Lesson

Language Arts

Reading
This week, begin reading *Stuart Little*. You should aim to finish the book in three weeks.

Assignments
Before your child begins learning new grammar material, it is important to review previously learned material. This is an important habit to develop and to follow regularly. Spend a few minutes each day helping your child recall the work of the previous day. This will help solidify the knowledge and prepare your student for the work ahead.

1. To begin reviewing nouns and verbs, write in your main lesson book ten to twelve short sentences about various animals and what they do. Here are some examples:

   The fish swims.
   The bird flies.
   The lion roars.
   The owl hoots.

   Make sure that each sentence has just one noun and one verb, and that each sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark. Keep the sentences simple! Once you are done, go through and circle the nouns in blue and the verbs in red. Note: the word *the* is not a noun; it’s a “helping word.”

   Using the sample sentences above, here is an example of what your child’s work will look like:

   ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY
   Language Arts
   □ Begin reading *Stuart Little*.
   □ Identify nouns and verbs.
   □ Correct errors in punctuation and capitalization.
   □ Memorize spelling words and take a quiz.
   □ Begin writing in a journal.
   Social Studies
   □ Imagine and draw a very old tree.
   □ Make a list of 10 things your tree has seen.
   □ Begin making a landscape model.
   □ Activity: Local Topography
   Project: Choosing a site
   Science
   □ Draw observations of different fruits and vegetables.
   □ Write a description of the form and quality of the fruit.
   □ Draw a cross-section of the fruit.
   Art
   □ Become familiar with the seven laws of perspective
   □ Draw no-outline circles.
   Music
   □ Choose a duet to begin learning.
The fish swims.
The bird flies.
The lion roars.
The owl hoots.

If your child has trouble differentiating between nouns and verbs, you can help by asking “Who or what is the sentence about?” (that’s the noun), and “What is happening in the sentence?” (that’s the verb).

2. The next day, recall the sentences you wrote and see how many sentences you can remember without looking at your main lesson book. After recalling as many of the sentences as possible, open your main lesson book and read the sentences aloud.

Next, review the four things that every sentence must have:

• capital letter at the beginning
• noun
• verb
• punctuation mark at the end

Ask your parent to write in your main lesson book a short paragraph of simple sentences with NO punctuation or capitalization. Using a colored pencil, you will correct the paragraph, dividing it into complete sentences by adding punctuation and capitalization. Here is an example of the kind of paragraph your parent might write:

the dog ran away the girl cried sadly the boy ran after the dog the orange cat mewed the old man slept the moon rose slowly

When writing a faulty paragraph for your child to correct, use simple sentences at first. Don’t try to “trick” your child in the first lesson. You want to build up a sense of success at first and then slowly introduce more challenging work.

Here is how the example above would be corrected:

The dog ran away. The girl cried sadly. The boy ran after the dog.
The orange cat mewed. The old man slept. The moon rose slowly.

In this course, you will sometimes be asked to create original exercises. If you are not comfortable with this responsibility, or do not have the
time, feel free to find a book of grammar exercises your child can work from directly.

3. Ask a parent to help you create a list of five to ten spelling words, either from the list in the appendix or from your written work or reading. Practice the words from Monday through Wednesday. Use the creative suggestions in the appendix for your spelling practice. On Thursday, take a pre-test to see how well you are remembering your spelling words. If you make some mistakes on the pre-test, review those words before the quiz on Friday. Words you have not mastered by the end of Friday can be added to next week’s list.

You may want to keep lists of your spelling words in your main lesson book, or in a separate spelling notebook.

Some children are very poor spellers who spell most words incorrectly. Others seem to have an almost instinctual ability to spell. Spelling ability is partially related to the learning style of the student and to genetic predisposition, but it also has to do with general reading strength and practice.

Start each week by creating a new list. The list can include words from the reading, a selection from the word lists in the coursebook appendix, and words your child recently misspelled in written work. Review meanings of words, as well as the proper spelling and tricks for remembering the spelling. Some children can easily learn ten to twelve words per week. Some can handle only five. Trial and error will help you discover what is right for your child.

Encourage your student to practice the spelling words in a different way each week. This will help keep things interesting. When you give the spelling quiz at the end of the week, read each word aloud and vary the order from the list with which your child practiced all week. If your child misspells any words on the spelling quiz, help him or her make the necessary corrections, and then add those words to next week’s list to give your child more time to learn them.

4. Begin keeping a journal. Your journal can be a binder, a notebook, a sketchbook, or any other kind of book that works for you. Get into the habit of writing in your journal at least three times a week (perhaps every other day). You can write about anything you like! You might write about what you experienced the day before, or about something that happened to you years ago. You can invent stories and write letters. Make sure you date each journal entry.
Language Arts
(continued)

Writing in a journal (or journaling) lets you write informally, away from the constraints of an assignment. Journaling has its own kind of freedom, and writing in it regularly will improve both your ability and your confidence as a writer. We will provide some suggestions for writing topics because we know that some days it’s difficult to come up with ideas, but we encourage you to come up with ideas of your own.

Use your journal to practice your cursive writing. Start paying attention to your handwriting. Make sure letters following o’s and v’s come off the top of the o and v, that lower case m’s have three humps and n’s have two. The lower case q should be distinguished from a g, just as the lower case u and v need to be clearly different from each other.

The goal is to learn how to write beautifully and quickly. In order to find the right balance, you will sometimes have to focus on the form of the writing and at other times you will have to focus on speed. If it takes all morning to write two sentences, you are going too slowly. However, if you finish your page in one minute, with writing that no one can read, then you are defeating the purpose of learning to write fluidly. If you find writing in cursive very challenging, alternate the days you use it. With regular practice, you will find that cursive writing gets easier and easier.

It is important that your child’s journal writing experience is largely free of judgment or constraints. This will allow your child to experience the freedom and flow of writing. The most important way you can support your child’s journal writing is to encourage him or her to write on a regular basis (three times a week is recommended) and to be enthusiastic (not judgmental) about what your child has written if he or she wants to share it with you.

Have your child write on both the front and back of the journal pages. Not only does this conserve paper, but it also gives the notebook the appearance of a “real” book being written, which is very fulfilling for a child. Writing in the journal with colored pencils makes a much more beautiful book, and of course, illustrations are always a lovely addition.

Try to avoid using lined paper. Many parents are dismayed by the crooked lines when a child is using unlined paper. However, those crooked lines are very important. When a child sees that his or her writing is crooked, the child is forced to draw forth from within the necessary strength and
balance to keep the lines straight. Sooner or later the lines will become straight, and the child will have grown inwardly. However, if he or she is always kept within bounds by straight lines, the child never has the opportunity to develop inner strength and balance to correct such crookedness.

The subject material for journal writing can simply be the content of life’s daily activities. The purpose is to help the child’s writing flow more freely and to help bring more awareness to the regular life events. When recalling events of the previous days, let your child struggle with memory a bit before you do the remembering for him or her.

When reviewing your student’s journal, make a note of any areas with which your child has trouble so you can work on those later. Rather than correcting the journal, take time to focus on problem areas at a separate time so your child doesn’t feel you are criticizing his or her journal writing.

If your child is struggling with penmanship, or has trouble writing in cursive, you are encouraged to refer back to the third grade course. Take the time to do regular form drawing practice, as outlined there. Form drawing leads easily into cursive writing, especially if done often so the child becomes accustomed to the “flowing” motion of the lines. We encourage you to have your child do all sizes of form drawing, both large and small, as well as many different kinds of patterns. Handwork activities (such as whittling, knitting, crocheting, clay sculpting, and beeswax modeling) can also improve writing by strengthening muscles and developing coordination. It is worth taking the time to engage in these handwork activities frequently with your child; you will soon notice an increase in your child’s dexterity in writing, and he or she will have some lovely craft items to show for it!

Social Studies

Assignments

1. Take some time to imagine your tree in great detail. Remember, your tree is very old. How tall is it? Do the branches start low to the ground or does the trunk rise up straight and tall before the first branches begin? When you have a strong image of your tree, draw a picture of it in your social studies main lesson book. Try to make your drawing as detailed as possible.
When you have completed your drawing, take a few minutes to appreciate it. Imagine that this tree has been growing for hundreds of years and that it has witnessed all of the events that have happened near your home since it was a tiny little sapling growing out of the ground.

Your child might appreciate your help in envisioning this tree. You might want to discuss ideas about the tree before your child begins to draw to help your child create a strong mental image of a very old tree.

2. On the next page of your main lesson book, make a list of about ten things that your tree has seen in its lifetime. See how far back you can go. Start with events that have happened in your lifetime and work backward. It’s all right if you can’t come up with a lot of events. Title this page “Events My Tree Has Seen” and leave the rest of the page blank.

As the year progresses, you will be adding many things to this list. Your knowledge of your area and its history will increase and you will have a much better sense of the events that your tree has witnessed. Every few weeks we will ask you to add new things to this list. In the meantime, feel free to give your tree a special name, and think about it from time to time as you learn about the area around you.

You can help jog your child’s memories about past events if he or she seems stuck with this assignment. Do not worry about teaching your child about local history—this assignment is just meant to allow your child to begin considering historical events in a personally relevant way.

3. This week you will begin making a miniature landscape model based on the topography of your local area. Topography is the shape and features of the land. The first step is to choose a site for your landscape model. You might have to make several excursions to find a suitable place. See the activity section below for instructions on how to get started. Read through them with a parent and make sure you understand all of the different steps before you get started.

In your main lesson book, keep track of the work you accomplish on each excursion, including the following:
• **Sketches:** Sketches of the site don’t have to be elaborate but they should contain specific observations of the area. Label items in the sketches for future reference.

• **Written observations:** Write notes of your observations of the area (you don’t have to write in complete sentences). Include specific details. Record smells and sounds as well as sights and textures.

• **Short summary of the day’s work:** Write down any discoveries you made and describe how the day went. Think about what was easy and what was more difficult. Explain any problems you encountered and ideas for how you could avoid them in the future.

The local topography project is a long-term project that extends over three weeks. In the first week you and your child will visit the site to make observations and to collect samples. During the second and third weeks your child will make a scale model of the site incorporating observations made during your visits. This may be the first time your child has had to record information to be used later. Help your student think through the kinds of observations that will be most useful for building a model. Together, you may want to come up with some questions ahead of time that your child can answer while making observations at the site. For example: How much of the site is covered by trees? Is there any water on the site? Are there any objects made by humans on the site?

This first lesson is a great opportunity for your child to get comfortable using the main lesson book. Encourage your child to write in it as much as possible and to think of it as a place to keep track of observations. Remember that you can paste things into the main lesson book later if it is easier to take a smaller notebook with you on your expeditions.

Your child’s ongoing log of the project will contain different types of entries. Encourage your child to record information in a way that keeps it organized and makes sense to him or her. At the very least, each day’s log entry should contain:

• Sketches
• Written observations
• A short summary of each day’s work
You may want to consider using a field guide of local trees and plants to help you complete the list of species found in your area. If you do not have a field guide at home, you can usually find one in the reference section of your local library.

This lesson contains many detailed instructions. This is a good opportunity for you and your child to learn a bit about how to manage a long-term project with multiple steps. Does your child find the instructions overwhelming? Does he or she follow each one in sequence or choose to skip ahead? Does your child have an easy or difficult time keeping track of the materials? As you work on the project, gently engage your child to be aware of how to organize the work.

Thinking about how the day went is a good opportunity for your child to think about his or her learning style. Reflection of this sort may not come easily at first, so you may want to ask your child questions that will encourage deeper thinking. For example: What is the easiest part of this project so far? What is the most difficult? What problems did you encounter today? How did you solve them? What parts of this project are you most excited about?

Science

Assignments

1. Your first observation will be of several different kinds of fruit.
   Choose two or three fruits (or vegetables) to explore on one day, and two or three others to do on another day. Remember, many so-called “vegetables” are really fruits because they contain seeds on the inside: tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, etc. Explore some of them, too!

   You will examine each piece thoroughly and try to experience it with all the senses. After a period of examination, carefully draw the fruit in the science main lesson book. You will make two drawings of each piece of fruit, using two different viewpoints.

   These drawings should not just be casual sketches. Make each drawing carefully, using colored pencils to portray what you see as clearly as possible.
All of these drawings should not be made in one day. Take time with your drawings. Make them different sizes, from small to large. Expand tiny things into large pictures, and shrink large items into tiny pictures. Consider doing huge paintings of things that are actually very small. Let yourself experience all these wonders of nature in a new way. Enjoy yourself, and allow yourself to become truly involved in the discovery of the hidden world of geometry all around you.

Student will practice drawing from varying perspectives. Drawings should be carefully done and in full color.

2. After drawing each piece of fruit, you will write a written description in the science main lesson book. First describe its form and then describe its quality. The form is the fruit's outward appearance, what everyone can see. Words that describe its shape, its size, and its color are good for describing form. The fruit’s quality is how you experience it personally. Words that express opinions are good for expressing quality. The words delicious and beautiful express quality.

When you are satisfied with your description, read aloud your description of the form (shape) to a friend or family member who does not know what fruit is being described (make sure you don’t say the name of the fruit in your description!). Have that person try to draw it from the description. If the person cannot guess what the item is from the description of its form, read the description of the qualities of the fruit. This can be a good test of communication skills.

During this first observation activity, your child may have a difficult time coming up with words to describe what is being observed. At this age children tend to be quite literal in their thinking and they rely heavily on visual cues when describing objects. Encourage your child to close his or her eyes and use the other senses.

3. After you have drawn the whole piece of fruit from two points of view and have written a description of both its outer form and its quality, you are ready for the next step. Ask a parent to help you cut the fruit in a cross-section as in the following examples:

(Note: When cutting fruit with hard pits in the center, such as peaches or plums, it’s easier if you score around the pit and then separate the two hemispheres, leaving the pit in one side.)
Now draw the fruit from the top, showing the pattern of the cross-section. (This will be your third perspective of that fruit.) See how your picture changes and your knowledge increases? What new qualities are you aware of when you cut the fruit? Does the cut fruit reveal some unexpected pattern? You will probably notice that the fruit’s scent is released when you cut it, which may give a new dimension to your knowledge.

When you finish observing and drawing the cross-sections of the fruit, use it to make a fruit salad!

Students can be encouraged to discuss what they see either before or after they draw.
Language Arts

Reading

Continue reading *Stuart Little*. Remember to alternate between reading some of it silently and some of it out loud with a parent.

Assignments

1. Use your noun and verb cards to create a variety of sentences. Play this sentence-building game several times this week. Add new nouns and verbs to your collection throughout the week.

   Two days this week, write down several of the sentences you created. Circle or shade the nouns in blue and the verbs in red. Be sure that each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period.

   When you create sentences for grammar activities, try to keep them simple. If your student asks to learn about other parts of speech, feel free to expand on this activity, as long as the student has mastered the ability to identify nouns and verbs.

2. Write in your journal every other day (or more often, if you’d like!).

   Date each journal entry so you know when you wrote it.

   If you are having a difficult time coming up with something to write about, here are two ideas:

   - Write about one of your favorite places to visit.
   - What would be the best thing about being tiny like Stuart Little?

   Journal writing is a great time for your child to enjoy writing without the added pressure of spelling and other “rules” for writing. Although it is always important to try to use proper writing conventions, you might
Language Arts

(continued)

want to remind your student that the primary focus of journal writing is on recording ideas rather than on making sure everything is perfectly correct.

3. Ask a parent to help you choose five to ten spelling words to learn this week. Remember to add the words you missed on last week’s quiz so you have a little more time to memorize them. Learn both the spelling and the meaning of each. Try a different practice technique from the one you used last week. On Thursday, take a practice test to see which words you still need to work on. On Friday, take a spelling quiz.

Refer back to the list of creative spelling practice ideas in the appendix of your coursebook as you go through the lessons. Try different ideas until you find your favorites.

Social Studies

Assignments

1. Begin building your landscape by constructing a box or preparing the area where it will be built.

2. Collect different types of soil for your landscape: topsoil, stones and pebbles, and subsoil.

3. Begin layering and sculpting the soil into the shapes you want.

Take some time to reflect on how the project is progressing. These types of projects are great for fostering a genuine sense of accomplishment in students. However, the parent often ends up doing a large share of the work. Identify areas where you could hand over more responsibility to your child.

Science

Shapes Found in Nature

The next observation exercises can be done during nature walks, in a vacant lot, or in a garden. You will be using a jeweler’s loupe to do close-up observations to discover natural patterns and geometry.
To use the jeweler’s loupe, place the wide end up to the eye, nestling it up against the upper cheekbones and side of the nose, completely covering the eye. It’s best to close the other eye. One loupe gives you five times (5x) magnification. Stacking the second one in the first provides 10x magnification. (If your loupe needs cleaning, use a soft cloth rather than using tissue, as the wood pulp in the tissue can scratch the lens. You may use a small amount of rubbing alcohol, if necessary.)

**Assignments**

1. Using a jeweler’s loupe (or magnifying glass), closely examine a variety of items in nature. For instance, you might look at a spider’s web, flower petals, seed pods, moss, tree bark, etc. See if you can discover natural patterns of geometric shapes. In your science main lesson book, make some sketches of what you see.

   The sketches should highlight geometric shapes and patterns in a magnified view of natural objects.

2. In your main lesson book, write the answers to the following questions about your nature observations:
   
   - What did you examine under magnification?
   - What different shapes did you find?
   - When viewed under magnification, how do these items look different from their usual appearance with the naked eye?
   - What are some of the most common shapes?
   - What function does the shape appear to serve in the overall structure? Why do you think these shapes appear?

   The student should answer each of the questions above. The final questions may be the most challenging for the student to answer. For instance, a student might respond that horizontal ridges in tree bark may serve to guide rain water to the roots of the tree, or to give insects places to hide, or to allow animals to more easily climb the tree. He or she is not expected to know all the answers right now, but rather to begin thinking about the relationship of form to function.

3. On another day, look at a variety of objects from around the house. In addition, look at traditional crafts of native peoples from
**Language Arts**

**Reading**

For the next three weeks, you will be reading *The Sign of the Beaver* for science.

**Assignments**

1. Choose new spelling words to learn this week. Make sure to include some plural nouns on your list.

2. Write in your journal. This week, you may want to revisit poetry writing. Add words to your word pool from *The Sign of the Beaver* and try writing poems based on nature themes.

3. Here are some activities you can do to practice singular and plural nouns. Try to do a little grammar work every day.
   - Do you know any other words that follow the rules given above? See if you can add 2-3 words to each list. Ask a parent for ideas if you can’t think of any.
   - See if you can come up with ways to memorize the different rules. Write the rules down in your main lesson book.
   - Ask a parent to write a paragraph that contains many singular nouns. Go through and change the singular nouns to plural nouns. Have a parent check your spelling.

There are many spelling rules introduced this week regarding the formation of plural nouns. To avoid overwhelming your student, it might work best to focus on two or three per day, using the suggestions above.

Note: when writing a paragraph with singular nouns (see the third bullet point above), use *the* instead of *a/an* so that your student doesn’t have to change any word but the noun. For instance, you might write “I used the apple to make applesauce.” Your student can simply change *apple* to *apples* and the sentence will still be correct.

### ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Language Arts</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn new spelling words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write three entries in your journal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice forming plural nouns.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Social Studies</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a dialogue between a settler and a squatter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity: Covered Wagon</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Science</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin reading <em>The Sign of the Beaver</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify local species of trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write descriptions of sounds in nature.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Art</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Draw a scene from a story using the laws of perspective.</td>
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<td>Draw the same scene from a different perspective.</td>
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<th><strong>Music</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Continue practicing and learning new material.</td>
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Social Studies

Reading

Read “Settlers and Squatters” and “Covered Wagons” (see Reading Selections).

Assignments

1. Imagine you are a man who has left his wife and family to venture out west. You have saved your money for several years and you have followed all the rules for registering your plans with the local claims office out west. You plan to build a home and bring your family out to join you in a year or two. After traveling all the way across the country, you arrive at your land parcel to find there is someone “squating” there.

Write a dialogue between yourself and the squatter. Think about what you would say to him and what he might say to you. You would each probably have plenty to say to one another before the situation was resolved. Try to put yourself in the place of the squatter as well as the settler so you can imagine how this person might feel about where he has been living and what his rights might be.

You might want to practice this first by acting out the scene with someone else. First take on the role of the settler, and then switch places and take on the role of the squatter. After acting it out, you will have a clearer idea of how to write your scene.

Aim to write a scene of about 2–3 pages of mostly dialogue with some setting details included. Refer to the rules for dialogue punctuation that you learned in lesson 19.

It may require a little work to imagine yourself as a grown man with a family. Take some time to talk through the scenario with a parent before you begin. Imagine how hard your journey would be to get to your land, and all the hopes and dreams you have for it. What will your reaction be when you discover the squatter on your land? What will the squatter’s response be? Will he be embarrassed? Angry? These are all things to figure out before you begin writing.
This assignment asks students to view a situation from two different perspectives. Some students will find this challenging. Acting out the conversation, taking turns doing each role, will help them see how the situation affects each person. Developing empathy for another’s position is an important element in character development. The dialogue should show the issues involved and allow each character to express opinions and feelings. Check for proper dialogue punctuation.

2. This week you are going to make your own covered wagon from a milk carton or shoebox. See the activity section below for details.

Science

Reading

For the next three weeks you will be reading *The Sign of the Beaver*.

You should finish the book by the end of lesson 24. You may want to look ahead to that lesson to read the questions that you’ll be answering about the story.

Assignments

1. Name the names of several different varieties of trees in your area. Learn to identify at least five of these trees by their leaves, trunks, shape and growth patterns, and other features. Practice identifying them when you see them in new places in your community.

You might find a tree identification guide in the library to help with this exercise. Keep a reference sheet that has information about different trees with you when you take walks in the neighborhood or in the woods, and use it to identify the trees you encounter. This takes careful observation skills. Your student might enjoy keeping a tally of how many different trees you find!

2. Select a quiet place outdoors (in the woods, if possible) and listen to the many sounds of nature. In your science main lesson book, describe each of the sounds that you hear, even if you don’t know what made it. Describing sounds can be challenging! Just do your best, and try to use a variety of descriptive words and analogies (“it sounded like...”)
Science
(continued)

This activity also requires children to use their powers of observation. It will help if you sit with your child and offer your own description of the sounds you hear in nature. For instance, you might say, “That bird sounds like a squeaky door hinge,” or “The leaves rustling in the wind remind me of turning the pages in a book.” Hearing the way you make comparisons and use descriptions can give your student new tools for how to describe his or her own observations. If your child is having a hard time concentrating on the sounds around you, try having him or her wear a blindfold for a few minutes.
Lesson

Language Arts

Assignments

1. Create a new spelling list that includes singular and plural nouns. Focus on the ones that you find the most difficult to spell.

2. For the next two weeks you will use your journal writing time to complete another learning reflection. Read through the list of questions below. Take your time formulating your answers. You will answer half of the questions this week, and half next week.

Before you begin, look over your learning reflections from lesson 12. It is important that these reflections build on your previous thoughts.

Learning Reflection Questions:

a. Make a list of the following items in your journal.
   • The title of a favorite poem that you wrote.
   • The topic of two of your favorite journal entries this year.
   • The most challenging grammar topic so far.
   • The most challenging punctuation rule so far.
   • Your favorite social studies project so far this year.
   • Your least favorite social studies project this year.
   • The most difficult science project you’ve done this year.
   • The most enjoyable science project you’ve done this year.

b. How are you doing on the reading goals that you set in lesson 12? Have you met either goal? If not, what will you need to do in order to meet them by the end of the year?

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

Language Arts
- Learn new spelling words.
- Complete a learning reflection.
- Practice forming possessives, plural nouns, and the contractions.
- Write sentences using singular and plural possessive nouns.
- Make corrections to a faulty paragraph.

Social Studies
- Begin researching early settlers to your region.
- Complete a colonial craft project.

Science
- Continue reading The Sign of the Beaver.
- Listen to and learn to distinguish different bird calls.
- Use nature signs during a nature walk.

Art
- Draw a scene from a story using the laws of perspective.

Music
- Continue practicing your musical instrument.
c. Have you been surprised by anything you’ve learned about your state this year? What? What are some of the most important things you think other people should know about your state?

d. What advice would you give to a new fourth grader sitting down to do his or her first research project? Come up with one piece of advice for each stage of the research process: research, note taking and organizing, outlining, writing, and revising/editing.

e. Have any of the lessons you learned about nutrition stuck with you? Do you eat any differently now than you did at the beginning of the year? Do you think about eating any differently? Explain.

f. Make a list of your five greatest strengths as a student. For example, do you love to read? Do you proofread your work carefully? Are you a confident writer? Do you love learning about grammar? Is long division easy for you?

g. Make a list of five things you would like to improve upon as a student. For example, do you wish you could read more quickly? Do you have a difficult time staying organized? Do fractions confuse you? Is spelling hard for you? At the end of the year, you will be asked to revisit this list, so make sure you write out your thoughts clearly so that you understand them when you look back on them.

As with past learning reflections, take some time to discuss the questions with your child before he or she sits down to write. Push your student to think carefully about the questions. If you think it will help, take notes during your discussion so that your child can refer back to them when he or she sits down to write a response.

Remember, this is also a good time for you to take stock of how the year is going for you. Are there any changes you’d like to make that will foster greater independence in your student or help your day or week move more smoothly?

3. Practice differentiating between possessives, plural nouns, and the contractions. For each sentence below, indicate which type of word is in bold:

a. My aunt’s arriving today. contraction
b. My **aunt's** car is new. **possessive noun**

c. She bought the car from the **neighbors**. **plural noun**

d. Do you think **she's** going to visit at **their** house? **contraction**
   (she's)/**possessive noun** (their)

e. **It's** not clear yet. **contraction**

f. **There's** a good reason to go. **contraction**

g. The **neighbors'** house was just painted. **plural** and **possessive noun**

h. The car in the driveway is **theirs**. **possessive noun**

i. My car is having **its** tires checked this morning. **possessive noun**

j. Is there **anybody's** car you can borrow? **possessive noun**

k. **Someone's** coming to pick us up. **contraction**

4. Complete the activities for practicing singular and plural possessive
   nouns:
   
   • Compose several sentences using singular possessive nouns.
   
   Example sentence: The kitten's dish is blue.

   • Compose several sentences using plural possessive nouns.

   Example sentence: The cats' meows let me know they were hungry.

5. Ask a parent to write a short paragraph that uses contractions and
   possessive nouns incorrectly. Go through and correct the sentences
   yourself.

   Contractions, plurals, and possessives can be confusing and take some
   time to fully understand. Make your paragraph fairly simple. You may
   need to underline the mistakes for your student to correct if he or she
   has trouble identifying them.

   As you read together, point out examples of each type of noun in the
   story. Be sure to let your child know that you understand how similar
   these words seem, and that your student is working on mastering one
   of the most important grammar rules that he or she will need to be a
   good writer in the future!
Social Studies

Assignments

1. Spend the week doing research and getting a sense of what the early history in your state was like. This will build on the research you did in lessons 19 and 20 about early explorers. Look ahead to the questions you’ll be answering in the next lesson and use them as a guide to help you with your reading. Make sure you take notes on each question and keep your notes well organized.

Students who live outside the United States are encouraged to “adopt” a state to learn about.

2. Complete at least one project from the colonial crafts section in the appendix.

The activities from the last few lessons have been very language-based. Use this week’s craft to take a break from reading and writing and to have fun making something.

Science

Reading

Continue reading The Sign of the Beaver.

Assignments

1. Go outside and listen to the birds in your neighborhood for half an hour. How many different birdcalls do you hear? Can you identify any of these birdcalls? Try to learn a few of them.

2. Go to the woods with a parent and see if you can find your way around using “signs.” You can do this in woods near your house, in a state park, or in a natural area nearby (such as a meadow or river). If you live in an urban area and there are no woods nearby, you can simulate this process in your own neighborhood by creating special signs. Perhaps you can find a new area to explore in this way!

Write a few sentences in your main lesson book describing your experience. List the signs you discovered and interpreted.
In the story, Attean shows Matt how to mark trees in the woods in order to find his way home. You and your child can experiment with this by using chalk on tree trunks, or making a mark using a piece of chalky rock. Another idea is to put stick “markers” on the path pointing the way you are going or make rock stacks showing your direction at each fork in the path. Perhaps your child has another idea to explore as well.