

Grade Twelve Students' Guide

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To accompany the novel

Laura's Story

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A. Introduction

Synopsis

Laura's Story is a novel about the life, struggles, and triumphs of an Acadian woman born in Chéticamp, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia in 1920. When she is widowed, penniless and alone with three small children, she takes a job at a convent in Montreal. She then returns with a beleaguered body and spirit but with a firmer resolve than ever to keep her family together. Yet when she develops tuberculosis, she is taken away again, this time for two and a half years to the sanitorium in Kentville. While Laura struggles to hold on to her boys and find her place in the world, the family members' stories develop, weave, and unfold. Over the years of their lives, we see courage and perseverance firsthand, and we are moved by the true meaning of family and love.

Laura's Story weaves together the narrative themes of finding meaning in one's life with the purpose of holding a family together, often under the most trying circumstances. As the characters evolve and age, many are tested through addiction, poverty, and the restraints of the time period, which held against our modern era, illustrate how far we have progressed as a people, a community, and a society-- or perhaps how far we have not.

The work is literary historical fiction with a clear, clean writing style. It has a strong female protagonist, is set in the Canadian Maritimes with a focus on Acadian culture and showcases a pivotal time in Canada's recent history.

Laura's Story lends itself very well to the Language Arts program or Literature curriculum. First and foremost, it's a very interesting story written to entertain the reader. Many themes can be explored.

Each teacher or facilitator can choose from the activities offered as well as implement other ideas to interpret and enrich the user guide for the novel. Activities suggested in this guide can be also adapted to other grades.

B. General Learning Outcomes – Grade Twelve Language Arts

Source: Atlantic Canada Curriculum Canadian Literature 12

1. Students will be expected to select and read, with understanding, a range of Canadian literature. (p.12)
2. Students will be expected to respond personally and critically to a range of Canadian literature, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre. (p.12)
3. Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of identity, diversity, and voice as portrayed in Canadian literature, including their own writing. (p.12)

<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/files/curriculum/canlit12webss.pdf>

C) Literature Aspects

This section offers activities that help us explore literature aspects in *Laura's Story* that link to outcomes in the grade twelve curriculum.

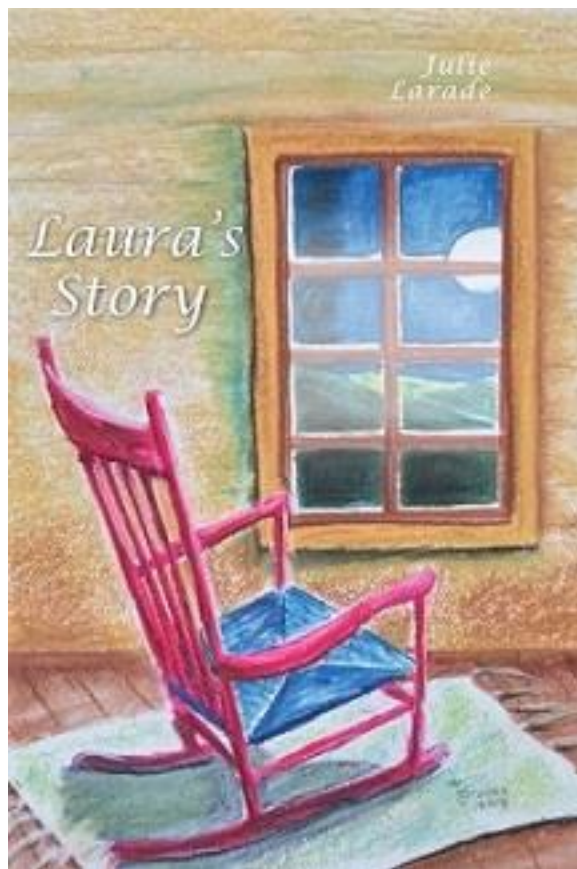
Interpretations – The Book Cover

Specific Outcome Students will be expected to:

2.3 examine how responses and interpretations reflect different reader perspectives. (p. 12)

Suggested pre-reading Activities:

- 1) Look at the book cover.



Interpretations – The Book Cover (continued)

2. What metaphors, symbols or other ideas does the cover evoke in your mind? Based on the cover, predict what you think the story will explore?

3. The moon is an important symbolic figure and has inspired poetry, music, and great discussion of the cosmos. What do you think the moon symbolizes on the cover?

Suggested post-reading activities:

1) Here is an example from the book of Laura looking at the moon:

Once the stove was checked for the night, Laura sat in her rocking chair looking out the window. Full moon again tonight...full moon, full of beans, full of people, full of love. She chuckled at herself. She blew out the lamp and slowly climbed into bed. pp. 43-44

- Find other examples of Laura looking at the moon. What does the moon represent/mean for her?

2) What are some examples of how the moon influences our culture, behaviour or beliefs? To get you started, here are some potential topics to explore:

- a) cutting your hair by the moon phases
- b) cutting firewood by the moon phases
- c) predicting weather

3) Create your own unique book cover for *Laura's Story* and explain the reasoning behind it to your teacher and/or peers.

4) Compile, if applicable, and display an art gallery of all the book covers created (in activity number 3).

Interpretations – The Opening Sentence (continued)

Specific Outcomes Students will be expected to:

2.4 reflect on what their own responses reveal about their personal values and attitudes. (p. 12)

2.5 examine how texts work to reveal and produce values, identities, and positions. (p.12)

The book *Laura's Story* begins with the following sentence.

It could have been fate, or an accident, but while climbing a ladder to wash her English employer's second story windows during the summer of 1938, Laura's mother, Joséphine Boudreau slipped and fell hard onto the ground, slipping quickly into delirium, then coma, and finally death.

This opening line establishes the time, the place, and the situation for the reader. For some readers, this first line of the book is simply about Laura's mother, a woman, who falls off a ladder. For other readers, this line is symbolic. Here is one reader's perspective of interpreting the symbolic nature of the sentence:

Laura Boudreau, a young Acadian woman, was the descendant of Acadians, who had been deported from the colony of Acadie between 1755-1763. In the book that begins in the year 1938, Laura's mother is working for an English master, a descendant of the group who had deported the Acadians from their original homeland in the 18th century.

As a result of the deportation, some Acadians, after the 1763 Peace Treaty of Paris, had been permitted to settle in what is today called the Maritime Provinces. One of the communities where these exiled wandering Acadians settled was the Chéticamp region located on Cape Breton Island. What symbolic irony that Laura's mother, descendant of the Acadian deportees, was working for a descendant of the group who had sent her ancestors into such a tormented exile.

Laura's mother falling from a ladder doing work for her English master, going from delirium to coma and finally to death could be seen as a symbol of what her ancestors had lived. Their deportation and exile could be seen as a falling into a surreal delirium, a coma, and a death of their life as they had known it. Fate? Accident?

Interpretations – The Opening Sentence (continued)

Suggested activities:

- 1) How do you interpret this first sentence of the book? Elaborate.

- 2) Write down some of your favourite lines from *Laura's Story*. Why do you like them? What about them is interesting? Explain.

- 3) What are some other first lines in books you admire? Write them down and share. Why do you think they are successful?

- 4) Write one first line that could be the start of a new story and share with the class.

- 5) Research Acadian history and write a short essay about a key person and/or an aspect of the Acadian way of life for someone who has never heard of the Acadians. Be sure to answer all of the “Wh” questions (Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How).

Writing – Crafting Characters and Themes

Specific Outcomes Students will be expected to:

3.1 identify recurring themes, values, and attitudes in texts. (p.12)

3.3 explore text by entering imaginatively into the lives and situations of characters. (p.12)

3.4 explore and examine characters' development and characters' understanding of themselves. (p.12)

There are many characters in the book. Here are some examples: Laura, Peggy, George, Johnny, Joe, Tom, Ben, Sadie Mae, old Patrick, Esther, Sam, Robert, Rosalie, Louise, Pierre Bergeron, the gardener, the innkeeper, Charlotte, Delores, Bella, Caroline, Bill, Father MacKay, Anne, Sara, the neighbouring farmer, Pierre in Chéticamp, Barbara, Mr. Ray, Dooly.

Suggested activities:

1) Discuss the following questions:

- a) Who is your favourite character and why? What does Larade do in constructing this character that makes him or her interesting?
- b) Who is your least favourite character? Why?
- c) Consider the Laura-Peggy relationship. What difficulties arise between them in the first half of the novel? Who are you more sympathetic towards?
- d) The topic of medical issues is one of the themes in the novel (for example, tuberculosis, cancer, addictions, dementia). Treatments and awareness of different maladies have changed over time. Compare these changes.

2) Place your favourite character in a new situation in contemporary day. Describe the situation and write a scene with description and dialogue involving another character. Present as a role-play.

Writing – Crafting Characters and Themes (continued)

3) Choose one of the following situations and write about alternative choices the character(s) could have made in the situation.

a) Johnny's decision to hide his infirmity from Laura.

b) Laura leaves her two elder sons with her sister and brings baby Ben with her when she goes to work at a convent in Montreal.

c) Sam's wife is cold and unfriendly toward Laura, even belittling her in front of her friends.

d) Tom drowns his sorrows in alcohol then without any warning, runs away from his family. He stays away for over two years without a word. He knows they love him, and he is hurting them.

4) Give an example of someone who was in a situation in which he or she had to make a difficult choice. This person can be real or fictive. What was the situation and what choice did the person make and why?

The Novel Structure: Its Arc

Specific Outcome Students will be expected to:

2.6 describe, discuss, and evaluate the language, ideas, and other significant characteristics of a variety of texts and genres. (p. 12)

“A narrative arc provides a visual map of a story showing how writers typically build up tension to a climactic moment and then allow the tension to decrease to the story’s resolution.” Susan Blau

Source: “Arc”, “What are story arcs in fiction writing?”
www.freelancewriting.com consulted March 6, 2015

Suggested activities:

- 1) With this definition in mind, discuss the following questions:
 - a) Discuss one or more events in the story that move from a problem (tension) to a resolution (release).
 - b) In these moments, what holds the reader’s interest as tension builds up to a climactic moment for the characters?
- 2) Create an entirely new scenario and put one of the characters from *Laura’s Story* in it. Examples: history, the future, fantasy, and contemporary life. Write a minimum one-page story that follows this model of beginning, challenge (problem), tension building, climactic moment, and resolution.
- 3) Create a role-play of the scenario.
- 4) Toward the end of the book, a “light” comes on for Laura as she realizes some things (her epiphany). What does Laura realize toward the end of the book?
- 5) Analyse the evolution of Laura’s character and what enables her to change and grow.

Literary Devices:

Simile, Metaphor, Alliteration, Foreshadowing and Subtext

Specific Outcome Students will be able to:

2.6 describe, discuss, and evaluate the language, ideas, and other significant characteristics of a variety of texts and genre. (p.12)

The author, Julie Larade, uses a variety of writing techniques in *Laura's Story*. For example, she uses simile, metaphor, alliteration, foreshadowing, pauses and silences (reading between the lines). Here are examples of how the author uses these writing techniques in the book.

1. Simile

Definition:

A figure of speech in which two fundamentally unlike things are explicitly compared, usually in a phrase introduced by like or as.

"Simile", grammar.about.com, consulted February 13, 2015

Examples:

1. Fit as a fiddle p.117
2. like a shock of cold water p.126

Suggested activities:

- 1) Discuss why you think Larade chose to use similes. Then, find a few of your favourites in the novel and share.
- 2) a) Create two of your own similes.
b) Add a visual representation to correspond with each simile.

Literary Devices (continued)

2. Metaphor

Definition:

A metaphor is a figure of speech that identifies something as being the same as some unrelated thing, for rhetorical effect, thus highlighting the similarities between the two. It is therefore considered more rhetorically powerful than a simile. While a simile compares two items, a metaphor directly equates them, and so does not apply any distancing words of comparison, such as "like" or "as".

"Metaphor", en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphor, consulted February 18, 2015.

Example

1. ... she realized resting was for the greater good and more productive than arguing with her bull in a china shop sister. p.129

Suggested activities:

- 1) Discuss why you think Larade chose to use metaphors.
- 2) Create two of your own metaphors.

Literary Devices (continued)

3. Alliteration

Definition:

The repetition of the same sounds or of the same kinds of sounds at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables of a phrase.

“Alliteration”, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia; consulted February 13, 2015

Examples:

1. perfect parallel parking p. 339
2. fall's first frost p. 352

Suggested activities:

- 1) Discuss why you think Larade used alliteration. Then, find a few of your favourites in the novel and share.
- 2) Create two of your own examples of alliteration.

Literary Devices (continued)

4. Foreshadowing

Definition:

Guessing ahead is a literary device by which an author hints what is to come. It is used to avoid disappointment, and sometimes used to arouse readers.

“Foreshadowing”, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, consulted February 13, 2015

Example:

Peg’s face was awash in heat spots beneath her blazing freckles. “He’s probably out in the barn, smoking. I give him hell for it, but it goes in one ear, out the other. Tom smokes with him, you know!” she looked accusatorily at Laura. p. 228

Suggested activities:

- 1) Find two to three other examples of foreshadowing throughout the novel, moments that indicate something is about to come/happen. Indicate the page number. Justify and explain your choice.
- 2) Choose a minimum of three literary devices (simile, metaphor, alliteration or foreshadowing) and incorporate them in a short story.

Literary Devices (continued)

5. Subtext: Pauses and silences (reading between the lines)

Definition:

Pauses and silences can add power and drama to a piece of writing. They can build emotion and tension. Pauses and silences are created by punctuation when one writes. A full stop or period, a comma, a semi-colon, and a colon are examples of punctuation that create a pause and silence. In music, rests are used to create pauses and silences.

“Pauses and Silences”, “Write out Loud”, <http://www.write-out-loud.com/quick-and-easy-effective-tips-for-using-pauses.html>, consulted February 21, 2016.

Example:

Robert lifted his hand then leaned back once Sam was out of sight. “Laura? I am going to tell you something I should not.” She just looked at him. “It’s not my place to say...” he paused and looked down. “I just,” he took a deep breath and smiled. “I just want you to know we’re happy you’re here. In our lives. Sam and I. You bring a breath of fresh air to the house, to Sam.” He lifted his head and looked about furtively. “Do you know,” he raised his voice, “I couldn’t agree more, these clouds do look exactly like galloping steeds.” Laura wasn’t quite sure what had just happened, but she had the feeling more was said in what Robert didn’t say. She felt then a sense of joy. She believed she understood. There was a reason Sam had come to visit her. p. 109

Suggested activities:

- 1) Find other examples of pauses and silences used in the book. Discuss them.
- 2) Write a dialogue between two characters whereby one has to tell the other some important news (terrible, exciting, surprising ...) but is hesitant to do so. Use punctuation to create pauses and silences and use prose to have the character say one thing but mean or hint at something else (subtext).
- 3) Prepare a role-play of the scenario.
- 4) Choose a minimum of three literary devices listed above (simile, metaphor, alliteration, and foreshadowing) and incorporate them in a short story.

D. Historical, Social and Cultural aspects

The activities on the following pages (pp.18-24) can help us understand some of the historical, social, and cultural aspects in *Laura's Story* that link to outcomes in the grade twelve curriculum.

Specific Outcome Students will be able to:

1.3 demonstrate knowledge about the geographic, historical, social, and cultural contexts of literary texts. (p.12)

In this section the following topics are explored:

Superstitions

The Traditional Fête of the *Mi-Carême* (mid-Lent)

Traditional Acadian Dishes

Hooked Rugs and Rag Rugs

Acadian Songs

D. Historical, Social and Cultural aspects (continued)

Superstitions

Laura sees signs in the natural world as impending luck, both good and bad. Spiders, a clear blue sky, a flock of crows, and a lone fawn all take on meaning.

Many people cross their fingers for good luck or believe a black cat is a sign of bad luck. What superstitions do you know about, and which ones do you pay attention to? Which ones are specific to Acadian culture?

Here is a definition of the word ... superstition.

“A belief or way of behaving that is based on fear of the unknown and faith in magic or luck: a belief that certain events or things will bring good or bad luck.”

“Superstition”, <http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/superstition> consulted February 20, 2015.

Here is an example in the book:

Laura felt this was a wonderful sign; spiders were good luck. And at long last, they were free. She smiled and hugged Ben tightly. p. 59

You will find other examples on pages 47, 59, and 194-195.

Suggested activities:

- 1) Find another example of a superstition that existed and/or still exists in the Acadian community. Find a similar superstition in another ethnic group of your choosing and then compare and contrast it with an Acadian superstition of your choice. (*Conduct an interview with an elderly person in the community or contact the museum Les Trois Pignons 902-224-2642)
- 2) Research some older superstitions to find out their origins. When were they created and how have they evolved? What did people who believed in the superstition(s) hope would happen to bring them luck?

D. Historical, Social and Cultural aspects (continued)

The traditional fête of the *Mi-Carême*

In *Laura's Story*, we read about the mini-carnival-like celebration during mid-Lent, called the *Mi-Carême*, a tradition that is still practised in the Acadian region of Chéticamp and Saint-Joseph-du-Moine, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Alone or in small groups, people disguise themselves and go from house to house (designated homes) to visit family and friends. The *Mi-Carêmes* or “runners” change their voices and mannerisms; in turn, the householders, or “watchers”, as they are called, try to guess the identity of the people behind the masks and costumes. The holiday is light-hearted with music, lots of food and amusement.

The following quote from the book refers to the *Mi-Carême*:

“Our gift to you, Mother, on your homecoming, from the whole family!”

“Where did you get the outfits?”

“Ben brought them up from Chéticamp. They have an annual tradition in the middle of Lent where people disguise themselves and go from house to house hoping they won't be recognized. He says it's a lot of fun.”

“I'd bet it is. We should go next year!”

“Will do, Mother.” p. 350



Logo: Le Centre de la *Mi-Carême*, Grand Étang, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

D) Historical, Social and Cultural aspects (continued)

The traditional fête of the *Mi-Carême* (continued)

Suggested activities:

- 1) For more information on the fête of the *Mi-Carême*, visit (if possible) the museum *Le Centre de la Mi-Carême*, located in Grand-Étang, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. (telephone number: 1-902-224-1016)
- 2) Visit the website of *Le Centre de la Mi-Carême*.
<http://www.micareme.ca/en/>
- 3) Watch the website's videos, view the photos and read about the history of the *Mi-Carême*. What other stories about how *Mi-Carême* originated do you know?
- 4) Create your own masks. If possible, plan an outing to *Le Centre de la Mi-Carême* to do so. Otherwise, kits can be purchased on their website.
- 5) Create, within your group, your own mid-lent event or fête of the *Mi-Carême* with "runners" and "watchers" along with food, music, song, dance, and fun.
- 6) Compare and contrast similar activities such as mummering in Newfoundland and Labrador and the Mardi Gras festivities in New Orleans, Louisiana.

References

Arsenault, Georges (2009). Translated from French into English by Sally Ross, *Acadian Mi-Carême: Mask and Merrymaking*, Charlottetown, Acorn Press.

Le Blanc, Barbara and Mireille Baulu-macWillie (2014). "Long Live *Mi-Carême*", « In My Classroom », *AVISO*, Halifax, The Magazine for the Nova Scotia Teaching Profession, pp. 3-7

D. Historical, Social and Cultural aspects (continued)

Traditional Acadian Dishes

Peggy prides herself on her cooking and is reputed to have the best biscuits in the region. When she and Laura think about happy memories of their childhood, it's their mother's traditional Acadian cooking that first comes to mind.

Here is a quote that refers to traditional Acadian food in the book:

Laura's stomach rumbled. She suddenly craved her mother's Acadian dishes of *fricot and **meat pie. Their whole lives were gone now, their quiet childhood afternoons skating on the pond or fishing in Chéticamp, the tang of the sea air. Nights knitting by the fire in Inverness singing Acadian songs and lullabies, all gone. p. 4

*fricot is a traditional Acadian dish made with potatoes, meat, onions and water.

**meat pie, known as *pâté* is also a traditional Acadian dish. It is first prepared with meat, onions, water, salt and pepper and then set in a pie crust.

Suggested activities:

- 1) How does food factor into Peggy's character?
- 2) What dishes do she and Laura remember so fondly?
- 3) Research a few Acadian recipes and write down a meal you would like to eat.
- 4) Create a menu with pictures of the dishes or have a class potluck!



meat pie

D. Historical, Social and Cultural aspects (continued)

Hooked Rugs and Rag Rugs

Laura is quite taken with the famous Chéticamp area hooked rugs and rag rugs. In *Laura's Story*, we discover some information about these rugs. Here is an example:

“Oh my, Laura, how beautiful,” she murmured. Peggy pulled out a hooked rug, displaying intricate colourful details of a rough sea where the high waves lashed against imposingly large rocks and in the corner, a lighthouse meant to guide any lost ship. The tears in her sister's eyes told Laura that this gift was anything but inconsequential; she'd clearly derived a very personal meaning from the scene given what was happening to her. Laura breathed out. “I bought it in Chéticamp. They have the most marvellous rugs and what's most intriguing is each stitch is made by hand. Sam and I talked to a few 'hookers',” Laura giggled into her hand, “but really, we were quite overwhelmed at how genuinely enthused they are about their work. A real labour of love.” p. 228

Suggested activities:

- 1) Visit the websites www.lestroispignons.com/ and www.bettyannecormier.com
- 2) Invite (if possible) a person who makes hooked rugs or rag rugs to visit your class and talk about them and demonstrate how to make them.
- 3) Visit (if possible) the museum located at *Les Trois Pignons* in the village of Chéticamp, Nova Scotia that highlights aspects of the history of hooked rugs and showcases such artisans as Élisabeth Le Fort.
- 4) Order a kit online to hook your own rug.
<https://www.bettyannecormier.com/workshops/fiberarts/>
<https://www.bettyannecormier.com/workshops/fiberarts#kits>
To support you in this endeavour, you can make use of numerous online tutorials such as : https://youtu.be/qkC_d7zP2nE
- 5) Do you have a passion for an activity? If yes, what is it? If not, choose a potential passion: writing, dancing, biking, cooking, sewing, knitting, playing a musical instrument, wood-working, metal-working, computer programming or another passion. Share your specific project that you would like to do.

Reference: Chiasson, Anselme and Annie Rose Deveau (1985). *History of Chéticamp Hooked Rugs and their Artisans*, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Lescarbot Publications.

D. Historical, Social and Cultural aspects (continued) **Acadian Songs**

In *Laura's Story* we see the importance of singing. Here is an example:

The night soon grew cool, a sure sign fall was upon them. When Laura tucked the boys in, she started to sing, "C'est la Poulette Grise." The boys did not understand a word. "You hardly sing anymore, Mother. Where did you learn these songs?"

"My mother used to sing them. Both my parents were Acadians, you know. My mother's last name was Chiasson, and my father was a Boudreau."

p. 43

Suggested activities:

- 1) Read the words of the traditional song *La poulette grise* (featured in the novel). (See following page). Ask someone to play/sing the melody or find a version online and listen to it.
- 2) Find another Acadian song. Search online to find information about a traditional Acadian singing. Share the information you find about the song.
- 3) Find a traditional song from another ethnic group. Present your findings. If possible, play, sing or demonstrate the song.
- 4) Either alone or with a classmate, write a song or poem. Share your creation with others (if possible, add music notes, record a video, create a YouTube video or Tic Toc video etc.) Present your work. If possible, play, sing or demonstrate the song.
- 5) In small groups, prepare a concert for an audience with some of the songs and/or poems you found or wrote.
- 6) Invite (if possible) an Acadian songwriter, composer and/or musician to visit and perform either in person or via Zoom, Teams etc.

References

Boudreau, Daniel (1996). 2e édition, *Chansons d'Acadie*, Moncton, Centre d'études acadiennes, Université de Moncton.

Chiasson, Anselme & Daniel Boudreau (different dates). *Chansons d'Acadie*, (variety of publishers).

Savard, Louis-Martin (2014). « Acadian Folklore Studies », <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/acadian-folklore-studies/>, consulted February 21, 2015.

C'EST LA POULETTE 15



M.S.H.
Présentation de Marie

TOUS DROITS RÉSERVÉS
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C'est la pou-let-te gri-se Qui pond dans l'é - gli- se, Ell' va pondre
un beau p'tit co-co Pour son p'tit qui va fair' do-di-che, Ell' va pondre
un beau p'tit co-co Pour son p'tit qui va fair' do-do. Do-di-che, do- do.

2
C'est la poulette blanche
Qui pond dans les branches,
Ell' va pondreetc.

4
C'est la poulette jaune
Qui pond dans les aulnes
Ell' va pondre etc.

3
C'est la poulette noire
Qui pond dans l'armoire
Ell' va pondreetc.

5
C'est la poulette brune
Qui pond dans la lune
Ell' va pondre etc.

C'EST LA CLOCHE DU VIEUX MANOIR

(Canon) *p* (écho)

A C'est la clo- che du vieux ma - noir, du vieux ma- noir Qui nous
dit le re - tour du soir, le re - tour du soir. C'est la...etc.

P (écho) A

Gadbois, Charles-Émile (s.d) La bonne chanson, série des jeunes, nos 1 à 25, p. 15.

E. Change and Continuity – Then and Now

Identifying Shifts over Time in *Laura's Story*

Over the nearly 100 years of the novel, the characters see numerous changes introduced: modes of transportation; construction of the Canso Causeway and the Trans-Canada Highway; adult education; advancements in medical research; creation of the Canadian flag; implementation of government programs such as the Employment Insurance System, Family Allowance, and Medicare; arrival of the telephone, radio and television in homes; and the invention of certain household appliances. Because of these changes, attitudes and thinking shifted.

Suggested activities:

- 1) Discuss the following questions:
 - a) What are some of the chief “markers” (details) of each of the decades in *Laura's Story*?

Which details do you notice (clothes, travel, behaviour...) that the writer uses to indicate the historical period/region?

What are some key points of Canadian progress you find in the novel that you feel have been most important in terms of contemporary life? For example, lack of medical treatment in the past, its cost and its duration are all aspects that show changes through time.

- b) When Laura is widowed, what does she do to earn a living in order to keep her home and family together?

What might she do today?

- c) Laura felt an important connection to her Chéticamp Acadian roots. Her youngest son, Ben, also felt a slight pull toward these same Acadian roots. What do you think Laura was looking for as she explored her Acadian ancestry?

What did Ben discover once he moved to the Chéticamp area to work at the Cape Breton Highlands National Park?

E. Change and Continuity – Then and Now (continued)

Identifying Shifts over Time in *Laura's Story* (continued)

- d) Laura and members of her family faced assimilation during their lifetime. The minority French-speaking Acadians living in Nova Scotia were surrounded by villages populated by English speaking individuals. In addition, radio, TV and newspapers were generally only in English. As a result, Acadians often felt a pressure to speak in the language of the majority, often forgetting their mother tongue (French).

What other communities face similar assimilation challenges? Discuss.

2) Choose one important change that took place during Laura's lifetime. Explain the positive and negative aspects as well as the impacts of the example chosen.

3) Prepare five questions pertaining to changes that occurred during Laura's lifetime. If possible, use them to interview an elder person in your community.

4) Invite an elder person from the community to speak about the changes that she/he has lived in her or his lifetime.

5) In small groups, discuss the changes in the role of women nowadays as compared to Laura's lifetime and Laura's mother's lifetime. Students can make a list or diagram.

6) Write a short essay about what you have learned from the book, from the interview, the elder's visit, or from the discussion about the changes in the role of women in society and share in groups or with the class.