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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1999 Volume I: Women's Voices in Fiction

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## **Louisa May Alcott: Her Life, Her Times And Her Literature**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 99.01.06

by Jean C. Gallogly

The subject of this unit is Louisa May Alcott with an emphasis on showing how her background shaped her writing and the similarities between her life and her best known novel: *Little Women*. Louisa May Alcott came from an interesting family and her tendency was to write books that borrowed their characters from her own relatives. She led a fairly colorful life for a woman born in 1832. She was a prolific writer, but also served as a nurse, teacher and suffragette. The classics are sometimes forgotten and this unit attempts to provide some strategies and ideas for bringing this author and her book alive to twentieth century students.

Several biographies are suggested that provide the necessary background on the author's life. The reading level varies, as do most of the books in this unit, allowing for use by several grade levels.

In addition, several adaptations are suggested for use with reluctant readers. There are also series that are based on the characters in *Little Women*. Other books that are suggested provide ideas for activities or lend themselves to creative use in the classroom.

(Recommended for Literature and Social Studies, grades 3 - 5.)

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