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Comprehension Questions

Prologue

1. Who are the people in the prologue? Give supportive evidence from the text in your answer.
2. Why has the family come to this place?
3. Why does Ejew tell herself to rejoice?
4. What will the family do here at the Cape?
5. Why were they hungrier than usual when they arrived at the Cape this year/
6. Why hadn't Ejew believed the stories about the Widdun? What happened to change her mind?
7. Why do the men have to help the women with the seals on shore?
8. Why is Ejew remembering a story about another group of people called "Others"?
9. What did Toma bring his father?
10. Why does Toma want to bring the stick with them?
11. What does Ejew tell Toma to do with the stick? Why?

Chapter 1

1. How does Lavinia see herself?
2. Why does she think she will never get back to her home?
3. How is it that Lavinia is crying about what has happened now that it is over?
4. Why did she think they would not be able to live in this place?
5. How had Jennie shown she was brave when they first landed?
6. What qualities did Ned possess which drew people to him?
7. What were the first words Lavinia wrote in her diary?
8. Why do you think Lavinia turns the book upside down and begins to write from back to front?
9. How had the Andrews family made a living in Weymouth?
10. How did Lavinia feel about her crowded bedroom?
11. What were the advantages of living on Monk Street?
12. How did everyone know that Richard Ellsworth was really angry?
13. What had Ned done?
14. How did Mr. Ellsworth explain that Ned had stolen from him?
15. What had Ellsworth intended to do when he came to Monk Street? Why did he change his mind?

Personal Response

Activity 1

With which character did you identify most? Why?

Include a description of the character's personality traits and explain why you identified with that person.

Give examples from the text to support your answer.

Personal Response

Activity 2

Which character did you dislike the most?

Include a description of that character's personality traits.

Explain what it was about this character that you disliked.

Give examples from the text to support your answer.

Research
Activity 3

Was the account of how the Andrews family came to Newfoundland realistic?

Research your own family to find out where they came from and, if possible, under what circumstances.

Research
Activity 4

What events in Ireland led to many people immigrating to Newfoundland?

Choose one of these events and write a report on it for your class.

Suggestions for speaking opportunities:

Debate Topics:

1. Was Ned guilty of stealing from Mr. Ellsworth?
2. Was Thomas still a priest even though he didn't consider himself one?
3. Were Peter and Joe entitled to any part of the money from the seals?
4. What were Mary's motives in starting her own vegetable garden?
5. Was Thomas actually guilty of a crime back in Ireland?

Drama Topics:

Students could choose one of the following events from the novel, write a script and act it out.

1. The scene between Ned and Mr. Ellsworth.
2. The scene between Peter and Young Joe.
3. Mary and Ned's wedding.
4. The return of the men from seal hunting.
5. The arrival of the Indian.