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Diary of Mary MacNeil

Learn How to Read a Diary



Ontario Curriculum Reading Unit

Integrated with Writing, Social Studies, and Technology



Name:

Ontario Curriculum Unit

Integrated Reading with Writing, Social Studies, and Technology

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Diary of Mary MacNeil

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A decorative shield with a metallic texture and rivets, containing a large white letter 'L' with a black outline. The shield is part of a larger decorative header featuring a wooden plank background, blue daisies, and green leaves.

Lesson Expectations and Rubric

Expectation	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Comprehension Strategies				
Demonstrating Understanding				
Making Inferences, Interpreting Texts				
Extending Understanding				
Text Form: Diary				
Text Features				
Reading Unfamiliar Words				
Reading Fluently				
Interconnected Skills				
Technology: THPLinks				
Point of View				

Comments:

R

Reading Selection

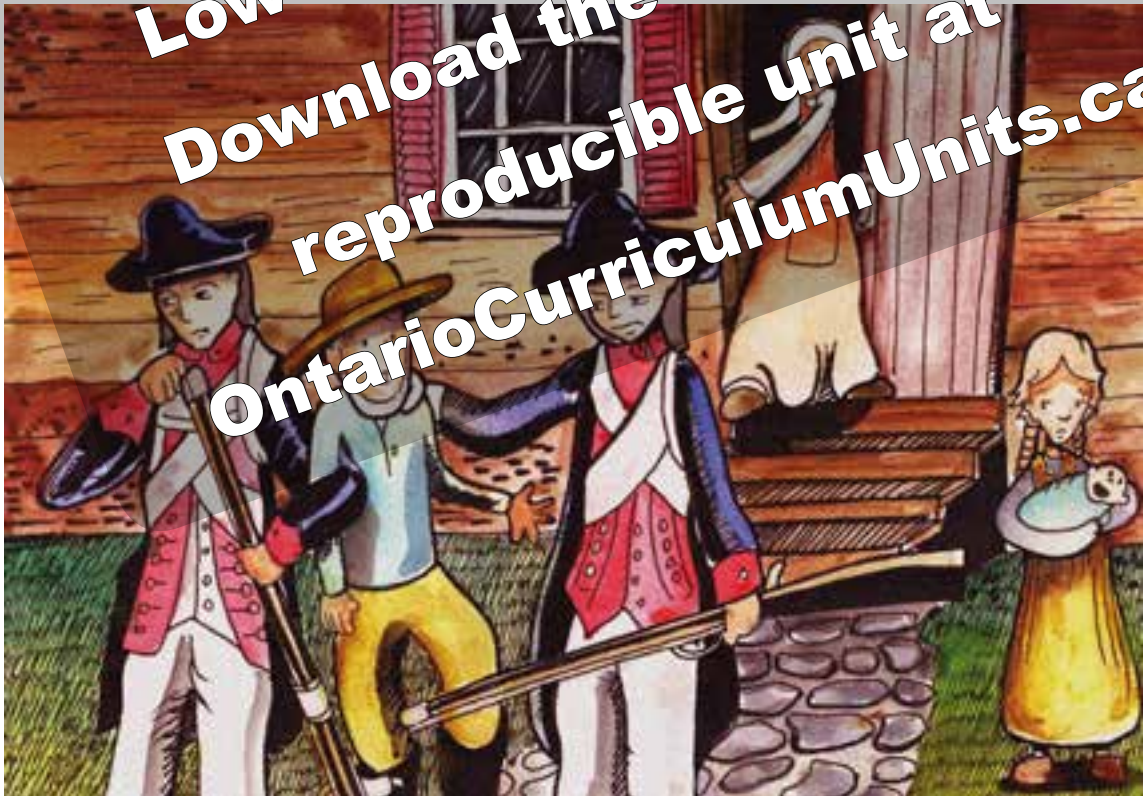


Below are excerpts from Mary MacNeil's diary that she wrote during the American Revolution. Her family was on England's side. Mary tells how the family had to flee to Canada. A diary is a private journal that someone keeps to record important events in their life.

DIARY OF MARY MACNEIL

July 10, 1783.

Today, they took Daddy away. The soldiers came through our door. Peter cried. I took him away from the soldiers. Mommy



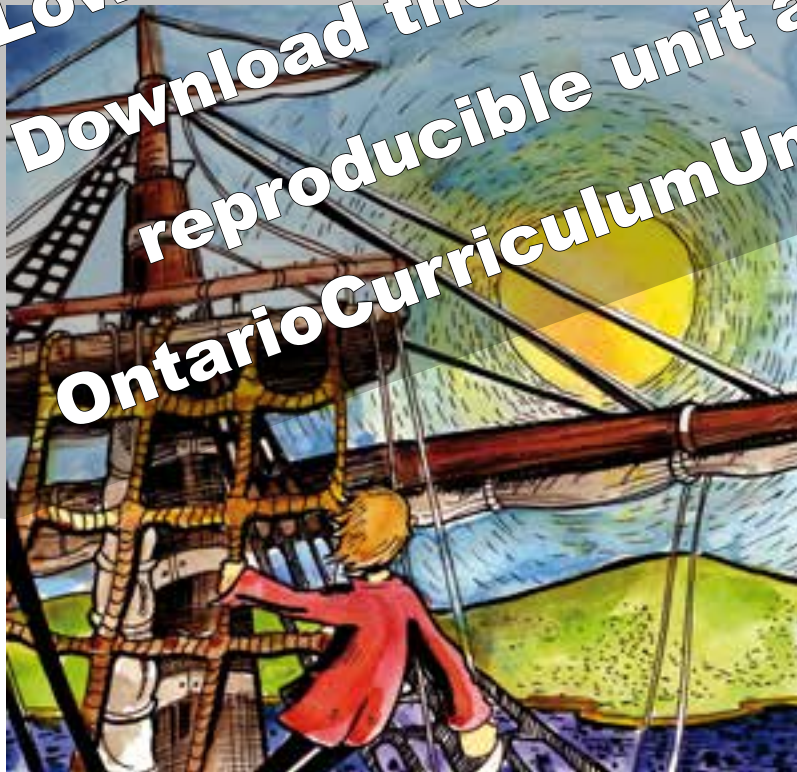
said the soldiers are fighting against England. Daddy is on England's side. My older brother, James, wasn't home. I'm glad. They might have taken him too.

August 10, 1783.

Daddy's been gone a month now. Mommy can't find out where he is. We hope he's safe in jail. Some of our neighbours were killed. We hope for the best. For Daddy, the best would be jail. Some people call us Tories because we support the king. They don't like Tories. They don't come to our store anymore. We see soldiers often. Some soldiers are kind, but some scare me. I want Daddy back.

August 31, 1783.

Today, Daddy came home. He is dirty, skinny, and very tired. He was in jail with almost no food. Mommy is so happy to see him.



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My parents talked all night planning our escape. Every time I woke up, I heard their voices downstairs.

September 1, 1783.

Daddy talked to all of us after breakfast. We have to move out of our home quickly. We have a week to pack and leave on a ship. We are going to a place called Nova Scotia in Canada. What a strange name. James says the name means New Scotland. I haven't even seen old Scotland!

My big brother, James, had lots of questions for Daddy. My big sister, Ruth, held Mommy's hand. They talk without words. Peter started crying and ran to me. I picked him up and rubbed his back. I tried to stay brave. Esther was sleeping as I rocked her cradle with my foot.

Daddy said lots of people who are against the revolution will come with us. We can take as much as we want from our house. The ship will be crowded. Daddy will sell all our big things. I can keep my doll. I loved around the kitchen. The blue flowered vase belonged to my grandmother. My other grandmother made our best tablecloth. Mommy was sad, she said we'd take what we could, but things weren't as important as family. We will have each other if we escape.

September 8, 1783.

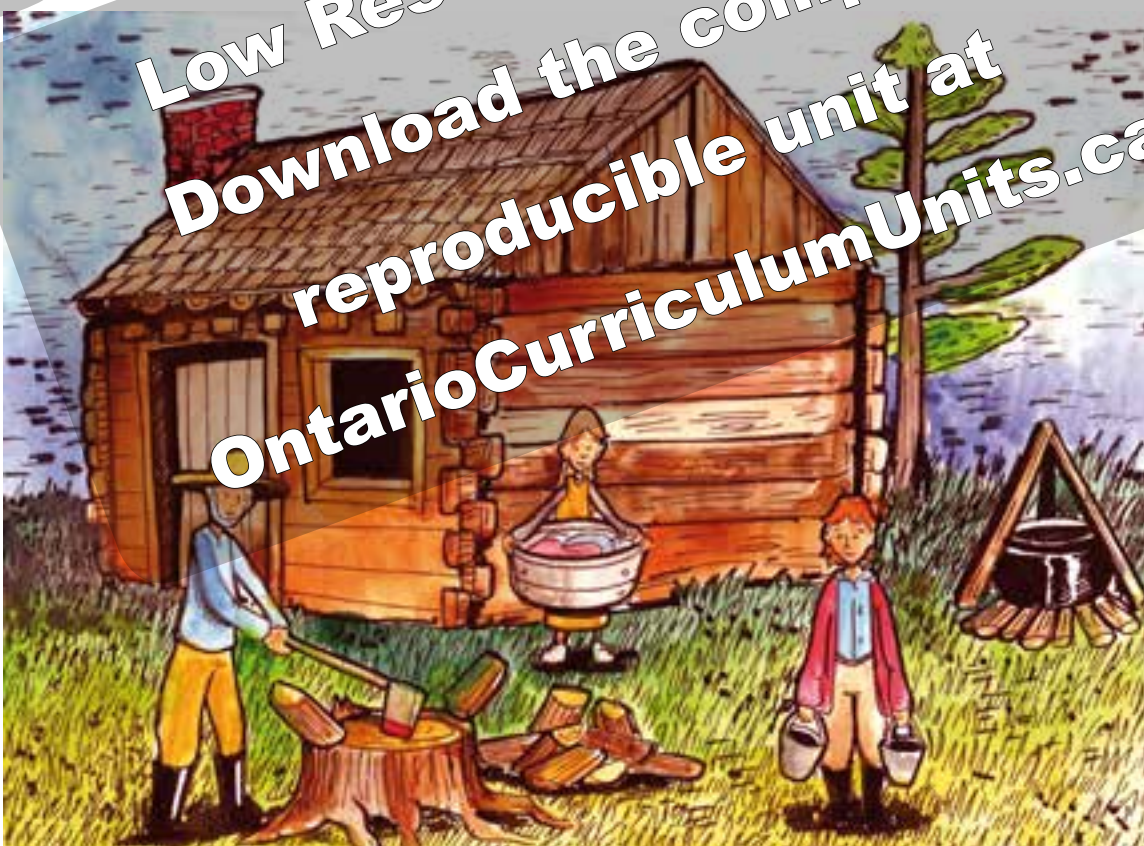
We are on the ship. Leaving is hard. Mommy and Daddy were born here, and so were we. Everyone helped pack. My main job was to take care of Peter and Esther. I'm the middle child. I'm too young to help Mommy with any heavy work. I'm too old to act like a child. Mommy says I am a good little helper and my job is important.

Yesterday, we took one last walk through our empty house. Then we left. Daddy shut the door. Mommy pulled a lonely weed from the front garden. James looked next door at his girlfriend's house. She's staying behind. Ruth covered her face. Peter held onto my leg. Esther slept in my arms. I swallowed hard so I wouldn't cry.

We walked quietly to the harbour. We got on the sailing ship and found our place in the hold (that means under the deck.) We're stuffed in here. There are too many people in this small space.

September 10, 1783.

We're sailing. There are some English soldiers on the ship. James can climb to the top of the mast. Mommy doesn't want to look. It is hard to walk on deck. The ship rolls from side to side and bounces up and down on the waves. We all have bruises



from bumping into things. The sailors say it is calm. I don't want to know what a storm would be like.

September 30, 1783.

After we landed in Nova Scotia, some people cried as the ship left. They stayed and watched until the sails disappeared. Daddy said, "Let's get to work. This is our home now. We can't look back." Now I know how my grandparents felt when they left Scotland for New York.

We are living in a tent city in Shelburne, Nova Scotia. There is more space than we had on the ship. We have the whole tent to ourselves. Daddy is trying to get some land so we can build a house and a new store. Mommy and Ruth spend all their time keeping us fed, warm, and clean. Ruth is happy to run around dirty. Mommy thinks he is a dirt magnet. As soon as she uses water to clean him, he finds dirt to play in.

March 15, 1784.

The men have built us a one room cabin. The floor is dirt. There's only one window and it doesn't have glass yet. But, there is a fireplace and lots of wood. We have a log cabin; we are in heaven – a warm one.

The winter was awful. Many people died. We thought Esther was going to die. She was so sick. Mommy, Ruth, and I took turns rocking her. We tried to feed her and keep her warm. Mommy said Esther has three mothers. We lined up for food all winter. There wasn't really enough to go around. We were all thin. We work together to take care of everybody. Mommy and Ruth work with the other women to keep us all fed and warm. Their hands are red and rough from the wash water and the cold. Daddy and

James worked with all the men to construct the buildings for the community.

Now we have a roof over our heads. We have beds to sleep in. We have Mommy's fresh bread to eat. We have a meeting place for church, and a school was opened. And we have each other. The worst part must be over.

This story is fiction but the things that happened to Mary really happened to the early settlers in Nova Scotia.

SAMPLE

Low Resolution Sample

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Thlink Number 100012

Scan the QR code or go to the website below. Listen to the diary entries and watch the video presentation. During the American Revolution, many people loyal to the King were expelled to Canada and became new settlers called the United Empire Loyalists. With your teacher or a family member, search online to learn about this group of refugees.

<http://thplink.tv/100012.html>





R

Reading for Meaning



Read all the questions in this section. Then, re-read all or part of the diary to answer the questions that follow.

- There were five children in Mary's family. She was the:
 - oldest
 - youngest
 - one in the middle
 - the second youngest
 - The soldiers crawled through the door because Daddy:
 - was a criminal
 - was a soldier
 - was on England's side
 - the house was on fire
 - Daddy returned from jail:
 - dirty, skinny, and angry
 - dirty, sick, and very tired
 - hungry, skinny, and sad
 - dirty, skinny, and very tired
 - The journey on the sailing ship was:
 - very difficult
 - all smooth sailing
 - took longer than expected
 - like taking a cruise
5. List three ways Mary's life was different from yours.

6. Read the paragraph at the top of page seven again. Everyone is sad to leave. List three things from the paragraph that tells us they are very unhappy.

7. Explain how the entire community worked to help each other during the first winter in Nova Scotia.

8. Read the last paragraph on page nine. Mary says that the worst part is over. List three ways things are better for the family.

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U

nderstanding Form and Style



The form of this selection is a diary. The format is very different from a novel or a poem. Think about the diary form then answer the questions below.

1. A diary tells us about:
 - a. events in a story
 - b. events in a famous person's life
 - c. events in a poem
 - d. events in the news
2. Reports are often organized with subtitles. Diary entries are written according to:
 - a. chapters
 - b. dates
 - c. numbered lists
 - d. subtitles
3. A diary tells mostly about:
 - a. the person writing it
 - b. the main character in the story
 - c. a famous person
 - d. a close member of the family
4. In a diary, you write about:
 - a. only facts
 - b. your feelings and events in your life
 - c. only recipes
 - d. only science experiments
5. Is Mary's diary written from a first person or third person point of view?



R

Reading with Fluency

The more you understand about word meanings and uses, the more fluent your reading will become. Answer the word meaning questions below.

- In this diary a harbour means:
 - the centre of town
 - the city park
 - where a ship is anchored
 - a tent city
 - What does Mommy mean when she said that Peter is a dirt magnet? He:
 - stands in a U shape
 - gets dirty often
 - stays clean
 - plays in magnetic dirt
 - “Ruth and Mommy talked without words.” means:
 - they used sign language
 - they both held hands
 - they stared into each other’s eyes
 - they knew what each other was thinking
 - Choose one diary entry to read aloud. Remember to show expression through your use of volume, speed, and pauses. Practice until you can read the passage fluently. Then read it to a family member.
4. Which word that means the opposite of “loyal” is:
 - citizen
 - reformer
 - loyalist
 - troublemaker



R

eflecting on Reading Skills and Strategies



Readers use different strategies depending on the form of the selection.

1. You probably came across some unfamiliar words in this diary. Below, list six words that were new to you.

Explain three reading strategies you used to help you figure out the meaning of these new words. Did you re-read the part, use a dictionary, read it aloud, ask someone for help, try to guess at the meaning by reading the entire sentence, or did you use another strategy?

Extend

Imagine that Mary's ship was attacked by pirates and she was taken captive. She is still writing in her diary. Write at least four diary entries about her life as a captive.

Four Diary Entries

Date 1: _____

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Date 3: _____

SAMPLE

Date 4: **Low Resolution Sample**
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