My stockings have a hole in them,  
I'm learning how to darn.  
Which means that I am mending them  
With needle and some yarn.

Ma says my dress is getting short,  
We must let out the hem.  
My only shoes have come apart,  
And Pa is patching them.

And stake her out each day.  
I help my Ma by hanging clothes  
And watching Sissy play.

I go to bed so tired,  
And get up before the sun.  
There's always work that's waiting.  
It never gets all done.

But Ma has made Pa promise  
To have a family rule.  
If there's a teacher hired,  
I get to go to school!
1. Match each word from the poem to the correct definition.

____ stockings  
a. thick thread made of cotton or wool

____ darn  
b. to fix by sewing

____ hem  
c. edge on a piece of cloth or clothes

____ yarn  
d. coverings for the foot

2. What is the author's purpose for writing this poem?
   a. To entertain us with a funny story from long ago
   b. To teach us how hard life was for frontier families long ago
   c. To persuade us to live like frontier families did long ago
   d. To teach us unusual words from long ago

3. Who is Bess?

   ________________________________________________________________

4. Why can't the girl in this poem go to school?

   ________________________________________________________________

5. Why do you think Ma wants her daughter to go to school?

   ________________________________________________________________
ANSWER KEY

Frontier Life
by Cindy Breedlove

1. Match each word from the poem to the correct definition.

   d stockings
   a. thick thread made of cotton or wool

2. What is the author's purpose for writing this poem?
   b. To teach us how hard life was for frontier families long ago

3. Who is Bess?
   Bess is the family's cow.

4. Why can't the girl in this poem go to school?
   The girl in the poem cannot go to school because there is no teacher.

5. Why do you think Ma wants her daughter to go to school?
   Answers may vary. Possible answer: Ma wants her daughter to have a better life.

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