Little Women
The Broadway Musical
Book by Allan Knee
Music by Jason Howland
Lyrics by Mindi Dickstein
Based on the novel by Louisa May Alcott

Study Guide for Educators
Generously sponsored by Ng & Ng Dental and Eye Care
Welcome to PCPA Theaterfest
A NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Thank you for bringing your students to PCPA Theaterfest at Allan Hancock College. Here are some helpful hints for your visit to the Marian Theatre. The top priority of our staff is to provide an enjoyable day of live theatre for you and your students. We offer you this study guide as a tool to prepare your students prior to the performance.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENT ETIQUETTE
Note-able behavior is a vital part of theater for youth. Going to the theater is not a casual event. It is a special occasion. If students are prepared properly, it will be a memorable, educational experience they will remember for years.

1. Have students enter the theater in a single file. Chaperones should be one adult for every ten students. Our ushers will assist you with locating your seats. Please wait until the usher has seated your party before any rearranging of seats to avoid injury and confusion. While seated, teachers should space themselves so they are visible, between every groups of ten students. Teachers and adults must remain with their group during the entire performance.

2. Once seated in the theater, students may go to the bathroom in small groups and with the teacher's permission. Please chaperone younger students. Once the show is over, please remain seated until the House Manager dismisses your school.

3. Please remind your students that we do not permit:
   - food, gum, drinks, smoking, hats, backpacks or large purses
   - disruptive talking.
   - disorderly and inappropriate behavior (stepping on/over seats, throwing objects, etc.)
   - cameras, iPods, cell phones, beepers, tape recorders, hand held video games. (Adults are asked to put any beepers or cell phones on silent or vibrate.) In cases of disorderly behavior, groups may be asked to leave the theater without ticket refunds.

4. Teachers should take time to remind students before attending the show of the following about a live performance: sometimes we forget when we come into a theatre that we are one of the most important parts of the production. Without an audience, there would be no performance. Your contribution of laughter, quiet attention and applause is part of the play.

When we watch movies or television, we are watching images on a screen and what we say or do cannot affect them. In the theatre the actors are real people who are present and creating an experience with us at that very moment. They see and hear us and are sensitive to our response. They know how we feel about the play by how we watch and listen. An invisible bond is formed between actors and a good audience, and it enables the actors to do their best for you. A good audience helps make a good performance.
PCPA Theaterfest welcomes you as a partner in the live theatre experience from the moment you take your seats. We hope that your visit will be a highlight of your school year.
Cast and Production Team for *Little Women*

**Director**
Roger DeLaurier

**Musical Director**
Callum Morris

**Choreographer**
Michael Jenkinson

**Scenic Designer**
DeAnne Kennedy

**Costume Designer**
Judy Ryerson

**Lighting Designer**
Jen 'Z' Zornow

**Sound Designer**
Elisabeth Rebel

**Stage Manager**
Christine Collins*

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**Cast of Characters**

Jo March
Karin Hendricks

Professor Bhaer
Andrew Philpot*

Amy March
Brittney Monroe

Meg March
Sarah Girard

Beth March
Renee Wylder

Marmee March
Elizabeth Stuart*

Mr. Laurence
Michael Tremblay

Laurie Laurence
Scott Fuss

Aunt March
Anna Romero

Mr. John Brooke
J.R. Yancher

Mrs. Kirk
Jillian Haig

Clarissa
Ahnastasia Albert

Braxton
Tony Carter

Rodrigo
Lafras le Roux

Knight
Paul Henry

Hag
Andrea Hilbrant

Troll
Melody Perera

Rodrigo 2
Cristina Gerla

Ensemble
Zachary Bukarev-Padlo

George P. Scott

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*Member, Actors' Equity Association*
HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

The Study Guide is a companion piece designed to explore many ideas depicted in the stage production of *Little Women*. Although the guide's intent is to enhance the student's theatrical experience, it can also be used as an introduction to the elements of a play (in this case a play with music), and the production elements involved in the play's presentation. Although many students are familiar with the general storyline, this specific stage adaptation presents a wealth of new questions for this generation to answer. The guide has been organized into three major sections:

Elements of the story

Elements of production

Activities

Teachers and group leaders will want to select portions of the guide for their specific usage. Discussion questions are meant to provoke a line of thought about a particular topic. The answers to the discussion questions in many instances will initiate the process of exploration and discovery of varied interpretations by everyone involved. This can be as rewarding as the wonderful experience of sight and sound that *Little Women* creates on-stage.

It is recommended that the Louisa May Alcott book, available in paperback at local libraries or book stores, be used in conjunction with discussion of the play.
ELEMENTS OF THE STORY
PLAY SYNOPSIS- (from http://www.littlewomenonbroadway.com )
Act I

As *Little Women* opens, we see Jo March enacting her OPERATIC TRAGEDY for Professor Bhaer, her neighbor in Mrs. Kirk’s New York boarding house. Her "blood and guts" saga is clearly not to his taste. He suggests she is capable of more refined writing. After he leaves, Jo ponders whether her writing was BETTER years before, back home in Concord, Massachusetts.

Reminiscing on those days, we venture back to the March family attic of two years previous. Jo is rehearsing her siblings in her new Christmas play. Each sister is trying to find something to be happy about that Christmas; it is difficult with their father away at war, and no money for gifts or a Christmas tree. Jo promises they will no longer want for anything once she is a successful writer, and they will all realize OUR FINEST DREAMS. As Jo runs off to fulfill one of those dreams, Marme comes home with a letter from their father. As she tries to do so herself, she reflects on how her life is HERE ALONE.

To help support the family, Jo has taken up helping Aunt March. Aunt March worries that Jo is not the lady she needs to be to take her place in proper society. Jo wants to tell Aunt March what she thinks of society, but Aunt March offers to bring Jo with her to Europe...if she can change her ways. “COULD YOU?”, she asks. “I could change if I wanted to”, replies Jo.

Time passes, and older sister Meg has one of her dreams realized: she and Jo are invited to a Valentine’s Ball! While younger sister Beth is happy for them, the youngest, Amy, is jealous. Meg worries what to say to potential suitors. “I’LL BE DELIGHTED” is what Marmee suggests. When the glamorous evening arrives, Amy tries to go in Jo’s place, as she feels she’s more entitled. When Marmee won’t allow her, Amy pouts and acts out to show her unhappiness. At the ball, Jo is startled by the appearance of her neighbor Laurie, who is accompanied by his tutor, Mr. Brooke. Meg is soon smitten by Mr. Brooke, and they leave to dance. Laurie professes his need for friends, and soon he asks Jo to TAKE A CHANCE ON ME. His good nature wins over Jo, and she agrees to take that chance!

Back home, after the ball, Amy and Jo have a little confrontation: It seems Amy’s jealousy has gotten the best of her. Marme tries to intervene, scolds Amy for her actions and explains to Jo that Amy is still very much a child. Jo is still getting over the sting of her tiff with Amy as she starts to express her feelings through her writing. Time passes, and we find Laurie inviting Jo to a skating race. Beth offers her skates to Amy, as Amy has outgrown her pair.

Intent on staying inside, Beth sits at the piano, out of tune as it is. Mr. Laurence, looking for his grandson, comes upon her musical attempts. She soon softens his hard heart, and they find themselves playing a duet OFF TO MASSACHUSETTS. He leaves, but not before inviting Beth to come play his (in-tune) grand piano next door.

Coming in from skating, we see Amy has fallen through the ice, and rescued by Laurie. Having faced this life or death situation, Jo and Amy resolve their differences, and Jo swears in Laurie as an honorary member of the March family, officially making them FIVE FOREVER.

Time passes, and Marmee is making plans to go to Washington to tend to her ill husband, but is short on funds. Jo saves the day, coming up with money to pay her fare. Marmee is just barely gone when Aunt March and Jo have a heated exchange, and Aunt March rescinds her offer of Europe. Instead, Aunt March turns her focus on Amy, to make her into the model society lady that she wished Jo would have been.
Before Jo can settle the matter, Mr. Brooke comes in to announce his enlistment in the Union Army, and to ask for Meg’s hand in marriage so he could be MORE THAN I AM. All of this seems so sudden to Jo, who questions Meg loyalty to the family; after all, they had sworn to remain together forever. Jo’s world is starting to change significantly! A few weeks later, visiting Jo in her attic, Laurie arrives with news and a declaration. The news: With Mr. Brooke at war, he is headed off to college in Boston. The declaration: He’s in love with Jo! All this is too much for Jo. She refuses his advances, sends him off, and questions her future. Will she be able to find her way, without her sisters or her best friend? As Act One ends, she vows her life will be ASTONISHING, no matter what!

Act II
Back in New York, 1866. The war has ended, and Mrs. Kirk and Professor Bhaer are holding a telegram for Jo. Jo, however, bursting in, has her own news to share. She has sold her first story to THE WEEKLY VOLCANO PRESS! Soon all are privy to its contents—she sold her OPERATIC TRAGEDY encountered earlier on, only now it’s better, thanks to the Professor’s advice! Once Jo comes down to earth, Mrs. Kirk remembers the telegram: Beth is gravely ill. Jo packs to leave New York immediately. She hastily makes her goodbyes.

Back in Concord, Mr. Laurence has his own plan to make Beth well—he moves his piano into the March home. Beth and her family are overwhelmed by his generosity, and soon all join in another rendition of OFF TO MASSACHUSETTS. After the song, Jo sends a note to Professor Bhaer, telling him of her plans to take Beth and Marmee to Cape Cod with her earnings. She asks him what’s new in New York. He tries over and over, but just can’t quite find the way to tell her HOW I AM.

Once on the Cape, Jo splurges her meager earnings on her mother and sister. All put up a brave front concerning Beth’s health, but Jo and Beth privately admit to one another SOME THINGS ARE MEANT TO BE.

Back in Concord, eventually Amy and Aunt March return from Europe. Much has changed. MEG is now a mother, Jo is now a published writer, and Beth has passed on. Things are different for Amy, too: she is engaged to Laurie, who consoled her in Europe when Beth died. Together they break the news to Jo; after all, it was THE MOST AMAZING THING.

Later, in her attic, Jo asks Marmee how she has been able to handle the loss of Beth. Simply, Marmee insists Beth will always be with them, and that Jo, too, will find she has DAYS OF PLENTY. Jo takes in what her mother has said, and finally sees how she can go on... and how she can keep Beth’s memory alive. Jo begins work on what is to become her greatest achievement: LITTLE WOMEN the novel. THE FIRE WITHIN ME fills her attic, and her heart, as she brings her family to life on paper.

The day of Amy and Laurie’s wedding arrives. Amidst the last minute details, Jo and Aunt March finally resolve their issues. Aunt March will leave Jo her house, with the suggestion that she open a school. Her generosity touches Jo in ways she never expected.

Suddenly, in the flurry of wedding excitement, a confused Professor Bhaer enters, looking for Jo. He apologizes for arriving on so auspicious a day, but he comes with good news and a declaration of his own. First, Jo’s manuscript has been bought! Jo March is a novelist! As for his declaration.... Well, he bought a kite!

But from this point, he proceeds to pour his heart out to Jo, and tells her how he’s finally ready to share his SMALL UMBRELLA IN THE RAIN. Jo, always skeptical, questions their chances. Theirs would be a new kind of relationship for a new world. Could it possibly work....? That question is answered nightly at LITTLE WOMEN, the musical!
About The Author – Luisa May Alcott
From: Louisa May Alcott Memorial Association http://www.louisamayalcott.org/louisamaytext.html

*My book came out; and people began to think that topsy-turvy Louisa would amount to something after all ...*

-Louisa May Alcott, 1855

Louisa May Alcott was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania on November 29, 1832. She and her three sisters, Anna, Elizabeth, and May, were educated by their father, philosopher/teacher Bronson Alcott, and raised on the practical Christianity of their mother, Abigail May.

Louisa spent her childhood in Boston and in Concord, Massachusetts, where her days were enlightened by visits to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s library, excursions into nature with Henry David Thoreau, and theatricals in the barn at "Hillside" (now Hawthorne’s "Wayside").

Like her character, "Jo March" in *Little Women*, young Louisa was a tomboy. "No boy could be my friend till I had beaten him in a race," she claimed, "and no girl if she refused to climb trees, leap fences ..."

For Louisa, writing was an early passion. She had a rich imagination and often her stories became melodramas that she and her sisters would act out for friends. Louisa preferred to play the "lurid" parts in these plays --"the villains, ghosts, bandits, and disdainful queens."

At age 15, troubled by the poverty that plagued her family, she vowed: "I will do something by and by. Don’t care what, teach, sew, act, write, anything to help the family; and I’ll be rich and famous and happy before I die, see if I won’t!"

Confronting a society that offered little opportunity to women seeking employment, Louisa determined, "... I will make a battering-ram of my head and make my way through this rough and tumble world." Whether as a teacher, seamstress, governess, or household servant, for many years Louisa did any work she could find.

Louisa’s career as an author began with poetry and short stories that appeared in popular magazines. In 1854, when she was 22, her first book *Flower Fables* was published. A milestone along her literary path was *Hospital Sketches* (1863), based on the letters she had written home from her post as a nurse in Washington, DC during the Civil War.

In all, Louisa published over 30 books and collections of stories. She died on March 6, 1888, only two days after her father, and is buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord.
When Louisa was 35 years old her father, Bronson Alcott approached her publisher Thomas Niles about a book he wanted to publish. Their talk soon turned to Louisa. Niles, an admirer of her book Hospital Sketches, suggested she write a “book for girls” which would have widespread appeal. At first, she was not interested and instead asked to have her short stories collected. He pressed her to do the girls’ book first. In May 1868, she wrote in her journal: "Niles, partner of Roberts, asked me to write a girl’s book. I said I’d try."

She later recalled she did not think she could write a successful book for girls and did not enjoy writing one. "I plod away", she wrote in her diary, "although I don't enjoy this sort of things." By June, she sent the first dozen chapters to Niles and both thought they were dull. Niles's niece Lillie Almy, however, reported that she enjoyed them. The completed manuscript was shown to several girls, who agreed it was "splendid".

Little Women was written at Orchard House from May to July 1868. The novel is based on Louisa and her sisters’ coming of age and is set in Civil War New England. "Jo March" was the first American juvenile heroine to act from her own individuality -- a living, breathing person rather than the idealized stereotype then prevalent in children’s fiction.
About the Playwright- Allan Knee
(from www.littlewomenonbroadway.com/)

Allan Knee has written for the stage and film. His play, _THE MAN WHO WAS PETER PAN_, was released by Miramax Films as _FINDING NEVERLAND_ in October 2004. It costars Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet and Dustin Hoffman. _SYNCOPATION_ won an American Critics Theater Award after premiering at the Long Wharf Theater and George Street Playhouse. It opened on Broadway in 2004 and was produced by Vaud Massarsky, directed by John Tillinger and choreographed by John O’Connell (Strictly Ballroom). His musical version of _LITTLE WOMEN_ won a Richard Rodgers Musical Theater Award. Among his other works are _SHMULNIK'S WALTZ_ (music by David Shire), _SANTA ANITA '42, THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL, ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE_ and _SHOLEM ALEICHEM LIVES_, which toured with Theodore Bikel. For young audiences he adapted _AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS_, which toured nationally for TheaterWorks/USA. For PBS he wrote the four-part adaptation of _THE SCARLET LETTER_. A graduate of the Yale School of Drama, he won a Richard Rodgers Musical Theater Award as well as a Cine Eagle Award from the Washington Film Festival. His plays have been produced at Jewish Repertory Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, Long Wharf Theater, Manhattan Punchline, Theatreworks/USA among many others. He is a founding member of the Workshop Theater Company.

About the Composer- Jason Howland

JASON HOWLAND is a 1993 graduate of Williams College with an Honors degree in Music Composition. Howland’s play written with Larry Pellegrini, _BLESSING IN DISGUISE_, premiered Off-Broadway. He was the musical supervisor for Wildhorn Productions, serving as musical director and conductor for the long running Broadway hit _JEKYLL & HYDE_, and musical supervisor for Broadway’s _THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL_ and _THE CIVIL WAR_. He was chosen to be the last Music Director of the long running Broadway mega-hit, _LES MISERABLES_, and had the honor of conducting the final performance of that show at the Imperial Theater. He was also the Music Director for the Broadway bound _TABOO_ by Boy George, produced by Rosie O’Donnell.

Howland has worked as an arranger, conductor, writer and producer on a number of recording projects including the Grammy-nominated cast album of _Jekyll & Hyde_ (Musical Director/Conductor/Vocal Arranger), _The Dreams in You_, for the September 11th Fund (Producer, Composer), the Broadway cast album of _The Scarlet Pimpernel_ (Associate Producer), Atlantic Records’ release of _The Civil War_ (Choral Conductor), the double disk compilation album _Jekyll & Hyde: The Complete Work_ (Vocal Arranger), the solo album for acclaimed international harpist _Jung Kwak_ (conductor), _Chuck Wagner_ (Producer), and Linda Eder’s Christmas album _Christmas Stays the Same_ (Arranger, Vocal Arranger). He has conducted in concert across the country for such notables as Ray Charles, Natalie Cole, Brandy, Bebe & Cece Winans, Carl Anderson, Linda Eder, Sebastian Bach and Davis Gaines, and was musical director and conductor for the opening ceremonies of 1998 The Goodwill Games held in New York City. Howland has a co-publishing deal with Cherry Lane Music Publishing, Inc. and is at work on two other musicals, _MARIEL_ and _QUICKSTEP_.

Social Background Of the Play: Civil War America

Events Surrounding the Years of the Play: 1863- 1866

-1800s The Westward Movement- Since the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 America paid $11.2 million for 800,000 square miles of land, America was driven to travel westward. This movement was spurred on by Manifest Destiny, the belief that America was destined to expand across the continent. Over 400,000 settlers, missionaries, and trappers used the Oregon Trail to travel west, and settle in the new territories past the Rockies.

-1830 Christian (Evangelical) revivals – religious gatherings that lasted for day are prevalent throughout the northern United States. These revivals promoted the idea that women were to serve their husbands, in addition the overt religious messages.

-1832 Louisa May Alcott born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

-1833 The American Anti-Slavery Society is organized.

-1834 New York Female Reform Society (whose mission was to reform “wayward women” and lead the spiritually poor) was founded; Female workers at the Lowell Mills in Massachusetts stage their first strike.

- 1834 Louisa and her family move to Concord, M.A. In this home, she became neighbors to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau

1836- The Transcendental Club held its first meeting at George Ripley’s home in Boston, met irregularly for the next three or four years at various places (including Alcott’s home)

-1847 After an economic depression 1839-1843, several religious and artistic communities form their own utopian communes throughout the northeast and promote ideas of equality and freedom beyond the “expected” ideas of political and religious freedom in the United States.

-1848 Seneca Falls (NY) Convention outlines a program for women’s rights.

-1850 The first national women’s rights convention is held in Worcester, MA- (30 miles from Concord)

-1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe published Uncle Tom’s Cabin, which crystallized abolitionist sentiments against slavery.

-1854 Louisa’s first book Flower Fables is published.

-1860 Democratic Party splits into northern and southern factions. The Constitutional Union party forms. Abraham Lincoln is elected president over Southern Democratic candidate John C. Breckenridge
1861 The Lower South secedes from the Union. Fort Sumter is bombarded, **Civil War** begins last until 1865. 11 southern slave states declare their secession from the U.S. to form the Confederate States of America led by Jefferson Davis. The U.S. federal government is supported by the northern states where slavery is abolished. The Union proves too strong for the Confederacy and eventually the South are defeated. Approximately 650,000 men, women and children were killed during the conflict and millions were wounded.

- **1862 Soldier’s Aid Society began**

- **1863 Battle of Gettysburg**: Largest number of Casualties in the Civil war, it ended Robert E Lee’s invasion of the North. Lincoln’s famous *Gettysburg Address*. Union Army draft riots in New York. Large cities begin to receive free home delivery of mail. New York City draft riots. Louisa May Alcott publishes *Hospital Sketches*.

- **1863 Battle of Vicksburg** Ulysses S. Grant and the Union army capture the Confederate city Vicksburg, Mississippi, after the town surrendered. The siege lasted 47 days.
- **54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry**, (the first all African American regiment) leaves from Massachusetts to join the Civil war. The 54th spearheaded an assault on Fort Wagner near Charleston, South Carolina. Colonel Shaw was killed, and regimental casualties totaled 272.

- 1864 Lincoln re-elected. Alexander Graham Bell and his brother develop a “speaking automaton.” Quadruplex Telegraph invented by Thomas Edison. Railroads hook on mail cars. General Grant takes control of all Union troops.

- **1865 Federal troops take over Richmond, VA and General Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox Court House. Lincoln is assassinated. Andrew Johnson succeeds to the presidency and unveils his Reconstruction plan. Louisa May Alcott publishes *Moods*. 13th Amendment passed, outlawing slavery.**

- **1866 Reconstruction Era begins in the South. The National Labor Union advocates an eight-hour workday. Black Codes developed in the South to rebel against Reconstruction. Civil Rights Act - Ku Klux Klan founded**

- **1867 The 14th Amendment is passed, whereby “citizen” is defined as “male” – this is the first use of the word “male” in the Constitution.**

- **1868 Little Women** is published. The New England Woman Suffrage Association is formed after women are denied the right to be included as voters in the 15th Amendment.

- **1879 Louisa May Alcott became the first woman in Concord to register to vote in the village's school committee election**
Important People:

**Abraham Lincoln:** President Lincoln: (1809—1865) Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President serving from 1861 until his assassination in 1865. He successfully led his country through the American Civil War ending slavery and uniting a nation. He was mostly self-educated. 1863 issued the Emancipation Proclamation. He promoted abolition of slavery.

**Ulysses S Grant:** prominent general for the Union

**Scarlet Fever:** Scarlet Fever is an infection caused by group A streptococcus bacteria. The bacteria make a toxin that can cause a scarlet-coloured rash. This infection was particularly fatal for children in the 1800’s, due to a lack of knowledge of how to treat the disease. A vaccine was invented in 1924 which was eclipsed by penicillin in the 1940’s.

**Union and Confederate States**

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**KEY:**
- **Union**
- **Confederate**
- **Border**

*Note: West Virginia broke away from Virginia in 1863 to join the Union*
Money
In 1861 the American $1.00 was equal to $24.00 today (2010), a value which dropped to $14.00 (in 1865)

Typical prices of food found at a family market in 1861:
Eggs: 16-18 cents per dozen
Butter: 16-18 cents per pound
Milk: 86 cents per gallon
Cheese: 12-14 cents per pound
Potatoes: 18-23 cents per bushel
Sweet Potatoes: 2.00 per bushel
Lard: 12 cents per pound
Dried Apples: 9 cents per pound
Dried Peaches: 20 cents per pound
Codfish: 5-6 cents per pound
Whitefish: 3.20 cents for half a barrel
Lake Michigan Trout: 8 cents per pound
Brown Sugar: 7-9 cents per pound
White Sugar: 10-14 cents per pound
Coffee: 12 ½ - 18 cents per pound
Tea: 50-75 cents per pound
Molasses: 40 cents per gallon
Honey: 25 cents per pound
Cranberries: 12 cents per quart
Lambs: 2.00-2.35 cents per 100 pounds
Beef: 2.50-3.00 cents per 100 pounds
Hams: 12-14 cents per pound

Louisa May Alcott’s Orchard House (circa 1690) is most noted for being home to the talented Alcott family, and is where Louisa May Alcott wrote and set her beloved classic novel, Little Women, in 1868. Concord, Massachusetts.
Women’s Clothing of the 1800s


19th Century Ladies Clothing & Garments

Pantalettes were the undermost garment a Lady would wear. Unlike the plain knee length drawers, the pantalette was longer in its leg length reaching passed the knee. It was decorated with tucks and flounces. They were made from Silk or Linen.

Another undergarment worn was the a chimise pronounced "shimmy". This was a woman's one piece undergarment. This was a loose undergarment that reached below the knees. It had a drawstring on the neckline and a button on the drawers. The chemise was calf lengthed and often had embroidered hems.

Next was the corset, which was a stiffened undergarment worn for support or to give shape to the waist and hips. She would put the corset on over the chemise. The corset itself had many designs. It was designed to give shape to the hips and waist. And to lift the bust area with support. It may have been a simple design with a little embroidery and lace. It tied in the back.

She then put on the petticoat. How many petticoats she wore was often determined by the temperature and the season. If it was summer she may only wear one. But in the bitter cold temperatures of winter many women wore five or six petticoats under their dresses.

In the mid 1850’s the hoops became popular to wear. After having put on the chemise, corset, and petticoat the 19th century lady would put on the hoop skirt. Some of the these were made with thin steel wire and other materials. Over the hoop she would wear her finest petticoat with pretty lace and embroidery on the hem. Finally, after layering herself with the undergarments she would then put on the dress. And last but not least, a lady always wore her gloves and her bonnet.

The diagram to the right shows the increasing relative skirt length with the increasing of age. This was thought proper for young girls as they approached womanhood. Most children were allowed to wear clothing that came just below the knee. But as they progressed in age so did the length of their clothes.

These are color plates depicting styles of ladies dresses from the middle of the 19th century. As they often revealed stylish clothing not everyone could keep up with the latest fashion. These were more of what women of that era wished to be wearing rather than what they were wearing. Actually, women of that era were much like women of today. Always looking for the newest fashion at an affordable price.

It wasn’t until later in the 19th century that dyes for clothing were richened and clothes tailor made. Ladies were able to get less expensive replicas of designer dresses made. To the left another color plate of a fashion made to advertise for women’s latest fashions.

(1825) The large puffed sleeves were fashionable from 1825-1840.
(1825-1850) The Romantic Era
(1840) Stiff horse-haired petticoats were sold.
(1850-1870) Hoop Era.
(1856) The Hoop became popular for ladies to wear.
(1873) The First Bustle was born.

Corsets and Health

Ladies experienced many health problems associated to the corset. It was not so much the design as it was women's desire's to be thinner than they really were. Ladies started wearing the corset at a young age, while they were yet teenagers and still developing and growing. The corset tightly squeezed the inner organs together. This caused some problems in childbirth. Others included digestive problems. Their stomach did not digest food the way it should and women died because of complications during childbirth. This was a tendency with women who attempted to get their waists as small as they could.

19th Century Boys and Men’s fashions

The Fauntleroy suit for boys became the style during Victoria's reign. It's most distinguishable characteristics was marked by a detailed lace collar with a smock that hung down passed the knee. Black stockings were worn with this outfit and later white would be worn. Fautleroy suits, pants and jackets, were made of velvet and silk and had embroidery. Silk was used in these costumes for sashes, cuffs and collars. One of the most popular accessory worn with these suits was the endearing sailor hat. At first, the idea of boys wearing velvet, silk and lace was hard for many to accept but this style became popular anyhow. As time passed simpler and plainer versions of this suit was worn. Of course, not all boys dressed this way. Farmers sons dressed in country fashions.

Buster Brown suits were worn between the ages of 5 and 8 and sometimes at older ages. This style became popular near the end of the Victorian Era. The smock-like suit had a short smock and bloomer pants above the knee with long stockings. The short pants were shorter than that of the Fauntleroy Suits. Large bows were often worn with these suits.

A gentleman was always seen wearing the best attire. With his wool evening tail coat or Double breasted suit he wore his charming top hat. The suits sported wide lapels during the early Victorian Period. White shirts were worn with the stiffened collars high about the neck during the 1830's. It wasn't until 1840 that men wore their collars down. Shirts were made of linen or muslin. A roll collar vest went over the shirt. It was made of either wool, linen, muslin or silk.

Court dressing was a formal style of dressing for men. But, later in the mid 1800's, country dress became a more comfortable style of clothing. The wardrobe consisted of a short-tailed jacket, riding hat (top hat), vest and boots. This outfit could be worn when riding horseback. Top hats were worn with formal and country suits. In any case, country suits were easier wear for men of that time.
Social Behavior and Etiquette

From: Geneva Historical Society:
http://www.genevahistoricalsociety.com/PDFs/Tea/Calling%20Cards.PDF
and Civil War Etiquette Glenna Jo Christen: http://home.earthlink.net/~gchristen/Etiquette.html

During the 19th century, all types of behaviors and activities were regulated by an extensive system of rules or etiquette. This etiquette helped distinguish or separate the middle and upper classes from working people and immigrants, who often did not have the time, money or knowledge to follow these rules. The etiquette of introductions, conversation, carriage riding, courtship, visiting, church, school, home, and the table were detailed in numerous publications. Those people who wished to learn how to behave properly often bought these books and followed their instructions.

For Men:
DO:
- Wear gloves on the street, in church & other formal occasions, except when eating or drinking - White or cream colored gloves for evening, Gray or other darker colors for day wear
- Stand up when a lady enters a room (or your presence in a large room)
- Offer a lady your seat if no others are available
- Assist a lady with her chair when she sits down or stands, especially when at a table or when the chairs are small and light
- Retrieve dropped items for a lady
- Open doors for a lady
- Help a lady with her coat, cloak, shawl, etc.
- Offer to bring a lady refreshments if they are available
- Offer your arm to escort a lady (with whom you are acquainted) into or out of a building or a room at all social events, and whenever walking on uneven ground
- Remove your hat when entering a building
- Lift your hat to a lady when she greets you in public (Merely touching the brim or a slight "tip" of the hat was very rude)

DON'T:
- Refer to another person by their first name in public
- Curse or discuss "impolite" subjects when ladies are present
- Leave a lady you know unattended, except with permission
- Use tobacco in any form when ladies are present
- Greet a lady in public unless she acknowledges you first
- Eat or drink while wearing gloves
For Women:

DO
- Graciously accept gentlemanly offers of assistance
- Wear gloves on the street, at church & other formal occasions, except when eating or drinking
- Refer to a gentlemen as “Mr.” and not by their first name or surname. While in public these forms of address should even be shown towards her spouse.
- Always walk or dance to her left side of the gentleman. While walking do not link arms, but instead, the lady should rest her left hand on his right hand.

DON’T
- Refer to another adult by his or her first name in public
- Grab your hoops or lift your skirts higher than is absolutely necessary to go up stairs
- Lift your skirts up onto a chair or stool, etc.
- Sit with your legs crossed (except at the ankles if necessary for comfort or habit)
- Lift your skirts up onto the seat of your chair when sitting down (Wait for, or if necessary, ask for assistance when sitting down at a table or on a small light chair)
- Speak in a loud, coarse voice

The following list of “errors to be avoided” at the table is excerpted from Thomas E. Hill’s popular, late 19th-century Manual of Social and Business Forms.
- Never fill the mouth very full.
- Never attempt to talk with the mouth full.
- Never explain at the table why certain foods do not agree with you.
- Never introduce disgusting or unpleasant topics for conversation.
- Never pick your teeth or put your hand in your mouth while eating.
- Never call loudly for the waiter, nor attract attention to yourself by boisterous conduct.
- Never wipe your fingers on the tablecloth, nor clean them in your mouth.
- Never make a display when removing hair, insects or other disagreeable things from your food. Place them quietly on the edge of your plate.
- Never permit yourself to engage in a heated argument at the table. Nor should you use gestures, nor illustrations made with a knife or fork on the tablecloth.
- Never use anything but fork or spoon in feeding yourself.
- Never expectorate at the table; also avoid sneezing or coughing. It is better to arise quietly from the table if you have occasion to do so. A sneeze is prevented by placing the finger firmly on the upper lip.

“On introduction in a room, a married lady generally offers her hand, and a young lady not. In a ballroom, where an introduction is to dancing, not friendship, you never shake hands -- only a bow. It may perhaps be laid down, that the more public the place of introduction, the less hand-shaking takes place.
ELEMENTS OF SCENIC DESIGN
Scenic Designer DeAnne Kennedy created these ¼ inch models to assist the director and other designers in imagining how the scenic element would enhance telling the story for Little Women.

The Act I – The Attic
Aunt March’s

The March House:
Act II  The Beach

The Boarding House
ELEMENTS OF COSTUME DESIGN
Costume Designer Judy Ryerson created the color pencil renderings to assist the director and other designers in imagining how the costume element would enhance the story for *Little Women*. The renderings are an important step in making sure the costumes are constructed to the designer’s specifications.
Peasant neck chemise
Showing underneath

Possibly mix of fabrics "leftovers"

Amy #1
Flat boots
Knitted bodice vest

warm coffee colored skirt - pull

Quality of colors, prints for dress

Beth #1
pu attic
A-Line dress over skirt
'Sweater' cinches it in
Buy shawl

Buy blouse dye
Pull skirt

Rust/white floral

Rust floral cotton skirt—stock

MARMEE #22
P21 prepare for dance

P 87 Beach

Repeat blouse skirt, add shawl.
**Discussion Topics**

**For Grades 1 –6**

1. Ask students to imagine how they would feel if they were used to getting presents on holidays or other special days, and then were told that they would not get anything this year. Would they be disappointed? What if they were told they would have one dollar to spend any way they wanted. Would they use it for themselves or for a gift for someone else? What if the other part of the special day was to include an extra special meal? How would they feel about giving their part of the food away to a stranger? Would they want to do it? Would it be hard?

2. Does the story end the way you expected? How? Why?

3. What are some themes in the story? How do they relate to the plot and characters?

4. Do you find the characters likable? Are the characters persons you would want to meet?

5. What are the conflicts in *Little Women*? What types of conflict (physical, moral, intellectual, or emotional) did you notice in the play?

**Discussion Topics**

**For Grades 6 –12**

1. What are some symbols in *Little Women*? How do they relate to the plot and characters?

2. Why is the novel usually considered a work of feminist literature?

3. What is the role of women in the text? How are mothers represented? What about single/independent women? What is Alcott telling us about how women function in this society? Does *Little Women* accept and/or challenge gender stereotypes? How?

4. How do these differing versions of femininity compare to one another? Is there one version that Alcott seems to favor? Look at Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy, Marmee, and Aunt March.

5. Remember that this novel was originally published as a children’s novel. Is *Little Women* really a “children’s book”? What aspects of it seem directed at or appropriate for a child audience? What aspects of it might appeal more to an adult audience?

6. Is the March family realistic? What aspects of their life seem too good to be true? What trials do they face that seem familiar to you?

7. Is Jo March still an appealing heroine for twenty-first-century audience? Do you think her problems relate to the experiences of girls today? If you are a female audience, describe your personal experience of the play. Does it speak to you or not? Do you find aspects of it unrealistic or frustrating?

8. Do you think gender is a barrier for male readers of *Little Women*? How can male readers engage with this novel more fully? If you are a male reader, describe your personal reading experience of the novel. Do you face challenges as you try to absorb yourself in the narrative? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

9. How important is the setting to this story? Could the same story take place in nineteenth-century England, or is there something particularly American about it? Could the same story take place in a different century?
**Activities**

**For Grades 4 – 7**

**Activity 1: Performance**
Ask the students to brainstorm themes of *Little Women* (the following are examples):

- Social Expectations, Hope, Women’s Rights, Achieving your dreams or Deferring Your Dreams,
- The role of men in society, Media, Gender Stereotypes, Family or Sibling Rivalry, Love

Ask the students to build a thematic performance devised of song, poetry, spoken word, short scenes to communicate the chosen theme. The devised piece should be 5—7 minutes in length.

**Activity 2 Create a Melodrama:**
Melodrama was a style or genre of acting in the 19th and early 20th century. The acting style was quite exaggerated and plays contained archetypes for which their character was based upon.

Music accompanied the scenes to highlight the emotional aspect of the scene. This style is still used today in blockbuster films and soap operas. Jo’s stories are very melodramatic, indicative of the plays of the time period. There are many examples of the melodramatic acting style in this production. The best melodramatic characters are vivid, larger-than-life and visceral.

The following is a description of one of Jo’s melodramatic characters. Try to make your characters as bold as “Carlotta”:

> “Carlotta, the madwoman in the attic, a creature of gall, a spinster rejected by the world...hungry for blood, rose from the dark. Her eyes were beady red, her hair ghastly white and her fingers clutched with rage, as she went out into the wretched night…” ~ *Little Women*

**Melodramatic Characters:**
- **Hero:** The strong and usually good-looking savior of the damsel in distress. He always saves the day. He stands with a broad chest, and bravely fights battles. He could have a side-kick that is the true ‘savior’ and the ‘brains of the operation.’
- **Heroine:** The sweet and young, beautiful woman who finds herself some kind of trouble. She either can’t pay the rent, or is the love interest of the villain. She is always saved by the hero. She often sighs and places her hand on her forehead in despair.
- **Villain:** The evil and dastardly bad person who wants to be as mean as he possible can. Usually has a cape, hat and cane which he uses to beat his sidekick. The sidekick is usually the brains of the operation or at least has a unique quality.

**Task:** Student’s devise a simple melodramatic plot: character, setting, conflict, raising of the stakes, conclusion. The style of acting should be large and dramatic. Movements are grandiose and spectacular. Students should have fun with costume and props. Scenes can be accompanied by instrumental music (or music without words) to help tell the story.

**Activity 3: Letter Writing**
They are to pretend they are one of the characters and write a letter to their father to tell him about their Christmas day. They will need to include at least three details from the storyline. If a boy is uncomfortable with this, then he can pretend to be Laurie writing to the girls’ Father telling him about what he has seen them do. They will need to include three details as well.
**Activity 4 Improvisation**

Break the class up into groups of 3-5 students. Give them 10 minutes to decide what are the main Five points or events in the story. The group will create tableau pictures (frozen poses that tell a story) to represent each of their main points. Have one person narrate the caption of each tableau. Like a living picture book. Have each group take turns their tableau story and watch each group in turn as they quickly go from one frame to the next, freezing only ten seconds or so in between each to let the audience see. This exercise quickly lets us all discuss what we think are the main events or plot points in the play.

**Activity 5: Writing**

Explore the range of genres Alcott wrote in. Have students read three shorter works available free online:
- Transcendental Wild Oats (http://www.classicauthors.net/Alcott/trancendental) – a fictionalized satire on her family’s life in a 19th-century Utopian community
- Hospital Sketches (http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/3837) – an account of Alcott’s time spent as an army nurse during the Civil War
- Behind a Mask, or a Woman’s Power (http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/8677) – a thriller Alcott wrote under a pseudonym.

Possible discussion questions might be: Which text did students enjoy most. Why?
What aspects of 19th Century culture stand out in each piece? What type of audience would be most interested in each piece during the 19th Century? Today? Have students create illustrations for these works that reflect the cultural details they identify, or pick a genre and try to write a paragraph in its style.

**Activity 6 Improvisation/Character**

Professional actors will rehearse a play for weeks before the audience comes to see it. You can give your students a taste of what it’s like to work on a character through the following acting exercises.

- Have each student pick one of the characters to portray – in their portrayals they should think about these things: how fast does their character move? how does his/her body look? Does he have aches and pains? Where? How does he/she feel emotionally at this age? What is his/her focus?
- In a central playing space (like the front of your classroom) have the student act out a moment in that character’s day (this can last about a minute).
- Have your class guess whom the student is portraying by what they see him/her do, and the way that he/she completes the action. What are the major clues? Is anything confusing?
- For an Extra Challenge: While the first student is acting, if another student thinks he/she knows who the character is, have that student join in the action. The challenge is to have student B act as his/her character, and also interact with character A in the context of the scene! You can have as many people enter the scene as you like. At some point say, “Freeze”! To stop the action. Ask students to determine which characters are being portrayed. Were the students thinking of the right characters? Talk about what movements, gestures, pace, and stance gave clues to the characters.
Was this Study Guide Helpful?
It is useful for us to know what was helpful to you as you read and/or used this guide. Please fill out and mail or e-mail this quick response sheet to us. We appreciate your ideas.

1. Was it easy for you to find and download the Guide?

2. Did you spend more time working with the material BEFORE or AFTER the play?
   Before         After         Equally Before and After

3. Did using this Study Guide add to your theater experience?
   Yes            Some          No

4. What did you use from the Guide?

5. How did the experience of preparing for and then seeing the play impact your students?

6. Is there something you would like to see included in the Guide that wasn’t here?

7. How much of the Guide did you read?
   Didn’t have time         Some              All

8. Which of the following best describes you?
   I teach:
   middle school             high school            elementary school           home school

Other Comments:

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