

Living Literature Grammar and Language Arts Packets



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for 3rd - 4th Grades

by
Cindy West

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About the Author



Cindy West has a master's degree in elementary education. She has taught in the public schools, but wouldn't trade teaching her own children for the world! Her schooling style is eclectic - mostly Charlotte Mason inspired with bits and pieces of Classical Education, too. Her family's school time is busy and creative as they use unit studies, project-based learning, and as much real-life lesson time as possible. Cindy loves sharing ideas with other homeschool moms through her blog and in person teaching workshops. She would love to hear from you!

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Literature Books Used in the Curriculum

Alejandro's Gift by Richard E. Albert

Aunt Chip and the Triple Creek Dam Affair by Patricia Polacco

Goin' Somewhere Special by Patricia McKissack

Harry the Dirty Dog by Gene Zion

Mailing May by Michael Tunnell

Mrs. Katz and Tush by Patricia Polacco

Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

Papa Piccolo by Carol Talley

Snakes Are Hunters by Patricia Lauber

Spiders by Gail Gibbons (Warning: There is evolutionary content on the 4th page.)

Storm in the Night by Mary Stolz

The Hatmaker's Sign by Candace Fleming

The Hickory Chair by Lisa Rowe Faustino

The Mountain that Loved a Bird by Alice McLerran

The Raft by Jim Lamarche

About the Curriculum



When my daughter was in 3rd grade, she and I were both tired (already) of the daily grammar drills from her workbooks. I noticed that she was continually going over the same few grammar concepts day in and day out. Not only did she not need the excessive amount of practice, she was bored to tears. Around the same time, I read a post on the Five In A Row Message Boards about a mom who didn't use a grammar curriculum. She simply pulled out grammar lessons from the living literature she and her son were using as opportunities arose. My wheels started turning....

My daughter (and I) had long before fallen in love with really good literature. We'd both be happy to sit and read together all day long if the rest of the curriculum would just leave us alone! :o) Alas, other subjects had to be taught and grammar was one of them. In the midst of being unhappy with our grammar curriculum, I was also realizing that spelling was beginning to be a bore since it held no significance to anything we were studying. I also didn't feel like anything we were doing, as far as curriculum goes, was specifically teaching much (or expecting much) about reading comprehension.

I mulled all of these things over a bit before I decided to create a language arts curriculum that would meet the needs of my daughter and pull all the loose ends together into a meaningful and easy to use language arts curriculum. And what follows is that curriculum.

I pulled fifteen great pieces of age-appropriate fiction, historical fiction and non-fiction picture books and put together various language arts activities ("Grammar Packets") for each book. I chose picture books rather than chapter books so the reading could be completed in one sitting. I planned it so the books can be read and the activities completed in any order.

Before I began, I researched grammar, language arts, reading comprehension, reading strategies and spelling expectations for children in 3rd-4th grades. I used homeschool curriculum sources as well as internet scope and sequences to determine exactly what skills my children needed to learn and practice within that age range.

My daughter started the curriculum during the second half of 3rd grade and finished it up during her 4th grade year. My son didn't begin using it until his 4th grade year. Each book is meant to last one week, but as you can probably tell if you're quick at math, we didn't always complete one book per week. Sometimes writing projects, grammar games or other language arts lessons took the place of this curriculum.

Like I mentioned before, the daily repetition of grammar skills weren't needed by my daughter. In other words, once she had it, she had it (usually.) I didn't see the need to continually practice the same skill over and over. For that reason, I specifically didn't include page after page of the same skill. If I noticed that she needed extra practice in a particular skill, I made sure to pull out

a page from our old grammar curriculum or print a freebie page from the internet as additional practice. I hope you'll do the same if you notice a particular need from your child.

Using the Curriculum

Following is how we used the materials. I hope you'll feel free to use them in whatever way works best for your family.

1. I copied each book's activity pages, hole punched them and placed them in a three-ring binder. The pages from the book we were working on were placed in the front of the binder so we didn't have to search for them.
2. One book was covered per week. Typically the schedule went something like this:
 - Day One: Read the book and discuss it with mom. I often asked my daughter to narrate the book instead.
 - Day Two: 1/3 of the activities, plus rewriting each spelling word twice.
 - Day Three: 1/3 of the activities, plus rewriting each spelling word twice.
 - Day Four: 1/3 of the activities, plus a spelling pretest.
 - Day Five: Mom goes over missed activities with her, plus missed pretest words are written again, plus a final spelling test.

The curriculum not only covers the language arts skills I mentioned above (grammar, reading comprehension, reading strategies and spelling), but it also covers oral language skills, narration and handwriting. Writing skills are practiced, too, as children answer the reading comprehension questions. In fact, I've included a list of the skills covered (along with a brief explanation of most skills) following this section.

For my daughter, the curriculum fostered independence as well. Besides a few preparatory comments, I allowed her to complete the reading and lessons without my help. Of course, the beauty of homeschooling allows you to help as much as your child needs!

As for activity directions, they are short and sweet. If a concept is new to your child, you may need to go over the how-to's with them briefly. There is an answer key at the end of the book should you need it. If you run into a question, email me and I'll be happy to answer it.

Getting Started

I think you're ready to get started. Here are a few last instructions to get you going. I pray your language arts time is pleasant and prosperous!

Materials:

Copy paper
Three hole punch
Three ring binder
Literature Books

What to Do:

Copy the activity pages and three hole punch.

Add them to a binder.

Choose a book for the week and place the activity pages for that book in the front of the binder.

Mark the activities you expect your child to complete each day.

Give any directions or mini-lessons you need to give each day.

Check work and go over missed answers.

Place the activity pages in the back of the binder when completed.

Skills Covered

(with Brief Explanations if necessary)

Parts of a Book

Author

Illustrator

Copyright

Dedications

Genres - Fiction and Nonfiction

Book Elements and Comprehension

Setting

Characters - Main and Secondary

Main Idea

Compare and Contrast

Sequence of Events

Fact vs. Opinion

Graphic Organizers

Critical thinking through writing

Poetic Devices

Descriptive Words

Alliteration - the use of one sound repeated many times through a sentence.

Onomatopoeia - words that sound like the actual sound they make. Examples: buzz, bong, cluck

Personification - when an inanimate object takes on human-like characteristics.

Similes - a comparison of two unlike things in a phrase. The phrase usually contains “like” or “as”. Examples: sly as a fox, the wind whistled like a freight train

Parts of Speech

Nouns - person, place or thing

Common Nouns - Examples: brother, grocery, dog

Proper Nouns - Examples: Gary, Walmart, Oreo

Pronouns - used in place of a noun - Example: **They** went to the store. Common pronouns include: I, me, you, they, them, he, she, it, we, him her, us and them

Verbs - action word, otherwise known as doing words

Helping Verbs - word that helps the main verb of the sentence. Common helping verbs include: am, as, are, was, were, been, be, can, has, shall, will, do, does, did, have, should, may, might, being, would, must, could, had

Subjects - the main noun of the sentence

Predicates - the main verb of the sentence

Adjectives - modify a noun or a pronoun, typically give the noun or pronoun more of a “picture in your mind”- Examples: **yellow** dress, **bright** sun

Adverbs - modify verbs or adjectives, typically give the action word more of a “picture in your mind” and often end in -ly - Examples: sing **beautifully**, drove **fast**, worked **quickly**

Possessives - show ownership - Example: Sarah’s dog (Who does the dog belong to? Sarah.)

Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases - a list of prepositions follows the skills list. A preposition links nouns, pronouns and phrases to other parts of the sentence. A preposition is always part of a phrase. - Example: The dog ran **into the house**.

Interjections - Usually doesn’t grammatically fit with the rest of a sentence and almost always shows great emotion. Examples: Great! Wow! Ouch! Oh, no!

Conjunctions - link words or phrases. Common conjunctions include: and, but, or, so, yet, nor and for.

Sentences

Complete Sentences

Sentence Fragments - Example: Like a tree limb.

Run-on Sentences - Example: The wind roared in the storm causing the tree limbs to break and the power lines to fall and the electricity to go out while we sat under the bed crying and screaming because we thought a tornado might be coming toward us when we heard a really loud sound like a train but it was only a strong gust of wind.

Capitalization

Punctuation - including ending punctuation, commas and quotes

Types of Sentences - including declarative, exclamatory and interrogative

Word Usage

Homonyms - words that sound alike but have different meanings and/or spellings - Example: bear/bare

Synonyms - words that have similar meanings - Example: friend, buddy, chum, pal

Antonyms - words that have opposite meanings - Example: love, hate

Compound Words - two words that could stand alone combined into one new word. Example: dog+house = doghouse

Contractions - Examples: can’t, won’t, don’t, she’ll, they’re, I’ll

Past, Present and Future Tense - Examples: Past - I went to the store. Present - I go to the store. OR I am going to the store. Future - I am going to the store. OR I will go to the store.

Double Negatives - Example: I **don’t** have **no** money. Two negatives have been used in the sentence and that is not appropriate grammatically.

Singular and Plural - Singular means one (apple), while plural means more than one (apples.)

Prefix - a prefix is added to the beginning of a root word to change its meaning. The prefix cannot stand alone without the root word. Example: re+run = rerun. “Re” is the prefix. It cannot stand alone as a word. When added to run, it changes the meaning of the root word (run) completely.

Suffix - a suffix is added to the end of a root word to change its meaning. It cannot stand alone as a word. Example: run+ing = running. “-ing” is the suffix. It cannot stand alone as a word. When added to run, it changes the tense of the word.

Root Words - the stand-alone word as mentioned above.

The following word usage “toughies” are explained and practiced:

more/most, sit/set, gone/went, -er/-est, to/too/two, there/their/they’re, may/can, its/it’s,
a/an, good/well

Dictionary and Spelling

Spelling Words

ABC order

Dictionary Practice

Thesaurus Practice

Dividing Syllables

Writing

Handwriting and/or Cursive (depending on what you expect as the teacher)

Answering questions with complete sentences and/or paragraphs.

Factual Writing

Creative Writing

Opinion-based Writing

Preposition List

About	From	Toward
Above	In	Under
Across	In front of	Underneath
After	Inside	Until
Against	Instead of	Up
Along	Into	Upon
Among	Like	With
Around	Near	Within
At	Of	Without
Before	Off	
Behind	On	
Below	On top of	
Beneath	Onto	
Beside	Out of	
Between	Outside	
By	Over	
Down	Past	
During	Since	
Except	Through	
For	To	





Alejandro's Gift

Author _____

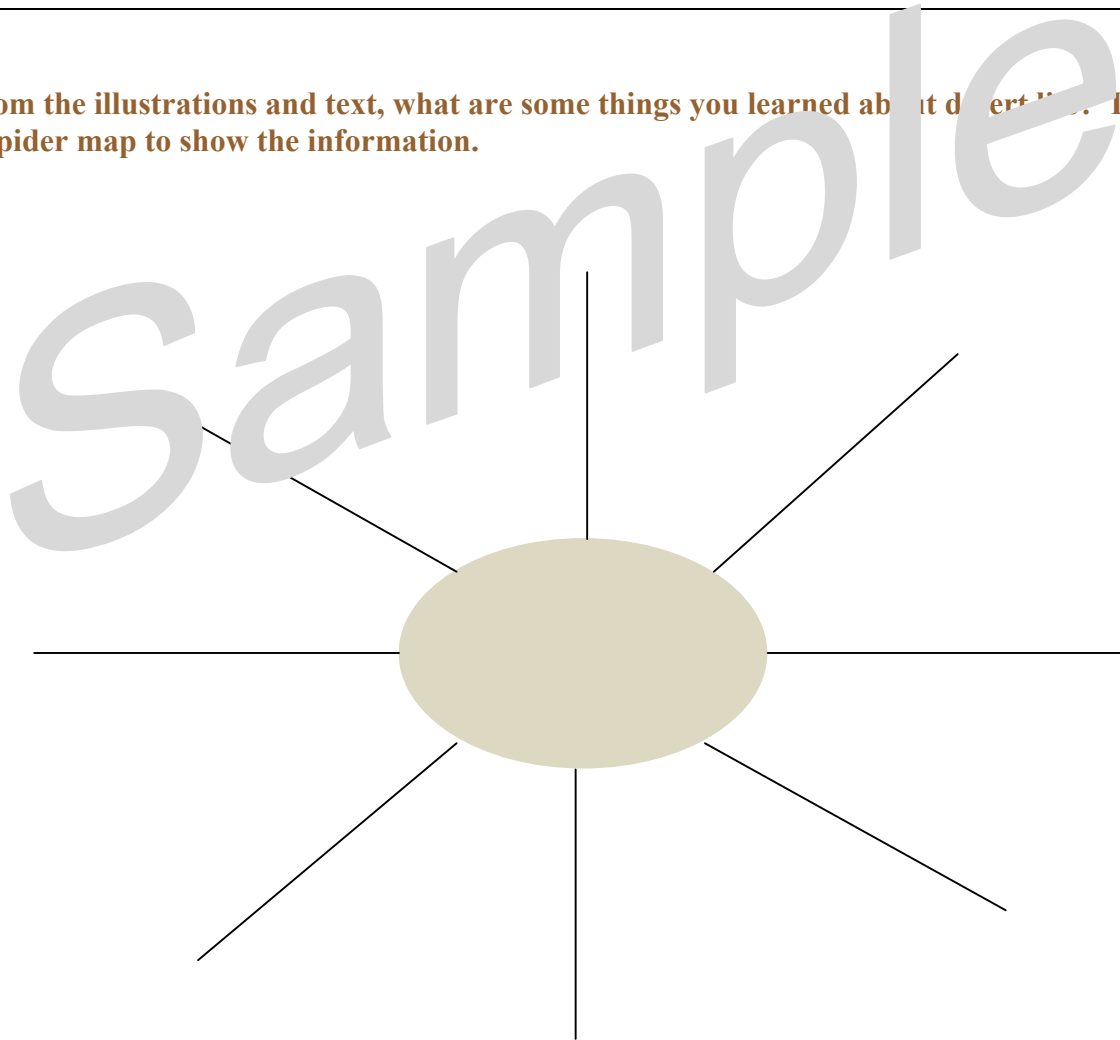
Illustrator _____

Circle the correct genre.

Fiction Nonfiction

What is the setting of this story?

From the illustrations and text, what are some things you learned about desert life? Draw a spider map to show the information.



Some sentences are fragments and need to be combined. Some are run-ons and need to be shortened. Decide what to do and rewrite the sentences correctly.

1. Alejandro planted a garden. Filled with carrots, beans and onions. Tomatoes and corn.

2. A ground squirrel ran up to one of the furrows, drank its fill of water, and scampered away after it left, Alejandro realized that for those few moments his loneliness had been forgotten.

Sit means to take a resting position. Set means to place something in a certain position. Circle the correct usage in the following sentences.

1. The birds (sit, set) on the campus.
2. Alejandro (sit, set) plants in his garden.
3. Alejandro (sit, set) up a very nice watering system for the animals and himself.
4. The animals will (sit, set) patiently and wait for watering time.

Decide whether the verbs in each sentence are written in past tense, present tense or future tense.

1. He took the time to build an elaborate watering system.
2. He is eating lunch right now.
3. The animals will come to get water today.
4. Why didn't the animals come this morning?
5. He will leave the animals alone.
6. The sun is setting in the sky.

The suffix -er is used when comparing two things. (Comparative) The suffix -est is used when comparing more than two things. (Superlative) Decide which to use in each sentence.

1. The roadrunner was the (smaller, smallest) of the two animals.
2. The pocket mouse was the (smaller, smallest) of all the animals coming into Alejandro's garden.
3. The jackrabbit was the (faster, fastest) of the two.
4. The large, old tortoise was the (heavier, heaviest) of them all.

Add a pronoun to each sentence. Make up your own sentence with a pronoun in the blank. (me, we, us, he, she, them, it.....)

1. _____ want to go visit the desert sometime.
 2. Do you think _____ will ever be let _____ gain _____.
 3. _____ coming to the watering hole every day.
 4. _____
-
-

Circle the interjections. Make up a sentence of your own with an interjection.

1. Wow! You sure did put a lot of work into that watering system.
 2. Hey! The animals are coming! Hurry!
 3. Oh, I sure do love seeing the animals!
 4. _____
-
-

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

What circumstances led to Alejandro being so lonely?

Tell about a time you were lonely and what you did to help yourself.

Why do you think the book is called Alejandro's "Gift"?

What made the second watering hole so much better than the first?

sample

Spelling Words - Write each in cursive at least twice. Study!

watering

growth

desert

dessert

shunned

remain

possible

loneliness

windmill

unexpected

visitor

gardening

BONUS:

disappointed

Sample