

Ideas and Activities for Teachers

by Cynthia Rankin
for

No small victory
Connie Brummel Crook

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Summary: *No small victory*

The story opens in the fall of 1936 at the height of the Depression in Canada and follows nine-year-old Bonnie Brown, her parents, and friends over one school year. Bonnie's parents have just lost their farm in Prince Edward County and debt is mounting. They are forced to move to a rental farm between Lang and Keene, Ontario. Bonnie is unhappy until she meets other local children. Archie and many others are leery of her at first, as her family has moved into an unoccupied farm where a father and daughter have died of tuberculosis. School bullies and an unyielding teacher are nearly too much for Bonnie.

Bonnie and her family experience the hardships faced by most families during the Depression. The family lives in extreme poverty and yet is reluctant to accept any support or charity. The family's stoic nature and faith manifest themselves as they triumph through one crisis after another.

Through it all, Bonnie and her parents manage to hold onto their pride, their family, and the farm. Bonnie, an independent thinker differing from the accepted norm in many ways, tries very hard to gain the respect of her peers.

About the Activities

These activities are designed for grades 4-6 and focus on major themes of the 1930's during the Depression: poverty, rural family life on farms and in small villages, one-room schools, changing roles of male and female, family pride, perseverance, and finding one's place in a new community and school.

There are many activities at a variety of levels. Read through the guide and select only those suited to your students.

Before Reading the Novel (Pre-teaching)

Teachers may need to encourage students to build a context for the events and historical setting in the novel. These activities are directed to the teacher. The computer lab and internet access would be helpful in some cases.

1. Have students examine the front and back cover of *No small victory*. Then ask them to guess about the setting of the book and the main character. (Note: Bonnie is looking down on the scene from the front cover.) After students read the back cover, ask about the Depression. Discuss how it relates to the recent recession. Let the students tell you what they already know. Then refer students to the display of artifacts and printed material already around the classroom. Ask students to bring items to add to this display from grandparents or research (E.g., middy, coal-oil lamp, preserves, old leather school strap, scribbler, old readers).

OR

Look at the front and back cover of the novel and read the table of contents. Predict the setting of the novel and what will happen. Keep track of these predictions on chart paper and compare them to the actual events in the novel.

2. Have students interview their grandparents and/or seniors about the 1930's Depression (a world event) and bring oral or written stories to school. Students may share, ask questions, and add to the bulletin board display.

3. Watch a video that will appeal to your class and also set the time, place and circumstances of the Depression. The long running television series *The Waltons*, although set in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia in the United States is a good starting point. The series is available for purchase and rent at most video stores and the library. The first four seasons most closely resemble the times in the novel. You might want to show snippets of various episodes to show a one-room school house, a general store, and the value of one cent in 1936, as well as the automobile, family meals, and medical care.

4. Book a day in the computer lab at your school. Put students in partners or groups and give each group a list of topics to research based on the Depression. Pairs or groups should report back to the whole class to provide information and working vocabulary for all students.

Sample Topics:

Financial Hard Times: tax collectors, mortgages, debt, the worth of a cent, nickel, dime

Education: one room school house, spellers, curriculum, teaching practices, discipline

Clothing: styles and fashions of the 1930's for children and adults, middy, casual and formal

Farming: clearing fields, raising chickens, running dairy and meat farms

Literature: novels read in the 1930's: *Anne of Green Gables*, *Heidi*, Thornton Burgess series

Food: preserves, suckerballs, apple pies, jellies

Medicine: tuberculosis, scarlet fever, quarantines, rural doctor, nursing

5. This question may be given before or after students have read this book: As a class, brainstorm the roles of girls and boys in today's society. Have students draw on their own experiences. What chores do they do around the house? What are their parent expectations for them later on in life? In what activities do they engage? What sports do they play? What books read?

6. As a class, make a map to locate as many places as you can still find that are mentioned in the novel. You will need a map that includes these areas. Locations: (p. 1) Massassaga (Prince Edward

County, ON); (p. 2) Belleville; (p. 6) Lang, Keene, Peterborough; (p. 7) Stirling, Belleville; (p. 8) Lake Ontario; (p. 10) Prince Edward County; (p. 24) Burnham's Dam, Indian River; (p. 36) Bay of Quinte; (p. 210) Rice Lake; and (p. 217) Westwood.

Guided Reading and Discussion Questions

These questions, which vary in length and difficulty, may be assigned to individuals, pairs, or small groups. A number of these answers could be oral only and lead to whole class discussions. Written answers are not necessarily required to show understanding. A wide variety of questions will prepare students for later in-depth activities and longer written and project assignments. **It is not expected that students will complete all of these questions.**

Chapter 1: Bonnie and Her Shadow

1. Why is Bonnie's family moving in the middle of the night?
2. Bonnie's father says, "[Motor cars are] the way of the future. Soon there won't be a horse left on any farm" (p. 2). What does he mean by this statement? (Hint: Remember the story is set in 1936.) Later Grandfather calls the new machinery of the day "new-fangled machinery." How has farming changed since 1936?
3. What loophole has Grandfather discovered to save the Browns from losing their furniture along with the farm? (pp. 3-4)
4. Why did the Browns lose their farm?
5. Why does Bonnie blame herself for Shadow's death? Do you think she should share in the blame? (p. 5)
6. Why is Bonnie "angry" (p. 6) about the move from Prince Edward County to Lang?

Chapter 2: New Neighbours

1. Why are Mum and Mrs Elmhirst scrubbing the farm house with Lysol? What is Lysol? (p. 10)
2. Why has the farm been left vacant for the last three years? What is tuberculosis, consumption, and a sanitarium? (pp. 15-16)
3. How do you know Archie, Angela, and Marianne will become friends with Bonnie? (pp. 17-19)
4. This novel is full of similes. Similes are comparisons that contain the words "like" or "as" in them. You might like to jot down a few of these. Here are examples: "The snake was draped over its branches just **like** Christmas tinsel" (p. 13) and "He smelled **like** horses and cows," (p. 13).

Chapter 3: The Law

1. Based on the description of the food and the house on pages 20-21, how do you know the Browns are in deep financial trouble?
2. What is a party-line telephone as mentioned on page 21? Describe how it works. What are the advantages and drawbacks of such a telephone system? (In a few rural and remote areas, party-lines still exist today.)
3. Why is it illegal to fish at certain times of the year? How does a “game warden” enforce the rules? (p. 23)
4. What is Relief and why do the Browns refuse to use it? (p. 23)
5. What are the expected chores for girls and boys in rural Canada in 1936? (pp. 19, 25-26)

Chapter 4: Fish Balls

1. How does Bonnie save the day with the game warden? (pp. 32-34)
2. In your own words, explain how suckers were cooked in jars. (pp. 360-37) Does this sound appealing to you? Why or why not? Why did Mum have to prepare them anyway, even though she calls them “awful fish.” (p. 37)
3. You get a good picture of life on a farm in the 1930’s on pages 38-40. List three or four things that stand out to you as being different from your way of life. At one point, the narrator tells the reader, “All farmers ate their big meal of the day at noon” (p. 39). Why is this the case? Think about the hours a farmer keeps and the type of work that is done on a farm.
4. Bonnie says she is a “complete stumblebum” (p. 41) in sports and tells us she is clumsy around the house and farm. Keep this in mind as you read. Is this just Bonnie’s perception of herself? List all the things she is good at and list the things that are challenging for her.
5. Why is the incubator that Grandpa O’Carr will loan to the Browns so badly needed by the family? What will they gain as a result? (p. 42)
6. Archie gives the puppy to Bonnie to be a cow dog. What’s a cow dog? How is it that Bonnie so easily guesses the dog’s name? (p. 43)
7. How are Bonnie and Boots alike when she brings him home? (p. 44)

Chapter 5: A Rough Start

1. Although Bonnie’s family is poor, her mother has pride. What is pride? How is the fact that Mother will not let Bonnie go to school in bare feet (p. 46) an example of Mother’s pride?

2. Bonnie's mother tries to prepare her for problems she might encounter as the "new kid" at school. What does this anecdote say about Mother? What does it tell you about the history of bullying? (pp. 46-47)
3. Recall Mother's advice to Bonnie: "You have to stand up for yourself in a new school. It's the only way or they'll take advantage" (p. 47). And "Stand up for yourself but don't go tattling to the teacher! No one likes a tattletale" (p. 48). Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion.
4. Describe the one room school house, inside and out. (pp. 48-55)
5. Why does Bonnie react so strongly when she hears her new teacher is – a man? (p. 49)
6. Write a character sketch of Mr McDougall. Do you think a teacher could really be so mean? Why do you think he is so strict? Why does Bonnie compare him to a snake on page 53: "His grey-green eyes made her think of a garter snake." How does Bonnie feel about snakes?

Chapter 6: Trouble and Turnips

1. Why does Bonnie feel she is so different from everyone else? List all the reasons Bonnie sees herself as set apart from the others in the Lang school.
2. Bonnie is not happy with brown sugar sandwiches and suckerballs and turnips. Why is this all they have to eat when they live on a farm?
3. Financial troubles are obviously a source of tension in the Brown household. What are the three reasons Mum blames Dad for losing the farm and causing their poverty? Does Dad deserve so much criticism? Why or why not?
4. Pride is a major theme in the novel. Why does Mum accuse Dad of having too much pride? (p. 63)
5. Many people who lived through the Depression vowed, as did Bonnie, that they would "never, ever be in debt!" (p. 65). Why did the Depression have such an impact on a whole generation? How has this philosophy been lost over the years since the Depression?

Chapter 7: Tom and Slinky

1. List the ways Bonnie and her family reduce, reuse, and recycle in an effort to stretch a dime.
2. How could Mr. McDougall have handled the episode with the *Anne of Green Gables* book more nicely for Bonnie? (pp. 68-69)
3. Why does Marianne refuse a piece of orange from Betty? What does Marianne mean when she says that she refused, "Because Betty always wants payment." (p. 71)?

4. Marianne also says, “We farmers never take Relief” (p. 71). Bonnie cannot understand and asks questions. Why won’t the farmers accept it? Is this just pride or something else? Explain.

5. Bonnie and Marianne discuss careers for women. (p. 72) Why does Bonnie think it’s possible for a woman to be a doctor. How realistic was it for a woman to hope to become a doctor in 1936? Why? How realistic is it today? Explain. How is Bonnie’s attitude more modern than other girls and women in her day?

6. Who could have helped Bonnie during the bullying incident when Slinky and Tom put her under the water pump? (pp. 73-74) Who was her only defender? Why doesn’t she or anyone else tell the teacher about the incident? Is this still the case today? Why? Who can you go to if there are bullies in your school? What happens to bullies in your school?

7. Bonnie decides not to tell her parents about the bullying incident at the water pump because she thinks she knows how her parents will react. (p. 77) How do you think each of her parents *will* react? What would your parents do?

Chapter 8: Swing High

1. When Bonnie receives a quarter from Mrs Elmhirst’s son, she day-dreams about what to buy. (p. 79) Based on what she says she can buy in the General Store, what amount would her quarter be equal to today? What would you have bought with the quarter if you were Bonnie? Why?

2. This chapter presents many examples to show how Mr McDougall is a “mean teacher” (p. 83). Write a list of things the teacher does to show Bonnie has a right to dislike her teacher. Choose one infraction on your list and show how a teacher today in a single grade or split grade class might handle it better.

3. Again, while Bonnie is being bullied by Tom and Slinky on the swing, “A chorus rose up from the students standing around the swing” (p. 87). Are all these students also guilty of bullying Bonnie? Why or why not? Why don’t any of them stop it, help her, or get an adult?

4. What should happen to Tom and Slinky as a result of the abuse they are inflicting on Bonnie? What do you think will happen to them? Did Bonnie’s plan not to tell after the pump episode prevent further problems? Do you think it will work now? Why or why not?

Chapter 9: Bullies Bullied

1. Dad’s question is a good one: “Where was your teacher all this time?” (p. 90). Why was Mr McDougall not present for the water pump incident or this one? What safety measures are in place at your school to avoid this sort of bullying?

2. Why does Bonnie’s mother agree with Bonnie: “Those bullies will just get worse if we tell on them” (p. 91)? Later Bonnie’s mother says, “The more you act afraid, the worse they’ll be” (p. 92). Does this seem like odd advice coming from Bonnie’s mother? Is this good advice when it comes to bullies? How could it lead to more trouble?

3. Notice the reference to the title when Bonnie's mother says, "Think of it as a small victory in a great battle each time you ignore them and act brave. Soon they'll find something else to do" (pp. 92-93). Does this seem like odd advice coming from Bonnie's mother? Is this good advice when it comes to bullies? How could it lead to more trouble?

4. Archie says Bonnie's father took care of Tom and Slinky. Archie says, "He threatened them within an inch of their lives if they ever laid a hand on you again" (p. 94). Do you think Bonnie's mother knows about this threat? How might she react if she found out? What could happen today if a parent of a bullied child threatened the bullies directly? List five strategies that do not involve ignoring the problem or threatening the bullies.

5. When Bonnie tells her mother on page 95 she has had no more trouble with the bullies, her mother says, "Good for you, Bonnie! Better to face everyone bravely. I'd call that a victory!" (Another reference to the title.) Would you call that a "victory"? Why or why not? Support your answer with information from the story and from class discussions about bullying.

Chapter 10: Blood on the Snow

1. How does the Christmas morning scene represent the extreme poverty the Browns face in 1936 during the Depression? What are the most significant details to you? Why do these stand out for you personally?

2. "There were drops of blood on the snow!" (p. 101). What do you think is the source of the blood? Why? Are you surprised by Bonnie's reaction?

3. Why does it take the doctor so long to get to the Brown's?

4. It seems like primitive medical care by our standards, but what exactly does the doctor do to treat Mr Brown's wound? (p. 105)

5. When Grandpa O'Carr arrives after Christmas, Bonnie's mother tells him they "need nothing" and they are "doing just fine" (p. 110). Clearly they are in need of many things. Why does Mum say this? Why don't the Browns want the grandparents to know how badly off they are?

6. Why is the chicken incubator such a valuable gift to the family? Be specific.

7. *Anne of Green Gables* is the perfect Christmas gift for Bonnie that year. (pp. 113-14) Why? Be specific. If you do not know the story of *Anne of Green Gables*, read it, watch the movie, or look it up on the internet.

Chapter 11: An Icy Adventure

1. "Mr McDougall told us to stay away from the river and *any* frozen water—even marshlands" (pp. 115-16). What do you predict will happen?

2. Were you surprised that Slinky rescued Angela and Bonnie from the icy water? (p. 118) Why or why not? Do you think this will change the relationship with Bonnie? Does this make him a hero? Give reasons for your opinion.

3. “The ice and water in Bonnie’s boots sloshed and crunched and slowed her down” (p. 119). The words “sloshed” and “crunched” are examples of onomatopoeia—that is; words that make the sound they are describing when they are said. Read the line aloud. Listen to the ice and water in Bonnie’s galoshes. Make a list of other onomatopoeic words associated with the “icy adventure”.

4. Hypothermia is a serious matter. Fortunately, Bonnie knew enough to keep Marianne moving so she did not freeze to death. Marianne’s father says he will tell her parents “how brave” she had been and that she “saved Marianne” (p. 124). Bonnie reflects on this and wonders if her mother “might think of this as another small victory” (p. 124). Do you think Bonnie is a hero and it is a victory? (Note the reference to the title.) Why or why not? Did Bonnie learn her lesson about sliding on frozen ice? How do you know?

Chapter 12: Back into the Cold

1. Find examples in this chapter to show little Grace Danford is showing signs of illness.

2. Is Mr McDougall at fault for the chimney fire in the school. Why or why not?

Chapter 13: Fever

1. Dr. Wright thinks little Grace might have scarlet fever. Why did many fear scarlet fever? (p. 143) Bonnie was “inoculated” (p. 144) to prevent it. Is scarlet fever covered by standard booster shots today? (Ask your parents, a health care professional, or check the internet.)

2. Who was put under “quarantine” during times of an “epidemic”? What did it mean for a family under quarantine? (p. 144) Have you ever been put in quarantine when you had an illness? What did you do to battle the boredom?

Chapter 14: Archie

1. In this chapter, the reader sees something of the amount of work that a rural country doctor faced. Describe the role based on this chapter and events earlier in the novel.

2. *No small victory* is adapted from the life of the author, Connie Brummel Crook. Bonnie is very much Connie as a nine year old. (See photo in last pages of this book.) In this chapter Bonnie says, “Oh, I am definitely going to write a book” (p. 148). Later when asked what she will write about, Bonnie says, “Maybe about Lang School” (p. 149). Only after she had already written ten novels and three picture books, did she do that! Would you like to write a book? What would it be about?

3. The death of Grace shows how contagious diseases were a few generations ago and even today, as new antibiotics become scarce and old ones don’t work as well. What procedures should you follow nowadays to prevent the spread of current infections?

Chapter 15: Quarantine

1. How do the eggs in the incubator represent some hope for Bonnie and her family in the midst of poverty, Grace's death, and the quarantine? (p. 154)
2. When Mum received books from Aunt Inez as a child, Mum says that *her mother* used to say, books "were a waste of time when [she] should be learning how to do things around the house, and an apron would've been more to the point" (p. 157). Later in the same conversation, Mum says her Aunt Inez, "... was too busy reading books to catch herself a solid man for a husband" (p. 157). What does Mum mean by this? How have times changed? Do you think Bonnie is the typical female in her time? Why or why not? How is Bonnie different from her mother?
3. Bonnie's family is very poor, but her mother says there are different kinds of poor and she is glad they live in the country. Why? How is being poor in the country in 1936 different from being poor in a city? Is this still true today? Explain.
4. List the household chores in which Bonnie is not particularly skilled? What are her talents?
5. Bonnie says maybe she won't be a housewife some day, but her mother says, "All girls marry unless they're really plain or ugly" (p. 158). What is your reaction to this line? Do you agree or disagree? How is Bonnie a girl ahead of her time for 1936?
6. The phone was for "emergencies only" during the epidemic, not for "'silly kids' chattering" (p. 160). At the same time, Mrs Brown knew how all of her neighbours were doing by using the phone. How was that possible? Describe the complete change in the phone's use today?
7. What is the response from the teacher and class when Bonnie reads her story about the Christmas day accident? How do you know that her skill with creative writing is something that might help her fit in among her peers? (pp. 164-65)

Chapter 16: Bug Town Kids

1. Head lice still spreads through schools today, as it did in 1936-37. How do you know the students from Lang were ashamed of the diagnosis? Although not fatal, why is it worse to be sent home with head lice, than a fever? Has the stigma for students with head lice changed very much in the last 70 or 80 years? Why?
2. There are many forms of bullying in the novel. Why do the Keene students feel they have a right to bully the class of Lang students walking back to school from Dr. Wright's office? Where were the teachers? (p. 173)
3. In this chapter as in others, it is clear that in a one-room school house the older students take responsibility for younger ones, and sometimes provide more supervision than the teacher. Make a list of ways the older students look after the younger ones. (Hint: Where is Mr. McDougall while the students are eating lunch and walking back from Keene?)

4. What was the law in 1936-37 for a student who had head lice? (p. 174) What is the law today? What is the procedure in your school if a student has head lice? (Hint: Ask a teacher or a health care professional.)

Chapter 17: Shorn

1. In your own words, describe the procedure Bonnie's mother puts her through to rid her of head lice. What is the standard procedure today?

Chapter 18: Bonnie's Plan

1. What was Bonnie's plan? How do the other Lang students react to her plan, especially Slinky?
2. Why is it that a chant made all the difference in facing the Keene bullies?
3. Bonnie says, "As terrible as they were, the infestation had brought everyone together. And Bonnie finally felt as though she belonged" (p. 185). Do common problems actually bring people together? Explain. How is this shown later when Slinky and she refuse to scrub the schoolhouse?
4. Why do the students walk out on Mr McDougall? (pp. 186-87) If he were a different sort of person, do you think the students would have refused to scrub the school house? Why or why not? What else might the students have done, other than walk out?

Chapter 19: Consequences

1. Why do you think there were no consequences for the Big Walkout?
2. Bonnie "puffed and panted as she took the cows up the side of the hill" (pp. 190-91). "Puffed and panted" are examples of onomatopoeia and alliteration. These techniques make writing more vivid. Onomatopoeia means words make the sound they are describing when they are spoken. Alliteration means two or more words together begin with the same letter for effect. Say the line again. The "pp" sound makes it sound like you are panting when you say the words.

Make a list of three other onomatopoetic words or use alliteration (or combine both) to describe someone as they run through a storm.

3. What happened to all the chickens in the chicken coop?
4. "'If only you had told us! Chickens are known for crowding when they are frightened. They should have been pulled apart as fast as possible! We might have revived some of them. Now they're *all* dead—suffocated. Why didn't you tell us?' Winded, Mum fell into a chair" (p. 197).

So Bonnie's parents might have been able to save some of the chickens. Why didn't she tell her parents? What would you do in a similar situation?

5. Bonnie says, “Mum would rather let the family starve than have her neighbours feel sorry for her” (p. 194). Bonnie has mentioned her mother’s pride several times. Do you think this is a bit extreme? Why would her mother feel this way, given the fact that it is the Depression and although everyone was poor, most people tried to help each other?

6. What does Bonnie plan to do to help make up for letting all the chickens die? Are these ideas realistic? Why or why not? What would you do?

Chapter 20: A Spot of Sunshine

1. The real reason the students were not punished for the Big Walkout is revealed. What is it?

2. How is Miss Clarke different from Mr McDougall? How do you know Miss Clarke and Bonnie will get along just great? Give specific examples. (pp. 202-05)

3. Why would Bonnie accidentally call Miss Clarke, “Miss Anderson” (p. 205)? (Hint: Think back to the beginning of the novel.)

4. At the end of the chapter Bonnie confides in Archie that she caused the death of the chickens. What does he offer as a solution? (p. 206) Why does Bonnie refuse?

Chapter 21: The Something Promise

1. Why is Bonnie shocked that the boys from Keene have no tops on their bathing suits? (p. 209) What was the fashion in 1937 for swim wear?

2. What might have happened to Slinky if the man from Keene had not rescued him? (p. 211)

3. Why is Archie so excited as he tells Bonnie about the upcoming spelling bee? (p. 213)

4. What is Bonnie’s plan now that she has heard about the spelling bee? Be specific. Why does she keep “that hope to herself for now” (p. 215)?

Chapter 22: The Spelling Bee

1. What does Bonnie want to prove to her mother at the spelling bee? (p. 219)

2. “February” is one of the most commonly misspelled words and a great word for a spelling bee. What other words can you think of that would be tricky enough to use in a spelling bee? List at least five words. Hold a spelling bee using this list and the lists of other classmates.

3. What are all the reasons Bonnie decides to enter the senior division of the spelling bee? (p. 223)

4. Is it ironic that Bonnie won the senior spelling bee by spelling “crocheting”? Why? (p. 224) (Reminder: Irony means there is an interesting twist, connection or outcome.)

5. Do Mr McDougall and Bonnie part ways on a positive note? Why? Be specific? (p. 227)

6. How many eggs can Bonnie get with her spelling bee prize money? Do the math! (p. 229)
7. Why does Mum tell Bonnie her final victory is a “big one” (p. 132)? Is it? Why or why not?
8. In the end, do you think it was a positive move for the Brown family to move to Lang? Support your answer with details from the novel.

Vocabulary and Study of Idioms

Teachers may use this section during or after the reading of the book. Since students learn many words by context, perhaps afterwards would be easier. The following is a long list of vocabulary found in the novel. Some of the terms will require your explanation and a dictionary definition may not suffice. Suggestions to build vocabulary might include: building a word wall; using the computer to create crossword puzzles; or holding an old fashioned spelling bee with the new vocabulary.

Vocabulary (in the order the words appear in the novel)

debt (1)	Loyalist ancestors (21)	‘sealers’ (36)
till(verb) (2)	telephone (party line) (21, 23)	preservers in sealers (36)
mortgage payments (4)	poker (for the stove) (22)	copper washing kettle (36)
tax collectors (4)	game warden (23)	dubious (36)
Depression (4)	relief (financial assistance) (23)	iron spider frying pan (36)
snitching (6)	granary (24)	salmon balls (36)
pantry (6)	laneway (24)	cold cellar (37)
cot (7)	veered (24)	bag of grain (38)
utility cupboard (8)	hamlet (of Lang) (24)	reins (38)
coal-oil lamp (8)	swollen glands (25)	braided rugs (39)
cattle truck (8)	gnarled (28)	tousled (39)
dooryard (10)	palms (28)	Shirley Temple (39)
Lysol (10)	overalls (28)	ushered (39)
verandah (11)	dam (29)	luscious (40)
gable (12)	cast nets (29)	incubator (42)
white picket fence (12)	suckers (29)	henhouse (42)
ruckus (12)	rod and bait (29)	spoil (as in food) (42)
garter snake (13)	spears (29)	cow dog (43)
ruefully (13)	Great War (31)	scything (45)
sanitarium (15)	saluted (31)	tin lunch pail (45)
consumption (15)	rifling (verb) (31)	wool stockings (45)
tuberculosis (15)	jacks (game) (31)	garters for stockings (45)
parlour (20)	quaint (32)	pleated skirt (45)
chesterfield (20)	ignorant (33)	starched white middy (45)
cellar (20)	quarantine (34)	Oxfords (46)
warming oven (20)	ploughed fields (35)	toques (47)
McIntosh apples (21)	underbrush (35)	clapboard (47)
stovepipe (21)	perplexed (36)	vestibule (49)

enrol (49)
black box-stove (50)
scribblers (50)
pupil (50)
blackboard (50)
guffaws (52)
hopscotch (54)
Jacques Cartier (54)
Holchelega (54)
entrance exams (55)
mop-pail (59)
gingham curtains (60)
dark buffet (60)
white Holsteins (61)
udders (61)
bedside washstand (66)
flour bag apron (66)
Depression soup kitchens (71)
school water pump (74)
Ford Lincoln (78)
pot-belly stove (79)
honeycomb (80)
school leather strap (83)
horse harness (84)
fetching (86)
milkm maid (86)
pranks (90)
iodine (91)
Rawleigh's Ointment (91)
flannel sheet (91)
fruitcake (92)
horehound candy (93)
woodshed (94)
wallow (96)
snowbound (96)
coal-oil bracket lamp (97)
wick (98)
binder twine (99)
sow (102)
oilcloth (103)
table leaves (103)
reservoir (103)
anaesthesia (105)
disinfectant (105)
carbolic acid (105)
woodbox (107)

raccoon cap (109)
treacherous (110)
contraption (111)
stoop (115)
pneumonia (118)
hypothermia (120)
Heidi (novel) (120)
lukewarm (122)
buffalo robe (123)
cutter (123)
muskrat coat and hat (124)
red flannel shirt (125)
blustery (125)
reins (127)
absentees (130)
kindling (130)
sceptically (130)
chimney fire (132)
General Store (132)
soot (133)
School board chairman (135)
burlap bag (135)
embroidered (135)
smouldering (135)
spelling bee (136)
forlorn (137)
makeshift bed (138)
The Adventures of Sammy Jay
(novel) (139)
scarlet fever (142)
red measles (143)
inoculated (143)
Medical Officer of Health (144)
immune (144)
serum (144)
epidemic (144)
Little Women (novel) (145)
sixty-mile radius (146)
vestibule (147)
stragglers (149)
smelling salts (150)
cloakroom (151)
galoshes (153)
chilblains (153)
coal-oil heaters (153)
contraption (154)
sponge baths (155)
poor as church mice (157)
abashed (163)
solemn voice (163)
Florence Nightingale (164)
horrendous (164)
coop (166)
bookish (166)
speller (167)
diligently (167)
Prince Edward Island (167)
head lice (168)
unison (168)
ruffians (169)
rummage (171)
brusquely (171)
glum (172)
bedraggled (172)
demoralized (174)
diagnosed (174)
truants (174)
summer kitchen (176)
lice and nits (177)
doused with coal oil (177)
lye soap (178)
bluing (180)
infestation (185)
menacingly (186)
lanky body (186)
trek (189)
delaying the inevitable (189)
encompassed (190)
loped (190)
lingering (190)
sauntered (191)
ominous (191)
seeding (192)
tin mailbox (193)
scrawl (193)
rampaging (194)
chicken and dumplings (194)
Normal School (201-202)
sedately (202)
sums (204)
rapture (204)
“bee” (206)

swimming hole (210)	“Danny Boy” song (217)	crocheting (224)
sauntered (210)	curtsied (217)	doilies (224)
civil tongue (210)	lectern (217)	ambled slowly (226)
hoarse voice (212)	“Encore!” (217)	nimbly (228)
gingerly (213)	adjudicate (218)	conceited (229)
recitations (213)	bolster (219)	utmost care (231)
spelling bee (213)	indignantly (223)	delicious aroma (231)

Expressions and Idioms (Alphabetical Order)

1. Have students brainstorm idioms they use every day. Idioms are expressions whose meanings are not literal translations of each word in the phrase. Be aware of students whose first language is not English. They require a context in which to understand the expressions.
2. Using context clues, dictionary or older family members/friends, fill in the chart below to show the meaning of each expression or idiom. This chart can be referred to while reading the novel.
3. Use the expressions and idioms from the novel which are listed in the chart below to draw comical cartoons that reflect the literal translation. For example a “crackerjack cook” might show a cook baking a box of Cracker Jack popcorn. A “swelled head” might show a character with a very swollen head, and “headlong” might show a character with a very long head. (Hint: Dictionaries of Idioms and the internet provide the origins of many of these expressions.)

Expression or Idiom	Page in Novel	Meaning	Similar Modern Expression
a piece	33	a distance	a little way down the road
back-bench boys	49		
big meal of the day	39		
bite your tongue	46		
boatload	42		
bonnie lass	3		
bunglers	41		
“by guess and by golly”	100		
“By George!”	230		
“Cat got your tongue?”	214		
“Cleanliness is next to Godliness.”	159		

cooked up this scheme	23		
cooties	74		
crackerjack cook	6		
daredevils	116		
darn	68		
dawdle	141		
deadbeats	74		
does the trick	105		
fret	142		
from stem to stern	186		
“Git”	33		
golly	117		
grim-faced	184		
“two left hands”	200		
headlong	34		
helter-skelter	17		
“I do declare—”	158		
“in for it”	194		
in a dither	216		
iron grip	86		
iron hand	49		
“it’s a good job”	129		
jeepers	18		
lock, stock, and barrel	3		
“March . . . in like a lion, . . . out like a lamb?”	125		

“mother would never stand for it—”	206		
my better half	142		
new-fangled	2		
passed away	149		
plenty scared	94		
ribbing	212		
“right up her alley”	214		
riptailsnorter	192		
ruffian	223		
scrapper	47		
scruff of his neck	61		
shipshape	123		
skedaddle	19		
small kindness	142		
snippet	32		
“Speak of the devil, he’s sure to appear!”	146		
squirt	49		
steer clear	33		
“. . . stop . . . in his tracks”	230		
stumblebum	41		
stung like mad	87		
swelled head	229		
tail . . . between his legs	61		
take a chill	10		
“That’s an old wives’ tale.”	176		
tussling	69		
“What on earth?”	230		

“Where there’s a will, there’s a way.”	159		
yonder	33		

Novel Extension Ideas

All of the projects are designed so students can explore historical events, controversial issues, literary connections, and themes through the close reading of the novel and beyond. Activities are directed to the students. These activities might be options for a culminating unit task.

Both fiction and non-fiction options are suggested for individuals, pairs, or small groups. Students can express themselves through poetry, written reports and oral reports, short stories, newspaper articles, research projects, art work, hope chests, fashion shows, cooking, photo stories, photo albums, slide shows, power point presentations, displays, family histories, videos, drama, guest speakers, and field trips. **There is a vast range in levels of difficulty in these activities.**

1. Write poems in any style using some of the following phrases found in the novel celebrating each of the four seasons experienced by Bonnie and her family. Write a poem for each season.

Fall: September night was cool, crickets chirped, blue jays squabbling, small apple orchard, goldenrod and wild grass, overgrown grass, bluejays were still making a ruckus in a tree, snake draped like Christmas tinsel, McIntosh apples, woodland oaks and maple trees, meadow, grassy hill, tall maples, ditch full of grass, pine and poplar trees ahead, gnarled root, riverbank, poplar saplings and fallen cedar logs, patch of prickly bushes, thick woods, short spruce shrub, thick underbrush, prickly branches, cedar bush, ploughed fields, yellow elm and orange maple, rail fence, black-and-white cows grazing near maple trees, salmon and bass, bag of grain, line of spruce, basswood trees, stand of poplars, tamaracks, baked bread, apple pie, beet pickles, spruce twig, tall yard-grass, rolling hills, gleaming blue waters, field of goldenrod, flaming red maple tree, flock of geese flew in a V, brown oak leaves, chipmunks and squirrels hustling about, breezes ruffling the leaves, suckerballs, dark leaf sticking to window, leafless lower branch

Winter: howling wind, snow pelting, relentless snow, snowbound, treacherous, frozen water, snow-laden spruce branches, nearby trees hanging over the ice, glistening snow, slowly melting, dripping onto the edge of the little pond, wind had swept the pond clear of snow, broke through the ice, going like the wind, chunks of ice floating around, sloshed and crunched, trees closed in around her, pneumonia, up the hill and through the woods, through heavy snowbanks, freezing, hypothermia, buffalo robes, cutter seat, muskrat coat and hat, in like a lion and out like a lamb, red flannel shirt, knitted toque, blustery, reins jingling, uneven snowbanks, blistering white snow, windburn and frozen tears, sway of the sleigh, kindling, chimney fire, cold winter days, looking like ice statues, smouldering, wind and snow buffeted the north-west side, cold drafts blow in and round the windows, sifting of snow, galoshes, coal-oil heaters, raw wool

Spring: winter had finally broken, great drifts of snow had gone fast in April, blustering winds, streams of water, trickled across the knolls and hills, warm spring day, balls of fuzz, fuzzy with blossoms, leaves on the lilacs, green curtain, head lice, cooties, unraked grass, spread like

lightening, dust-packed route, doom and gloom, summer kitchen, coal oil and lye soap, creaking of the rickety steps, jumbled mob, rushed across the long front yard, dirt road snaked alongside the Indian River, sun shone warmly, skipped home, strong gust of wind, huge black cloud rolling in, dampness filled the air, drenched, lingering, big maple tree, thunderstorm, puffed and panted, pastured in grassy field, hillside field, gravel road, seeding, plump chicken, cedar hedge, two robins were singing on the fence, across the bridge

Summer: big maple shaded two picnic tables between, water gushed over the dam and foamed, dark and deep, sturdy log bridge, swim over, Rice Lake, swimming hole, sauntered, mighty splash, deep water, holding him underwater, sputtered like a fountain, feet dangled in the water, hoarse voice, gingerly, clear and bright, a breeze blew fresh and light, in a dither, surge of courage, feeling of delight, nearly drowned, Mill Pond, ruffian, jumping beans, heroine, ambled, wee lass, nimbly, slapping the reins, stop in his tracks, utmost care, delicious aroma drifted, trees closed in around them like an embrace, happy silence, road into the woods, semi-darkness, beams of moonlight streaking across their path, wasn't afraid of the woods anymore, brave, no small victory

2. Choose one of the following lines that comes directly from the novel to start a short story of your own. This line will be the first line of your short story.

“Something was going on.” (p. 1)
“They’re the way of the future.” (p. 2)
“Two people died in there.” (p. 18)
“That’s illegal. It’s not fishing season.” (p. 22)
“He had a white star just above his nose.” (p. 43)
“Their house was the most remote—you had to pass through woods and hills and hills to reach it.” (p. 58)
“Should she tell her parents what had happened?” (p. 77)
“There were drops of blood on the snow!” (p. 101)
“Suddenly, just in front of Archie, it happened.” (p. 117)
“She couldn’t face going back to school alone and so she headed for home.” (p. 119)
“Dr Wright said that anyone with a fever would be under quarantine, along with their whole family, too.” (p. 143)
“Together, they ran in silence from the school.” (p. 152)
“Mum was cutting her hair!” (p. 178)
“Archie and Slinky were hopping up and down like jumping beans.” (p. 225)

3. There are many different kinds of trees mentioned in the novel: cedar, spruce, aspen, oak, maple, pine, poplar, elm, basswood, tamarack, apple, and lilac. Which are deciduous and which are coniferous? Study the leaves/needles, shape, trunk, etc. If you do not have access to the actual tree, view pictures on the internet. Make a display to show the different types of trees in the novel. Present your project to the class. (Hint: If you are collecting real leaves and putting them on a poster board wax the leaves. Place the leaves between two sheets of waxed paper. Lay a cloth over the top sheet and ask an adult to press your leaves with a hot iron.)

4. Write a newspaper article about one of the main incidents in the novel. (Suggestions: epidemic of scarlet fever or head lice.) See your teacher to make sure you write in proper newspaper form. Make your article look like it is in the local Lang or Keene Gazette. Age your newspaper.

5. Write a letter to the author of the novel, Connie Brummel Crook. Try to conduct an interview, either by phone or via email. Have questions ready that relate to the novel, the writing process, and Ms Crook and her relationship to the character Bonnie. Present your interview to your class.
6. Research the Depression in Canada. Choose specific topics to research; such as, Relief programs, government aid, protests, and policies to help the jobless and the poor. Make a power point slide show to share with the class.
7. Research health care during the 1930's in Canada. Narrow your research to diseases and treatments, rural doctors and nurses, home remedies or medical advancements and medical research at the time.
8. Research automobiles in the 1930's. Make a slide show or photo story to present to the class showing the various types of automobiles. At that time, there were both automobiles and horses still in use. How did they co-exist? What were the roads like?
9. Dig into your family tree and family history whether or not your family was living in Canada in 1936. What are your own family stories from the Depression? Write these down or put them on a CD or video. Include photos.
10. Make a hope chest of items for a young girl to become a “good housewife” in 1936-37. A traditional hope chest, generally cedar to prevent moths, was a young girl’s trunk filled with things she would one day take into a marriage to use as a wife. For example, you might have some embroidery, crocheting, recipes, apron, tea towels and bedding, special dishes, books and more. Be prepared to share these items with the class and talk about each one and its use. You could write a short description of each on a small card.
11. Fashion has changed since 1936-37. Research the fashion of the day. Make a sample outfit(s) to fit you or a friend that matches how one of the characters might have looked in the 1930's. Either model your costume(s) yourself or ask your friends to do it for you while you describe each article of clothing to the class in a mini-fashion show.
12. Arrange to have guest speakers come into your classroom based on one or a couple of the following topics from the novel: a health care professional to talk about head lice; an historian to talk about the history of schools and the one room school; a chicken, pig or dairy farmer to answer questions about farming today and in the past; a senior citizen to talk about living through the Depression; or an anti-bullying expert.
13. Arrange a field trip for your class to visit a working pioneer village in your area. For example: Lang Pioneer Village at Lang, Ontario, twelve miles from Peterborough (1-866-289-5264).
14. “You know, Bonnie, our ancestors went through a much rougher time—the hungry year! They’d have been thankful for turnips.” Bonnie’s father refers to a time of extreme poverty for immigrants into Canada, often referred to by historians as the hungry years of 1787, 88. Connie Brummel Crook’s novel, *The Hungry Year*, a 2002 Regional Silver Birch winner, tells about this time. Was that a more difficult time? Read and compare the times and the heroines.

15. Learn to embroider, crochet or knit. Make something very simple that relates to the novel. Show it off to the class and give instructions on how to perform this art.
16. Make a traditional photo album or make a slide show of images that show 1936-37 and the events in the novel. You will need to use the internet and perhaps you have some old family photos that you can copy or scan for this activity. Share your project with the class.
17. What music was popular in the 1930's? What technology was available. Bonnie does not talk about listening to the radio, so we might assume her family did not have a radio or a Victrola for playing records. Create a presentation to show the class how music was transmitted to people. Play examples of popular music of the day. What were the songs about? Were they as depressing as the times or did the songs aim to lift people's spirits.
18. Do you love candy? Research the treats and sweets available to kids in 1936-37. What were the ingredients. What was the cost? Do any of these candies still exist? For example are the suckers mentioned in the novel still made? What is horehound candy? Can you get samples? Provide a mouth watering slide show of the penny candies, pop, and treats in the 1930's.
19. Work with a group to combine various scenes from the novel that show Bonnie is a modern thinker whose attitudes are ahead of her time for a young girl, raised in a traditional family in 1936. Video tape your performance or present live to the class.
20. Work with an adult to make one of the foods mentioned in the novel. For example, learn to make an apple pie from scratch or make jelly or jam the old fashioned way. Explain the procedure to the class. Perhaps photograph or video the process to show the class how it's done. Bring your creation into the class to share. Be mindful of potential food allergies in your class.
21. Prepare an anti-bullying campaign for your school. Decide how you want to target the student body. For example, you could write a message to be read every day on morning announcements. Talk to your teacher before proceeding. Consider what has already been done in your school and what else you can do to prevent and stop school bullying.

No small victory

Connie Brummel Crook

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