

Plan a circle: “Little Women”

Louisa May Alcott (1868–69) · public-domain novel (Part 1 or whole) · grades 7–9 · ~2–3 weeks. Rights: Public domain.

Kit section 5 (group agreement & calendar), scaffolded for this text. Students fill the group, calendar, and roles.

Preview note: Preview period gender expectations, religious references, and illness/death (Beth); plan support.

Text, group, and target

Text / author / edition	“Little Women” — Louisa May Alcott (1868–69). _____ (edition)
Group / period / dates	
Grade / TEKS target (p. 3)	Grade 8 · §110.24 — 7(A): theme through characters/events; 6(C,D): support inferences, summary; 1(D): student-led discussion.
Learning intention	We are learning to explain how the March sisters' choices reveal a theme about ambition, family, and sacrifice.
Success criteria	I bring one open question, cite two details with chapter/page, respond to a peer, and name how my thinking changed.

Reading map & calendar

Chunk	Read through	Meeting date · leader
1	Ch. 1–11: the sisters, “playing pilgrims,” Christmas, and meeting Laurie.	
2	Ch. 12–23: Beth’s scarlet fever, Meg’s romance, and Father’s return.	

Members & first-meeting jobs (p. 7 roles)

Member	First job	Rotates to (next meeting)

Text-specific discussion questions (open — more than one answer)

- **Predict:** Four sisters vow to bear their “burdens” — which sister’s ambition will cost or reward her most?
- **Question:** Why might Alcott frame the sisters’ growth as a “pilgrim’s progress”?
- **Clarify:** What does Jo mean by wanting to “do something splendid”?
- **Summarize:** Trace one sister’s main change in Part 1, without opinion.
- **Interpret the theme:** How do the sisters’ choices reveal a theme about ambition versus duty? Use two details.

Optional Jigsaw lenses (p. 4): *Character* (Jo and her sisters) · *Theme* (ambition vs. duty) · *Structure* (the Pilgrim’s Progress frame) · *Setting* (the Civil War home front) · *Language* (the narrator’s moral asides).

Reading notes: “Little Women”

Name: _____ · Home group: _____ · Section: “Little Women,” _____ · Expert lens: _____

Everyone prepares. Read the whole assigned section. Write or draw three important ideas, two supporting details with locations, and one summary in your own words. Keep interpretation separate from summary.

Questions

What needs clarification?
What could the group explore?

3 · Important ideas

Character choices, conflicts, themes, or central ideas.

1.

2.

3.

Vocabulary

Word + location + meaning or clue.
Mark anything still uncertain.

2 · Supporting details

Short quote or accurate paraphrase + page/paragraph + what it shows.

1.

2.

1 · Summary in my own words

Bring to the circle

My interpretation: These details suggest _____

Synthesis (connect two lenses): _____

After discussion: My thinking changed / became clearer because _____

TEKS evidence: 6(C,D) supported inference; 7(A) theme through characters/events; 1(D) response to a peer.