



Molly **Learning Guide**

Learn about
cooperation,
resourcefulness, and
World War Two
through the stories
of Molly McIntire,
set in 1944.





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About the Molly Books

Molly McIntire is a lively nine-year-old whose family is learning to live with war, just like every family in the United States in 1944. Home-front World War Two is the setting for all six books of historical fiction about Molly.

Cooperation stands out as a key theme in Molly's stories. Molly and her schoolmates work together to benefit soldiers, and Molly and her family make daily sacrifices in their lives while Dad is away at war. They're just like Americans everywhere on the home front, who joined volunteer groups and worked in factories to support the war. Similarly, as a nation, the United States pooled its resources with those of its allies. All these efforts of cooperation served one common cause: winning the war.

Change and *self-reliance* are other important themes in the Molly books. Molly must learn to be resourceful and responsible for herself. In this way, her stories parallel the story of the United States as it, too, took on the larger responsibilities of a world power because of the war. Both Molly and her country must deal with changes and make peace with a world that will never be the same.

The six books of the core series are:

Book 1: *Meet Molly*

Book 2: *Molly Learns a Lesson*

Book 3: *Molly's Surprise*

Book 4: *Happy Birthday, Molly!*

Book 5: *Molly Saves the Day*

Book 6: *Changes for Molly*

Instructions for Teachers

Assign or read aloud to your students some or all of the books in numerical order. As needed, print copies of each work sheet you would like to use in class. Before assigning the work sheets to your students, consider the talking points and discussion questions for each work sheet provided below. Note: It's not essential to read all six books in order to complete the work sheets.

Talking Points and Discussion

Cooperation

Molly struggles to cooperate in *Meet Molly*. She must bring her own desires in line with realistic expectations and other people's desires. In *Molly Learns a Lesson*, Miss Campbell teaches her students about allies—people who work together for the same goal. But Molly wants to stand out, so she convinces her friends to undertake a separate project. In the end, it's all the girls working together that produces the stand-out project—and that shows "the true meaning of allied effort." Similarly, the United States's effort to work together with its allies produces a victory in war, a victory no single country by itself could have won. *Discussion questions:* What is the advantage of working in groups? What can be difficult about working in groups? Can you think of an example of a time when it is okay to be uncooperative?

Just for Fun: Play a game to show students how cooperation can help solve a knotty problem. Break your class into groups of 8 to 12 students. Each group should stand in a circle, shoulder to



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shoulder. Ask each student to place one hand in the middle of the circle and grasp someone else's hand. Then each should place his or her other hand in the middle and grab another person's hand. Tell the groups that the goal of this activity is to work together to untangle themselves—without letting go of their hands—to form a circle.

Adaptability and Resourcefulness

Molly discovers that part of life during wartime is learning to adapt to change and to live with less. Even on holidays, Molly's family must find new ways to celebrate and carry out traditions. Just like other families in the 1940s, the McIntires learn how to find joy in spite of the shortages, hardships, and uncertainties created by war. *Discussion question:* Describe a difficult situation in your own life that you have had to adapt to. How did you adapt?

The Nature of War

In *Molly Saves the Day*, Molly goes to camp, where she learns lessons similar to those learned by soldiers at war. War creates artificial divisions—teams and armies. Molly observes that "friendship doesn't count during a war" (page 32). As Molly explains, "You can't think of people as people during a war. You think of them as part of an army" (page 35). In the end, Molly thinks nobody really won the camp's Color War—and she's glad they no longer have to choose sides. *Discussion questions:* Do you know anybody who has been in the military or provided services to members of the military or veterans (e.g., medical services, administration, etc.)? Who is this person and what did he or she do?

Answer Key

Cooperation

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Answers will vary.



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Adaptability and Resourcefulness

1. Answers will vary but may include the following:

	What do you use/eat regularly that requires this product?	How would you adapt to living without it? What could you use instead?
Rubber	• car/bicycle tires • shoe soles • basketballs, tennis balls, etc.	• Use public transportation. • Don't buy new shoes until the old ones are worn out. • Play games that use non-rubber equipment (e.g., Frisbee, tag, footraces, capture the flag, etc.).
Sugar	• candy, cake, cookies, etc.	• Use less sugar in homemade treats. • Use honey instead of sugar. • Eat fruit for dessert.
Meat	• breakfast meats, sandwiches, dinner	• Find other healthy sources of protein, such as eggs, nuts, and soy.
Gasoline	• cars, buses, etc.	• Walk to your destination. • Use public transportation to cut down on your fuel use.

2. Answers will vary but may include missing Dad, not having traditional materials to make Halloween costumes, and not being able to purchase fresh foods at the grocery store.

3. Answers will vary but may include putting Dad's picture in a heart locket, making Halloween costumes out of paper, and growing vegetables to eat in a Victory garden.

The Nature of War

1. Answers will vary.

2. Answers will vary but may include the following examples. The Color War and a real war are alike because: There are two opposing sides. People must be brave in order to win. Some people are taken prisoner. The leaders plot "battle" strategy. People are injured (with poison ivy in the Color War). The Color War and a real war differ because: In the Color War, there are no weapons, people don't die, and everyone knows it is just for fun.

3. Answers will vary.

Puzzle

BEING A GOOD STUDENT IS AS IMPORTANT AS BEING A GOOD SOLDIER.

Illustrations by Nick Backes and John Pugh



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Cooperation

1. In *Meet Molly*, Ricky's teasing leads Molly to fight back, and their tricks turn into a war of revenge. Imagine you could give Molly and Ricky advice about teasing. What would you say?

2. In *Molly Learns a Lesson*, Molly doesn't want to help with Alison's project. Molly wants her own project to be the best so that she will get special attention from Miss Campbell. She also thinks that Alison's project might be too hard. Do you think Molly's reasons for wanting to do her own project are good ones? Explain your answer.

3. The blanket that Molly and the rest of the girls made is an example of one big thing that was made from smaller things contributed by different people. Draw a picture of a project that you've worked on or something you've achieved by working with others.



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Adaptability and Resourcefulness

1. During World War Two, factories began to make war materials rather than things we use daily. So the government began to ration everyday things to make sure everybody got a share. What if the following items were rationed today? Fill in the chart below. The first one is done for you.

	What do you use/eat regularly that requires this product?	How would you adapt to living without it? What could you use instead?
Rubber	• car/bicycle tires • shoe soles • basketballs, tennis balls, etc.	• Use public transportation. • Don't buy new shoes until the old ones are worn out. • Play games that use non-rubber equipment (e.g., Frisbee, tag, footraces, capture the flag, etc.).
Sugar		
Meat		
Gasoline		

2. Being *adaptable* means being able to adjust to new situations. Give three examples of changes that Molly and her family had to adapt to during wartime.

3. Being *resourceful* means finding clever ways to overcome difficulties. What are some ways Molly and her family adapted to these changes by being resourceful?



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The Nature of War

1. Think about a time when you and a good friend were on opposing teams. Did you feel more loyalty to your team or to your friend? Explain why you felt the way you did.

The Color War

In *Molly Saves the Day*, Molly goes to summer camp. One of the campers' favorite traditions is the game of Color War. The campers are divided into two teams: the Red Team and the Blue Team. The Blue Team must try to capture the flag from the Red Team's territory. Whichever team has the flag at sunset wins the game.

2.

Give at least two examples of how the Color War and a real war are alike.	Give at least two examples of how the Color War and a real war are different.

3. After World War Two, many countries joined together to create the United Nations in hopes of preventing war. List at least two ideas you have for creating a more peaceful world.



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Miss Campbell's Message

Miss Campbell told Molly's third-grade class that school was their war duty. What else did she tell them?

To solve the puzzle, place the letters above the red line in the boxes below the red line to form words. The letters in each column can be used only in that same column. A blue square indicates the end of a word.



S	M	I	N	S	O	A	N	T	G	A	D	S
	B	U	D	G	N	A	A	I	S	O	S	
	E		O	N	G			G	O	R	O	
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