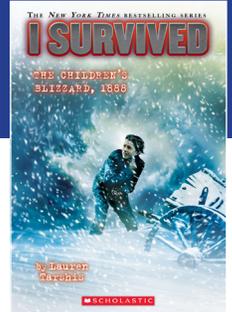


I SURVIVED

BOOK CLUB

Name: _____

I Survived The Children 's Blizzard, 1888



CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. Why doesn't John consider Prairie Creek a proper town? What might he be comparing it to?

2. Why does John think he can't be friends with Rex, Peter, and Sven? How does King Rattler change this?

3. What are the pros and cons of living in a "soddy"?



4. Why were the grasshopper attacks so terrible?

5. How do the boys surprise John after he falls into the creek? What does he think they're going to do, and what do they actually do?

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT *(CONTINUED)*

6. For John and his family, what is the difference between dealing with an early snowstorm in Chicago and an early snowstorm in Prairie Creek?

7. Why does the snowstorm in September result in John and Franny missing school for weeks?

8. When John is out in the blizzard looking for Franny, what does he start to understand and why?

9. What are the three different things that John and his friends do to try and survive the blizzard? Do they work?

10. What does John hear in the hissing wind as they try to get to Ricker farm? Why do you think this is what he hears?

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT: Answer the organizer questions on the next page to help you write a two-paragraph essay about how John proves to himself that he is brave and capable of living in the Dakota Territory.

Name: _____

I Survived The Children 's Blizzard, 1888

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT *(CONTINUED)*

TWO-PARAGRAPH ESSAY ORGANIZER FOR *I SURVIVED THE CHILDREN'S BLIZZARD, 1888*

Answer the questions below to brainstorm ideas for your first paragraph, which will be your introduction:

At the beginning of the book, how does John see himself? Why doesn't he think he belongs in Dakota?

For your second paragraph, list two actions John takes during the blizzard that show his bravery:

1. _____

2. _____

Next, answer the question below to help write a concluding statement for the end of your second paragraph.

What does John learn about himself during the course of the book?

Now, write your essay on the back of this page or on a computer using your answers above.

ANSWERS

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. John doesn't think Prairie Creek is much of a town because it's so small. Only about twenty families live there, and the main street is just a strip of dirt with a general store, a hardware store, and a tiny hotel. John might be comparing Prairie Creek to the big city of Chicago, where he and his parents used to live.
2. John thinks that he doesn't have anything in common with Rex, Peter, and Sven, who are tough pioneer boys. But when Rex says he's found King Rattler and invites John to go with them, John agrees, and the adventure helps them connect with each other.
3. The pros are: a house made of sod is cozy; the thick dirt walls keep the heat in during the winter and out during the summer. The cons: When it rains, muddy water drips from the ceiling, the floor turns into a mud puddle, and worms, spiders, and mice come out of the walls.
4. Not only did billions of grasshoppers drop out of the sky and climb all over people, but they also ate every stalk of wheat, causing farmers to lose their crops. This left farmers and their families with no money for coal, clothes, or supplies.
5. After he falls into the creek, John thinks that Rex, Peter, and Sven are going to make fun of him for running off "like a scared rabbit." But when the boys find John, they surprise him by being worried about him and asking if he's all right, rather than making fun of him.
6. In Chicago, if there was an early snowstorm, John and his family could go to a store and buy food. In Prairie Creek, where everything they eat comes from the land, an early snowstorm could make it difficult for them to eat. Nothing grows on the prairie when it's covered with ice and snow.
7. Pa decides that the September snowstorm is a message about preparing for winter. John and Franny stay home from school to help their parents harvest the potatoes and turnips, plow the soil, patch the soddy, and make the haystacks.
8. When John first heard a story about a farmer who'd gone out in a blizzard, gotten lost close to his house, and frozen to death, he didn't understand how it could have happened. But as John staggers around blindly and loses his way in the storm just a few steps away from the schoolhouse, he understands *exactly* how it happened.
9. First John and his friends take shelter in the school with Miss Ruell. This works for a while, but there isn't enough coal to keep them warm for more than a few hours. Then they get on the sleds to try to make it to a hotel, but their horse spooks and they have to jump off the sled. Finally, they take shelter in a haystack. Luckily for them, though they have to spend the night there, the storm ends just a few minutes after they climb in and fall asleep.
10. John hears the wind hissing, "You're weak," "You can't make it," and "You're doomed!" What he's really hearing are his own worst fears about not being tough enough to survive in Dakota.

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT: Answers will vary but may include references to John going out into the storm to find Franny, and John telling the others that they have to take shelter in the haystack to survive.