

WHEELS OF CHANGE STUDY GUIDE

1. Change is the overriding theme of this novel. Discuss good vs. bad change and how the characters accepted or rejected change. CCSS RL 4.9
2. How did Emily's ideas about change evolve throughout the story? CCSS RL 3.3
3. What does the horseshoe symbolize? Do you think it really had power? Explain. CCSS RL 5.4
4. Do you think Beatrice's personality and behavior are her own or as result of trying to please her mother? CCSS RL 3.3
5. What characteristics made Charlie a good friend for Emily? Vice versa. CCSS RL 3.3
6. What do you think of Emily's reaction to Mrs. Peabody's comments at the tea? Was Emily justified in dumping tea in Mrs. Peabody's lap? Explain why or why not. What would you have done? CCSS RL 4.3
7. 1908-09 was a time in history when segregation was common. Do you think Mr. Soper was courageous in employing an African-American? Explain. CCSS RL 3.3
8. Was life easier or harder in 1909? What did you like about the time period?
9. The roles of males and females were more sharply divided in the early 20th Century. Do you think Emily's resistance to learning proper lady-like behavior was typical for girls her age? Why or why not? CCSS RL 4.3
10. How did Emily's relationship with Mama change? CCSS RL 5.2
11. The story takes place when there were fewer luxuries in everyday life – especially regarding entertainment. What would you do if you had no radio, television, telephone, electricity or car, like most of the people in the story? CCSS RL 4.9
12. Learning skills and being self-sufficient was important during this time in history. Why? Do you think these values are still important today? Explain.
13. Emily and Charlie were expected to help the family by doing daily chores. If they weren't completed, the household and family suffered. Does your family depend on you to do certain jobs? What would happen if you didn't do them? CCSS RL 4.9
14. What did Emily expect President Roosevelt to do for Papa? CCSS RL 4.3
15. What did you think of Emily's suggestions for changing Papa's business? What might you have done to help? CCSS RL 4.9
16. Do you think it was foolish or brave of Emily to stay in the barn during the fire? What would you have done? CCSS RL 3.3
17. There were limited opportunities for women at the turn of the 20th Century. Single women who were not from wealthy families could teach, work long hours in a factory under awful conditions, or work as maids, governesses, or servants to wealthy families. Once married, they were expected to stay home and care for their husband and children. Do the opportunities enjoyed by women today make their lives easier or more difficult? Explain. CCSS RL 4.9

18. When Mama first meets Mrs. Jackson, they seem ill as ease with one another. Why?
CCSS RL 5.2
19. Do you think it was unusual for Emily's best friend to be a boy? Why or why not?
20. If the story took place today, do you think it would be easy for a girl to become a blacksmith? Explain.