

Ideas and Activities

for

Teachers

by

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for

Meyers' Creek

by

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The Meyers Saga

Meyers' Creek is the second novel in the Meyers Saga. It continues the story of this Loyalist family, the Waltermeyers, who changed their name to the English translation—Meyers.

Flight, the first in the saga, takes place during the American Revolution and is narrated by George, the Meyers' eldest son. Meyers' Creek, which begins three years after the end of Flight, is the story of the Meyers' early years in Canada told by nine-teen-year-old Mary, the Meyers' eldest daughter.

Meyers' Rebellion is the third novel in the series. It takes place during the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion. 15-year-old John Meyers finds himself embroiled in the rebellion under the leadership of William Lyon Mackenzie himself.

All three novels can be read independently.

Meyers' Creek

PART ONE: Into a New Country (July 1, 1786 – October 7, 1786)

PART TWO: Into the Valley (mid-June 1787 – late March 1788)

PART THREE: A New Estate (mid-July 1788 – late October 1788)

ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES

Before Reading the Novel (Pre-teaching)

Pre-reading suggestions encourage students to reflect on situations in their own lives that relate to the novel and its historical background. These activities are directed to the teacher. Choose one or two activities to complete with your class. Activities can be completed individually, in pairs, small groups or as a whole class.

1. Have students look at the novel and write answers to the following questions based on the cover, introduction and end pages.
 - a) Who is the author?
 - b) What is the title?
 - c) What is the name of the company that published the book?
 - d) In what year was the novel published? Why are there two copyright dates?
 - e) Look at the cover art. Read the back cover. What do you think the book is about?
 - f) Read the short biography of the author on the back cover and inside the last pages of the novel. Write three interesting facts about the author. Why do you think she wrote the novel?
 - g) Read the list of other novels by Connie Brummel Crook on page 277. What style (genre) of novels does the author write? How do you know?
 - h) List the traits of historical fiction.
 - i) How many pages are in the novel? How many chapters? What is the average number of pages in each chapter?
 - j) Why is the novel divided into three parts? What do the chapter titles tell you about each of the three parts?
2. Introduce students to key points in *Life in Upper Canada*, *Loyalists*, and the American Revolution through visual images and discussion. Use computers, Smart Board, Elmo Projector, school library materials, etc., to build a file of visual images and video clips.
3. Have students reflect on particular situations when they were in conflict with their parents/guardians. Ask them to write about the situation from both points of view. How was the situation resolved? In small groups have students share these stories. Then, have each group choose one student's story to share in a class discussion about conflict resolution with parents. (Tell students that they will share stories in advance. Some students may NOT wish to share particular personal incidents.)
4. All families encounter good times and bad times. Have the students write about the happiest and hardest times their family has faced. In small groups, ask students to share these experiences and discuss how both happy and hard times affected their families. Then, have each group write a recipe for family survival. Share these with the whole class. Post the recipes in the classroom and refer back to them as you read about how the Meyers faced their trials in Upper Canada. (Tell students in advance that they will share their family stories with the class. Some students may NOT wish to write about particular personal incidents.)
5. Consider setting up all the work for your novel study on *Meyer's Creek* in small reading groups. The students can read each chapter aloud together and work on chapter questions as a group. If you use this approach, begin by reading the first two or three chapters together as a class to ensure everyone

understands the historical setting and background. Frequent checks with each group will be required to ensure understanding of the novel.

6. Read the first few chapters aloud to the class. a) Check in with students to ensure they understand historical terms and context. Keep a class list of terms on the Smart Board or on chart paper. See the vocabulary chart at the end of this guide. b) As characters are introduced, draw a family tree on chart paper and add to it. c) Draw “love triangles” to keep track of who is in love with whom in the first part of the novel.

7. Have the students work in small groups to come up with both the pros and cons of life in Upper Canada in the eighteenth century. (See the chart below.)

Pro	Explain	Con	Explain
Lots of land	Small population in 18 th century, so lots of land for farmers	Have to clear land	Land is covered in forests and have to clear it before can farm it: rock and stumps
Game for food	Lots of animals available in all four seasons	Limited access to supplies and food	Trading posts are far away so have to hunt and grow own food

During the Reading

The following chapter questions allow students to explore the novel as they read. While completing the tasks, your students will have opportunities to discuss their personal feelings about the story, make predictions about upcoming events, and think about motives for characters’ actions. All the activities and questions are directed to the students. It is not expected that students will complete all of the questions. Choose questions that match the learning goals for your class. Students can work in pairs, or small groups.

PART ONE: Into a New Country (July 1, 1786 – October 7, 1786)

Chapter One

1. Record examples with page numbers to show how Mary is different from most young women in the late eighteenth century. Look at the references to stereotypical expectations for girls at the time and Mary's reactions to those expectations. (Start by reviewing pages 10 and 11.)
2. Draw the Meyers' family tree using a computer or by hand. List all the children of John and Polly Meyers and their ages.
3. Flashbacks provide many clues about the Meyers family. If you haven't read *Flight*, piece together the family story during the American Revolution and their flight to Canada.
4. a) Is the 'raid' about acquiring material belongings or something else? b) Why are the Meyers willing to risk their lives to return to the States? c) What are they returning to get?
5. What is John Bleecker's special relationship to the Meyers? (pp. 13, 21, 35)
6. Predict what you think will happen to each of the characters during the raid.

Chapter Two

1. a) Research Loyalists and their role during the American Revolution and in the early years of Canada. b) Review the information about compensation given to Loyalists by the British government. (i) What promises were made to the Loyalists by the British? (ii) What promises was the British Government slow to fulfill and how did this affect the Meyers? (See pages 19, 25, 53, 77, 79, 84, 86, 94, 110-111, 116, 147, 173, 189-190.)
2. a) Make a map of Central Canada and upstate New York to record geographical places in the novel. Write the historical and current names. (Do you notice anything interesting about the original names (e.g., King's Town = Kingston)? b) Why are some of the place names different? Ask the teacher for a map or use the computer to generate one. c) Trace the route the Meyers follow to and from their farm in the Bay of Quinte to Albany and back. (Begin by reviewing pages 19-20.) d) Draw a map of the Meyers' farm and Bleeckers' grove.

Chapter Three

1. Mary tells her brother that her disguise as a boy "is a whole lot better than a dress. It would make work a lot easier if women could wear breeches" (p. 24). Consider to what degree Mary's complaint is valid. Also consider the type of work that women and girls were doing daily.
2. Why did the Meyers live on three farms in the first three years in Canada? (p. 25)
3. Write a paragraph to illustrate how a trading post, like John Bleecker's, operates. (Refer to pages 21 and 29-30.)

Chapter Four

1. What are the challenges faced by John Bleecker at his trading post and that of other Loyalist settlers? Why are they determined to keep what is theirs even if they have to fight for it? (pp. 35-36)
2. Write a comparison of John Bleecker's father and his stepfather. (Refer to pages 21 and 35.)
3. a) Copy three examples from the novel with page references to show the romantic tension developing between Mary and John. b) How do you know they are attracted to each other?
4. Mosquitoes were a real threat to settlers. What did they do to keep them at bay? (p. 37) Have we made much progress warding off mosquitoes today? Explain.
5. Does Mary's presence pose a risk for the group of men on the raid? Why or why not?

Chapter Five

1. Based on events so far, list all the reasons Mary stowed away to go on the raid. Consider things Mary has said as well as her actions and attitude.
2. Draw a family tree of the Bleeckers.
3. a) Mary is not fond of her freckles. List the home remedies she used to erase them.
b) Many old remedies and superstitions are still mentioned in beauty tips today? List the ones you have heard passed down in your family; such as, men who wear hats a lot will go bald or that if you cut your hair short and it will grow thicker.
4. Write a brief conversation/dialogue between Lucy and Mary or John, George and Tobias after the dance.

Chapter Six

1. Why does Father decide to keep Mary with them on the raid? How is she an advantage to the raiding party? (pp. 48 and 55-56)
2. a) According to Mary how is the attitude towards slavery different in the States compared to Canada at this time?
b) How does Mary's own family living in both countries illustrate this point? Give specific examples. (See page 48.)
3. a) How does this chapter show the attitudes of Americans towards Loyalists three years after the American Revolution? Consider the attitudes of Jacob Meyers towards his own brother John and his reaction to John Bleecker and his father's death.
b) How do Mary's grandparents feel about Loyalists? Why do they have to hide their feelings and physically hide John and his family?
4. a) How do the Meyers plan to carry out the raid?
b) What do you think will happen?

Chapter Seven

1. What was Mary's role supposed to be in the raid? What role did she play in the actual raid?
2. a) Who are the six men who pose a threat during the raid?
b) How does their relationship to the Meyers show the unique nature of the two sides during the American Revolution? (pp. 63-64)
3. a) Do you see the Meyers as traitors and thieves **or** heroes and victims?
b) Do they have a right to return and claim their belongings in their old homestead free of punishment? Support your opinion with specific examples from the novel.

Chapter Eight

1. How can Mrs. Lloyd and her son Bill live in the same house and have such opposite views of politics? Does this happen today? Explain with examples.
2. Boots, George's dog, does not have a main part in *Meyers' Creek*; however, a whole chapter is devoted to retrieving him. Why? What does this episode reveal about the characters?

Chapter Nine

1. a) List some of the belongings that the Meyers retrieved from the family home in the States.
b) What is unusual about some of the items?
c) Why would John Meyers go to such lengths to bring back a staircase?
2. Romance triangles are often used to describe two people in love with the same person. By the end of Chapter Nine it appears two love triangles are emerging in the novel. Describe both.
3. Find three specific examples and copy them from the story with page references to show that John Bleecker has eyes for Catharine.
4. Start keeping track of the references to bears threatening the settlers' safety. What other threats to personal safety were a reality for isolated settlers? (See pages 12, 32, 56, 78-79, 88, 92, 117-118, 140-144, 169-179, 220, 249, 252.)

Chapter Ten

5. Farming required long hours of hard work in the late eighteenth century and still does today. What are the advantages and disadvantages of farming in the past? Do any of these pros and cons of farming apply today? Explain. (Refer back to pages 81-82.)
b) What is the source of George's conflict with his father?
c) Would this be a typical conflict with teenagers of farmers today? Explain.

Chapter Eleven

1. a) What preparations were required by the Loyalists to survive the harsh Canadian winters?
b) How important was it that neighbours helped neighbours in Upper Canada?

2. John Meyers compares himself to Abraham from Genesis in the Bible. Familiarize yourself with the story.
- What are the direct parallels to John Meyers' story?
 - Is it a fair comparison? Why or why not?
3. a) Why has John Bleecker built a palisade or stockade around his trading post?
b) What does this say about John? (p. 92)
4. Mississauga youth steal from John.
- Is that standard practice?
 - What impact did the Europeans have on the natives?
 - How were their philosophies of property different? (pp. 91-92)
 - Give specific examples to show John Bleecker and the Meyers show respect for the Indigenous people in Upper Canada?
5. Although Mary loves her sister Catharine, she is clearly jealous of the attention given to Catharine by John.
- How does this make you feel about Mary?
 - Is Catharine purposely trying to 'steal' John because she knows her sister likes him?
 - Is John aware of the dynamics between the two sisters and enjoys the conflict he creates? Support your opinion about all three characters with specifics from the novel. Include page references to support your points.
6. How did John's log cabin acquire the nickname Bleecker's Castle? (Refer back to p. 83.) Describe the cabin in detail.

Chapter Twelve

1. The announcement of John Bleecker and Catharine's wedding brings out a variety of reactions from the Meyers family. (pp. 97-100)
- Father agreed to the marriage, so why does he react negatively when John announces they will be wed in October?
 - Why is mother concerned that Catharine's hope chest is not sufficient for her to be wed yet?
 - Why does Mary appear excited about her sister's wedding when she is clearly upset?
 - How does Tobias show compassion and sensitivity for Mary?
 - George reacts most favourably to the announcement of the wedding. Is he enjoying the effect the announcement has on Mary or is he just excited because John is his best friend? Support your opinion with specific references and page numbers from the novel.
2. Write **three** short diary entries after the wedding between John and Catharine. Choose to write from one of the following groups of characters: a) John, Mary, Catharine; b) Father, Mother, John Bleecker's mother; d) or Lucy, George and Tobias. Write in first person point of view as if you are living in the eighteenth century. (Hint: In each diary entry show how you feel about the wedding and make predictions for yourself and the newlyweds.)
3. **Class Activity:** In a circle, play the game: "Opening the Wedding Present." Use your fingers to mime the size and shape of a gift box. Mime opening the box and remove a wedding present. Continue the mime by doing something to hint at the object's identity. The rest of the class must guess what the eighteenth century item you have opened. Go around the circle so each person has a turn.

PART TWO: Into the Valley (mid-June 1787 – late March 1788)

Chapter Thirteen

1. Stop reading at the end of page 107. Predict the identity of the visitor. Support your opinion based on the facts revealed in his conversation with Mary.
2. a) What is the relationship between Father and the visitor?
b) What was the specific role of each man during the American Revolution and how did his path cross the others?
c) Do you think it is realistic that the visitor would actually seek out his enemy and visit with him cordially? Support your opinion.
3. General Schuyler refers to Father as “the legend”. Mary recalls that the Americans feared her father; “The common folk say he has supernatural powers” (p. 107). Why was Father referred to as ‘the legend’ and so greatly feared? Be specific.
4. The 2013 edition of the novel includes the developments in Chapter Thirteen; however, the original 1995 edition of *Meyers’ Creek*, the current Chapter Thirteen (the visit from General Schuyler) is absent.
a) What does this chapter reveal about Hans Waltermeyer/John Meyers’ character?
b) What themes are developed with the inclusion of this chapter? Be specific.
5. General Schuyler seems more concerned about his silverware than the plot to kidnap him.
a) What does this say about the General?
b) What does Father’s explanation of the incident show about him.
6. John Meyers explains to the General: “I am a peaceful man, and war games do not appeal to me. It’s building a new nation that’s the real challenge. I am here and here I’ll stay, God willing. I’m building for the future now—in a land I can be proud to call my home” (p. 113).
a) Based on Father's actions in the novel so far, do you agree that he is a peaceful man now?
b) Account for the opening raid; is it ‘peaceful’? Argue for or against the peaceful view of Father?

Chapter Fourteen

1. Although Mary is not really a mid-wife she takes the mid-wife’s bag with her to visit Catharine, just in case of an emergency.
a) What was the role of a mid-wife in the eighteenth century?
b) What training would they have?
c) What would be in the mid-wife’s bag? List the items.
2. George explains to Mary why she always “gets asked to do so much”. Why is Mary the ‘go to’ girl for the whole family? List all the reasons.
3. George and Tobias will get larger portions of land allotted to Loyalists because they “joined up for a while,” (p. 116). Mary is quick to add, however, it was “after a peace treaty was already signed”. Do you think it is fair that they receive a larger share? Why or why not?

4. Mary is also entitled to a portion of land because the new law would grant it to “all children of Loyalists” (p. 116).

a) Does that seem progressive for the eighteenth century?

b) Why would the government grant land to women?

c) What was the role many Loyalist women played during the American Revolution for which they were never compensated? (p. 116)

5. Bears were a real threat to settlers. How does the incident encountering the bears en route to Catharine and John’s cabin illustrate the dangers faced by the Loyalists?

6. a) Why is the Meyers family insistent on bringing Catharine home to live with them a month before the baby is due?

b) Why does Catharine stay in her cabin with John until closer to her due date?

Chapter Fifteen

1. Mary thinks Catharine was “sickeningly agreeable as usual” (p. 125).

a) What does that observation tell you about both Catharine and Mary?

b) What does it mean to be “sickeningly agreeable” and why is it irritating?

2. a) How does Mary’s attitude towards John Bleecker change when she discovers he is illegally “trading rum for furs” (p. 132)?

b) How does your attitude change? Why?

3. a) What is Mary’s attitude towards John after her confrontation with him? How can she still have feelings for him?

b) What is your attitude towards John now? What was the worst part about the confrontation? Be specific and quote lines and support page numbers.

Chapter Sixteen

1. Why does Mary feel that she and her sister are treated like prisoners by John in the cabin (p. 132)? Do you agree? Why?

2. In Chapter Fourteen, George tells Mary, “You know you’re stronger than your sisters” (p. 115).

a) How does Mary show her strength when drunken attackers threaten her?

b) How does Catharine show her own inner strength?

c) Has George underestimated Catharine?

3. Is it responsible for John to leave Catharine alone in the cabin, knowing the risks?

4. The Meyers and Bleeckers have mentioned several times that the Mississaugas are excellent trading partners and no threat to them.

a) Why did they attack the cabin?

b) Why didn’t Mary just let the youths steal the rum and be gone?

c) Whose fault is the attack? Why?

Chapter Seventeen

1. This chapter is broken into two parts: George and Tobias en route to fetch their sisters, and secondly, John returning from his delivery.
 - a) Why would the author choose to place this chapter **after** the reader is fully aware of the meaning of the gun shots that George, Tobias and John hear?
 - b) Would the action be as suspenseful if this chapter preceded Chapter Sixteen? Defend your opinion.
2. What do you learn about Tobias and his relationship with his brother based on his conversation while they stalk the bear?
3. Why do George and Tobias stalk the bear?
4. Tobias thinks George is bored and says, "I bet you wish there was another war on," (p. 143).
 - a) Are there some people who actually thrive on the excitement of war? Explain.
 - b) How would Father react to this comment?
5.
 - a) Do you agree with Mr. Young's carefree attitude towards childbirth?
 - b) Do you think this is a typical attitude for most men in the late eighteen hundreds? Why?
 - c) Do you agree when he says, "Most women know how to handle these matters [childbearing and midwifery]" (p. 146)? Why or why not?
 - d) Does John agree with Mr. Young? How do you know?

Chapter Eighteen

1.
 - a) Why does John think it is safer to go to his tiny cabin at night, with his pregnant wife and Mary, rather than stay in their home behind the stockade?
 - b) Do you think this is a wise choice? Why or why not?
2. John verbally attacks Mary's mother. Based on the few comments other characters have made about Mary's mother, write a detailed character sketch of her.
3. For a second time in the same day, John leaves his pregnant wife and Mary unattended in the tiny old cabin. What's the reason John returns to his home and what does this say about him?
4. Who do you think Mary sees in the woods at the end of the chapter?

Chapter Nineteen

1. Why do you think the author chooses to leave out a scene in which the baby is born?
2. In the eighteen and nineteenth centuries babies were born at home with a few women attendants and possibly a midwife. What are the risks to the baby and mother in these cabin conditions?
3. Based on some details in this chapter, piece together what must have happened to George and Tobias from the moment they heard the gun shot to their arrival at the tiny cabin on the morning after the baby's birth.
4.
 - a) How do you feel about John at this point? Why?
 - b) Is there any way to justify his actions?
 - c) Do you think John's obsession with protecting his property is a result of his experiences during the American Revolution? Explain with examples.

Chapter Twenty

1. Describe the relationship between Father and John. What are the sources of tension and where do they have some common ground?
2. a) Do you agree that John “neglects” Catharine (p. 164)?
b) Is John’s treatment of Catharine typical of most pioneer husbands, including Catharine’s own father?
3. Father says, “The Mississaugas have been friendly and seem to bear no grudge for selling some of their land to British government” (p. 166).
a) Were the Mississaugas paid fairly for their land?
b) Have any of these old land treaties been disputed after the fact?
4. a) What is a mill?
b) Why does father require water access?
c) How will Father’s mill be an advantage to John Bleecker and his trading post?

Chapter Twenty-One

1. Both George and Tobias are infatuated with Lucy.
a) Which brother do you think is more in love with her? Why?
b) Which brother do you think is Lucy most taken by? How do you know?
2. How does the bear hunt in Chapter Seventeen foreshadow the events in this chapter? Explain. Reread the dialogue in both chapters carefully.
3. What are the unfavourable conditions under which the George and Tobias set out to hunt the bear? (Consider the time of day; the boys’ physical condition; specific location; visibility, etc.)

Chapter Twenty-Two

1. a) What were the circumstances surrounding the accidental shooting of Tobias? Be specific.
b) Who is to blame? Could the accident have been avoided? How?
2. a) How does Mother show her strength after the death of Tobias? Be specific.
b) What characteristics do Mother and Mary share?
3. a) Does anyone in the Meyers family resent George for Tobias’ death?
b) How do you know George’s guilt and sorrow is overwhelming? Be specific.

Chapter Twenty-Three

1. a) Why does George go to work for Peter Van Alstine in Adolphustown?
b) Do you agree it will be good for him? Why?
2. Why does George refuse to court Lucy now that Tobias is dead? Be specific. Include quotations and page references.

3. a) How much of Tobias' death has influenced Catharine's appeal to Mary to take her place if anything happens to her?
- b) Do you think Catharine knows how Mary once felt about John?
- c) Predict what you think will happen to Catharine and Mary.

Chapter Twenty-Four

1. What are all the factors that resulted in the 'Hungry Year' in 1788?
2. Do you find Catharine's death anticlimactic after the death of Tobias? Why or why not?
3. There is an old saying from pioneer times: "A man's first wife bears his children and his second wife raises them."
 - a) What does this old expression mean?
 - b) How is Catharine's death an example of the validity of part of the statement?
 - c) Predict what will happen if it is true.
4. In spite of personality differences and minor squabbles, the Meyers are a close-knit family. In Part Two, major tragedies strike, but the ties are not broken.
 - a) Discuss the relationship between Mary and George, George and Tobias, and Catharine and Mary.
 - b) How do these ties help the family to recover?

PART THREE: A New Estate (mid-July 1788 – late October 1788)

Chapter Twenty-Five

1. During the Hungry Year, Mary says, “We had eaten or given away all our seed potatoes and hand-crushed most of our seed wheat” (p. 208).
 - a) What are seed potatoes and seed wheat?
 - b) What does that mean for the up-coming planting season?
2. George’s says, “We need to be near each other in the wilderness. We don’t want forest lots between our farms. It will only make a haven for more bears and wild creatures. The more we clear the land side by side, the better off we’ll be” (p. 208).
 - a) How has George changed after his winter away from the family in Adolphustown?
 - b) How important is family to him now?
 - c) Does this sound like the bored George who longed for another war?
 - d) Explain the change that has come over George.
3. Are there any signs that a romance might be possible between Mary and John? Give specific examples to prove your hunches.

Chapter Twenty-Six

1. Why would “folks talk” if Mary were to move in to help John with her two nephews?
2. Do you think John really loves Mary or is he really just looking for a mother for his children? Support your opinion with direct quotations from the novel and page references.
3.
 - a) Why does Mary refuse John’s marriage proposal?
 - b) Is Mary still in love with John? How do you know?
 - c) Predict what will happen to Mary and John.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

1. Agree or disagree with Mary’s statement: “A woman can run a business just as well as a man” (p. 220).
 - a) Consider this statement in the eighteenth century.
 - b) Consider it today.
2. Why is Father clearly upset when he witnesses the budding romance between John and Mary? Supply several possible reasons.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

1.
 - a) Why do you think Father is against Mary’s marriage to John Bleecker? Compare your ideas to the reasons Father gives Mary.
 - b) Are his reasons valid? Why or why not.
2. Father supports Mary's application for an allotment of land and her plan to operate her own farm with the support of her family. Is this thinking out of character for Father? Why or why not?

Chapter Twenty-Nine

1. a) How much of Father's reaction against the marriage of Mary and John is a result of his grief over the deaths of Tobias and Catharine?
b) How much is based on real concern for Mary's safety? (See page 233.)
c) How does Father use laws in the Church of England to oppose the marriage?
d) Was it really a law in the Church of England? Is it still a law even today?
2. Agree or disagree with the following statement and support your opinion with facts from the novel: Father's unwillingness to consent to the marriage intensifies the feelings John and Mary have for each other.
3. a) Have Mary's previous actions prepared the reader for her actions now?
b) Do you admire Mary's decision to marry John regardless of her father's wishes and the laws of her church? Why or why not?
c) Earlier in the novel Mary was encouraged that her father would surely not allow Catharine to be married to John. She says, "Surely Father would put a stop to this romance. Father would *never* allow it. She was certain of that" (p. 96). At that point Mary was not critical of her father's power. In fact she hoped it would work to her advantage.
d) What does this reveal about Mary?
e) Since Father gave his approval for Catharine's marriage, what does it say about Father and how well his family knows him?
4. John actually compliments Mary's mother in this chapter. He says, "Your mother is a strong lady" (p. 235) and hopes she will aid in supporting the marriage. On other occasions in the past Polly Meyers was the target of John's insults (p. 129).
a) When else does John act in a kinder and gentler manner?
b) What accounts for his change in attitude and behaviour?
5. While Father works to dissolve the relationship between Mary and John, he is also petitioning for Mary's land grant. What does this tell you about Meyers' feelings for his daughter?

Chapter Thirty

1. How does Mary show her determination to become a farmer?
2. What are the details of the plan for the elopement?
3. a) Why is George so accepting of Mary's plan to elope with John, especially after his own commitment to forgo a relationship with Lucy out of respect for Tobias?
b) What is George's role in the plan?
4. Why is Mother able to accept the relationship between John and Mary when Father is not? Copy a line from this chapter that shows Mother's understanding of her daughter.
5. Why doesn't Mary tell her mother that she plans to elope with John in the immediate future?

Chapter Thirty-One

1. The details of the scene in which John and Mary paddle the canoe en route to King's Town for their elopement, sound like the picture on the cover; however, in the novel Mary is described costumed in "Leonard's old baggy breeches" (p. 246).
 - a) Why would the cover artist choose to paint that specific scene?
 - b) Why would the artist choose to dress Mary in her traditional dress and mob cap instead of the boy's clothing described in the novel?
 - c) The 1995 edition of the novel, published by Stoddart shows a different scene, featuring Mary on the cover. Find a copy of the 1995 edition and compare the two.
 - d) Which is the more effective cover? Why?
 - e) Create your own cover, including art, synopsis, and endorsements.
2. What do you learn in this chapter to add to the characters of Mary and John?

Chapter Thirty-Two

1. What's a 'shot-gun wedding' (p. 254) and why is Mary so offended at the suggestion that her wedding is a 'shot-gun wedding'?
2. Mary is particularly sensitive to Lucy's comments.
 - a) List the insults Lucy directs at Mary.
 - b) Do you think Mary's feelings are justified?
 - c) Why does Lucy insist on hosting a wedding dinner for the newlyweds?
3. Mary fears that if her father finds out about the elopement he will have the marriage annulled.
 - a) What does that mean?
 - b) Why would he not be able to do so?
 - c) On what grounds can marriages be annulled, even today?
4. How does the chase scene in King's Town show Mary's strength of character and courage?
5. Margaret Johnson aids in the successful elopement.
 - a) Why does she help Mary?
 - b) How is the Mohawk attitude towards women in a marriage even more progressive than Mary's line of thinking? (See page 264.)
6. Do you agree with John that Mary's father's "bark is worse than his bite" (p. 264)? Prove your point with specific evidence and page references from the novel.

Chapter Thirty-Three

1. How do Mary's mother, Betty, and siblings diffuse the tension even though Mary's mother does not approve?
2. Why is Boots' pup the perfect wedding gift for John and Mary? Consider everything the family and Boots have been through and stand for.
3. Reread the last couple of paragraphs of the novel.
 - a) What does it say about Father?

- b) Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
- c) Do you admire his final action or not? Explain.

Historical Note

1. Why does the author include a detailed Historical Note at the end?
2. Which parts of the novel surprised you the most when you discovered they were actually true or made up? Why?

Culminating Tasks and Novel Extensions

These activities encourage students to reflect on the novel by looking at plot, character, setting, theme, conflict and historical context. Activities are divided into **Research Projects, Essay and Written Tasks: Creative Writing and Non-Fiction**. Both fiction and non-fiction options could be completed as individuals, pairs, or small groups. Activities are directed to the students. There is a vast range in the level of difficulty in these activities. Students might complete one activity from each section. Specific teaching is required to prepare students to write essay options.

Part A: Research Projects

1. “The course of true love never did run smooth” (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act 1, Scene i). This common theme appears frequently in literature; for example in *Romeo and Juliet*, and the Greek myth *Pyramus and Thisbe*. Research a famous couple from history (fictitious or real) whose love story got off to a rocky start or had a lot of bumps along the way. Present the story to the class in a format of your choice: song, video, dramatization, etc. (Suggestions: Napoleon and Josephine, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Bonnie and Clyde, etc.)
2. Hans Waltermeyer of Dutch descent changed his name to the John Meyers, the English version (p. 11). Trace your own family roots and names. Have any of the names (first names and/or surnames) been changed to the English versions? When? Why? Prepare a visual report to the class in a format of your choice.
3. What was the role of Indigenous Peoples in the successful transition of Loyalists? The author references the Mississaugas, a Huron tribe who lived nearby and the Mohawks who lived near Deseronto. Referring to the Mississaugas, John Meyers says, “The British have purchased all this land from them. In fact, the British now own land as far back from the shore as man can walk in a day” (p. 27). What was the role of Indigenous Peoples and how fairly were they treated by the British government in Upper Canada?
4. Review the many references to bears in the novel: Bear attacks are still a threat in many parts of Canada. Bears have even come into cities. Create a report on bear safety and protection. Your final product could take the form of an informational brochure; slide show, YouTube instructional video, etc. Also make reference to the events in the novel about bears. (See pages 12, 32, 56, 78-79, 88, 92, 117-118, 140-144, 169-179, 220, 249, 252.)
5. Create a virtual tour of John Bleecker’s trading post and Bleecker’s castle. Pretend that you are a Real Estate Agent and both properties are up for sale. Read current real-estate ads, both in print form and on-line, to learn some of the tricks of the trade and the language. Although your project is in an electronic format, pretend it is the eighteenth century. a) What are the selling features? b) What do you know about

the former owners? c) What added features/upgrades are included? d) What can you say about the neighbours?

6. Research canoes used by Loyalists, Natives and others in the eighteenth century. Visit or contact the Canoe Museum in Peterborough for information. a) Build a small model of an eighteenth century canoe, or b) create an electronic presentation in a format of your choice to show how to construct a canoe.

7. Midwives were responsible for the births of most pioneer babies in the eighteenth century and played a significant role in the development of this nation. a) Research midwifery in the eighteenth century. b) Research midwifery today. c) Present a report showing the history of midwifery and include who and how one became a midwife in the early days of Canada, and secondly the process to become a midwife today. d) Present your findings in a format of your choice: electronic slide show, Prezi, Power Point, YouTube video or print format. You might choose to use a comparison format: Midwifery in the Eighteenth Century vs. Midwifery in the Twenty-first Century.

8. Margaret Johnson helps Mary elude her father long enough to get married. She is the daughter of Molly Brant and niece of Joseph Brant. The young woman says that she too is a Loyalist. a) Research Joseph Brant and his family. b) Present a project to show the contribution of Mohawk Loyalists in Ontario. c) What compensation was given to the Mohawk for their service? Was it the same as Loyalists of European decent?

9. Not all Loyalists were of British origin. Many were Indigenous People, African-American, Dutch, German, French and other European backgrounds. a) Make a chart organizer to compare the backgrounds, motives, occupations, and strengths of each group. b) Choose *one* group and research the impact it had on the area where large numbers settled. c) Present a project in the format of your choice (electronic or paper) to share your research with the class. (Hint: Many African-American-American Loyalists went to the Maritimes. Joseph Brant, the Mohawk chief and leader of the Six Nations, settled in Grand River, Ontario. Some German Loyalists settled in Upper Canada and Nova Scotia.)

10. Loyalists settled throughout Ontario, but the largest number settled in the eastern part of the province. They founded every major city, including Kingston, Brockville, Prescott, Gananoque, Napanee, Belleville, and Trenton. Choose one city and research its history and the role the Loyalists played in its development. Present your findings in the format of your choice: Prezi, slide show, Power Point, or print format, such as in the form of a brochure.

11. King's Town is modern day Kingston, Ontario and it has had a significant impact on the development of Ontario and Canada as a nation. a) Research the history of Kingston and its role in the formation and continued development of Ontario. b) Prepare a report in the format of your choice: electronic or physical project to show the Loyalists' history in Kingston is still evident in the city today. (Hint: Look at the architecture, street names, famous monuments/buildings, place names/rivers/etc., universities and schools.)

12. Read excerpts from *Roughing it in the Bush* by Susanna Moodie and the *The Backwoods of Canada* by her sister Catherine Parr Traill (or other historical accounts) of the lives of women in Upper Canada. a) Was Catharine's experience with John similar to other pioneer wives? b) What strategies did women use to adapt to their isolated environment? c) Prepare a report in the format of your choice: electronic or print, to show the role of women in Upper Canada. Show both their challenges and contributions in pioneer days.

13. Research the impact Loyalists men, women and their descendants have had on the development of the nation. You may wish to contact The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada. a) Why do you think this group is still in existence today? b) Canadians who can trace their ancestors back to the Loyalists can receive a U.E.L. designation and certificate. Why do so many descendants of Loyalists pursue this accreditation in this time? c) Present the findings of your research in the format of your choice: electronic or print.
14. Connie Brummel Crook, a direct descendant of Mary Meyers and John Bleecker, has researched her family tree and found her ancestors' stories. See the Historical Notes at the end of the novel. a) Interview or contact family members to discover your own family stories. b) Using this information, write your own historical fiction short story. Your story is based on historical information, but it does not have to be completely factual. c) Share your story with the class in a format of your choice: read aloud, audiotape, videotape or YouTube reading.
15. There are many references to water travel in *Meyers' Creek*. Create a map (either draw by hand or generate one electronically) to indicate the most commonly used waterways travelled by Loyalists in Upper Canada. Create a symbol for the type of watercraft that would be used on each waterway you identify.
16. Although life was hard for Loyalists, Connie Brummel Crook provides details about their leisure time as well. Create a report in the format of your choice (electronic or written) about work versus leisure in Upper Canada. Start with information provided in the novel; then, research harvest bees, quilting bees, barn raisings, sugaring-off parties, church picnics, housewarmings, weddings, barn dances, etc.
17. a) Research one of the following skills that a typical person your age would have in the eighteenth century: quilting; making lye soap; carding and spinning wool; baking a pie from scratch; writing with a real quill pen; oral storytelling; building wooden toys; making cloth; knitting warm winter clothing; making birch bark pails; whittling wooden utensils; weaving baskets; making moccasins; preparing preserves, etc. b) Show the steps to produce a final product (E.g., an apple pie), either in a real-time demonstration, video or slide show. c) Share the final product with the class. d) Give the class a chance to try the process of making something from the eighteenth century. (Refer to *The Canadian Settler's Guide* by Catherine Parr Traill.)
18. *Meyers' Creek* is the second book in the Meyers Saga trilogy; however, it can be read on its own. a) Read the other two novels in the series: *Flight* and *Meyer's Rebellion*. b) Create a report to show the similarities and differences in plot, setting, characters and themes. c) Include a personal review of the three books. d) Share your comparison and personal review with the class in the format of your choice: electronic or print.

19. Make a visual dictionary of vocabulary from the novel. You might want to sub-divide the dictionary into categories: clothing, farming terms, political terms, etc. Prepare a physical dictionary or an electronic format: slide show, Prezi, Power Point, etc. Use the vocabulary chart below as a starting point.

**Vocabulary and historical terms and expression:
(Words are listed in the order they appear in the novel.)**

Word	Page	Dictionary Support	Meaning in your own words based on the context in the novel
stoop	10		
raid	11		
diplomat	11		
American Revolution	11		
homespun trousers	11		
bronchial pneumonia	12		
tarred and feathered	12		
mob cap	13		
waggoner	13		
musket	13		
fieldstone fireplace	14		
petticoat	15		
breeches	15		
homespun knee breeches	15		
camouflage	15		
short-gown	15		
white shifts	15		
Loyalists	15		
squatters	19		
bateau	20		
trading post	21		
Mississaugas	21		
Mohawks	24		
tomahawks	24		
French seigneuries	26		
daft	26		
wood wool	26		
venison	27		
iron-spider frying pan	27		
fortnight	29		

tanner	30		
wild rye	34		
stockade	35		
bastions	39		
shanties	45		
house-warmings	45		
dawdle	47		
granary	51		
guffaw	53		
ramrods	57		
scythes	77		
windrows	83		
Sabbath	86		
wary	89		
punt	90		
stockade	92		
hope chest	99		
layette	104		
russet frock	105		
waistcoat	105		
gentility	105		
petticoat	105		
midwife	114		
consumption	115		
deeds	116		
squatting	116		
Flannel clouts	125		
belly bindings	125		
elope	164		
haversack	172		
cellar	197		
clapboard house	211		
flotilla	258		
jetty	259		
sulphur	260		

Written Tasks: Creative Writing and Non-Fiction

1. a) Complete a character sketch of one major and one minor character under these headings: physical appearance, actions (good and bad), conflicts, others' comments about them, likes and dislikes, relationships. Add other headings if you wish. Include direct quotations and references from all three parts of the novel. b) Use the information to write a "Wikipedia style" biography of the character. You will need to read biographies on Wikipedia to match the format.
2. Write the eulogy for either George to deliver at Tobias' funeral or Mary to deliver at Catharine's funeral. Use specific information to make the characters sound as they do in the novel.
3. Write two letters to Mary and John one year after their marriage. Write one letter from Mother and one from Father. (Hint: Research the manner in which letters were written in the eighteenth century. Look up the letters of Susanna Moodie for an example.) Make your letters look authentic.
4. a) Draw a detailed chart to organize the jobs, roles, and expectations for men, women, and children in Upper Canada. b) Consider *your* interests and talents. What roles would suit you best? c) Write a creative story in first person in which you are the hero for a day in the eighteenth century. Consider your daily routine, challenges and skills. Include secondary characters in your story.
5. Consider the impact of the physical features of the land, climate and wildlife on Loyalist settlers in Upper Canada. Write a creative story in which all three elements are crucial to the plot, conflict, theme, and characters. Set the story in Upper Canada in the eighteenth century.
6. Make a group or class newspaper that might have been written in Upper Canada in 1788. a) Each student can make several contributions: birth and death announcements, letters to the editor, advertisements, illustrations, headline stories, social notes, maps, political cartoons, etc. b) Present the newspaper in the format of your choice: print or electronic.
7. Choose a scene to rewrite from a different character's perspective or you can be really creative and choose to write from the point of view of a non-human (e.g., Boots, Duke and Bonnie, the bed on which both Tobias and Catharine die, the canoe that transports Mary and John to King's Town, the bear who kills Tobias, the stockade, the rum barrel, the cupboard rescued from the old homestead, the arrow that narrowly missed Catharine, the wagon, Father's military uniform, etc.).
8. Write a supported opinion essay based on one of the topics below. Choose one of the following statements and argue for or against it. Write five paragraphs: introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use the format taught in your class. You must write in third person in this essay. Give specific examples and direct quotations with page references to defend your position.
 - a) Mary does not really love John Bleecker; she married him to spite her father.
 - b) Catharine is the real hero in the story because she always acts in a selfless manner.
 - c) If Catharine had survived, Mary would have never married.
 - d) *Meyers' Creek* is mainly a story of survival; the romance is a secondary theme.
 - e) Loyalists were badly treated, first by the Americans for their loyalty to Britain, and then by the British government, which was slow to pay its debts to them.
 - f) It would be great to have been a Loyalist in Upper Canada because there were none of the problems we have to face in today's society.
 - g) Other than the fashions and the explosion of the digital age, not much has really changed since the days of the pioneers in Upper Canada.

h) Weather is as much a factor for farmers in the 21st century as it was in the 18th.

9. Write a comparative essay based on one of the topics below. Write five paragraphs: introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use the format taught in your class. You must write in third person in this essay. Give specific examples and direct quotations with page references to defend your position.

- a) Compare one of the pairs: Mary/Catharine or George/Tobias, or Mary/Father.
- b) Compare life after the American Revolution in Upper Canada to the United States.
- c) Compare the lives of women in Upper Canada to that of the men.
- d) Compare John and Catharine's relationship to that of John and Mary's.
- e) Compare life in rural Upper Canada to life in the towns.
- f) Compare the attitudes of husbands to their wives in the Mohawk culture to that of most of the Loyalists in Upper Canada.

10. Write a personal essay based on one of the topics below. Write five paragraphs: introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use the format taught in your class. You may write in first person in this essay. Give specific examples and direct quotations with page references to defend your position.

- a) The characters in the novel are multi-dimensional—neither all good nor bad. Choose one character and write about when you disliked him or her and when you most admired him or her. Tell why you felt this way.
- b) Many novels are made into movies. Think about *Meyers' Creek* adapted into a movie. Write a personal essay in which you select current actors to play the roles of each of the main characters. Defend your choices with solid reasons from both the novel and knowledge about each actor.
- c) George says, "You know, Mary, this last winter, I realize how important all of you are to me. We need to be near each other in this wilderness" (p. 215). Strength of family is a major theme in *Meyers' Creek*. Define what 'family' means to you and write a personal essay about it.