The Little House
Written by Virginia Lee Burton
Grades 1-5
Date of Publication: 1942
ISBN: 978-1-328-74194-3

Discussion Questions

Before Reading

- What kind of house, apartment, condominium or shared space do you live in? Is it a little one? A big one? What do other homes around yours look like?
- What type of neighborhood do you live in? Do you live in the country where there is more open land? Do you live in the city where there are buildings and busy streets?

During Reading

- What clues in the pictures tell you that time has passed? How does the area around the house change over time? Have you seen changes to the neighborhood where you live? What kinds of changes have occurred?
- What happens to the Little House when these changes happen? How do you think the Little House feels? How are the changes that happen good changes? How are they bad ones?

After Reading

- What would have happened if the Little House was torn down when the city changed? Do you think it is important to protect and care for homes even if they are small like the Little House? Why do you think it is important? What would happen if your home was torn down?
- Why do you think the family decided to live in the Little House again? What made the Little House special for the family?
Suggested Vocabulary Words

Built: past tense of build; to make something with materials
Carriage: four-wheeled vehicle usually pulled by animals
Glance: take a quick look
Harvest: gather or pick food from crops
Ripen: when fruit or vegetables are ready to pick and eat
Season: four parts of the year that have different weather conditions—winter, spring, summer, fall
Swell: become larger in size
Tenement Houses: a house that is split into smaller rooms or homes
Trolley: a type of train that is connected to a wire and driven on a street

Activity Ideas

My Little House

- Instruct students to draw their home and the environment that surrounds it. Encourage them to think about the different parts of their home and what makes it special. What does it look like on the outside? What does it look like on the inside? What is it surrounded by? What makes it special? What happens at your home?
- Students may draw another building if they do not feel comfortable or interested in drawing their home.

Community Map

- Draw a street on a large sheet of butcher/poster paper.
- Post the student’s drawings from the previous activity along it.
- Have students add to the street with buildings they see around them. Encourage them to think about stores, libraries, schools, and parks.

House Diorama

- Have students create a diorama of one room in their home using a shoe box or other recyclable materials.
- After the dioramas are created, facilitate a Show and Tell and ask students to share a special memory that happened in the room or their home.