

Year 5

Danger on the Prairie 2

Inference 2d

During the journey, it seemed I was always in charge of watching Mary. When I complained to Ma, she said, “Now, Emma, looking after your sister is one of the most important tasks you can do. It’s a great compliment that Pa and I trust you enough to protect our youngest child. We feel that you are responsible and caring, and we know that Mary is in good hands with you.”

When the caravan arrived in Kansas, all the families went off to settle on their own plots. “Pa, what happened to all the trees?” I asked as I looked at the flat, dusty land.

Pa smiled. “Emma, we are out on the plains now. There are very few trees, and the land is mostly flat.”

“How will we build our house if there are no trees to cut?”

“We will use what nature has given us,” Pa answered.

What could Pa be thinking? There was nothing on the plain but dust and grass.

“We’ll build our house with sod. We will cut blocks of earth and let them dry in the sun. We can use the blocks to build our new home.”

He added, “First, we have to get the ploughing done to prepare the soil. The crops must have time to grow and be harvested before winter. There will be time to build a house after we plant our crops.”

Pa and Jacob planted the crops. They sowed seeds for corn, squash and beans. Then we all worked together to build our house.

We made bricks from sod. When the house was done, it had one big room. Pa had made a wooden frame for a small window to let in light. Ma hung blankets from the ceiling to divide the space into separate areas for sleeping, cooking and eating.

The sod house was nice and cool, protecting us from the hot sun that beat down on the plain. One of my tasks was sweeping the dirt floor every morning. I also had to haul water from the stream and help Ma in her “kitchen garden”.

The kitchen garden was a small garden right next to the house. Ma had brought seeds with her for vegetables like potatoes, peas and peppers. We didn’t sell anything from the kitchen garden. This was our food, and it had to last us through the winter. Ma was very careful about saving as much as she could. It took half a day to travel to the nearest town, and Ma was worried about running out of food during the long winter months ahead.

We gradually grew accustomed to life on the prairie. When I think about that time, one day in particular stands out in my mind.

Questions

1 How did Emma feel about looking after Mary?

Give **one** piece of evidence to show how you know this.

2 Read from '*We made bricks from sod*' to the end.

Tick **two** statements that are true about the new house.

Tick **two**.

It was similar to a modern-day home.

It let lots of light in.

It was made of brick.

It did not have a carpet.

The temperature inside was comfortable.

3 Read from '*Pa and Jacob planted the crops*' to the end.

How can you tell that the family are good at teamwork?

Give **three** ways.

1.

2.

3.

4 Read from 'He added, "First, we have to get the ploughing done to prepare the soil"' to the end.

Draw **three** lines to match each character to the most suitable description.

Ma

helpful

Emma

knowledgeable

Pa

sensible

5 Read the last **two paragraphs**.

What **impression** do you get of Ma?

Give **two** impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. _____

2. _____

Answers

1 How did Emma feel about looking after Mary?

Not happy/annoyed/frustrated (or similar).

Give **one** piece of evidence to show how you know this.

It says 'when I complained to Mum' / she complained to her mum about it.

2 Read from 'We made bricks from sod' to the end.

Tick **two** statements that are true about the new house.

Tick **two**.

It was similar to a modern-day home.

It let lots of light in.

It was made of brick.

It did not have a carpet.

The temperature inside was comfortable.

3 Read from 'Pa and Jacob planted the crops' to the end.

How can you tell that the family are good at teamwork?

Give **three** ways.

Any three of the following:

Then we all worked together to build our house / they all worked together to build the house.

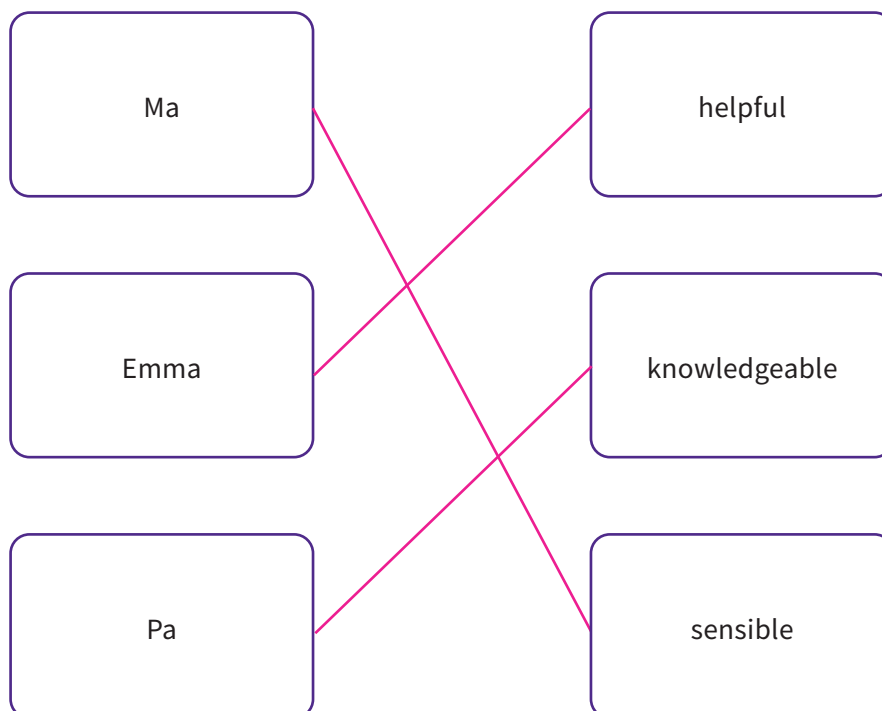
Pa and Jacob planted the crops / Pa and Jacob worked together to plant the crops.

Emma helped Ma in the 'kitchen garden'.

Emma had chores – sweeping the dirt floor and hauling water / One of my tasks was sweeping the dirt floor every morning. I also had to haul water from the stream and help Ma in her "kitchen garden."

4 Read from 'He added, "First, we have to get the ploughing done to prepare the soil"' to the end.

Draw **three** lines to match each character to the most suitable description.



5 Read the last **two paragraphs**.

What **impression** do you get of Ma?

Give **two** impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Sensible/cautious/careful – she saved as much food as she could / she didn't sell any food.

Hardworking – she looked after the kitchen garden and grew their food from seeds.

Concerned/worried – she thought they might run out of food.