. What was the hardest thing Auntie Nina ever had to do?

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***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*

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### **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.*
9. Who taught Pete to trap? *His mother.*
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.

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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.



## Raising Ourselves Novel Study



### Chapter Four Handout 1

## Chapter Four Vocabulary

vagrant	ridicule	scourge	prejudices
quandary	cynical	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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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**  
**Handout 2**

**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? \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

10. What two aspects of village life aren't likely to change, in the author's opinion?

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

12. How did Velma find out about her father's youth? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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**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?

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

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

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4. Do you think that racism has changed in the last 30 years? If so how? If not, why?

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## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



## **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.*
6. What kind of temper did Hannah have? Give examples. *Bad temper. Flew into fits of rage. Sometimes throw Edison out of the house.*
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.*



## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

### **Questions: p.52-53**

9. Where did Mary live? Why? *At the orphanage because of a serious illness.*
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.

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### **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 fared 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.

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### **Chapter Five** **Handout 1**

## **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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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### Chapter Five Handout 2

## Vocabulary Review: Chapter 1-5

Find the words below in the word search.

i l p w e t k m r i m x p k v f c f j b  
p k u b u h e a t h e n i m a d y q u j  
y d o f r j d c z z b p a m g i n e l p  
r e g a e m e b c o a p h c r s i p s e  
v q n s s t v z i e r u t p a c c l c r  
g d i m i n i s h i n g w c n o a w d s  
w z l g l k t p n r b t o v t u l q p q  
d e b a i r p u s e g n r x t r o d g y  
s c i m e d i p e e t k g i q g l j p d  
s n s r n d r w n e e a r d c e x i z n  
c e o i t n c g n i g g e l t o o b k v  
c u c v d r s t f s w t v b o e q z p s  
s l x i f d e h s f a i o h g y a s g z  
r f a b d d d m m d g y r a d n a u q j  
k n u a l u z l n i l c u r i v a l r y  
b o l y w p j u l a n g u i d i j t t d  
x c b n b i n e p t n u u l w a w r e y  
x d e l c i d i r a t t i r e x c y i u  
o p u r j g s k l p w x s s q z k h x g  
r o d q t v y j z x o l p z x c t i p x

attire  
beaten  
boistrerous  
bootlegging  
capture  
confluence  
contentedly  
cynical  
descriptive

diminishing  
eccentric  
eerie  
enigma  
epidemics  
heathen  
inundated  
language  
languid

loyalty  
meager  
overgrowth  
prejudices  
quandary  
remnants  
resilient  
ridicle  
rituals

rivalry  
scourge  
shed  
sibling  
spiteful  
sultry  
trod  
vagrant  
vigil



**Chapter Five**  
**Handout 3**

**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?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Where did Mary live? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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

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---

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)

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

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---

---

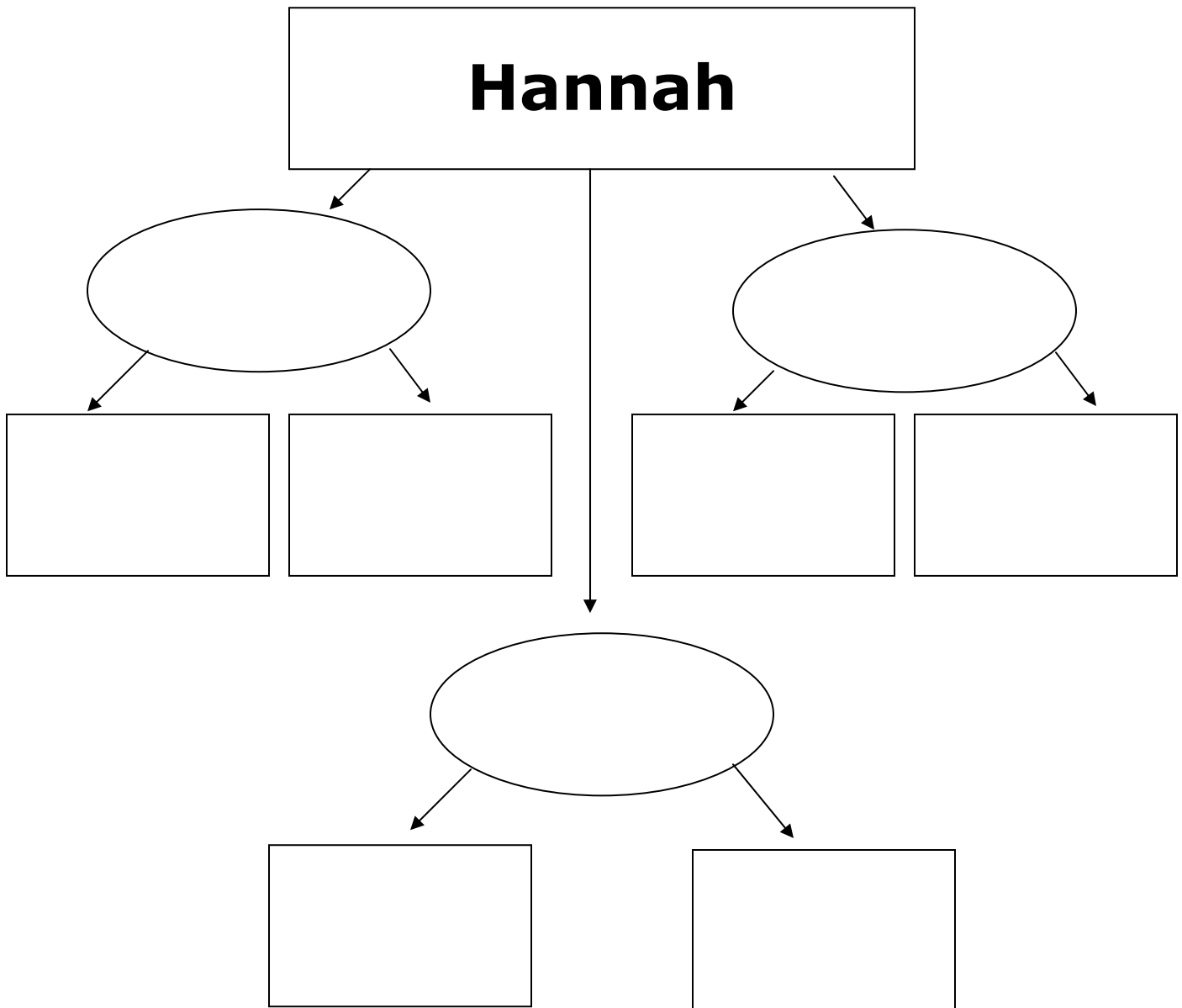
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**Chapter Five**  
Handout 4

**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  
stench

bereft  
irony

quarantine  
nonchalance

contagious  
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**

1. How did Moses feel when Hannah died? *Numb with grief.*
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 he hospital*

#### **Questions: p.64-65**

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



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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."

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### **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.

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### Chapter Six Handout 1

## Chapter Six Vocabulary

incomprehensible  
stench

bereft  
vulnerability

quarantine  
nonchalance

contagious  
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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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**  
**Handout 2**

**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? \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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.*
7. What did they use for toilet paper? *Glossy pages of the catalogue.*



## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

### **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.*
10. How many rooms in their log cabin? Where did they play? *Two. In storage boxes under the bed.*

### **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?

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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.

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



### **Chapter Seven** **Handout 1**

## **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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Word 6:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Word 7:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Chapter Seven**  
**Handout 2**

**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?

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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? \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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? \_\_\_\_\_

---



**Chapter Seven**  
**Handout 3**

**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.

	<b>Summer</b>	<b>Winter</b>
<b>In the book</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Red Over, Red Over</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dig tunnels and mazes in snow berms</li></ul>
<b>From your childhood</b>		



## **Chapter Eight – Uptown and School**

### **Learning Activities**

2 Handouts

#### **Activity 1 - Vocabulary**

hostile	pummel	cowardice	validated
assailant	individuality	disintegrate	chaos

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.*



## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

### **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.

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- “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 be bullied?

Use these websites to research the topic bullying.

- <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>

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***



### **Chapter Eight** **Handout 1**

## **Chapter Eight Vocabulary**

hostile                      pummel                      cowardice                      validated  
assailant                      individuality                      disintegrate                      chaos

Match the word and the meaning. Write a sentence for each word.

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_



**Chapter Eight**  
**Handout 2**

**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?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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**

livelihood  
solace

concocting  
foreboding

vaguely  
stoically

perplexed  
reluctantly

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.*



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### **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.*

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

18. Who helped with her childbirth? *The midwives.*

### **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**  
Handout 1

**Chapter Nine Vocabulary**

livelihood  
solace

concocting  
foreboding

vaguely  
stoically

perplexed  
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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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. When 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**  
**Handout 2**

**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? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

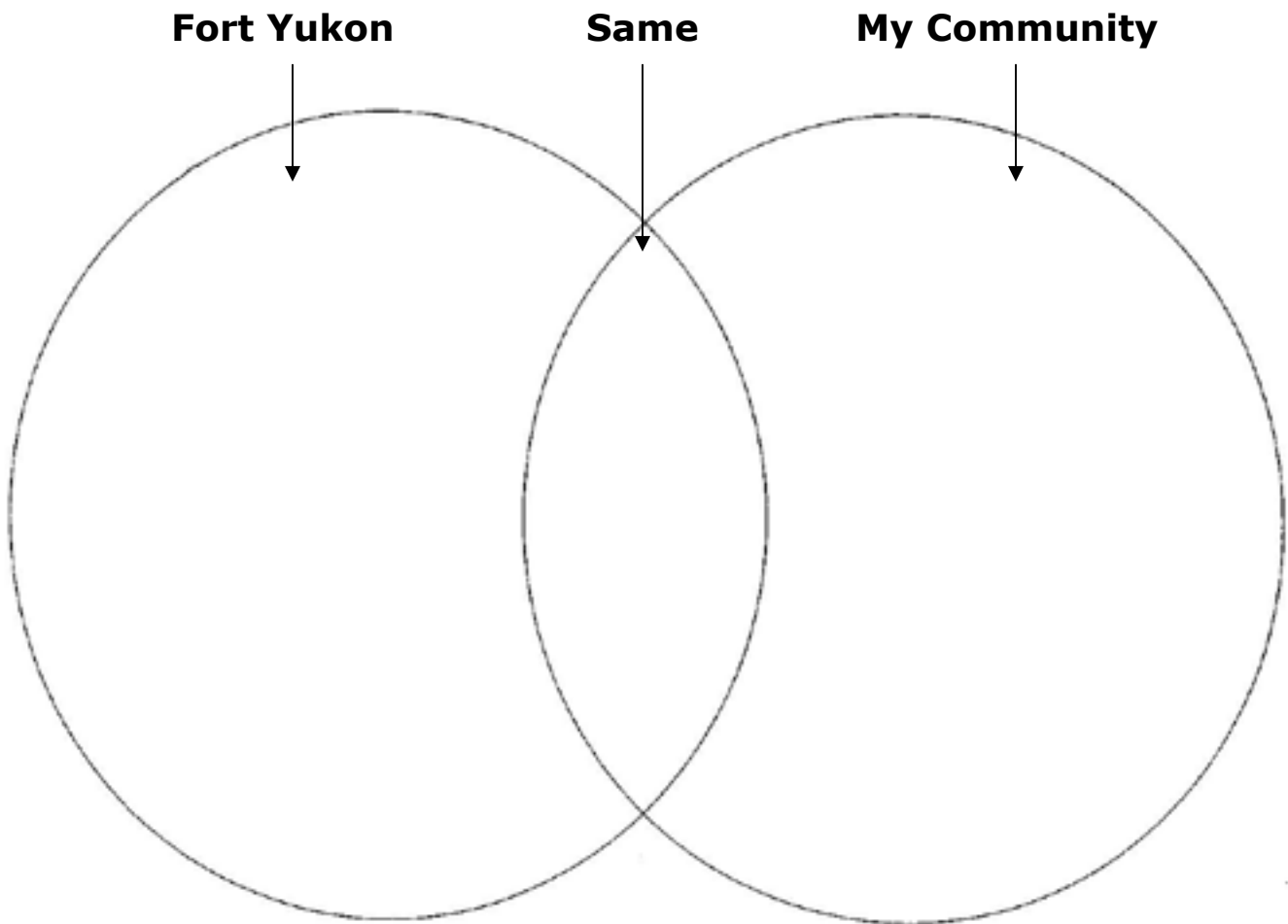
18. Who helped with her childbirth? \_\_\_\_\_



**Chapter Nine**  
**Handout 3**

**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.





## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



## **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.*

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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.

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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 happen 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.

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



### **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

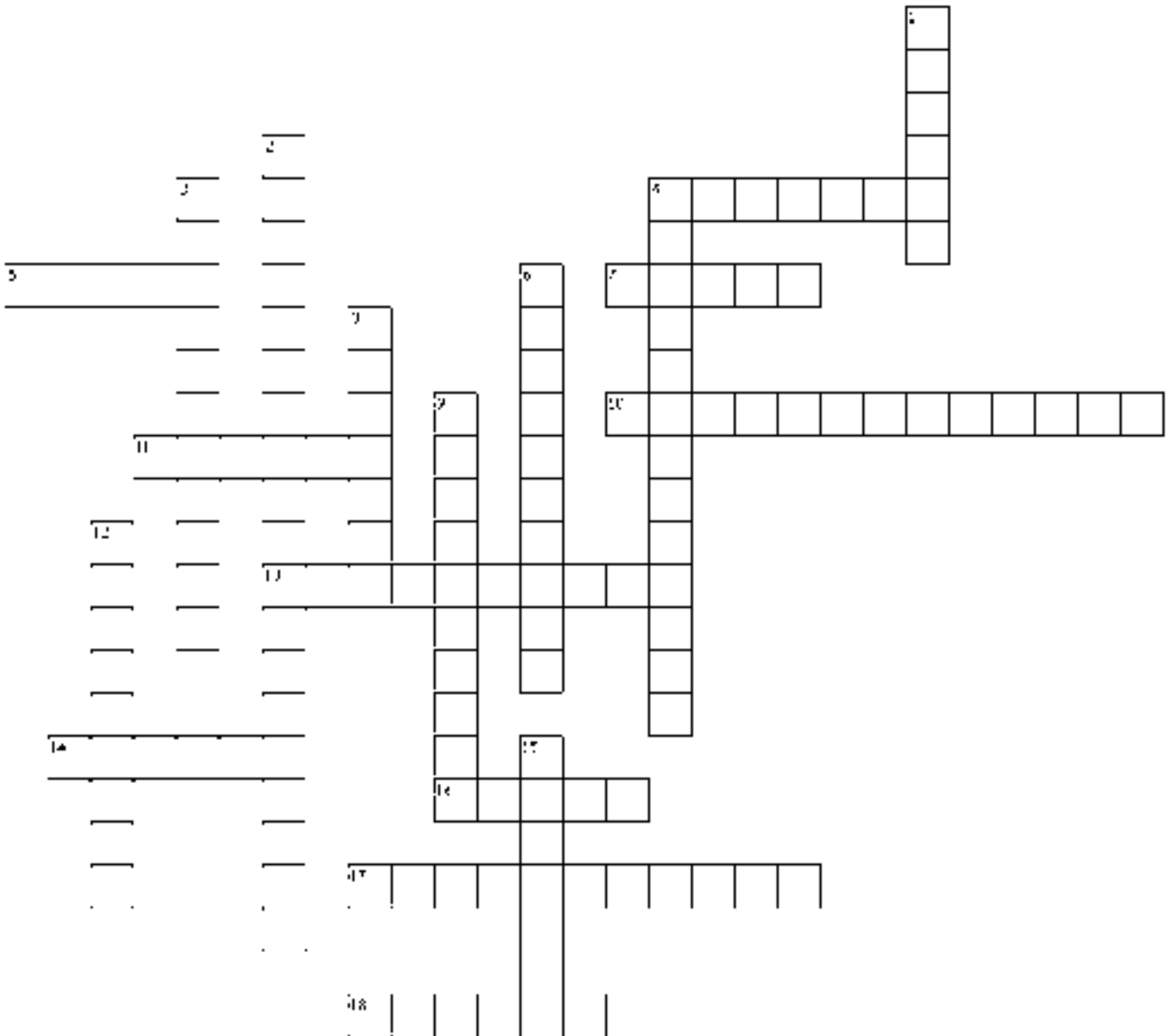
**Down**

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

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

## 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?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

8. What happened when father and uncle Tim found two men at their spring camping spot? Would this have happened in the old days?

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---

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?

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---

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**

1. Who came to visit in July, 1972? *Cousin Kay, uncle Tim's daughter.*
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.

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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.*
16. What happened the next morning, January 4, 1973? *Her father died.*

### **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?

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

- 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.

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***



### **Chapter Eleven** **Handout 1**

## **Chapter Eleven Vocabulary**

procrastinate  
morose

audacious  
ornery

sheath  
ire

conjure  
assuage

Match the word with the definition and then write a sentence showing the meaning for each word.

procrastinate		1. Extremely bold or daring
audacious		2. To effect, produce, bring, etc., by or as by magic
sheath		3. Gloomily or sullenly ill-humored, as a person or mood
conjure		4. Ugly and unpleasant in disposition or temper
morose		5. To put off till another day or time
ornery		6. To make milder or less severe; relieve; ease; mitigate
ire		7. A close-fitting dress, skirt, or coat
assuage		8. Intense anger; wrath

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_



**Chapter Eleven**  
**Handout 2**

**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? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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 medicated out?

---

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

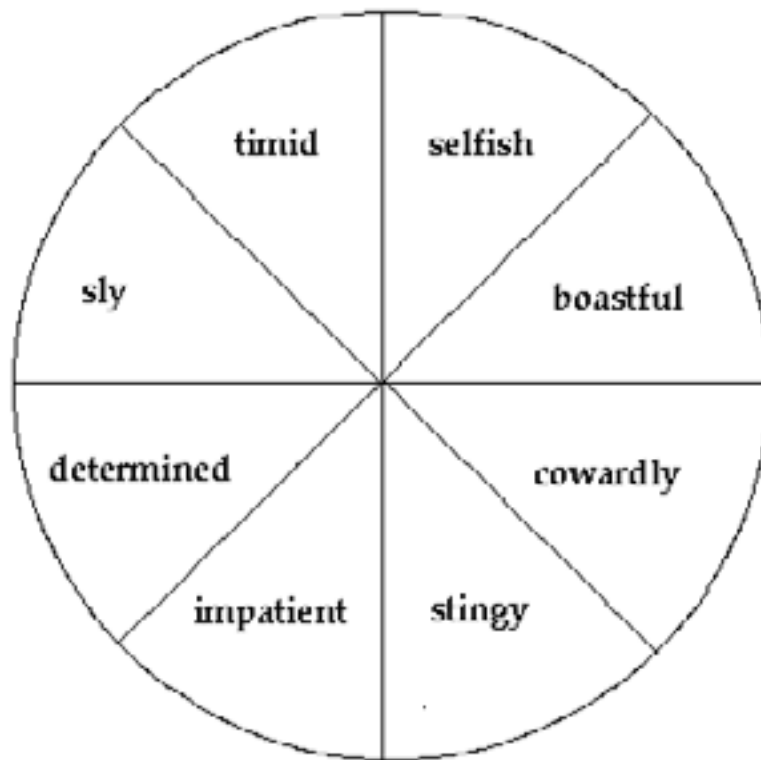




**Chapter Eleven**  
**Handout 3**

**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.



## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

**Trait** \_\_\_\_\_

**Character** \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



## **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**

4. What store opened in Fort Yukon? *A liquor store.*
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.*

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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.*

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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.

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



### **Chapter Twelve** **Handout 1**

## **Chapter Twelve Vocabulary**

overwhelming  
carte blanche

gnashing  
emulate

alleviate  
diligently

heady  
jovial

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

6. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





**Chapter Twelve**  
**Handout 2**

**Chapter Twelve Questions**

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

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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? \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. What happened at Grandpa Mo's? How did they behave? Give examples.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Why was Grandpa Mo so sad? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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  
scrutiny

plight  
intrigued

akin  
endeavours

exertion

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.*

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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..*
9. How does Velma describe Christmas? *A hardship.*
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.*
14. What did Velma want to do? *Learn how to trap and live off the 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?

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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**  
Handout 1

**Chapter Thirteen Vocabulary**

rationalized  
scrutiny

plight  
intrigued

akin  
endeavours

exertion

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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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: \_\_\_\_\_



## ***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**  
Handout 2

**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?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



### **Chapter Thirteen** **Handout 3**

## **Reference Cards**

### **Websites**

“The Wolverine” [www.blindkat.tripod.com/zoo/wolverine.html](http://www.blindkat.tripod.com/zoo/wolverine.html) April 1, 2005

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

<b>Reference card</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Website address</b>	
<b>Author</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Year</b>	
<b>Notes</b>	

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



### **Chapter Thirteen** **Handout 4**

## **Character Portrait** **Mae Wallis**

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

<b>Sober</b>	<b>Drunk</b>

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

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---

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

---

---

---

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## **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.*
4. What did Velma do her first day alone? *Cut and haul wood.*
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.*

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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.*
13. Why did Billy leave? Was it for supplies? *Probably not. He wasn't an outdoorsman.*
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?

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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**  
**Handout 1**

**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**  
**Handout 2**

**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 word?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
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? \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

10. What did she and Billy use for transportation to Neegoogwandah? What happened on their trip?

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11. How did Velma learn to trap? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. What kind of tracks did Billy find? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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14. What did Velma realize? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Chapter Fourteen**  
**Handout 3**

**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.

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***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**

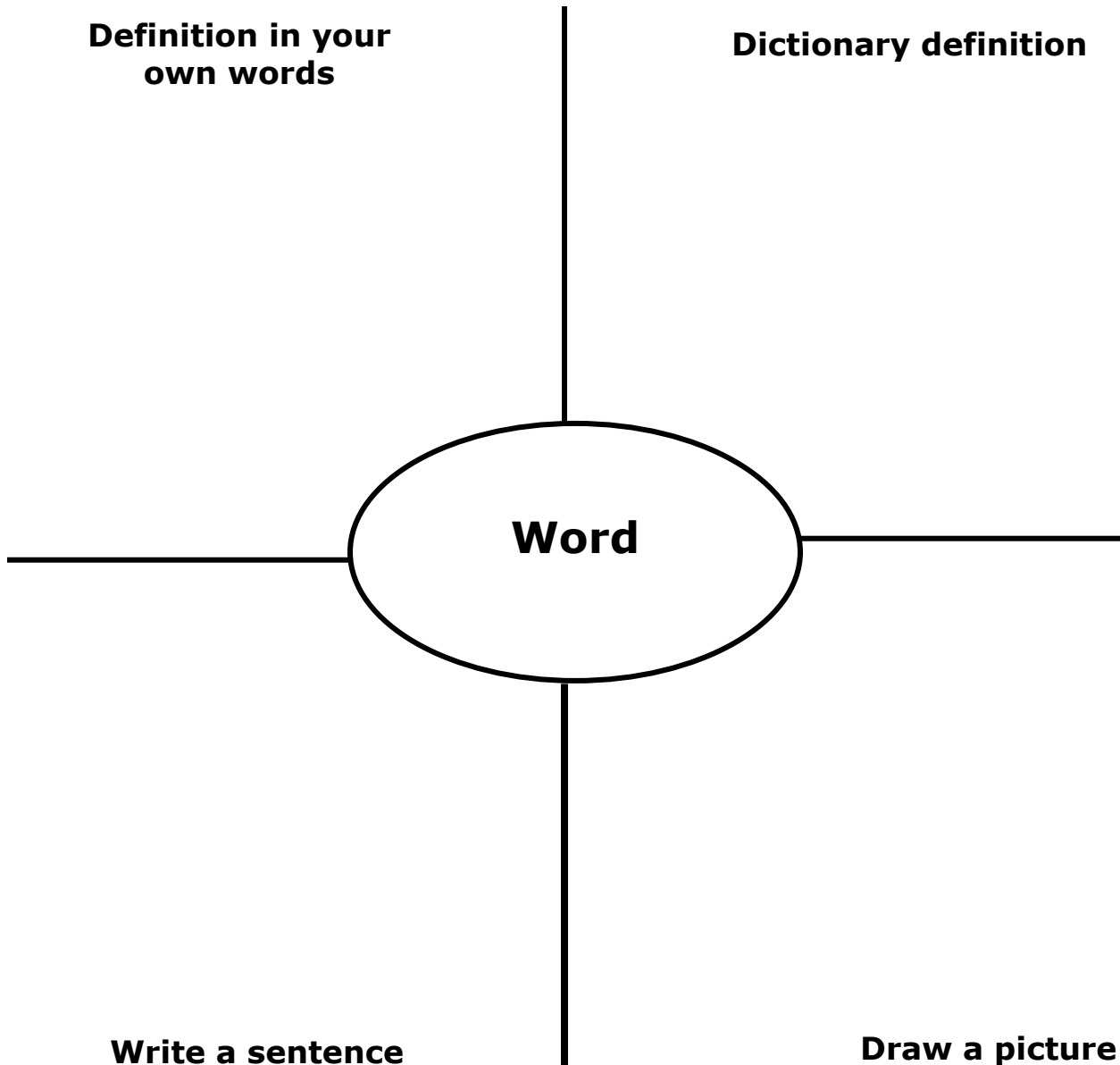
- Write an expository paragraph on how to set a muskrat trap. Handout 4 has an example of an expository paragraph.



**Chapter Fifteen**  
Handout 1

**Chapter Fifteen Vocabulary<sup>5</sup>**

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



Source: [http://www.teach.virginia.edu/go/readquest/pdf/wordmap\\_2.pdf](http://www.teach.virginia.edu/go/readquest/pdf/wordmap_2.pdf) Raymond C. Jones





**Chapter Fifteen**  
**Handout 2**

**Vocabulary Review – Word Bingo**  
**Chapters 11 - 15**

procrastinate    audacious    conjure    ornery    assuage  
overwhelming    alleviate    heady    emulate    diligently  
jovial    plight    akin    scrutiny    intrigued  
endeavours    ominously    petrified    pacified    eerily  
embarked    omnipresent    hues    avid    exertion

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




**Chapter Fifteen**  
Handout 3

**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? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Why did her mother cry? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What did her mother teach her? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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?

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

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11. How did they pass their time? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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## **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:

consequently  
clearly, then  
furthermore  
additionally  
and  
however  
on the other hand  
admittedly  
assuredly  
certainly

in addition  
moreover  
because  
besides that  
in the same way  
but  
yet  
nobody denies  
obviously  
of course

also  
pursuing this further  
in the light of the... it is  
easy to see that  
following this further  
nevertheless  
on the contrary  
undoubtedly  
unquestionably  
generally speaking

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

granted  
no doubt  
therefore  
finally  
after  
afterwards  
as soon as  
at first  
at last  
before

to be sure  
true  
in other words  
lastly  
before long  
finally  
first... second... third  
in the first place  
in the meantime

in general  
at this level  
in this situation  
in conclusion  
later  
meanwhile  
next  
soon  
then

**Write an expository paragraph on how to set muskrat traps.**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



## **Chapter Sixteen – Struggles**

### **Learning Activities**

3 Handouts

#### **Activity 1 - Vocabulary**

hypocrite  
subtle

squalor  
succumbed

contemplated  
inconsolable

eccentric  
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.*

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

### **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.

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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**  
Handout 1

**Chapter Sixteen Vocabulary**

hypocrite  
subtle

squalor  
succumbed

contemplated  
inconsolable

eccentric  
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.

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## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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**Chapter Sixteen**  
**Handout 2**

**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? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

9. What happened to two of her younger brothers? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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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?

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14. How did Barry cheer Velma up? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Why did Becky and Velma move out of their mom's house? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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17. What happened Velma's first night on the job?

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**Chapter Sixteen**  
Handout 3

**K-W-L**  
Moose Hunting

<b>Know</b>	<b>Want</b>	<b>Learned</b>
What do I already <b>know</b> about moose hunting?	What do I <b>want</b> to know about moose hunting?	What have I <b>learned</b> about this topic?



## **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.*

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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 it 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**

### **Handout 1**

## **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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**  
Handout 2

**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? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
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? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How many roommates did she have? Why did Velma feel different than them?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What experience made Velma embarrassed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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?

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10. What happened when Velma was depressed? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Who became her friends? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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13. Why did she feel shame? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Chapter Seventeen**  
**Handout 3**

**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.<sup>6</sup>

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?

Signs	Causes	Treatments

<sup>6</sup> 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)

***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



## **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.*
3. Who did they stay with in Seattle? *Lana's cousin.*
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.*
7. How did they get home? *Barry sent money for Velma and Lana's family helped with her airfare.*
8. What did Velma notice when she got off the plane in Fairbanks? *People tanned and healthy.*

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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.*
10. How did they help their mother stop drinking? *Went on long walks with her.*
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?

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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?



## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



### **Chapter Eighteen** Handout 1

## **Chapter Eighteen Vocabulary**

predator                      reprimand                      erupted                      existence  
oblivious                      insurmountable

Match the word and the meaning. Write a sentence for each word.

predator		1. Unmindful; unconscious; unaware
reprimand		2. Way of living: a way of living, especially a life of severe hardship
erupted		3. Tell somebody off
existence		4. Too great to overcome: impossible to overcome or deal with successfully
oblivious		5. One that victimizes, plunders, or destroys, especially for one's own gain
insurmountable		6. To emerge violently from restraint or limits; explode

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_



## **Chapter Eighteen**

### **Handout 2**

## **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? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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**

1. What did Barry do? *Administrator for the Native Village of Fort Yukon.*
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.*
6. What did Barry tell Velma to do with her story "Two Old Women." *Get it published.*
7. What award did Velma win? *The Western States Book Award.*
8. Velma dreamed of a Utopian society. What did she expect at Venetie Reservation? *Sober, self-sufficient, healthy Indians.*

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

### **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?

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

- 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 religion and spirituality.





## **Chapter Nineteen**

### **Handout 1**

## **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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Raising Ourselves Novel Study***

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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Chapter Nineteen**  
Handout 2

**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?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

9. Velma realized that the problems of Fort Yukon happen in other communities too. What bothered her the most about her people?

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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?

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13. Why did Barry carry his burden alone? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

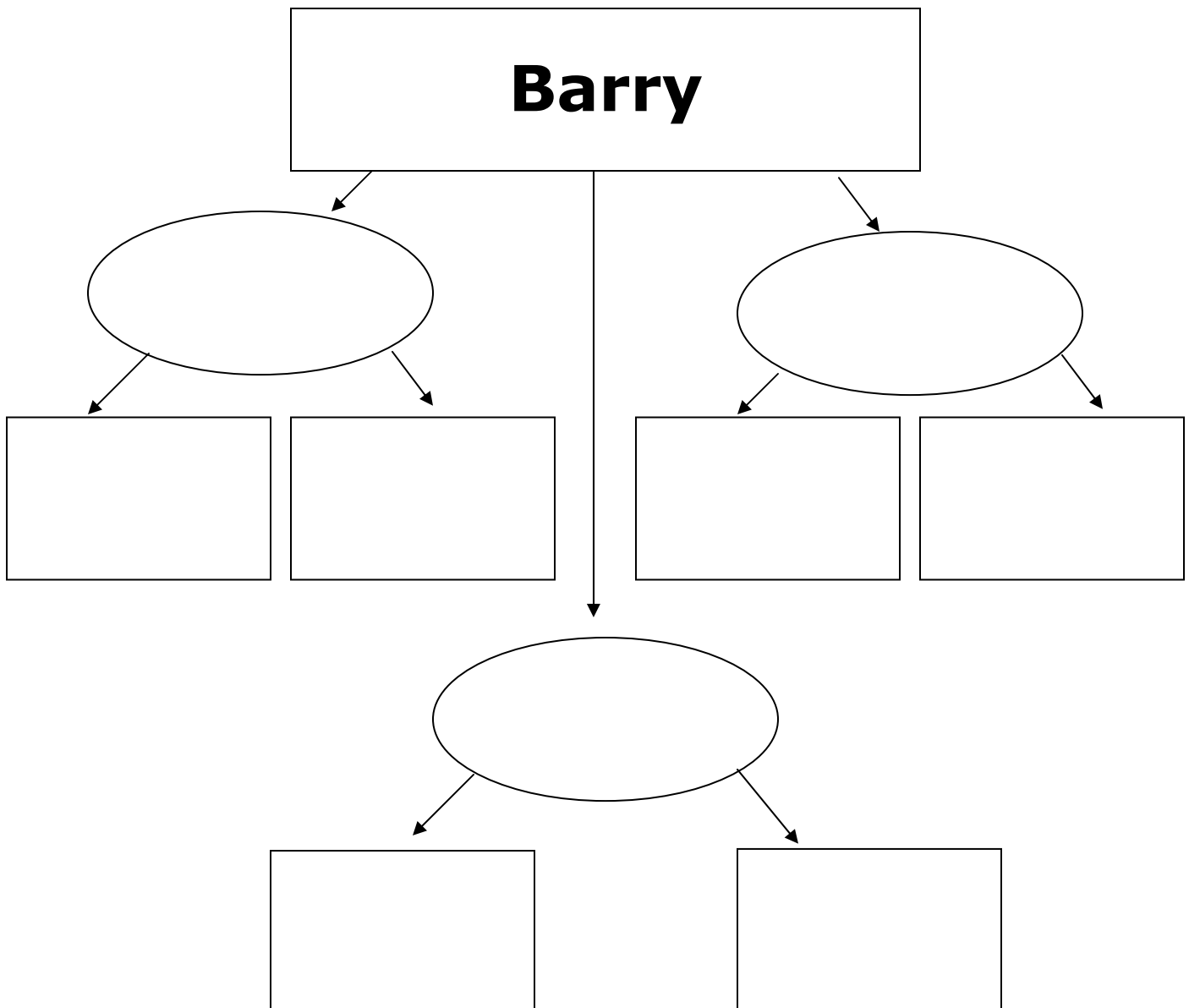
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**Chapter Nineteen**  
Handout 3

**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.



***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**



## **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."



## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

- 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.

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

- 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](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.



### **Epilogue and Review** Handout 2

## **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**

[http://www.allreaders.com/Topics/info\\_538.asp?BSID=0](http://www.allreaders.com/Topics/info_538.asp?BSID=0)

### **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.

## ***Raising Ourselves* Novel Study**

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>