



*Samantha*

## Learning Guide

Learn about innovation,  
generosity, and family  
through the stories of  
Samantha, set in 1904.

 American Girl®



*Samantha*

## About the Samantha Books

Samantha Parkington is a nine-year-old orphan who lives with her wealthy grandmother in a fictional small town in New York. Her stories take place at the turn of the twentieth century, a time when America faced far-reaching changes.

Change is the underlying theme in all the Samantha books. Samantha must find her own path between her grandmother's belief in old-fashioned values and ideas and her aunt's allegiance to new ones. Samantha learns to be thoughtful about making changes, and to be both respectful of traditional ways and open to what is new. Samantha's story parallels that of the nation at the beginning of the "American century," a time when the country faced changes in every sphere of life.

The six books of the core series are:

**Book 1:** *Meet Samantha*

**Book 2:** *Samantha Learns a Lesson*

**Book 3:** *Samantha's Surprise*

**Book 4:** *Happy Birthday, Samantha!*

**Book 5:** *Samantha Saves the Day*

**Book 6:** *Changes for Samantha*

## 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

### Innovation

In the early 1900s, most Americans still lived the way their parents had. They traveled by horse and by steam power and lived in rural areas. Less than ten percent of homes had electricity. But change was in the air. While the Wright brothers worked on flying machines, Henry Ford perfected the Model T, which would eventually replace the horse and buggy. The first two decades of the 1900s were an exciting time of reform, innovation, and progress. It eventually became known as the "progressive era." *Discussion questions:* Newfangled, or innovative, inventions were important in 1904. What are some examples of inventions that are considered "newfangled" today?

### Giving of Oneself

In *Samantha's Surprise*, Samantha plans to make her Christmas presents by hand. She says, "Home-made gifts are the best ones because you give of yourself when you make them" (page 22). Samantha is worried that Uncle Gard's friend Cornelia might get in the way of her plans for the holidays. But then Cornelia gives so generously of herself—by sledding, shopping, and making a gingerbread house with Samantha—that Samantha decides to give of herself in return. *Discussion question:* What do you think it means to "give of yourself"?

### Family

Samantha is an orphan. She doesn't have a mom and a dad, and she was an only child when her parents died. Samantha's family is made up of her grandmother, Uncle Gard, and Aunt Cornelia. *Discussion question:* What are some other examples of nontraditional families?



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## Answer Key

### Innovation

1. Answers will vary but may include the following points:

Type of activity	Traditional ways	“Newfangled” in 1904	New and innovative today
<b>Getting around</b>	Horse and buggy	Motorcar	Hybrid car
<b>Listening to music</b>	Live concerts	Phonograph or record player	MP3 device
<b>Entertainment</b>	Live theater	Talking pictures	3-D movies

2. Answers will vary.

3. Answers will vary.

### Giving of Oneself

1. Answers will vary but may include the following points:

Characters	Examples
Samantha	Samantha gives of herself by giving her beloved doll and a basket of food to Nellie when she is sent back to the city.
Grandmary	Grandmary gives of herself by providing a home and a healthy upbringing to Samantha.
Uncle Gard	Uncle Gard gives of himself by driving Samantha around in his exciting new motorcar and by acting as a positive male role model in Samantha’s life.

2. Answers will vary.

3. Answers will vary.

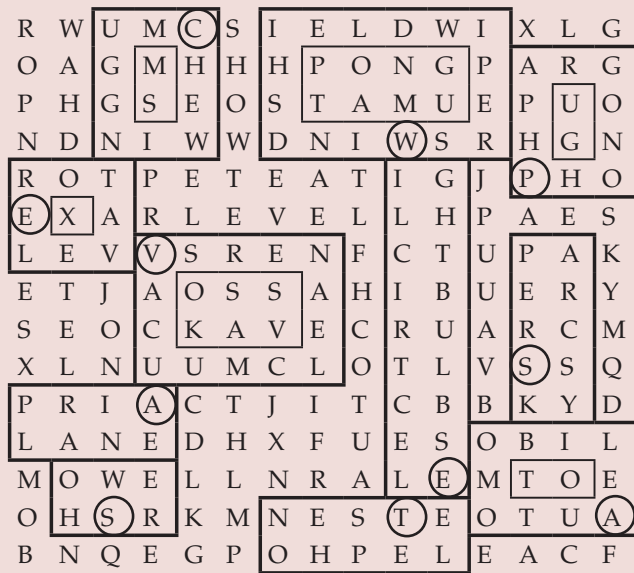


Samantha

## Family

1. Students may suggest that some advantages to being an only child include more attention from one's parents, not having to share one's belongings, being able to be alone when one wants to be, and no sibling rivalry. Disadvantages may include not having someone one's age in the house to spend time or commiserate with, parents expecting too much or putting a lot of pressure on the child, and nobody to share the duty of household chores.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.

## Newfangled Notions Word Search





*Samantha*

## Innovation

1. The early 1900s were an exciting time of innovation. What technologies were considered “newfangled” in Samantha’s time? What inventions are considered new and innovative today?

Type of activity	Traditional ways	“Newfangled” in 1904	New and innovative today
Getting around	Horse and buggy		
Listening to music			MP3 player
Entertainment		Talking pictures	

2. Samantha’s stories take place more than 100 years ago. If Samantha could travel forward in time to this year, what changes do you think would surprise her the most?

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3. In the space below, draw a picture of what you think the world will look like in 100 years.



Samantha

## Giving of Oneself

1. How do the following characters give of themselves in *Meet Samantha*?

Characters	Examples
Samantha	
Grandmary	
Uncle Gard	

2. Think of a person you know who gives of himself or herself often. Give at least two examples of this person's generosity.

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3. Describe a time when you gave of yourself.

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Samantha

# Family

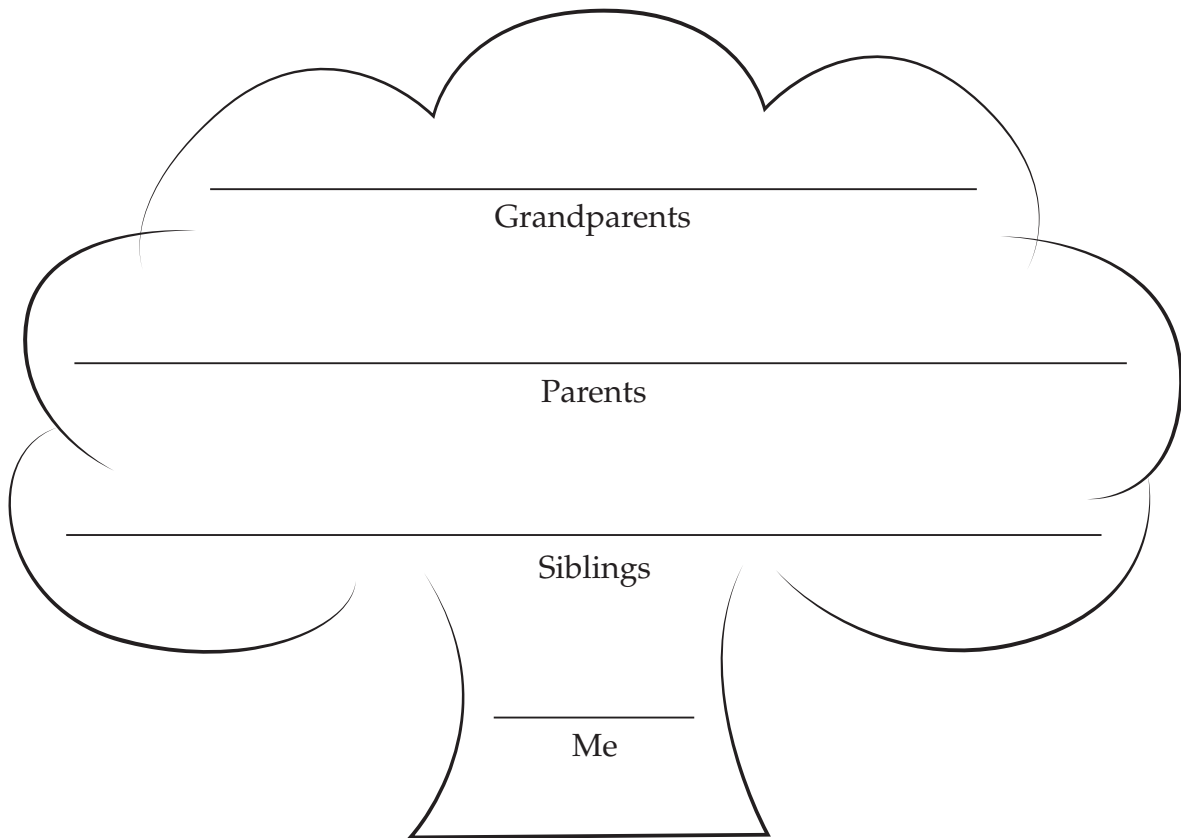
1. Samantha is an only child. What are some benefits to being an only child? What are some disadvantages?

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2. Who is in your family? Fill in as much of the family tree as you can.



3. Is there someone you consider close enough to be family who doesn't fit in a particular category on your family tree? Explain.

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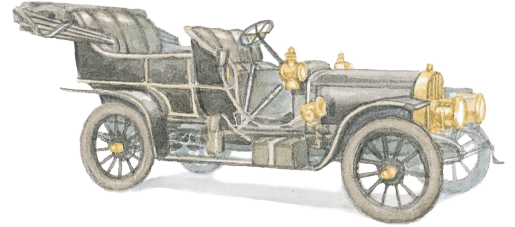
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Samantha

## Newfangled Inventions

The world was bursting with recent inventions in the early 1900s. Find the names of some of those things in this puzzle. Each item in the word list can be found below. The words turn corners to form a box. Circle the first letter; then outline the whole word. We've done one to show you how it works.



R	W	U	M	C	S	I	E	L	D	W	I	X	L	G
O	A	G	M	H	H	P	O	N	G	P	A	R	G	
P	H	G	S	E	O	S	T	A	M	U	E	P	U	O
N	D	N	I	W	W	D	N	I	W	S	R	H	G	N
R	O	T	P	E	T	E	A	T	I	G	J	P	H	O
E	X	A	R	L	E	V	E	L	L	H	P	A	E	S
L	E	V	V	S	R	E	N	F	C	T	U	P	A	K
E	T	J	A	O	S	S	A	H	I	B	U	E	R	Y
S	E	O	C	K	A	V	E	C	R	U	A	R	C	M
X	L	N	U	U	M	C	L	O	T	L	V	S	S	Q
P	R	I	A	C	T	J	I	T	C	B	B	K	Y	D
L	A	N	E	D	H	X	F	U	E	S	O	B	I	L
M	O	W	E	L	L	N	R	A	L	E	M	T	O	E
O	H	S	R	K	M	N	E	S	T	E	O	T	U	A
B	N	Q	E	G	P	O	H	P	E	L	E	A	C	F

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|---------------------|-------------------|
| airplane            | shower            |
| automobile          | skyscraper        |
| chewing gum         | telephones        |
| electric lightbulbs | vacuum cleaners   |
| elevator            | windshield wipers |
| phonograph          |                   |