

# Oak Meadow Grade 4

TEACHER MANUAL

**Oak Meadow, Inc.**  
Post Office Box 1346  
Brattleboro, Vermont 05302-1346  
oakmeadow.com

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# Grade 4



# 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.

### Language Arts

(continued)

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



## 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



### Social Studies

*(continued)*

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:



## Social Studies

*(continued)*

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.





## Grade 4



# Lesson

## 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

#### ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

##### Language Arts

- Continue reading *Stuart Little*.
- Play a game making up sentences with nouns and verbs.
- Write several sentences identifying nouns and verbs.
- Practice 5–10 spelling words, and take a spelling test.
- Compose journal entries in cursive.

##### Social Studies

- Begin building landscape model.
- Identify and collect different types of soil.
- Begin layering and sculpting the soil
- Activity: Building your landscape model

##### Science

- Observe and sketch natural items under magnification.
- Describe observations of patterns and shapes in nature.
- Identify similarities between historical artifacts and patterns in nature.

##### Art

- Use tonal technique to create simple geometric shapes.

##### Music

- Continue working on a duet.
- Work on maintaining a consistent tempo.





## Grade 4



# Lesson

## 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

### Language Arts

- Learn new spelling words.
- Write three entries in your journal.
- Practice forming plural nouns.

### Social Studies

- Write a dialogue between a settler and a squatter.
- Activity: Covered Wagon

### Science

- Begin reading *The Sign of the Beaver*.
- Identify local species of trees.
- Write descriptions of sounds in nature.

### Art

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

### Music

- Continue practicing and learning new material.

# 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 “squatting” 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.





## Grade 4



# 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.

### Language Arts

(continued)

- 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



## 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.

