

"Every job is good if you do your best and work hard. A man who works hard stinks only to the ones that have nothing to do but smell."

-Laura Ingalls Wilder



# LIVING LIKE LAURA

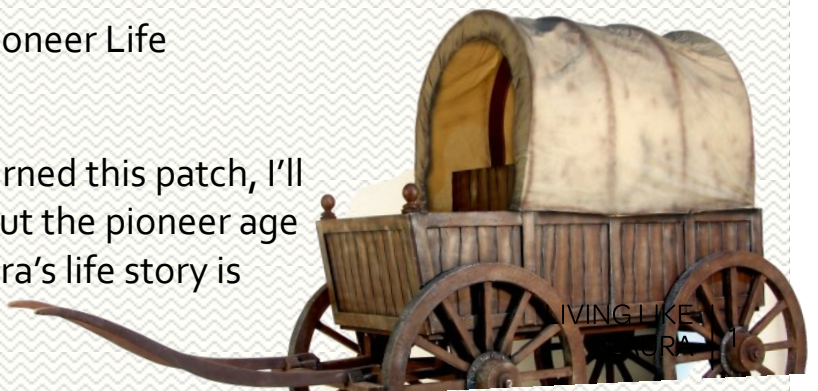
**L**aura Ingalls Wilder was a great American author who wrote down the stories of her family traveling across the Midwest in a covered wagon looking for a new home. Work your way through these steps and learn why so many girls love her pioneer stories.

## Steps

1. Know Your Stuff
2. Make and Take
3. Picnic on the Prairie
4. Playtime
5. Live the Pioneer Life

## Purpose

When I've earned this patch, I'll know all about the pioneer age and why Laura's life story is important.



## WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Laura Ingalls Wilder was born on February 7, 1867, to Charles and Caroline Ingalls in their log cabin just outside of Pepin, Wisconsin. In her books, Wilder would later come to call the cabin "The Little House in the Big Woods."



# STEP 1 KNOW YOUR STUFF

The best way to get to know more about Laura's life is to know about that time in history!

## CHOICES—DO ONE:

☐ **VISIT THE SIGHTS.** There are many sights that honor pioneers and Laura Ingalls Wilder! Here are a few:

- Buffalo Bill Museum — LeClaire, IA
- Geneseo Historical Museum — Geneseo, IL
- Johnson County Historical Society — Coralville, IA
- Laura Ingalls Wilder Park & Museum — Burr Oak, IA
- Old Bradford Pioneer Village Museum — Nashua, IA
- Pioneer Heritage Museum & Resource Library — Marengo, IA
- Walnut Grove Pioneer Village — Long Grove, IA

OR .....

☐ **READ THE BOOKS.** When Laura got old enough she wrote down her childhood stories! There are 9 books in total, and they are each an adventure waiting to be read. You can get a great idea of what it was like to live as a pioneer by reading the books.

OR .....

☐ **RESEARCH IT.** With an adult's permission, go online and type in a few things in your search bar about pioneers and Laura Ingalls Wilder!



# STEP 2 MAKE AND TAKE

Have fun and learn to make things yourself, just like Laura's family had to!

## CHOICES—DO ONE:

☐ **LEARN TO HAND SEW.** When traveling across the country, Laura and her family didn't have a store that they could buy clothes from so they had to learn to sew. Grab some fabric scraps or an old t-shirt and try your hand at sewing. Try and make a bag or a pencil case that you can show off at school!

**OR** .....

☐ **BE AN ARCHITECT.** Make your own log cabin with popsicle sticks! You can add a chimney, windows and furniture! If you would like you can even paint your log cabin to make it colorful. Be sure to make some popsicle people for your log cabin as well!

**OR** .....

☐ **MAKE A DOLL.** Flip the page to learn how to make a corn-husk doll.



## TAKE A BREAK!

Take time to do some crafts and play a game called Feather Dance!

Players form a circle and must keep at least one downy feather afloat within the circle without touching it. They may blow or wave their hands to create a breeze. Whoever lets the feather touch the ground first is out! See who will be the last one standing!

# MAKE A CORNHUSK DOLL!

Ask your family and friends to pick up some corn and save all of the husks! Then, get started on making your own doll so you can be just like Laura!

## STEPS FOR MAKING A CORNHUSK DOLL

**1.** Moisten cornhusks. Hold the ends of 2 cornhusks together.



**2.** Wrap another cornhusk around the ends to hold them together. Make a big lump when you do it.



**3.** Fold the husks down over the lump.



**4.** Tie the folds with a piece of yarn. This makes the head.



**5.** Split a cornhusk into three parts. Tie the strips together at one end.



**6.** Braid the three strips together. Tie the other end to make the hands and arms.



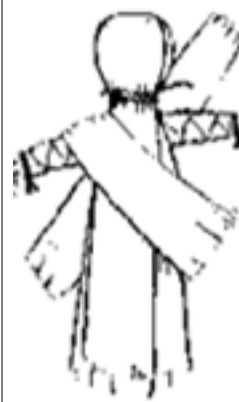
**7.** Position the arms between the first two husks and under the head.



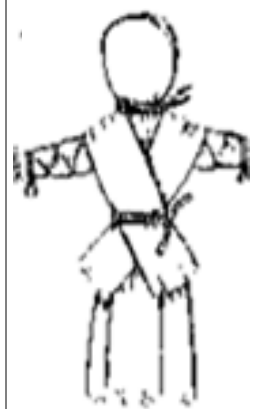
**8.** Split one more husk into two parts.



**9.** Fold one part over each shoulder.



**10.** Tie with yarn at the waist. This makes a belt for the shirt.



# STEP 3 PICNIC ON THE PRAIRIE

Do like they did back in Laura's day and learn more about cooking the old fashioned way, even before microwaves!

## CHOICES—DO ONE:

☐ **COOKOUT OVER A FIRE.** Ask if it would be okay to have a bonfire in your backyard. Grab some roasting sticks and cook some hot dogs over a fire! Talk about what kind of food the pioneers would be eating and how they would cook it!

OR

☐ **PLANT A GARDEN.** Grab some friends and plant a garden in your backyard or in your community! Plant vegetables, berries and all sorts of yummy foods! When they are ripe, harvest them and have a feast!

OR

☐ **LOOK UP RECIPES.** Do some research online or at your local library about what kinds of food pioneers used to eat! Pick a recipe and, with an adult's help, make it for dinner! Hint: There are some great bread recipes out there that even Laura used to make!



## HOMEMADE BREAD RECIPE

### Ingredients:

3 cups flour  
3 tsp. yeast  
3 tsp. sugar  
1 tsp. salt  
1 cup warm water  
1 tbsp. margarine

### Directions:

1. Mix together flour, yeast, sugar and salt. Slowly add in warm water until dough is consistent.
2. Cut margarine into small cubes and add it to the mixing dough.
3. Knead dough with a bit of flour and form it in a ball. Let rest on counter for 10 min.
4. Roll dough and divide loaf into two. Roll out to be long, thin.
5. Braid two loafs together.
6. Spray bread pan and gently place bread, tucking away loose ends.
7. Bake in oven at 350 degrees for 30 min. Let cool for 15 min.
8. Enjoy!

# STEP 4 PLAYTIME

Laura and her sisters were once girls just like you. Play games that they used to play!

## CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **BLIND WOMAN'S BLUFF.** One player is blindfolded and put in the middle of everyone else. When the blind player catches someone, she must try to identify who it is by a quick feel of the head and shoulders. If she gets it right, the caught player becomes the blind player. If not, play resumes.

OR .....

- ☐ **I SPY.** One player is 'it' and covers her eyes while the other players hide. When everyone is hidden they all call out "Whoop!" The player who is 'it' then looks for the hidden players. If she sees one she must call them out by name, "I spy Lucy!" If your name is called you must run to the place where the person who was 'it' started, while the person who is 'it' tries to tag you. If you are tagged, you become 'it'.

OR .....

- ☐ **PUT ON A SHOW.** Write a story about something that would have happened in the pioneer days. Pretend to be traveling, hiking, horseback riding and more! Get those creative juices flowing. Grab some friends and act it out for them. Be sure to dress up, too!

"I wanted children now to understand more about the beginnings of things,...

...to know what is behind the things they see—what it is that made America as they know it."

-Laura Ingalls Wilder



# STEP 5 LIVE THE PIONEER LIFE

Now that you have learned about Laura Ingalls Wilder's life, create some memories of your own!

## CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **GO CAMPING.** Ask if it would be okay to set up a tent in your backyard! When Laura's family was traveling across the Great Plains they slept outside or in their covered wagon. Pretend like you are Laura, and tell ghost stories and roast some s'mores!

OR

- ☐ **SEE SOME ANIMALS.** Visit a location where you can see some animals that Laura would have run into when she was growing up! Be sure to take your camera along and snap pictures. Put them all in a photo book to keep as a keepsake!

OR

- ☐ **WRITE A LETTER.** Take some time and write a hand written letter to a friend! When Laura was a girl, they had no phones or computers and therefore the only way they communicated with people far away was through letters.



## FUN FACT:

Laura wrote the "Little House" book series about her own childhood. It inspired a movie, a television show, and a few mini series based on the books!