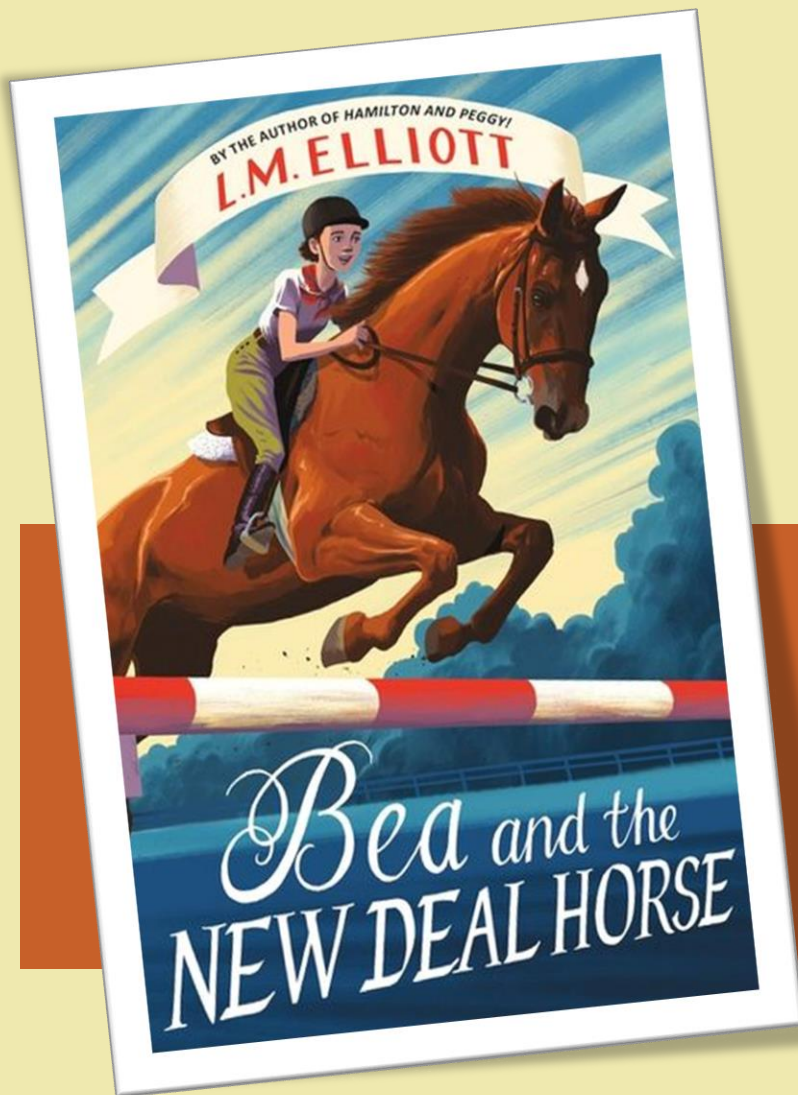


EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE



Ride into discussions
about the Great
Depression, resilience,
and responsibility



ABOUT THE BOOK

Thirteen-year-old Bea wakes in a hayloft on a horse farm in Virginia where her father has brought her and her eight-year-old sister Vivian after the stock market crash took everything: his job, their Richmond home, their Mama's health and life. But he's gone, leaving only a note that he thinks the farm's owner, a Mrs. Scott, might take care of the girls the way he no longer can. Her daughter was once a dear friend of their Mama's.

But that daughter is not there, and Mrs. Scott seems haunted, brittle. How is Bea supposed to convince the formidable horsewoman to take in two stray children? Her money and farm are drying up in a drought too. Mrs. Scott may even have to sell her beautiful horses, starting with a promising but volatile chestnut she rescued from abuse and Bea saves from colic. Wrestling with her own hurts, Bea understands the chestnut's skittish suspicion and dangerous temper. If she can coax the powerful jumper to trust her, together "this beaten-up horse and beaten-down girl" might be able to compete at horse shows and save the farm—maybe even win a place in Mrs. Scott's heart.

BEFORE AND DURING READING

Activate and build knowledge

Students don't need to know everything about the Great Depression or the New Deal to enjoy and learn from reading *Bea and the New Deal Horse*. Provide just enough background to set a purpose for reading and really entice students to read! Use these questions and resources to give students enough information to spark their curiosity, activate or build knowledge, and help them connect to the time period of the novel.

Ask and get students thinking and talking:

- What do you know about the U.S. economy today? Can you describe what the stock market is?
- Do you know what the current rate of unemployment is? What it means?
- Have you heard about any recent store or business closings?
- What do you know about the economy during Great Depression? When did the Great Depression take place?
- What impact did the Great Depression have on Americans of all ages?
- What do you know about how people survived the Great Depression? What was the New Deal? What do you know about the New Deal's long term effects on the U.S. government, economy, and society?

Be sure to correct any misinformation that students may have and guide them to resources:

FDR Presidential Library and Museum: Great Depression Facts
fdrlibrary.org/great-depression-facts

FDR Presidential Library and Museum: What Caused the Great Depression?
youtu.be/jRhaIZwIkCI



Crash Course US History: The Great Depression
youtu.be/GCQfMWAikyU

Children of the Great Depression by Russell Freedman

FDR Presidential Library and Museum: The Promise of Change
youtu.be/SFnMANxqVAs

Crash Course U.S. History: The New Deal
youtu.be/6bMq9Ek6jnA

Build student knowledge during reading as well as before. Note these potential stopping points with topics ripe for posing targeted questions or sharing information:

- Chapter 3: Fox hunting
- Chapter 9: World War I and the Bonus Army
- Chapter 14: Horse shows
- Chapter 18 and 23: Auction and foreclosure
- Chapter 25: Rainmakers

Resources

Masters of Foxhounds Association of North America: Kid's Guide to Foxhunting booklet
mfha.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/kidsintrototofoxhunting2014.pdf

Zinn Education Project: July 28, 1932: Bonus Army Attacked
zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/bonus-army-attacked/

U.S. Equestrian Federation: Learning Center Videos
usef.org/learning-center

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Foreclosure Process
hud.gov/topics/avoiding_foreclosure/foreclosureprocess

The Rain Wizard: The Amazing, Mysterious, True Life of Charles Mallory Hatfield by Larry Dane Brimmer





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The questions below can be used for class or small group discussion or offered to students as reflective writing prompts. For even more meaningful discussions, students should also develop their own questions. As students read, encourage them to note ideas they find interesting or that make them wonder, passages they don't understand and those they like, and things they question, predict, and conclude.
2. "Daddy had left us. Dumped us, like unwanted kittens by the side of a highway with the hope a passing stranger would take pity on them." (page 9) What would you have done if you had woken up in Bea's situation? How would you have reacted? How would you feel?
3. Why does Bea not search for her father? Why do you think Bea doesn't share her father's note with Mrs. Scott right away? What do you think of the choices and decisions Bea makes for herself and her sister?
4. What do you think of Bea as a big sister? Why does she feel the needs to keep the truth about their father leaving a secret from Viv? Have you ever kept a problem secret from someone else and tried to deal with it on your own? What was your experience like?
5. How would you have reacted if you were in Mrs. Scott's situation and found two children hiding and living in your stable? Why do you think she does not call the sheriff? What do you think would have happened to Bea and Viv if she had called the sheriff?
6. What does it mean to be a parent? What does it mean to act like a parent? How do Mrs. Scott's experiences with her own children impact and influence her relationships with Bea and Vivian? How does Bea feel about her mother and father? How do her feelings change? What did you learn about parent-child relationships from this book?
7. What did you learn from the book about the status of women and girls during the 1930s? What are some of the ways the female characters deal with societal restrictions? Do any of the women in this novel embody feminist ideals? Discuss how opportunities for women have evolved since the 1930s and what prejudices and roadblocks remain.
8. What draws Bea to the chestnut? Why do you think Bea is able to make a connection with the chestnut? How are Bea and the chestnut alike? What bonds them together? Have you ever felt a connection or bond with an animal or pet? What was it like?
9. Have you ever worked with horses before? Imagine you were given this opportunity. Would you take it? Why or why not? What did you learn from Bea's experiences about the challenges and benefits of caring for and training a horse? What life lessons might you learn from taking on a such a challenge?
10. Explore the theme of responsibility in the book. Which characters show that people living in a society together have a responsibility to one another? How do they show it? Do you believe you have responsibilities to yourself first or to other people? Why? How has this novel



changed the way you think about social, economic, and systematic injustices? What are you willing to take responsibility for to create a more just society?

11. What do the words “new deal” mean to Bea? What are “new deals” that other characters are looking for?
12. Why does Bea shake her head “to get rid of that ridiculous, that pitiful hopeful, that completely unjustified thought that [she] could call Mrs. Scott’s house *home*” (p. 260) What ideas about what makes a home do you get from Bea? What is home? What is essential to home? What does it look like when you don’t have a home? How does the idea of home and family change for Bea? Discuss the moment when Bea realizes that she has found a home.

ACTIVITIES

Sing All Your Cares Away

What role does music play in helping us cope with difficulties? Music uplifts, and during the Great Depression, songs could raise people’s spirits and offer hope or give many people dealing with hardships something to identify with. According to Bea, Ralph “obviously had a musical and hopeful soul” (p. 30). He and Rex often shared a cheerful tune while they worked.

Have students listen to some of those songs:



“On the Sunny Side of the Street”
(youtu.be/htkmiAuoMTk)

“There’s a Rainbow ’Round My Shoulder”
(youtu.be/DmokaexWMpU)

“I Got Rhythm”
(youtu.be/mAxAEY1Xzrk)

“Tiptoe Through the Tulips”
(youtu.be/hY-w5p5sz-Y)

“Happy Days Are Here Again”
(youtu.be/roF6H7oxVtE)

“Get Happy”
(youtu.be/K0K4like2zk)

Talk with students about their feelings about music and the role it plays in their lives. Are there songs that raise their spirits or bring them joy? Ask students to think about Bea and the problems and challenges she has to deal with. What kinds of songs do they think Bea needs to hear? Are they songs of hope, songs to escape her problems, songs to help her relax?



Set up small groups for discussion about music and playlists and let students talk about the songs they just listened to, favorite songs of their own, and their own experiences making and listening to playlists. Have them write down what kinds of ideas and emotions the songs they listen to inspire and share what they wrote with their group.

Then have students work together in their small groups to identify at least five problems, challenges, or emotions that Bea has to deal with and ask them to recommend songs that they think would be good for Bea to hear in those circumstances. For each song, they should write a paragraph that explains what they like about the song and what they think it offers to Bea.

Have students present these annotations to the class as part of a playlist, along with a link to their song collection on SoundCloud, Spotify, iTunes, or YouTube.

You might also incorporate additional approaches to this activity from this resource from the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) on Using Music to Teach about the Great Depression (socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/articles/se_71010715.pdf).

Getting a New Deal

*He's Ready! Are you?
We Need Action!
The fundamental cause of our distress has not been remedied.
Conditions demand Roosevelt and a New Deal.*

Dr. Liburn is inspired by the FDR rally he attends and brings a campaign flyer to Malachi (page 204). Given *the fundamental cause of our distress has not been remedied* by President Hoover's administration, FDR's New Deal ideas offered hope to people in crisis.

Talk with students about what role government plays. What role do they think it should play, especially in times of crisis? Does the government have a responsibility to help its citizens? Help them understand how the Great Depression and the New Deal changed the role of the federal government in the U.S. economy and what impact that had—and still has—on the economy, politics, and society.

After FDR takes office, his New Deal agencies and programs are set up to provide relief for the needy, recovery for the economy, and reform for the financial system. But that time has yet to come for the characters of *Bea and the New Deal Horse*.

Provide students with a list of New Deal relief and recovery agencies and their functions. Have them imagine that these programs and services are available to the characters of *Bea and the New Deal Horse*. Then have students research, identify, and explain at least two New Deal agencies and/or programs which could provide help to one of these characters:

Bea
Bea's father

Mrs. Scott
Malachi

Dr. Liburn
Old Berryman



Students will first need to identify and note the problems or needs of the character they have chosen. After using the list to select an agency or program that could help with a specific problem, students should do further research on that agency or program to determine if it could successfully meet their character's needs. Students should note which programs fall short.

Ask students to be specific in their benefits report about how the agencies/programs they identify could help their character. Have them explain what short- and longer-term impact these programs had on their character's health, well-being, financial security, housing, education, civil rights, and place in society.

Resources

FDR Library and Museum: Interactive Periodic Table of the New Deal
fdrlibrary.org/New-Deal-Periodic-Table

Mr. Donn's Site for Kids & Teachers: New Deal Agencies and Programs
greatdepression.mrdonn.org/newdealagencies.html

Library of Congress: New Deal Primary Source Set
loc.gov/classroom-materials/new-deal/

Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum: The Great Depression
hoover.archives.gov/exhibits/great-depression

FDR Presidential Library and Museum: Great Depression Facts
fdrlibrary.org/great-depression-facts

Children of the Great Depression by Russell Freedman

Protest History

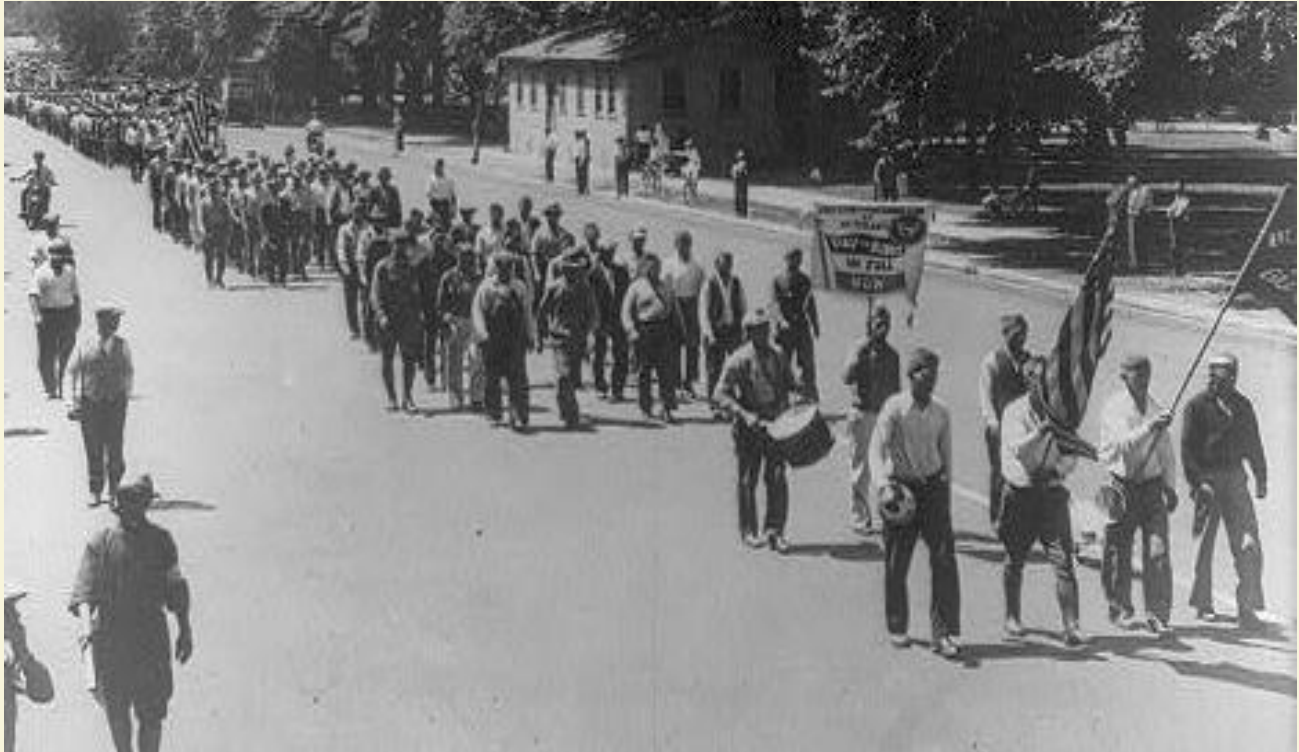
In the U.S., protesting is a legal right protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution. Bea witnesses World War I veterans marching their way to Washington, D.C., to demand change—an early payment of the bonus pay the government promised to them. When a bill to provide veterans' relief does not pass, more veterans, both Black and white—and their families—encamped on the nation's capital until President Hoover branded them as communist agitators and sent troops to forcibly remove them.

Bea also witnesses the reaction of the community to the Bonus Army marchers. Have students discuss the different sentiments and perceptions described in the book. Ask students how they might have reacted to the veterans or to members of the community.

Get students thinking more deeply about the purpose and the power of the protest. Talk about historic and recent protests. What kinds of thoughts and feelings do people express through protests? How does the media cover protesting? How do people react to protests and protestors? Have students ever participated in a protest? What inspired their participation? What was their experience like?



Have students research and learn more about the Bonus Army and their protest. Then have them identify and research another notable protest. Ask students to write an essay that compares and contrasts this protest with the protest of the Bonus Army. They should identify the reasons and the goals for each protest and look at what the resolutions from the protests meant to the protesters and to society in the long and short term.



Resources

National Parks Conservation Association: The Forgotten March
<https://www.npca.org/articles/1915-the-forgotten-march>

National Archives: The 1932 Bonus Army: Black and White Americans Unite in March on Washington
prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2020/07/15/the-1932-bonus-army-black-and-white-americans-unite-in-march-on-washington/

National Archives: African Americans in the Military during World War I
[archives.gov/research/african-americans/wwi/war](https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/wwi/war)

NPR: Soldier Against Soldier: The Story of the Bonus Army
[npr.org/2005/02/13/4494446/soldier-against-soldier-the-story-of-the-bonus-army](https://www.npr.org/2005/02/13/4494446/soldier-against-soldier-the-story-of-the-bonus-army)

Educators 4 Social Change: Teaching About Protests
educators4sc.org/topic-guides/teaching-about-protests/



Horse Tales

Given Bea's feelings for the chestnut and the experiences they share, get students talking about their relationship and the chestnut's role in it. Does the chestnut have feelings for Bea? What kind of personality does the chestnut have?



Though the story is told from Bea's point of view, the author gives readers a few clues about what the chestnut thinks and feels through Bea's insights. Sometimes authors tell stories that give animals a human consciousness and a way to express their thoughts. Talk with students about anthropomorphism and personification. What do they think about stories in which animals behave as animals versus stories with animals that seem human? Discuss and compare other animal characters from children's literature (Wilbur in *Charlotte's Web*; Ulysses (the squirrel) in *Flora and Ulysses*; Ivan in *The One and Only Ivan*; etc.) What does having animals with a human point of view bring to a story?

Have students write a short story from the point of view of an animal—the chestnut that becomes Sunup, the New Deal Horse. In telling a story from the chestnut's perspective, have them stay in the same fictional world, though their stories can take place before or after events in the book. When students read their finished stories aloud to the class, encourage discussion about how students developed their characters. Does the chestnut's voice sound human? How much of how they wrote the chestnut's character is based on how a horse actually behaves and real facts about horses?

EPISTOLARY ACTIVITIES

Presidential Correspondence

Bea is taken with FDR's idea of a new chance and a New Deal. Ask students to write a letter from Bea's perspective to FDR when he takes office as President of the United States. Have them include concerns Bea may have and also offer ideas she might suggest for his goals in office.

As many economic, racial, social, and environmental issues that were important during the Great Depression still present a challenge today, encourage students to also write their own letters to the President about things they are concerned about.





Family Correspondence

In *Bea and the New Deal Horse*, there are some family relationships that have been broken and need healing. Ask students to think about Mrs. Scott's relationship with her daughter. Is there a way to repair their relationship? Have students write an empathetic letter from Mrs. Scott to her daughter Marjorie that offers an apology and vision for a better future relationship.

FIELD TRIPS

Your New Deal

Seventy-five years after the New Deal created airports, schools, hospitals, post offices, art, highways, and more, we are still using them. No city, town, or rural area was untouched by the New Deal. Explore the Living New Deal map (livingnewdeal.org/map) and show students what New Deal projects are in your community. Plan a field trip to visit a local New Deal project and learn more about the New Deal's impact on your community! Or plan a project for students to seek out New Deal sites not yet on the map and submit the documentation for inclusion the Living New Deal's national inventory and map.

Equine Experience

Give students the opportunity to explore the basics of horsemanship. Local horse farms and riding centers are often open to visiting groups, offering either mounted or un-mounted activities, such as basic information about horses and horse care, grooming, tacking, feeding, and more.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST

New Deal Programs: Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?

This lesson plan from the Library of Congress uses primary sources to teach students about the impact the Great Depression and New Deal programs had on the lives of Americans.

loc.gov/classroom-materials/new-deal-programs-brother-can-you-spare-a-dime/

C3 Teachers: New Deal

This inquiry lesson plan uses the New Deal and the expansion of federal government programs as a context for considering the larger question about the appropriate role of government.

c3teachers.org/inquiries/new-deal/

C3 Teachers: New Deal, Fair Deal?

This inquiry focuses on the impacts of the New Deal policies with a focus on the experiences of everyday Americans living in the South.

c3teachers.org/inquiries/new-deal-fair-deal/

MORE RESOURCES

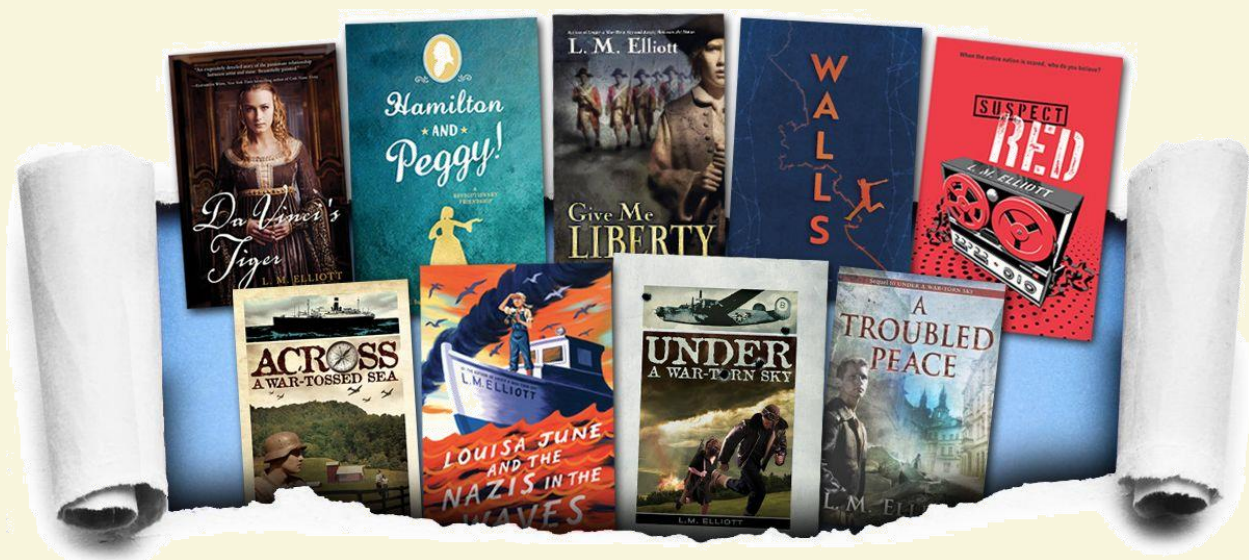
Visit author [L.M. Elliott's website](#) for more historical facts and resources related to *Bea and the New Deal Horse*.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



L. M. ELLIOTT was an award-winning magazine journalist in Washington, D.C., before becoming a New York Times bestselling author of historical and biographical novels. Her books explore a variety of eras (the Italian Renaissance, the American Revolutionary War, WWII, and the Cold War), and are written for a variety of ages. Many of her works have been named NCSS/CBC Notables (National Council of Social Studies and Children’s Book Council), Bank Street College Best Books, Jefferson Cup Honor Books, Kirkus Bests, and Grateful American Book Prize winners. A lifelong Virginian and history-lover, she spends happy hours on trail rides with her daughter and beloved horse Tinker.



RACHAEL WALKER (belleofthebook.com) developed this guide. She consults on a wide variety of educational programs and multimedia projects, and develops educational materials and reading resources for children, parents, and teachers.