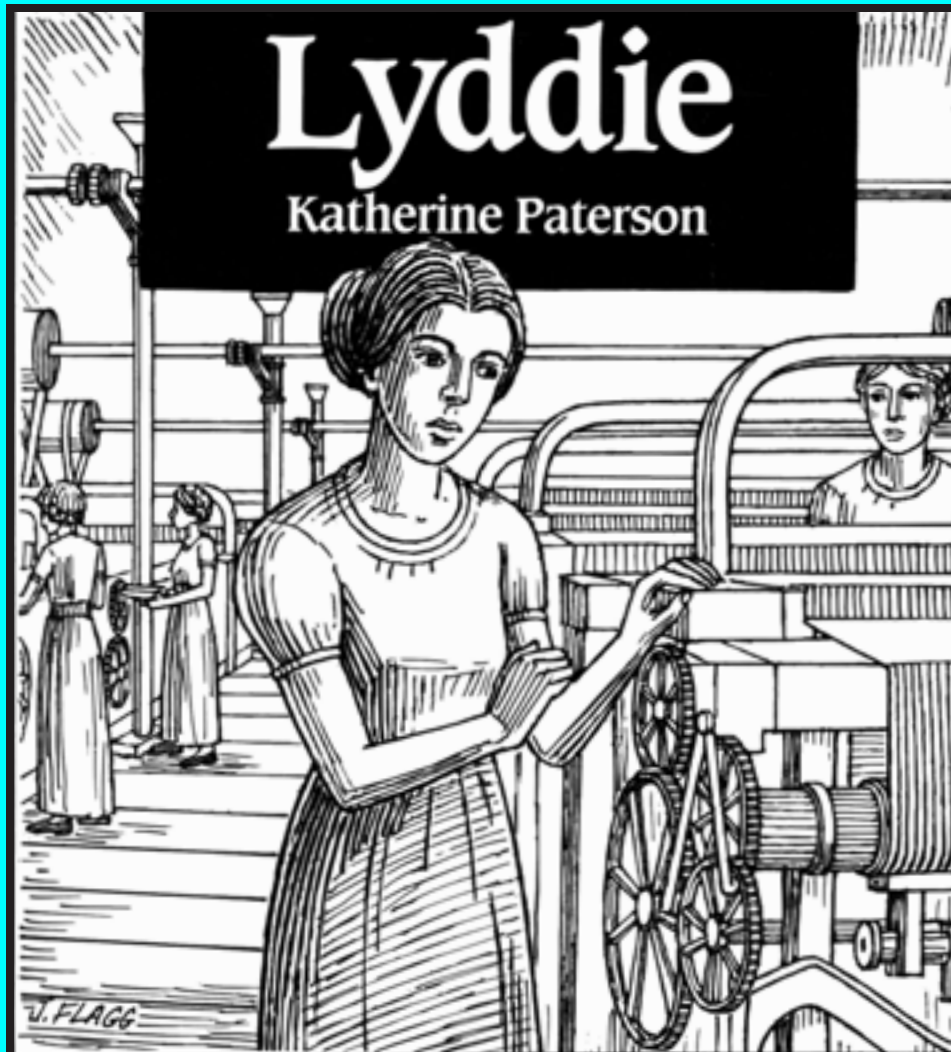


Novel·Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the book *Lyddie*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lowell, Massachusetts

From 1823 to 1845, the mill town of Lowell had the reputation of being a model factory community in which mostly female factory workers lived respectably and safely in company-owned boarding houses. Compared to textile mills in England, its buildings were much cleaner and lighter in order to attract young farm women eager for the rare chance to earn money of their own. Mill work, however, was grueling. The operatives worked from eleven to thirteen hours a day, six days a week, averaging about \$3.50 per week in wages, of which about \$1.25 went for room and board. Even so, many of the young women found time to attend educational public lectures and produce their own magazine.

Child Labor Laws

Until the twentieth century, impoverished or orphaned children under ten and some as young as five or six were commonly put to work in unsafe and unhealthy factories and mines. Although Dickens' book *Oliver Twist*, exposing the evils of child labor, helped fuel a reform movement in both England and the United States, it wasn't until 1916 that the United States government first attempted to establish the lowest age for child workers and a maximum work day and work week for them. Because employers successfully fought these laws in court, it wasn't until 1938 that effective child labor laws were finally passed.

Poor House

The poor house or poor farm was an institution operated by the local town or rural government or by the people of the community. These places were subsidized by community tithes and/or the sale of farm produce. When community members were, for any reason, unable to maintain a home and provide for their own needs, they went to the poor house voluntarily or were moved there by their neighbors. Being sent to the poor farm was a fate to be dreaded because usually the inhabitants lived there on the edge of poverty with just enough to eat and barely any comforts. No one's special needs were taken into account, and orphaned children might share their quarters with unwed mothers, petty criminals, and people who were infirm, dying, or mentally ill.

Irish Immigration

Irish immigration to the United States peaked between 1845 and 1848 as a result of the Great Potato Famine, when a fungus destroyed Ireland's staple crop. This disaster caused one quarter of the Irish population to emigrate or starve to death. Between 1840 and 1860, as many as two million Irish immigrants came to the United States, desperate for work. Most of these immigrants were illiterate, and sought jobs as manual laborers. Some went to the cities where they found work as house servants and factory hands; many worked as unskilled laborers on canals, railroads, in mines, and in quarries. Because many Irish were Catholics, they were sometimes disparagingly called "papists," partisans of the pope.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. **Social Studies Connection:** *Lyddie* is set in Vermont and Massachusetts in 1843. Do some research to find out what it was like to live in New England at that time. To better understand this book, look for answers to these questions:
 - How did most people make their living?
 - What was it like to live on a small New England farm?
 - What were the working conditions in New England factories? How were they different from today's factories?
 - What were the laws about slavery?
 - Who were the Quakers? What was their attitude toward slavery?
2. *Lyddie* is about a teenage girl in 1843 who must survive on her own after her family separates. Suppose a family left a young girl on her own today. What organizations and institutions might provide help? Which if any of these resources do you think might have been available more than a century ago?
3. Think about young people who leave home to survive on their own today. What skills and qualities do you think they need to survive? Which of these skills and qualities do you think are ones that have helped people survive throughout time?
4. What is the hardest work you have ever done? For how long did you do it? Why did you do it? What were the positive and negative aspects of this work?
5. Have you ever been in a situation in which your best interests were different from those of your friends? What happened? How did you feel?
6. What do you think people did for entertainment in an age when there were no televisions, radios, movies, or computers? What part do you think reading might have played in the lives of these people? What are your own feelings about reading? How do some of your classmates and friends feel about reading?
7. Have you read any other books of fiction set in the United States in the 1800s? If so, when and where were these stories set? Did the books give you the impression that life was easier or harder for young people than it is today? Would you prefer to live then or now? Why?
8. Become familiar with the specialized vocabulary that appears in the Glossary on page five of this study guide. It will help you understand *Lyddie's* experiences and her world.