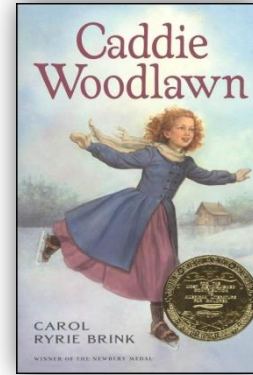


Title: Caddie Woodlawn
Author: Carol Ryrie Brink
Grade Level: 4th Grade



SUMMARY

Caddie Woodlawn does NOT want to act like the “lady” she is expected to be. Caddie likes to run wild and free with her brothers, across the Wisconsin prairie. While she always seems to find trouble in her adventures, she makes up for it with a big heart. Your family will love this free-spirited character and enjoy learning about life in the 1800's on the prairie. Full of action and adventure, you and your child will look forward to seeing which mishaps Caddie gets herself into next! The book gives you plenty to talk about – like the Civil War and the ongoing conflicts between white settlers and Native Americans in the United States.

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WHILE READING

VOCABULARY

It's important to make sure that your child has an understanding of key words in the book. Talking about words while reading is a great way for your child to learn new words.

In this book, you might talk about these words:

- indignant (pg. 110)
- hastened (pg. 167)
- adjoining (pg. 180)
- monotonous (pg. 190)
- calamity (pg. 214)

You might use a question like:

In the story, what does the word “monotonous” mean? Reread the paragraph on page 190 that uses this word. What are the characters doing and talking about when this word is used? How does this help you to figure out what it means?

KEY IDEAS and THEMES

In addition to words, it's important to talk about key ideas and themes and how they develop over the course of the book. Here are some examples to get you started:

1. What kind of person is Caddie? Encourage him or her to pay attention to what the character says, does, and thinks. As you talk about this, ask your child to point to the places in the book that talk about what Caddie is like. Follow up with questions like “What do other characters think of Caddie? How do you know?”
2. On page 74 it says, “Pioneer children were always having mishaps, but they were expected to know how to use their heads in emergencies.” What are “mishaps” anyway? Ask your child to use another word they know to replace mishaps. As a family,

talk about some of the mishaps the Woodlawn children experienced. How did they respond? Do you think they “used their heads?” Why or why not?

3. Talk about Caddie's relationship with her father. What is it like? How do they get along? How do you know? As you talk about this, ask, “How does the author help you to know that each is important to the other?” Encourage your child to use examples throughout the story.
4. One important theme in the book is the relationship between white settlers and the Native Americans. Ask your child what he or she thinks about this relationship. What do the white settlers think of Indian John and his people? What about Caddie and Johnny Woodlawn? What do they think of Indian John? As you talk about this, ask your child to find words and phrases that describe how Caddie interacts with Indian John and his people. What can you learn from Caddie and Indian John's friendship?
5. The setting plays an important role throughout *Caddie Woodlawn*. What is the Woodlawn's life on the Wisconsin prairie like? As a family, talk about how the setting relates to the plot. Be sure to talk about where the book takes place and the time period too. What conflicts happen because of this setting? How does the characters' growth relate to their life on the prairie? Compare this setting with Clara, Mother, and Annabelle's description of Boston.
6. On page 273, Caddie says, “How far I've come! I'm the same girl and yet not the same. I wonder if it's always like that? Folks keep growing from one person into another all their lives, and life is just a lot of everyday adventures.” As a family, talk about how Caddie has changed and grown throughout the book. What helped her grow? What lessons can you learn from Caddie?

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Caddie Woodlawn takes place in 1864. What was going on at the time? Pick a historical topic from the list below and learn more about it. As a family, search online or visit the library to gather more information about the history. Talk about how the event connects with the characters' lives in *Caddie Woodlawn*.

Some possible topics include:

- Western expansion in the United States
- Civil War
- Lincoln's Assassination
- American Indian Wars
- Life on the prairie
- The Oregon Trail
- Kit Carson