

Notes

## Practice with Hints

Use the Notes column to take notes and use SALSA™ strategies. There are a few hints to get you started.

### Prairie Days



**Solve** Not sure what a prairie is? Read Ahead to figure it out.

The first time Pru saw Nebraska, it was as though she had come to the edge of the world. Gone were the flowering trees, green bushes, and soft purple hills that she had grown to know and love in Virginia. Instead, there was the prairie. It was a huge, nearly treeless expanse of land that stretched as far as she could see in every direction.

Moving to Nebraska several months ago could not be avoided, though. Her father had trouble finding work, and farmland was expensive in Virginia. In Nebraska, they got free land to begin their own farm.

Now it was time to go to town, a welcome change from the everyday routine. Little Red was already hitched to the wagon. Pru's mother would stay behind with baby Jeb.

"Climb up into the wagon and we'll head for town," Pru's father said. They had to leave early and move quickly, because it was a whole day's trip to get to town and back. They needed to purchase everything they couldn't make or grow themselves, including enough flour, dried meat, and feed for the animals to last for weeks.

“Remember to get me some new thread and needles,” her mother reminded Pru. Pru was 10 years old and learning how to sew clothes. That would give her mother more time to do the countless other chores that needed doing around the farm. Pru tried to help her mother as much as possible. She weeded the garden, washed clothes in the old bucket, and dragged water to the house. She worked a lot of the time.

“I’ll remember, Mother. I love you,” Pru hugged her mother before she climbed aboard the wagon.

When they arrived in town, they drove to the general store. Pru loved to study the merchandise while she waited. There were gadgets, tools, and rolls of fabrics. Pru ran a satiny material between her fingers. It felt smooth and wonderful! And then there were the dolls. Her rag dolls were not nearly so pretty. Pru stared at their pretty painted china faces.<sup>1</sup> She desperately wanted one, and imagined what it would be like to hold. She thought and thought about it.

They were halfway home when Pru realized she had forgotten the thread and needles. “Oh, no, Papa! Mama will be so disappointed.”

“It’s my fault, too,” her father told her. He could see how upset Pru was.

The rest of the trip, Pru couldn’t stop thinking about how she could have forgotten. “If only I hadn’t spent so much time daydreaming about dolls,” she thought sadly.

As soon as they approached the farm, Mama came running out to greet them. She took one look at her daughter and she knew at once what had happened.

“You forgot the thread and needles, didn’t you?” she said.

“Yes, Mama. I’m so sorry.”

Her mother hugged her and said. “You’ll remember next time. Now, get inside. Dinner’s waiting.”

### Footnote

<sup>1</sup> China dolls had heads and sometimes arms and legs made of porcelain or “china.” They were very delicate and quite valuable.

## Notes

**Look** Look here to find out what Pru’s life was like.

**Ask** What does Pru’s thinking about the dolls suggest about her?

**Assemble** Describe in your own words how Pru reacts to her problem.

**Skim** Footnotes are small but important. Watch for footnote markers in the text that tell you there is a footnote to help you.

**1** "Prairie Days" is an example of—

- (A) autobiography.
- (B) poetry.
- (C) fantasy.
- (D) historical fiction.



*Hint*—Think about what each genre is like. Eliminate the answers that make no sense.

**2** What is the MAIN theme of this story?

- (F) Traveling by wagon is comfortable but slow.
- (G) Thinking about what you want makes it too easy to forget what you need to do.
- (H) Children should not be given any responsibility for important things.
- (J) Life on a prairie is about the same as life anywhere else.



*Hint*—A theme is like a lesson. Which lesson does the author want readers to learn?

**3** The author included the fifth paragraph to help the reader—

- (A) understand why Pru's father needed to go to town.
- (B) get an idea of what a prairie looks like.
- (C) see how hard life was on the prairie long ago.
- (D) understand why Pru likes dolls.



*Hint*—What is the main idea of the paragraph?

**4** Phrases such as "flowering trees, green bushes, and soft purple hills" and "huge, nearly treeless expanse" in the first paragraph give the reader a sense of—

- (F) how different Nebraska is from Virginia.
- (G) what kind of weather there is in Nebraska.
- (H) the difference between spring and winter.
- (J) how pleased Pru was to be in Nebraska.



*Hint*—What does each phrase describe? *Imagine It*—what pictures do they create in your mind?

**5** Which detail tells you that this passage may be historical fiction?

- (A) Pru washes clothes in a bucket.
- (B) Pru moves from Virginia to Nebraska.
- (C) Pru likes to play with dolls.
- (D) Pru's family has a farm.



*Hint*—Which detail suggests that this story takes place a long time ago?

**6** Which of the following does NOT add to the reader's sense that Pru would forget the thread and needles?

- (F) Pru loved to study the merchandise.
- (G) Pru stared at the pretty painted china faces.
- (H) Pru imagined what it would be like to hold a china doll.
- (J) Pru hugged her mother and climbed aboard the wagon.



*Hint*—Use *What You Know* to judge how Pru felt and put yourself in her place. Which choices might cause you to forget?

**7** How does living in Nebraska create a problem for Pru?

- (A) Her father must look for work.
- (B) Farmland is too expensive.
- (C) It is very different from the life she had before.
- (D) She can't buy what she needs at the store.



*Hint*—What events or feelings happen because of the setting of the story?

**8** Which detail BEST supports the idea that Pru's father cared a lot about her?

- (F) He says forgetting the needles and thread was his fault, too.
- (G) He might buy her a penny candy if she is well-behaved.
- (H) He buys supplies for weeks at a time.
- (J) Pru looks at the dolls while her father shops.



*Hint*—Use *What You Know* about how people show they really care.