

**Teaching Materials for Classrooms, Homeschooler Programs,
or Book Clubs**

For *Superior Tapestry: Weaving the Threads of Upper Michigan History*

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: All questions can be discussed in a large group, small group, with a partner, or written as individual or group essays.

Some students may feel intimidated by having to read an entire book, and teachers may not have time to go through all the chapters within the framework of their other curriculum needs. One solution might be to have individuals or small groups choose a chapter that interests them, read it thoroughly, and then present that chapter to the whole group. This could also work for members of a book club. Presentations might include a variety of visuals and technology if desired. Teachers could develop grading rubrics to reflect their subject area or work in conjunction with other teachers of geography, history or science.

It is not necessary to use all questions/suggestions for each chapter. Teachers/groups may choose any or all questions or project ideas or come up with some of their own.

Chapter 1: Birch Bark Canoe (Time frame of the chapter: mid-to-late 1600s)

1. After reading how canoes were built by the Ojibwa, what do you think would be the most challenging part? Why?
2. Research how modern-day canoes are made. Compare/contrast the two processes using a Venn diagram (two intersecting circles where similarities are placed in the intersection and differences are placed in the outer circle areas).
3. See if you can locate all, or most, of the stops the trading party made on a modern map. If you were to try to make this trip today (by water or by road) what would your route be? What would you plan to take with you? Note the Native American place names on the map and learn what these names mean. Free maps are available from the State of Michigan and some have been posted on: <http://www.superiortapestry.com/maps/>
4. If you had been in an Ojibwa camp at that time, what trade goods would you have wanted? Why would you make each choice?
5. What was the most interesting fact you learned from this chapter?
6. Readers might choose to make a hand-held canoe using some of the methods described in the chapter and teach this to the class, or they draw or paint a canoe based on the photo in the chapter and on other research.

Chapter 2: Bahweting: The Sound of the Rapids (Time frame of the chapter: pre-historic through the present time)

1. Make a time line of the major historical events listed in the chapter and note on it any applicable historic names.
2. From the evidence in the chapter, what does Bahweting, as a character, think about humans? Does “her” opinion change over time? If so, how?
3. If you were the rapids of the St. Mary’s River, what would be your opinion of human beings? Why?
4. From the descriptions in the chapter, draw a sketch of how a lock works. Compare your sketch to what you can find on the internet. How accurate were you?
5. The end of the chapter speculates on what Bahweting might see in the next 100 years. What do you imagine in the river’s future?
6. Write this chapter as a newspaper article. Remember the 5Ws: who, what, where, when, why. Teachers may set a word limit on this in accordance with the abilities of the students.
7. Have one reader act out the part of Bahweting and another be an interviewer. Have those watching take notes as this is being done.

Chapter 3: A Bell Tolls (Time frame of the chapter: 1975-1995)

1. Gordon Lightfoot wrote and recorded a song about the wreck of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*. Look it up on the internet and compare the lyrics to the events portrayed in the chapter. What are the similarities and differences? Use a wall-sized Venn diagram if desired. Would these differences be due to the different points of view of the author of this book and the song writer; to artistic license; “alternative facts”; or some other reason?
2. Why did it take so long for the wreck to be located and for Bell to be retrieved?
3. If you had been the captain of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, what would you have done differently that might have prevented the wreck? Justify your answer.
4. Have each student research at least one other ship wreck on Lake Superior, or any of the other Great Lakes, over history. Compare/contrast the two shipwrecks as to location, season of the year, weather, type of ship, number of lives lost, amount of money lost, etc. Several such reports could be combined onto a class chart with the factors across the top and ship wrecks listed down the left side.

Chapter 4: Fox River Flowing (Time frame of the chapter: pre-historic, 1880s- 1919 to present day)

1. What was the impact of the logging industry on the Fox River and the Seney area?
2. What has happened since the end of logging to restore the original ecology?
3. Research the present logging industry and compare today's practices to those of the past. Readers could include photos from the internet or other research to make a Power Point presentation, a scrapbook, etc.
4. What was "Lady Fox's" opinion of humanity and how did it change over the course of the chapter?
5. How is this river's attitude toward humans different from, or similar to, that of the St. Mary's River? In either questions 4 or 5, teachers may wish to put a minimum number of words or a maximum.

Chapter 5: One Piano's Plinking (Time frame for chapter: 1880s-1910 and to present)

1. List some of the reasons that Seney was known as the "toughest town" during its heyday. What other towns across the country had similar reputations? How did those towns earn their reputations?
2. What was the barkeep's reason for purchasing Piano? How does this work out for him? Make references to the text to justify your answer.
3. Compare Piano's feelings about Seney to his experience in Grand Marais. Which would you choose and why?
4. How did the end of the railroad affect the community of Grand Marais? If you had lived there at the time and wanted to stay, what would you have done to continue to earn a living?

Chapter 6: Portrait of Pictured Rocks (Time frame of chapter: prehistoric to the present)

1. The author begins this chapter with a poem. After reading the chapter, try writing a poetic response of your own. If you have never been there, look up more pictures on the internet to get an idea of what you would feel seeing this remarkable coastline.
2. What does "Cliff" want out of "life"? Site evidence from the text for your answer.
3. Make a timeline of the attitude of humans toward the Pictured Rocks shoreline. Include what may happen over the next fifty years.
4. If you planned a trip to visit Cliff, what would you need to take? Include considerations for safety if hiking or kayaking. What would the approximate cost of your trip be?

Chapter 7: Sand Point Lighthouse: A Plum Assignment (Time frame for chapter: 1867-1939 and present day)

1. What does “a plum assignment” mean? How was the job of the Sand Point Lighthouse different from that of an off-shore lighthouse?
2. Does Sand Point consider her job important? Cite evidence for your answer.
3. Would you want to be a lighthouse keeper? Why or why not?
4. How did Sand Point feel about her various “make-overs” during the 20th century?

Chapter 8: Ring ‘Round the Ages (Time fame of the chapter: mid-to-late 1600s to the present)

1. After reading the chapter, why do you think the author had to speculate more about the history of the rings than she did for the objects in other chapters?
2. Use a world map and the information in the chapter to approximate the travels of Ring from France to the modern site where she was found. The State of Michigan has some free maps and some of these are posted on <http://www.superiortapestry.com/maps/>
3. Expand on the meaning of “two-spirit woman” in this chapter and in Ojibwa culture.
4. In what places is this chapter “woven into” the histories of items in the previous chapters?

Chapter 9: A Failure in Forging Iron (Time frame of the chapter: prehistoric, 1848-1904 and present)

1. Why was there iron in the area where Forge was first built?
2. Why do you think historians today have a difficult time being sure as to who led whom to the iron deposits?
3. Do you think there might be a story in the “walking beam/backbone” of the ship *Ocean* made from steel from Forge? What might that story be?
4. Write a monolog (an essay in first person from Forge’s point of view) about what Forge might have said as he fell into disrepair and ruin and about his legacy today? Here, as at any point, teachers may want to state minimum and maximum word/sentence counts.

Chapter 10: Saturday Sauna (Time frame of the chapter: 1890s to 1940s)

1. There are several hints in the chapter about why this sauna is different from other saunas of the day. What are those differences? (A Venn diagram could be used.)
2. Why might the Hankas have chosen to take only 80 acres for their homestead when they could have had 160?
3. What were the strengths and skills of each member of the Hanka family? How might this have affected their use of their land?
4. Research the Homestead Act and how other families developed their homestead farms. Compare some of these to the Hanka's experience. What can you conclude about how the Homestead Act affected the development of the United States?
5. If you live in an area where many families have saunas, bring pictures of them to compare with each other. If a family has a sauna, they could also write something from their sauna's point of view.

Chapter 11: In Bishop Baraga's Footprints (Time frame of chapter: 1797-1868 and present)

1. Bishop Baraga, as a priest, had many emotions. What are some of these and what may have caused his many changes of emotion during his ministry?
2. What experiences have you had out of doors during the winter? Compare your experiences to those of Baraga.
3. On a world and United States map, trace Baraga's journey through life. How would you feel if you were "in his shoes?" on <http://www.superiortapestry.com/maps/>
4. How was Baraga's mission to Native Peoples different from many other missionaries of his day? What, specifically, did he do for Native Peoples that others did not?

Chapter 12: Chip of the Pines Casino (Time frame of chapter: 1970s to present)

1. What was Fred Dakota's main reason for starting a casino?
2. List the many long-term benefits, beyond Dakota's family, of his efforts in building a casino?
3. Outline the pros and cons of gambling. Ask yourself honestly where you stand on the issue.
4. What are your thoughts on the man who put "Chip" in his pocket and then later gave him to the museum?
5. What evidence is there in the chapter of prejudice against Native Peoples?

Chapter 13: Tools of the Home Speak (Time frame of chapter: late 1800s and early 1900s)

1. Compare the “factual” aspects of this chapter to the “fictional” ones. Based on this evidence, do you feel the fictional aspects could have happened?
2. As you think about the chapter, what other stories of objects mentioned can you imagine?
3. Think about your kitchen today. Describe what it would be like if you had to go for a week or more without electricity.
4. What do you do with your socks and other clothing items when the fabric wears thin or tears?
5. What other “antique” kitchen or home-use tools might anyone have in their home, garage, attic or basement? How were they used? If you are not sure, interview parents, grandparents or elderly people in your area about each thing.

Chapter 14: Man Car of Quincy Mine (Time frame of chapter: 1890s to present)

1. Look at the men’s faces in the photo on page 106. At the time of the picture, photographers had to have people sit or stand absolutely still for over a minute. Why do you think people kept such a “straight face” when being photographed?
2. Choose one of the men in the photograph. Think about what you have learned about everyday life from this and previous chapters. Where do you think the man you chose came from? Does he have a family? What kind of a house do you think he lives in? Is he better or worse off than he was wherever he came from? (You may need to do some research to ponder some of these questions.)
3. After reading the poem “Song of the Man Engine,” imagine you are climbing a ladder into a dark mine shaft. Would you be able to do it? What would your thoughts be descending and ascending? Would you have similar or different thoughts riding up and down in Man Car?
4. What evidence is there that the owners and managers of the Quincy and other mines at that time cared, or didn’t care, about the safety of their workers? Compare that to businesses today.

Chapter 15: A Bridge Across: (Time frame of chapter: 1850s to present)

1. Make a time line showing how people crossed the water between Houghton and Hancock.
2. What made the design of the Houghton-Hancock lift bridge different from most other bridges? See related video: [Keweenaw Crossing: Michigan's Elevator Bridge](#) (an MDOT video)
3. Research different bridge designs. Use paper (you can fold it), paperclips, craft sticks, soda straws, string, tape, or glue, to design and build a bridge eight inches long. Use books, set seven inches apart as the banks of a river. Will your bridge hold five crayons (or a similar weight) sitting in the middle of it? Test the maximum strength of your bridge by adding other objects to the crayons.
4. Visit any bridge near you and take a photo of it. Imagine what it thinks and what it might say on any given day. Find out about when and how that local bridge was built. Present this information/imagining as a report, story, poem, or even a song.

Chapter 16: *The Lady Be Good* (Time frame of chapter: 1940s to present)

1. Why do you think Henry Ford opposed hiring women and why did the company change that policy during World War II? See a related video: [Building the B-24: The Story of Willow Run](#) (Ford Video)
2. Why did the crew of the *Lady Be Good* think they were over the Mediterranean Sea?
3. What do you think the crew members might have said when they landed in sand, not water?
4. See what you can find concerning the percentage of lost bombers to successful missions.
5. Did you have relatives (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins) involved in World War II—either in the military, civilian jobs, medical personnel or any other area? Interview them (or people who remember them) and compare their experiences. Share the interview results with the group.

Chapter 17: A Stone's Story (Time frame of chapter: prehistoric to present day)

1. Why do you think the author chose to begin this chapter with the geological background of “Stone”?
2. Research and list some of the buildings outside the Copper Country area that are/were built from Jacobsville Sandstone. Share your list.
3. How are “Stone” and “Cliff” (from Chapter 6) related?
4. If you were Stone, how might your emotions have been similar to, or different from, those the author imagined for Stone?

Chapter 18: At the Corner of 7th and Elm (Time Frame of the chapter: 1870s to present)

1. What were the various purposes of the Italian Mutual Benefit Society and other such groups? How important were they?
2. Has anyone in your family ever belonged to an ethnic club or society? If so, what was that group's purpose? If not, what group might you or a family member become involved in?
3. Why do you think the author chose to focus on the cultural societies in this chapter, rather than on the disaster of Dec. 24, 1913?
4. List some of the events/people that both Stone (Chapter 17) and Street Corner might have seen.
5. View the video: U.P. author Steve Lehto's video [Christmas Eve – Remember the Italian Hall](#)

Chapter 19: Piles of Poor Rock (Time frame of the chapter: prehistoric to present)

1. Why was geology important in this chapter?
2. Review the definition of metaphor. The author uses the metaphor of a queen bee for the formation of the many rock layers. What other metaphors might she have used?
3. Research the present status of the migrating stamp sands along the Lake Superior shore at Gay and Big Traverse Bay. What progress has been made with solving the problem?
4. What other creative uses might be found for using stamp sand?
5. See related video: [Keweenaw Peninsula's lakes – Gay Stamp Sands](#) (a YouTube video)

Chapter 20: Chrysler Calamity on the *City of Bangor* (Time frame of the chapter: 1927 to present)

1. What factors might be involved in creating personality for a character like "Car"?
2. Using the evidence in the chapter, plot the ship's course on a map of the Great Lakes from Detroit to where it ran aground. The State of Michigan has some free maps and some of these are posted on: <http://www.superiortapestry.com/maps/>
3. Why is Lake Superior particularly dangerous in November?
4. What is the longest amount of time you have ever been out in cold weather? Compare your experience to that of the crew members seeking safety at Copper Harbor.

Chapter 21: A Tree's Tale (Time frame of the chapter: late 1400s to present)

1. Why do you think the author refers to so many historical events in telling Tree's story?
2. The author mentions the book *Charlotte's Web* as being formative for a young child. Was there a book, movie, or other influence that helped form your opinions about animals and nature? If so, what was it and what effect did it have?
3. Where do your ideas fall in the continuum from unrestricted industrial use of all resources to the other extreme of complete restriction? Is it possible to have a balance between economic development/jobs and saving species and natural areas for future generations? A debate might be a good format for exploring this topic.
4. Haiku is a Japanese form of nature poetry consisting of seventeen syllables (not words, but syllables) arranged in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Try writing a Haiku about Tree. Here are two examples:

Are trees just timber
Or do they go much deeper
Than their root systems?

Cool green producers
Renew oxygen supply
Add beauty to life

5. See the related short video: [Estivant Pines Nature Sanctuary – Experience the Keweenaw](#) (5 minute video)

Chapter 22: Fireside Stories of Hearth and Home (Time frame of chapter: 1844 to present)

1. What other objects or buildings at Fort Wilkins mentioned in the chapter might have told a story similar to that of Hearth?
2. What might be some of the differences between Hearth's story and a hearth in the enlisted men's cottages?
3. Make a list of the challenges of being a soldier stationed at Fort Wilkins.
4. What are some of the similarities and differences between life at Fort Wilkins in the 1840s and the 1860s?
5. See the related video: [Michigan State Parks 100: Fort Wilkins](#) (short video)

Chapter 23: Fabulous Float Copper (Time fame of the chapter: prehistoric to present)

1. What are some of the differences in attitude towards Boulder by the Ojibwa and early White explorers?
2. What would you have done if you had come across Boulder in those early days?
3. Examine the money spent to move Boulder. Was "ownership" of Boulder worth it in terms of economic value? Why or why not?
4. What are Boulder's feelings about people over the course of the chapter?

Chapter 24: Toppling Timber (Time frame of chapter: early 1900s to present)

1. How did most sawyers learn their trade? What were the main things they had to learn?
2. Compare Jack's desire to learn to be a sawyer from his grandfather with that of his son learning from him later.
3. How did Saw know that the old man had died?
4. What were the main reasons for the decline in the lumber business in the Ontonagon area as compared to previous chapters on logging? (Chapters 4 and 5) What new technology had arrived in Ontonagon that was not mentioned previously?
5. Search the internet or other sources and write a short essay on how the lumber business has changed since the time of this chapter.

Chapter 25: Daily Happenings at the Ironwood Depot (Time frame of the chapter: 1890s to the present)

1. What were the hopes and dreams of many immigrants to Ironwood and other U.P. areas during the mining boom days? (You may have to do some research on this.)
2. Why do you think Depot feels like the town's hostess? Do you agree or disagree with the use of this term?
3. Try writing a possible conversation between Depot and the post office.
4. Why were railroads so important at that time and why did they become less important over time?

Chapter 26: Iron Mountain's Monster Pump (Time frame of the chapter: 1890s to 1930s and present)

1. Do you know any people who have oversized egos like Cornish Steam Pump? What do you think makes them that way?
2. What happened to blunt Cornish Steam Pump's bragging and humble him?
3. Speculate about what may have happened to Cornish Steam Pump if the people in the area had not been interested in preserving their history.

Chapter 27: Menominee's Memory, the Dudley Bug (Time frame of the chapter: 1890s to around 1915 and present)

1. List the advantages and disadvantages of the Dudley Bug motorcycle-car. What was the main event that caused the Dudley family to end production?
2. Find out if any of the tools Dudley invented are still in use today.
3. The author makes the point that if we, today, do not make an effort to preserve the past, it will disappear into dust. How might you become involved in the area where you live to preserve your local history?

END OF BOOK EXPANSION IDEAS:

1. Choose one or more items/characters/people in the book and make a web chart showing the “weaving” between chapters. For example, Bishop Baraga is mentioned in several chapters. (A web chart might show small ovals for each chapter and lines connecting them where chapters interact with each other—like a spider web.)
2. Choose a tree/rock/river or artifact near where you live. Do you see it as male or female and why do you think it should be that gender? List its personality traits. Research its history and write a short story about it.
3. Interview a parent, grandparent, or elderly person in your neighborhood about their childhood. What objects did they use that we no longer use? What might those objects have to say to your computer, videogame, or smartphone?
4. Practice **persuasion** by advertising a chapter/topic/place from the book. Make a slideshow, “billboard”/poster, pamphlet, etc. How are you going to get your audience to come there, care about, and “spread the word”?
5. Choose a topic (in or out of the U.P.) that is not included in *Superior Tapestry*. After reviewing the literary elements of **personification** and **sensory details**, point out examples of these in several chapters and use these techniques as you emulate the author’s writing style. Research, study, and write about a topic/artifact/time in history. Make it chapter 28!
6. Choose a topic of interest such as: lighthouses, waterways, railroads, logging, fishing industry, veteran memorials, freighters on the Great Lakes (apps are available), invasive species, waterfalls, nature/hiking trails (like the Estivant Pines), etc., and use **map skills** (the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and beyond) to locate several of whatever topic you chose. (Teachers/group leaders may decide how many to require.) Present the map with short descriptions of each and directions for people to find that place.
7. How did the author organize the book? What do you think her purposes were for doing so? Review Text Structures, Text Features, and patterns. Any ideas or suggestions for a possible Volume #2? Send your suggestions to the author.
8. Conduct vocabulary studies for each chapter. Collect, study, and teach others to use these words.
9. Websites and searches to learn more: Find and share credible sources and possibly do some virtual tours. Also, use your local library; there are most likely local history and Michigan sections to learn more about any of the chapters that grabbed your interest. Teachers may want to review “credible sources”: those with authors who have authority or expertise in their fields; those with footnotes or lists stating their sources; those under government or university auspices with reputations to uphold; newspapers which adhere to journalistic standards; documentary films with reputable producers. Remember that anyone can put up a website claiming to have “facts”, but not all of these are reputable sources.

10. If possible, travel, explore, and learn more about the sites in the book (maybe as a class field trip for the nearby sites). Also, use the author's "My Superior Tapestry Logbook" included in the Appendix as a checklist of your progress.
11. Focus on and study the advances in particular chapters. Use a timeline to show change and growth. Music, phones/technology, trade, travel, building of boats, bridges, buildings, towns, etc.
12. Invite local historical experts and others to your class/group to share what they know about your area.