

# The First Four Years

By Laura Ingalls Wilder

## Q and A Discussion Guide

The First Year		
1	When does this story begin?	After <i>These Happy Golden Years</i> ends, and just before Almanzo and Laura get married.
2	What deal did Almanzo and Laura have about farming?	They would try for three years, and then something else if it didn't work out.
3	Prologue: How did the road look?	It was a dim trace across the grasslands
4	In 1885, why did no one mind hot sunshine and harsh winds?	There wasn't a choice and it was just how things were.
5	Why could Laura see Almanzo from 1/2 a mile away?	There were no trees or buildings in the way and so people could see a distance away.
6	What do you think of a school section of hay that was first come first served?	It seems odd to us when everything except parks and government property is owned. It may seem like a good idea to some of the students. Maybe some of the students are familiar with community gardens.
7	Why did Laura wear a black cashmere dress for her August wedding?	She had just made it as she thought a married woman should have a black dress. She didn't know ahead of time when she would be getting married. She and Almanzo were trying to avoid relatives planning a wedding for them. It was just practical.
8	The farm life was busy and there was much work for both Almanzo and Laura. What did do all day?	Almanzo: Farming work including walking behind the plow behind the horses, caring for animals, working outside, milking the cow, and more. Laura worked inside. She churned butter, cooked all homemade meals, sewed clothes, knitted socks, fed the threshers when they came over in the fall, washed clothes, and more. They were busy and happy.

9	What did Laura and Almanzo do for fun?	They took buggy rides on Sunday afternoon. The rides had to be short when the horses were working a lot during the week. Even they needed a day of rest.
10	Name two things they bought the first year.	2 work horses, a sulky plow, Trixy and Fly the saddle ponies, new wagon, new harvester (\$200), saddle, set of glassware, Bread Plate
11	How did Laura buy a saddle for Trixy?	She ordered one from Montgomery Wards catalogue.
12	Which pony was faster, Trixy or Fly?	Trixy was faster.
13	Laura thought she could make butter and sell it with eggs in town. Why didn't that work?	No one bought the butter, and eggs only would bring in 5 cents a dozen. Almanzo said he wasn't worried.
14	Why did Ole Larson make a poor neighbor?	He borrowed things and didn't return them, or broke them. He borrowed many things. He did not share meat like a good neighbor should have done.
15	In the fall, Geese formations flew in V-shapes day and night. The "world was full of their calls." What did Almanzo say about that?	"Everything is lovely when the geese honk high."
16	What are some things that happened in the four day blizzard?	Almanzo almost couldn't find the house. The milk was frozen when he got there. One man died. Three children spent the time in a haystack and lived, although they were weak. Many range cattle died. People had frozen hands and feet.
17	Why did the next blizzard have a better outcome?	People were prepared for the storm and did things like ran a rope from the barn to the house. The next blizzard was expected.

18	How did Laura know the neighbors were fine after the storm with no phone and without talking to them?	The fire in the chimney was making smoke.
19	Why were the horses fat and happy in the winter?	They didn't have to work so hard, and on the rides they didn't go so far in case a storm would blow in.
20	Which holiday did Laura and Almanzo host?	New Year's Day was added to the seasonal get togethers.
21	Why was Laura sick for many months?	She was pregnant and sick the whole time. She did try to do her work.
22	When did they name the baby?	Before the baby was born, Laura named her Rose. (The smell of prairie roses was in the air.) No ultra sound, she just knew!
23	Why did they have to move on their first anniversary?	Almanzo needed a mortgage and the only way to get one was to move to the homestead. \$800 was the amount!