

Fourth Grade Overview

First Semester

Second Semester

Language Arts

- Parts of speech
- Journal writing
- Paragraphing skills
- Revision skills
- Sentence variety
- Poetry
- Memorization and recitation

- Dialogue punctuation
- Short story writing
- Plurals and possessives
- Editing and proofreading
- Grammar rules

Social Studies

- Topography observation and model
- Permanent and migrating animals
- Native American research paper
- Model of Native American village
- State geography and landforms
- State symbol, flag, and bird
- State history

- Colonial America
- Mapping skills
- Native American leaders
- Material culture of pioneers
- Model of pioneer settlement
- California Gold Rush
- Pony Express
- Transcontinental Railroad

Science

- Geometry and patterns in nature
- Relationship between form and function
- Charting data
- Seed dispersal
- Animal species and breeds
- Nutrition
- Basic cell structure

- Nature observations
- Constellations
- Moon and gravity
- Solar system
- Planet research project
- Measuring altitude
- Longitude and latitude
- Cardinal directions and compass navigation

Math

- Carrying and borrowing
- Division with remainders
- Multistep word problems
- Weights and measures
- Two-digit multiplication
- Roman numerals

- Adding and subtracting fractions
- Money math
- Rounding and estimating
- Long division
- Mixed numbers and improper fractions
- Equivalent fractions
- Common denominator

Art

Students learn the seven laws of drawing perspective. Each law is explored in depth and students gain ample practice in using the various techniques including tonal drawing, foreshortening, overlapping, and shading.

Music

Students continue learning to play an instrument. Oak Meadow's *Recorder Duets* is offered to students interested in taking their recorder playing further. Opportunities and suggestions are provided for holding recitals and other performances.

Oak Meadow

Grade 4

COURSEBOOK

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

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Grade 4



Lesson

Language Arts

Each week in language arts, you will be asked to do a little reading, some writing, and usually some grammar. These activities will help you become a better reader and writer, and you will get a closer look at how the English language works.

This year, you are going to continue learning about the structure of the English language. Here are the four parts of speech you should already know:

- nouns (name words)
- verbs (doing words)
- adjectives (picture words)
- adverbs (how words)

You also know that a sentence always starts with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark, and that every sentence must have a noun and a verb. Sentences do not have to have adjectives or adverbs, but these words make sentences more interesting and informative. We'll begin the year with a review of these rules and parts of speech.

Reading

Throughout the year, you will be asked to read several chapter books. You will read a few chapters each week and at the end of each book, you will be asked to complete a project about the book. This will give you an opportunity to think about the whole book and some of its themes. Please do some of the reading silently, and some of it out loud with a parent. It might be tempting to read the whole book to yourself, but it is important that you do some reading aloud because this will allow the adult to see how your reading is going and to ask you questions about the book.

MATERIALS

Language Arts: Journal
Journal or notebook (a small one is easy to carry around)

Social Studies: Topography project
Notebook or sketchpad and pencil
Containers for collecting samples
Masking tape (to identify samples)

Science: Geometry in nature
Several different kinds of fruit or vegetables

Art: Sketches
Sketchbook
Graphite and colored pencils

Language Arts

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If you find that the books that we've selected are too difficult for you, feel free to choose books that are at your reading level. Make sure you discuss this decision with a parent and that you get some help choosing an appropriate replacement book. If you end up reading books that are different from the ones we've selected, work with a parent to change the assignments so that they fit the books you've chosen.

This week, begin reading *Stuart Little*. Read a little bit every day. Make sure you alternate between reading it silently to yourself and reading aloud with a parent. Keep track of words and ideas you don't understand. Ask a parent to explain things that are confusing to you. You should aim to finish the book in three weeks. You will be asked to write about it in lesson 3.

Assignments

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."

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

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.

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.

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.

Language Arts

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Language Arts

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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.

Social Studies

This year in social studies, you will learn about the area in which you live. You will start by studying the landscape around you, and as time goes on, you will gradually expand your study to include your state and its history. The material you will study will vary depending on where you live. Students who live in cities will gather different information than students who live in rural areas. Students who live in the Eastern United States will learn a different history than those who live in the West. In learning about the area in which you live, you will study what it's like today, and also what it was like many years ago.

The Story of a Very Old Tree

In order to help you keep track of all the changes that have occurred in your home area, we would like you to begin thinking like a very old tree that has lived in your area for hundreds of years. This can be a real tree or an imaginary tree. Why a tree? Because trees can live for a long time and some of the really old ones have lived through the periods in history that you will study this year.

Have you ever seen what a tree looks like when it has been cut? Inside the trunk of a tree are many rings nestled inside each other. Each ring represents a year of the tree's life. A thirty-year-old tree will have thirty rings. The ring on the outside is the newest ring and the ones in the middle are the oldest. As the tree gets bigger and older, more rings will be added to the outside.

Imagine that this drawing is the trunk of a tree that has been cut in half. Can you guess how old this tree is? Which rings are the oldest rings? Which rings are the newest?

If you guessed that the tree is 16 years old, you guessed correctly. Each of the rings shows a year of the tree's life. New rings form just under the bark, so the oldest rings are the ones in the center.

Now, imagine a very old tree. Choose a species of tree that is common in your area. Possible examples include maple, oak, aspen, juniper, birch, apple, pine, and spruce. Picture your tree in your mind, and imagine what it would look like if it were really, really old. Some old trees grow wide and some grow tall. Some get very rough and gnarled bark, others get very heavy limbs. From now on, we will call this tree "your tree." If you have a real tree in your area that you'd like to use for your tree, that's fine, or you can just imagine your tree.

Social Studies

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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.

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.

Social Studies

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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.

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.

Activity

Local Topography Project: Choosing a Site

Choosing a Site: Before you start building your landscape, you must familiarize yourself with the land around you. Spend this week walking around outside looking for a good site to use as the basis for your model landscape. If you live in an urban or suburban area, you might have to go to a park or natural spot outside of your city. Look for an

area that is habitable (not too steep or swampy, for instance), and that has some access to water (a spring, creek, river, etc.).

Making Observations: If possible, climb to a high place where you can look out over the land. Then go to a low spot and see what the land looks like from below. Bring a notebook or sketchpad, and make several sketches from different vantage points, but most of all try to remember how the ground looked, and where the grass, trees, and bushes were located. Try to picture your area as it was before any buildings or roads were built. Look at the shape of the land, the type of soil, the trees, bushes, grass, the gullies, washes, and natural marks left on the land by the forces of nature. Observe rocks and other natural formations, including their colors and patterns, and any other interesting details. While picturing it as an undeveloped yet habitable landscape, observe the relationship between the landforms and soil, the water resources, and the natural vegetation.

Collecting Samples: As you observe the area you will use as your model, begin collecting samples of rocks, sand, and soil. You might want to bring some containers along to help you organize your samples. You can use masking tape to label your containers. Be sure that as you gather materials, you do not harm or disturb the environment. Take only the samples you really need.

Science

This year in science you are going to focus on developing your observation skills. Making careful observations simply means to see things as they are, with freshness, curiosity, and a sense of wonder. You will begin by taking a very close look at the natural world.

Geometry and Patterns in Nature

At any minute of the day we can observe the fantastic patterns and geometry in nature. Keeping your mind open when you make observations is important because it allows you to see things from different viewpoints and to see beneath the surface of what seems obvious. Too often we are like the old story of the three blind men describing an elephant:

Once three blind men were brought before an elephant and told to describe it. The hands of the first one were placed upon the

Social Studies

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Science

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ears of the elephant, the hands of the second were placed upon the leg, and the tail was placed in the hands of the third.

The first blind man said, after feeling very carefully, “An elephant is like a great leaf. It is large, flat, coarse, and floppy.”

The second man objected vigorously. “No, an elephant is nothing like that,” he cried. “Obviously, an elephant is like the trunk of a tree—strong, solid, thick, and firm.”

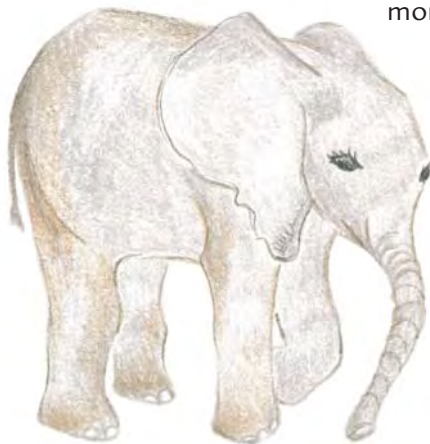
“No, no!” shouted the third blind man. “You two are being ridiculous! An elephant is long and thin. Anyone can tell that it is much like a length of rope.”

Sometimes we are just like the blind men in this story. We fail to see the entire picture because we do not have the objectivity or independence to see other points of view.

Using just one viewpoint is quite limiting. For example, if someone asked you what an elephant looked like, and you were shown a picture of one from only one point of view, the picture would not be complete:

Is this really an accurate picture? Is it complete? Really, one should have another viewpoint in order to see a little more of what an elephant is:

Now the viewer has at least a somewhat more complete picture!



In this first lesson, you will be using a piece of fruit to do a detailed observation and drawing.

In doing so, you will discover that there are many structures in nature that reveal beautiful geometric forms. The entire “geometry in nature” study is full of opportunities for creative expression through drawings. Don’t worry if you feel like you aren’t a very good artist—throughout the year, you will be learning techniques that artists use that will help your drawings to be more realistic and expressive.

You can find many excellent resources for projects related to geometry. Here are a few to look for in your local library (or ask your librarian for books like these):

Frank Lloyd Wright for Kids by Kathleen Thorne-Thomsen

Quick and Easy Origami by Toshie Takahama

Fun With Pattern by Fifi Weinert

Shape Me a Rhyme: Nature's Forms in Poetry by Jane Yolen

Echoes for the Eye: Poems to Celebrate Patterns in Nature by Baraba Juster Esbensen

Growing Patterns (Fibonacci Numbers in Nature) by Sarah C. Campbell

You can also experiment with geometric forms on your own. If you like to sew, quilting provides lots of opportunities to create beautiful geometric designs. If you like to tie knots, you can learn how to make a macramé friendship bracelet (you can find directions in the library or online). See if you can find a way to explore geometry on your own!

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.

Science

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Science

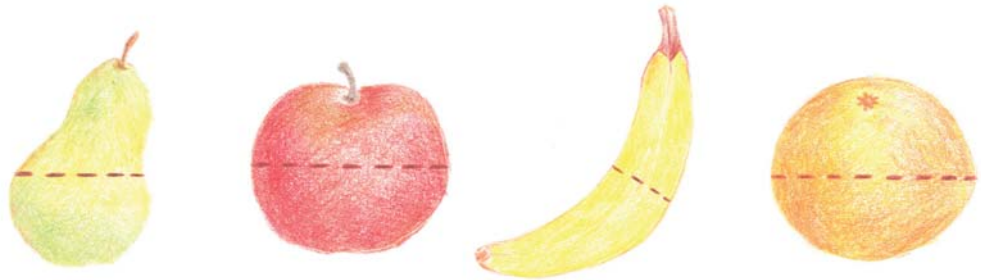
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Let yourself experience all these wonders of nature in a new way. Enjoy yourself, and allow yourself to become truly involved in the discovery of the hidden world of geometry all around you.

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.

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!

Science

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Art

As you begin the year in art, here are some tips to keep in mind:

- It is very important that you practice your new art skills regularly (at least three to four times per week). Frequent practice is necessary if you want to make real progress as an artist.

This does not mean that you have to spend a lot of time drawing every day, or that you have to complete a drawing every time you sit down to your sketchbook. The goal is to experience the world as an artist a little bit every day.

- It is important to draw from nature and not from pictures.

In this age of high quality photographs and computer art, it is very easy to compare your work with these high-tech images. You may desire to draw from photographs or slick drawings to achieve a "professional" look. However, nature is not glossy like this. It is always changing. By observing nature, we can recognize patterns and rhythms, and as we observe these rhythms we can see a connection to our own selves. This is one way we can begin to experience the world as an artist.

If you have an art museum or gallery in your area, make some time at different points in the year to visit. Go with a friend and discuss what you see. Bring your sketchbook and copy some of the paintings and drawings you find there. Periodically throughout the year, we will ask you to find examples of art in books and magazines, but seeing original art in person is the best way to understand how artists work and what techniques they use.

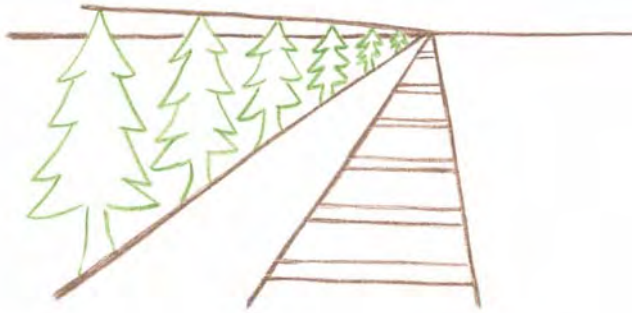
Before you get started on your first art assignment, please look over the following information. You will spend a lot of time getting to know the seven laws of drawing perspective, so take a moment to familiarize yourself with them now.

Art The Seven Laws of Drawing Perspective

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Using *perspective* in drawing means creating three-dimensional objects and scenes on a flat surface. Most adults learned perspective by choosing a

point on the horizon and drawing straight lines that eventually meet at that point, such as in this example of railroad tracks or trees receding in a straight line into the distance:

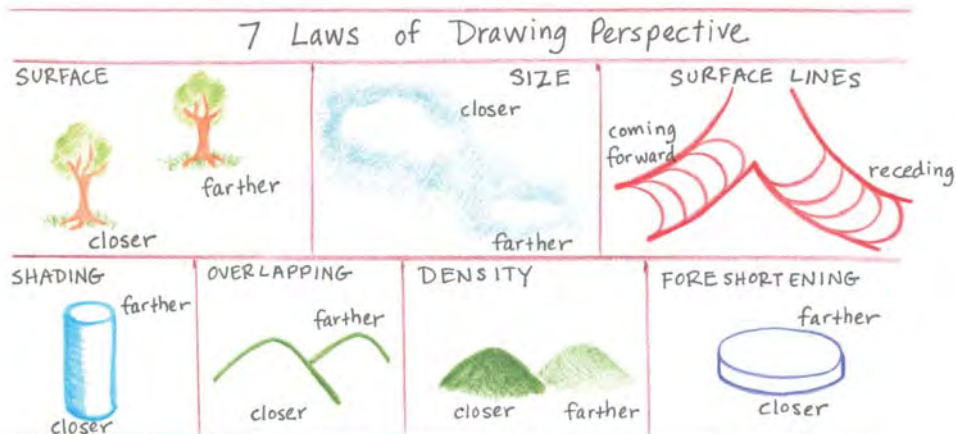


Although this example shows perspective, it more clearly shows how to line items up. What if we have a rock in the picture? In order to show the rock in relation to the trees we would have to make more lines converging on the vanishing point. As you can see, this would

shortly become very complicated as we drew new lines for every object we wanted to draw in the picture.

There is an easier way! If we break down perspective into seven laws, we can draw anything in a three-dimensional fashion. These laws are as follows:

1. **Surface:** An item drawn near the bottom of the page looks closer than an item drawn near the top of the page.
2. **Size:** Objects drawn larger look closer than smaller ones.
3. **Surface Lines:** Lines which curve to “wrap around” an item give it the appearance of moving away or coming closer.
4. **Shading:** Adding shading to an object creates the appearance of volume and depth.
5. **Overlapping:** An object that overlaps another object looks like the closer of the two objects. An object that has another object overlapping it appears to be farther away.
6. **Density:** An object drawn darker and with more detail appears closer. An object drawn lighter looks more distant.
7. **Foreshortening:** The effect of turning a circle into an oval gives the appearance of depth in a drawing. This can be clearly seen by placing a coin near the edge of a table. If you crouch down until your eyes are nearly level with the tabletop, the coin appears to be oval.



Art

(continued)

Using Tone in “No-Outline” Drawings

The term *tone* refers to small changes in darkness and color in a drawing. Through the careful use of color, it is possible to create a “living” form. We will be using tone throughout the year.

In the following exercises you will learn how to draw without outside “contour” lines. (A contour line is the outline of an object.) You will draw objects and create forms that look three-dimensional with tone alone. This will give you a finished product that seems to be more alive. Using tone in this way will enable you to give dimension to any form, and it will help you develop mastery over your colored pencil or crayon as you practice different ways of using the tool. This in turn will bring about an increase in your confidence level. We will refer to this type of drawing as “no-outline drawing” throughout this coursebook.

Holding Your Pencil or Crayon

There is a certain way that most people learn to hold their pencils for writing. Drawing requires a much looser approach, and so we must hold our pencils differently to gain freedom of movement. Below is an illustration that demonstrates how to hold a pencil while drawing for the best freedom of movement.



Art

(continued)

Once your pencil is in position, try a few strokes. Move your hand in a circular pattern, using your whole arm as a unit. Naturally there will be detail work where you want more control over your lines, and it is fine to switch to your handwriting position for these moments. For starting out, however, and getting the general shapes on your paper, freedom of movement from the whole arm is wonderful. It can take some getting used to, so be patient with yourself as you experiment.

Assignment

Create a no-outline circle. Using a colored pencil or crayon, create a circle without first drawing an outside contour line. This is most easily done by making repeated light strokes, never heavy or dark, on a diagonal. The form should be darker towards the center and lighter at the edges through repeated pencil or crayon strokes. Try working from the center out or the edges in, whichever seems most natural. The edges should appear to merge with the paper. As you draw each stroke, think of the motion as breathing, in and out; in this way the creative process becomes connected to the natural pattern of nature.



You may want to make several of these tonal circles, in different sizes and colors, to give your more practice. Try using colored pencils, graphite (“regular”) pencils, and crayons and see how each one gives you a different line and different possibilities in your art.

Music

The focus in music this year will be on playing duets. Duets are a fun and challenging way to expand your musical skills and share a love of music with someone else. If you have worked with the Oak Meadow curriculum in first through third grade, you may have been playing the recorder. If you have already learned the songs in Oak Meadow’s *Advanced Recorder*, this year you will be using Oak Meadow’s *Recorder Duets*. This book

has 13 duets in it, which you can learn throughout the year. You are also encouraged to find additional duets to play. This week, choose a duet to begin learning with a partner.

If you have been playing another instrument, you may be ready to play duets on that instrument, if your parent or a friend can play with you.

If you do not yet play a musical instrument, or are not ready to play duets, simply work each week at your own pace, building musical skills through regular practice. (If you want to learn the recorder, Oak Meadow's Recording Playing Series offers *Beginning Recorder*, *Intermediate Recorder*, and *Advanced Recorder*.)

For Parents of Enrolled Students

You will be sending a sample of work from this lesson to your Oak Meadow teacher at the end of lesson 4. In the meantime, feel free to contact your teacher if you have any questions about the assignments or the learning process.

Learning Assessment

These assessment rubrics are intended to help track student progress throughout the year. Please remember that these skills continue to develop over time. Parents and teachers can use this space to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or skills that need work.

Music

(continued)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Learning Assessment

LANGUAGE ARTS	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Reads independently				
Reads aloud with confidence and expression				
Writes legibly in cursive				
Prints legibly				
Identifies nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs				
Corrects errors in capitalization and punctuation				
Memorizes spelling words				

LITERATURE	Read aloud by adult	Read by child, in progress	Read by child, completed	Notes
<i>Stuart Little</i>				
Free choice book:				
Free choice book:				
Free choice book:				

SPELLING TEST	Score #correct/total #	Notes
1		

SOCIAL STUDIES	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Demonstrates knowledge of past events				
Describes local geography				

Learning Assessment

SCIENCE	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Demonstrates focused observational skills				
Describes observations in writing				
Records observations in detailed illustrations				
Shows ability to draw from varying perspectives				
Identifies geometric forms in nature				

Grade 4



Lesson

Language Arts

Sentence Building with Nouns and Verbs

You will need to think of an experience you've had recently to help you complete this activity. Perhaps you went to the park recently and you saw other children running around, or maybe you visited a museum or went for a walk in the woods. Try to remember what you did during this experience and list the nouns and verbs that come to mind. Put the nouns and their corresponding verbs in two separate columns. For example:

Nouns	Verbs
children	play
dogs	bark
moms	talk
boys	swing
girls	run
ball	rolls

Once you have done this, you can assign new actions to the nouns. For instance, instead of *children play*, you might write *children sing*. You'll also assign new nouns to the verbs (for example, instead of *dogs bark*, you might change it to *coyotes bark*). You can use the same nouns and verbs you used before, but reassign them to make new pairs. You can also add a few new nouns and verbs. For example:

Nouns	Verbs
children	sing
dogs	play

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.

Language Arts

(continued)

coyotes

bark

moms

laugh

boys

eat

girls

jump

waves

roll

balls

bounce

Write down each word from your lists of nouns and verbs on a strip of colored paper: nouns are blue and verbs are red. An easy way to do this is to use colored index cards or construction paper (you can cut them into strips).

After your cards are ready, mix them all up together. Choose one blue card and one red card, and create a sentence using them. It is fine if you end up with some nonsense sentences. Your purpose is simply to get a strong sense of what nouns and verbs “feel” like so that you will easily recognize when a sentence has them both.

Note: Keep these cards handy, as they will be used again later.

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.

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?

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.

Social Studies

Now that you have chosen a site to use as the idea for your landscape model, you are ready to begin building. You will have two weeks in which to complete this project.

Read the activity section carefully for detailed instructions on building your landscape model. Follow the steps shown on the following pages for making your landscape:

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.

Activity

Building Your Landscape Model

Many things can be used to contain your miniature landscape model. It can be built in a large box, wood frame, tabletop, washtub, child's swimming pool, or directly on the ground in your yard. If you build your landscape directly on the ground, you will have to be able to shelter it from rain and running water so it does not get destroyed in a storm.

If you want to be able to move your model about, a sturdy wooden box is desirable. It should be at least 30" x 30" so that you will not have to crowd all the things you want to include in the model. Line the box with plastic to keep dampness from seeping. (You can also use a plastic tub like those used for kitty litter; if you do, you don't need to line it with plastic.)

Language Arts

(continued)

[illegible]

Social Studies

(continued)

If you choose to make a box, you will need material for the bottom of the box. You can use any sturdy wood, at least $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. This could be plywood, scrap wood, old pickets from a fence, etc. Build a frame for the box using $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wood about 30 inches in length (to make a square box 30 x 30") and at least 4" high. This will keep the soil in place as you layer and sculpt it.

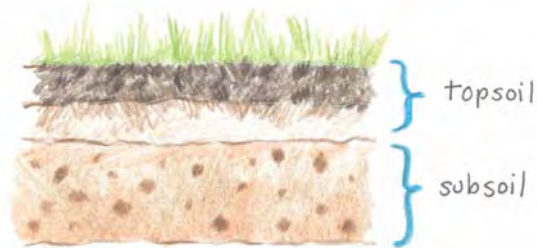
The Layers of Your Landscape

After you build your box or prepare your landscape site, you will collect soil to use. When you were scouting around different landscape sites last week, you might have noticed different types of dirt in different places. In reality, soil is layered, and every layer has its own character. As you build up your model, you will be layering it to match the Earth's layers.

When you begin to collect soil, the first thing you will see is the topsoil. When you scrape that away, you will find the subsoil.

Topsoil: Usually crumbly with organic matter mixed in (grass, roots, dead leaves, etc.). The topmost layer contains living organisms, both plants and animals. The topsoil will be used for the surface of the landscape.

Subsoil: Usually hard sand, rocks, or clay. The subsoil will be used for building up the landscape, and creating the different shapes of the land. The harder subsoil will make a strong foundation, as it will not crumble so easily.



Collecting Soil

Much of the soil can come from your own yard, or you can collect it from vacant lots or fields. If possible, dampen the soil before you collect it. Soil should not be muddy, but slightly damp, so it sticks together a bit.

Scrape off the topsoil and try to keep it intact. If there are a lot of large, dry weeds or other growth, trim with grass shears, but leave the stubble in the soil so it will lend more reality to your model. Try to remove the topsoil in chunks to keep it looking realistic; even tiny, living plants or insects

can remain. A twig caught in the grass can become a fallen tree in your model. Remove whole leaves, however, as they will be out of scale.

While the topsoil is the “icing on the cake,” adding stones and pebbles will give your landscape character. Collect stones and pebbles with a purpose, keeping in mind the part they are to play in the model. A small pebble could become a boulder in your model, so you’ll need to experiment to discover how to put everything together so that it looks realistic.

Remember, you are carefully building a scale model of an authentic landscape, not just throwing dirt haphazardly into a box. Therefore, you should have a plan to follow based upon the sketches you made from observations. As the model develops, you may need to adjust your original plan. Also, depending upon how firm your subsoil is, rocks, cardboard, or other sturdy material can be used underneath to support your land forms. The important thing is that on the surface it should look authentic.

When you collect soil for your model, use separate containers for rocks, topsoil, sand, clays, and other natural materials. Also, you will want to collect dried plants, twigs, and other such items to use for the vegetation of your landscape. Your stones should be of many sizes and types in order to be representative of different sizes of rocks in nature, including pebbles, gravel, rocks, and boulders.

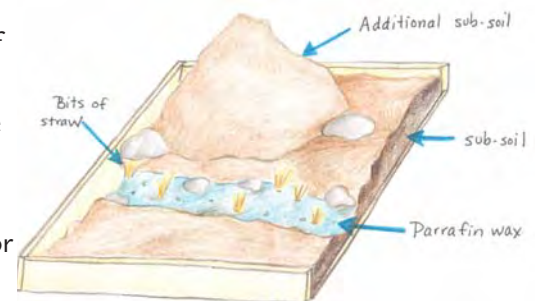
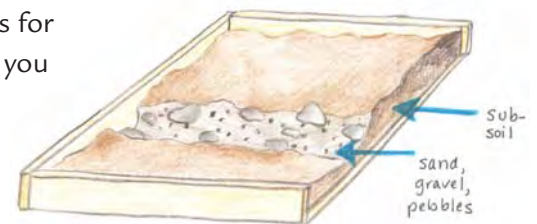
Building Landforms

Start your model by putting down a layer of subsoil. If you want a rise or small hill, make one part slightly higher. If there is to be a creek, river, or lake in your miniature landscape, leave a hollow spot for it. Line this area with sand, silt, gravel, and/or pebbles so it looks like the bed of a real body of water. To make water, pour melted paraffin, candle wax, or bits of old crayons into the bed that you made.

How to melt wax safely: Fill a one-pound coffee can 2/3 full of pieces of paraffin wax. Boil water in a pan and then turn the burner to a low setting. Put on oven mitts and carefully set the can of wax into the pan to melt, keeping an eye on it until it is entirely melted. You might want to mix blue-green food coloring with the wax to give it a more realistic water appearance, or use blue and green candle scraps or crayon shavings.

Social Studies

(continued)

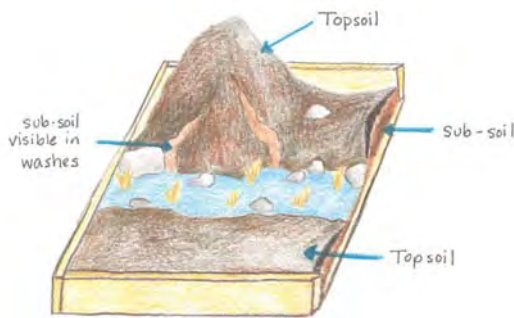


Social Studies

(continued)

If you want reeds or plants in your “water,” you can stick dry grass, straw, or twigs into the wax before it hardens. You can also make ripples, rapids, or waterfalls by shaping the wax before it hardens.

Here is how your landscape might look with wax “water” in place, reeds, additional rocks, and a hill built up of additional subsoil.



At this point, your model is ready for a covering of topsoil and placement of trees and shrubbery. Before putting down topsoil, all subsoil that will be covered should be scratched with a fork so the surface is rough. Next, spray the subsoil with a mist sprayer filled with water. Lay down the topsoil, pressing it firmly with the flat of your hand so it fuses with the subsoil.

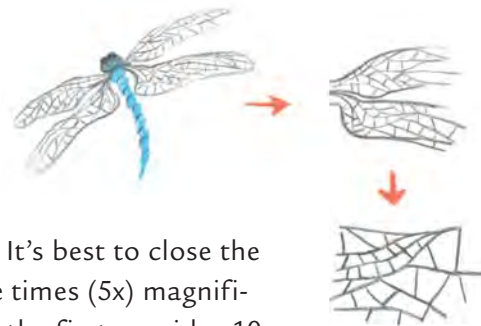
In making this model, you should become aware of the effects of running water on the landscape. When applying the topsoil, leave it off in the places where it would normally have been eroded away. Do you remember seeing any evidence of erosion when you were looking at landscape sites? Natural drainage patterns should be sculpted into the landscape, as you see in this drawing:

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.
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?
3. On another day, look at a variety of objects from around the house. In addition, look at traditional crafts of native peoples from all continents. Traditional crafts are often made of natural materials such as mud, straw, cane, shell, gourd, wood, and stone. Pay attention to the patterns you see in these objects. Interestingly, there are often similarities between patterns made by people who never had any contact with one another.

In your main lesson book, answer the following questions about the manmade objects you observed:

- Are the crafts or artifacts imitating something in nature?
- Does the pattern or quality of the material used require the craftsman to make a certain shape?
- What shapes or items are used to decorate the objects?
- How do these shapes or items relate to the surrounding environment and to the overall object itself?

Science

(continued)

[illegible]

Art

This week, you will experiment with creating other geometric forms. To do this, start with your no-outline circle and pull the edges out. Try to make it so that you can't see the edges of the original circle. Can you transform a circle into a triangle? Into a square? How about into a circle again? Keep in mind that each shape should stand alone without the edges of the previous shape being visible. Again, experiment with different art media (graphite pencil, colored pencil, and crayon).

This exercise will help you become more successful in creating the shapes that you desire. How often have you become frustrated because you can't draw the image that you want? With the elimination of the outline, and through the gradual layering on of color and tone, the edges of the drawing can easily be changed before your very eyes. You may not be able to create the exact image that's in your head, but you may get closer to it.

Assignment

Practice drawing the geometric shapes you find in nature this week. Begin by making tonal circles and changing the shapes into ovals, droplets, and leaf shapes.

Music

Assignment

Continue working on the new duet you learned. You can use familiar tunes and old favorites to warm-up each session before you begin working on new material. When playing a duet, it is essential for both players to keep the same tempo. Work with your partner to maintain a steady beat as you play.

For Enrolled Students

Feel free to contact your teacher if you have any questions about the assignments or the learning process. You will be sending a sample of work from this lesson to your Oak Meadow teacher at the end of lesson 4.

Learning Assessment

These assessment rubrics are intended to help track student progress throughout the year. Please remember that these skills continue to develop over time. Parents and teachers can use this space to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or skills that need work.

LANGUAGE ARTS	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Reads independently				
Reads aloud with confidence and expression				
Writes legibly in cursive				
Prints legibly				
Identifies nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs				
Corrects errors in capitalization and punctuation				
Memorizes spelling words				

LITERATURE	Read aloud by adult	Read by child, in progress	Read by child, completed	Notes
<i>Stuart Little</i>				
Free choice book:				
Free choice book:				
Free choice book:				

SPELLING TEST	Score #correct/total #	Notes
2		

Learning Assessment

SOCIAL STUDIES	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Demonstrates knowledge of past events				
Describes local geography				
Demonstrates knowledge of different types of soil				
Identifies evidence of erosion				

SCIENCE	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Demonstrates focused observational skills				
Describes observations in writing				
Records observations in detailed illustrations				
Shows ability to draw from varying perspectives				
Identifies geometric forms in nature				
Identifies similarities between historical artifacts and patterns in nature				

Grade 4



Lesson

Language Arts

Singular and Plural Nouns

You learned about common and proper nouns in lesson 7. This week you will focus on singular and plural nouns. A *singular* noun names one person, place, or thing (i.e. *girl, cat, city*). A *plural* noun names more than one person, place, or thing (i.e. *girls, cats, cities*).

There are some important spelling guidelines about turning a singular noun into a plural noun. To form the plural of most nouns, just add an *s*.

Singular	Plural
cat	cats
girl	girls
tree	trees
apple	apples

But not all nouns work this way. Here are some other rules. Notice that there are exceptions to some of them. This means that you have to memorize some of these words. Include them on your spelling lists this week and next.

To form the plural of nouns ending in *s*, *z*, *ch*, or *sh*, add *-es* to the singular.

Singular	Plural
dress	dresses
waltz	waltzes
watch	watches
push	pushes

MATERIALS

Social Studies: Covered Wagon

Milk carton or shoebox
Sharp knife or utility knife

Masking tape, glue, or stapler

Cloth or light canvas

Contact paper with wood paneling design (optional)

Wire

Five brass brads

Cardboard

Language Arts

(continued)

To form the plural of most nouns ending in *x*, add *-es* to the singular.

Singular**Plural**

box

boxes

fox

foxes

ox

is an exception!

oxen

To form the plural of some nouns that end in *f* or *fe*, add *-s* to the singular.

Singular**Plural**

handkerchief

handkerchiefs

bluff

bluffs

roof

roofs

To form the plural of some nouns that end in *f* or *fe*, change the *f* to *v* and add *-es* to the singular.

Singular**Plural**

knife

knives

leaf

leaves

wolf

wolves

To form the plural of a noun ending in *y* after a vowel, add *-s* to the singular.

Singular**Plural**

boy

boys

ray

rays

monkey

monkeys

To form the plural of a noun ending in *y* after a consonant, drop the *y* and add *-ies* to the singular.

Singular**Plural**

daisy

daisies

penny

pennies

kitty

kitties

There are some tricky plurals that you'll just have to memorize! Notice that in a few cases the plural is just the same as the singular.

Singular	Plural
child	children
man	men
woman	women
foot	feet
tooth	teeth
mouse	mice
goose	geese
louse	lice
deer	deer
moose	moose
sheep	sheep

Language Arts

(continued)

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.

Language Arts

(continued)

- 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.

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.

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.

Activity

Covered Wagon

You will need:

- Milk carton or shoebox
- Sharp knife or utility knife
- Masking tape, glue, or stapler
- Cloth or light canvas
- Contact paper with wood paneling design (optional)
- Wire
- Five brass brads
- Extra cardboard

What to do:

- Remove the top half of the milk carton with a sharp knife. (Get help from an adult.) Unfold the top part of the carton and remove the top and bottom parts. (See the picture.) Then fold the two sides down and tape them shut to form a flat surface.
- Wrap the sides with masking tape to simulate wood boards, or cover with “wood paneling” contact paper.
- Form the axles from strips of cardboard, bending the ends to attach the wheels. The back axle should be glued to the carton, and the front axle should be attached with a brass brad. Use a long narrow piece of cardboard or a stick for the “tree” to which the horses are hitched.
- Cut the driver’s seat and the wheels from cardboard, and attach the wheels with brass brads.

Social Studies

(continued)

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Social Studies*(continued)*

- e. Use wire to form the framework for the canvas cover, and glue, staple, or tape the cloth to the wire frame.

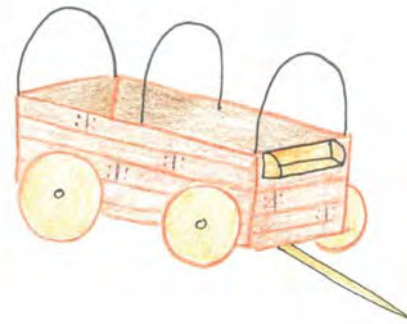
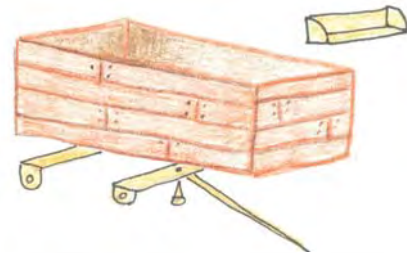
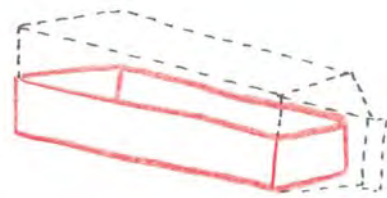
Reading selections**Squatters and Settlers**

After the hunters and trappers, there were other groups of people who ventured into the frontier. These tended to be people who had not been successful in making a living in the existing communities. They were looking for new and better opportunities.

In the beginning it was rare for an entire family to move west. Usually the man would make his way, alone or with a small group of other men, into the frontier to establish a claim on a piece of land. Once he found a place that he felt would be worthwhile, he would return to the East to get his family. The government organized land offices to enforce rules for claiming land. The basic guideline was simply that people could claim land cheaply or even for free as long as they agreed to stay there, take care of it, and “improve” it by building on it, or clearing it and planting it. In order to protect their claim, they had to register with the land office.

Some people didn’t bother to register, but wandered about from one claim to another. They were known as “squatters.”

Squatters were often forced to leave their homes because someone else took the time to register with the land office and therefore had the official right to the property. Perhaps this was just as well in some cases, because the squatters often didn’t take good



care of their land, and didn't abide by the treaties that had been established to keep peace with the local tribes of Native Americans.

Little by little, people who had a bit more money began moving west. They often bought the farms of earlier settlers, and also staked their claims on untouched property. Many of their descendants still own these farms today.

It was this last group of settlers who usually established towns in the frontier regions. As the little settlements grew, they organized systems of law and order, built churches, started schools, and created more businesses. These are the people who founded and named many of the towns that still exist today.

Covered Wagons

Pioneers crossed the country by foot, by horse, and by wagon. It took so long that they usually had to leave their eastern homes in late winter in order to cross the wilderness, find a site on which to settle, build a cabin, and lay in food supplies and firewood before the next winter arrived.

The idea of traveling in a covered wagon may sound exciting, but in truth it was a grueling, exhausting journey. A family could bring very little with them other than the basics needed for survival. If they filled their wagon with the wrong things, or in the wrong amounts, they might not survive. Tools for making necessities in their new home were most important. An ax was an especially handy piece of equipment, because it could be used to split logs for house building, to clear wooded land, and for many daily tasks.

Having a good wagon made all the difference for a family traveling west. The earlier wagons were more like pushcarts than wagons, but as the roads improved, wagons pulled by mules and oxen became more practical. The Conestoga wagon was the most famous wagon used by these early pioneers. These wagons had high wheels so they could cross over the tree stumps and rocks in the road that were sometimes over a foot high. Conestoga wagons were covered with heavy canvas to help keep out the weather. They had a feeding trough for the animals at the back, and a porch on the side for a rider. These wagons were sturdy, and made to carry a very heavy load, as much as six tons!

Social Studies

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As time went on and more people decided to cross the prairie and venture through the mountains, it became clear that the Conestoga wagon, as wonderful as it was, needed to change. It was just too heavy to make this kind of trip, which often took five or six months, and took the travelers through the rivers and over mountain passes. The new wagon that emerged became known as the prairie schooner. A *schooner* is a ship with sails, and these wagons looked like a fleet of ships when a group of them was seen moving across the plains.

The prairie schooner was lighter than the Conestoga wagon, with wheels farther apart, and front wheels smaller than the back ones. These features made it less likely to get stuck in mud, and allowed it to turn more easily on narrow trails. The entire wagon was designed to be taken apart so the bed could be separated from the running gear and floated across a river.

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.
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...")

Assignments

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Assignment

For Enrolled Students

Learning Assessment

Oak Meadow

Learning Assessment

LANGUAGE ARTS	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Uses spelling rules to correctly form plural nouns				
Correctly identifies interjections and uses them in writing dialogue				
Demonstrates knowledge of punctuating dialogue				
Identifies subject and predicate in sentences				
Identifies story components (character, setting, story problem, conflict, and resolution)				
Composes an original story (creative writing)				
Writes three- to five-sentence paragraphs				
Demonstrates good paragraphing skills				
Demonstrates reading comprehension through related project				
Reads independently				
Reads aloud with confidence and expression				
Writes legibly in print and cursive				
Correctly identifies and uses different parts of speech in writing				
Identifies and corrects errors in own writing				
Alphabetizes a list of words				
Memorizes spelling words				

Learning Assessment

LITERATURE	Read aloud by adult	Read by child, in progress	Read by child, completed	Notes
<i>The Sign of the Beaver</i>				
<i>Rachel's Journal</i>				
Free choice book:				
Free choice book:				
Free choice book:				

SPELLING TEST	Score #correct/total #	Notes
22		

SOCIAL STUDIES	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Demonstrates ability to consider divergent perspectives				
Demonstrates knowledge of colonial life				
Shows familiarity with early explorations in America				
Draws a map with a fair degree of accuracy				
Uses map scale to determine distances				
Identifies locations on a map				
Shows familiarity with reading different types of maps				
Demonstrates knowledge of local area				

Learning Assessment

SCIENCE	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Demonstrates knowledge of local plants				
Research report: Demonstrates good note taking skills				
Research report: Organizes notes into out-line				
Research report: Uses outline to write rough draft				
Research report: Revises and edits rough draft into final report				
Demonstrates knowledge of social behavior of animals				
Demonstrates familiarity with a variety of animal breeds				
Applies knowledge of nutrition to personal eating habits				
Reads food labels to identify ingredients				
Demonstrates knowledge of food groups				
Demonstrates focused observational skills				
Describes observations in writing				
Records observations in detailed illustrations				

Grade 4



Lesson

Language Arts

Possessive Nouns

You learned about several kinds of nouns this year: common nouns, proper nouns, pronouns, singular nouns, and plural nouns. Now we'll learn about the *possessive noun*.

A possessive noun tells who or what owns or possesses something. For example:

Marsha's dog has long, fluffy ears.

The dog's tail is also very fluffy.

Who has the dog with the long, fluffy ears? Marsha does. *Marsha's* is a possessive noun. Who or what has the fluffy tail? The dog does. *Dog's* is a possessive noun.

Possessive nouns can be singular or plural, depending on who does the possessing (one person or thing or many people/things):

Singular possessive noun: the dog's tail, the girl's hat

Plural possessive noun: all the dogs' tails, all the girls' hats

You see that when changing a possessive noun to plural, the ending *-s* gets added to the possessive noun **and** to the thing they are possessing (*dogs* and *tails*—because if there is more than one dog, there is more than one tail!). You might also notice that the placement of the apostrophe changes, from *'s* to *s'*.

The biggest confusion most people have about possessive nouns is figuring out where to put the apostrophe. Here are some general rules to follow:

Language Arts

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- To make a singular possessive noun, add 's. Do this even if the word already ends in s. For example:

The boy's pencil got lost.

Charles's pencil got lost.

- To make a plural possessive noun, you must first check the last letter of the plural noun. If it is an s, just add an apostrophe. For example:

Two girls' pencils got lost.

The players' uniforms were filthy.

- If the last letter is not s, you must add 's. For example:

Three children's mothers were late in picking them up.

The men's store will be open tomorrow.

Another confusion many people have is whether something is a plural noun (and therefore doesn't get an apostrophe), or a plural possessive noun. For example:

The girls are going to the play. (*girls* is a plural noun)

The girls' bus just left. (*girls'* is a plural possessive noun, so it gets an apostrophe)

Here's the important rule: All possessives need an apostrophe.

Here's the exception to the rule: Possessive personal pronouns do not need an apostrophe. Personal pronouns refer to specific people or things. Personal pronouns include: *I, you, he, she, it, we, they*.

Possessive personal pronouns indicate ownership: *my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, theirs*. They do not require an apostrophe.

Pronouns such as *one, anyone, someone, somebody, anybody*, and *nobody* are considered to be indefinite pronouns (they don't refer to a specific person) and do require apostrophes.

Examples:

This hat is mine. Where is yours?

This is somebody's bag, but it's not mine.

Did you see anyone's car outside?

A common confusion happens between *its* and *it's*. Can you tell which is the possessive and which is not? Remember that possessives made with personal pronouns do not get an apostrophe. This means that *its* is the possessive. *It's* is a contraction of *it is*. For example:

Its tail is fluffy. (Possessive personal pronoun: the tail belongs to it)

It's time to go home. (Contraction of *it is*)

Other common errors occur between the following words:

your you're

their they're

Can you tell which are the possessive pronouns and which are the contractions? Perhaps you can go back and review contractions in lesson 20 if you weren't sure!

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.

Language Arts

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Language Arts

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- 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?
 - 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.
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.
 - b. My **aunt's** car is new.
 - c. She bought the car from the **neighbors**.
 - d. Do you think **she's** going to visit at **their** house?
 - e. **It's** not clear yet.

- f. **There's** a good reason to go.
 - g. The **neighbors'** house was just painted.
 - h. The car in the driveway is **theirs**.
 - i. My car is having **its** tires checked this morning.
 - j. Is there **anybody's** car you can borrow?
 - k. **Someone's** coming to pick us up.
4. Complete the activities for practicing singular and plural possessive nouns:
- Compose several sentences using singular possessive nouns.
 - Compose several sentences using plural possessive nouns.
5. Ask a parent to write a short paragraph that uses contractions and possessive nouns incorrectly. Go through and correct the sentences yourself.

Social Studies

Settlers in Your State

Now that you have spent a few weeks learning about different aspects of the colonial period in general, it's time to focus further on the colonial period in your state. (If you live outside the United States, you can pick any state you like for this research.) Check your local library for good research books. There will probably be a lot of books to choose from, so make sure you select a book that matches your reading level. Some of the history can be confusing, and you want to make sure you understand what you are reading.

As you conduct research about your own state, keep in mind that the information will vary according to your state and where it is located. This is because different areas were settled and became states at different times. The western states were settled many years after the eastern states. If you live in a state west of the Mississippi River, look at a map in an atlas to see the dates of statehood, or look in an encyclopedia. Study the history of states east of the Mississippi up to about 1840. Study the history of states west of the Mississippi from as early as you can.

Language Arts

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Social Studies

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

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.

Art

Assignment

Draw a picture of a scene from *The Sign of the Beaver*. Include two or three different laws of perspective from the previous lessons. As before, try drawing scenes from the story emphasizing different laws of perspective.

Assignment

Learning Assessment

LANGUAGE ARTS	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Uses spelling rules to correctly form plural nouns				
Uses apostrophe accurately in forming singular and plural possessives				
Uses apostrophe accurately in forming contractions				
Identifies story components (character, setting, story problem, conflict, and resolution)				
Composes an original story (creative writing)				
Writes three- to five-sentence paragraphs				
Demonstrates good paragraphing skills				
Demonstrates reading comprehension through related project				
Reads independently				
Reads aloud with confidence and expression				
Writes legibly in print and cursive				
Correctly identifies and uses different parts of speech in writing				
Identifies and corrects errors in own writing				
Alphabetizes a list of words				
Memorizes spelling words				

Learning Assessment

LITERATURE	Read aloud by adult	Read by child, in progress	Read by child, completed	Notes
<i>The Sign of the Beaver</i>				
Free choice book:				
Free choice book:				
Free choice book:				

SPELLING TEST	Score #correct/total #	Notes
23		

SOCIAL STUDIES	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Demonstrates ability to consider divergent perspectives				
Demonstrates knowledge of colonial life				
Shows familiarity with early explorations in America				
Draws a map with a fair degree of accuracy				
Uses map scale to determine distances				
Identifies locations on a map				
Shows familiarity with reading different types of maps				
Demonstrates knowledge of local area				

Learning Assessment

SCIENCE	Not Yet Evident	Developing	Consistent	Notes
Demonstrates knowledge of local plants				
Research report: Demonstrates good note taking skills				
Research report: Organizes notes into outline				
Research report: Uses outline to write rough draft				
Research report: Revises and edits rough draft into final report				
Demonstrates knowledge of social behavior of animals				
Demonstrates familiarity with a variety of animal breeds				
Applies knowledge of nutrition to personal eating habits				
Reads food labels to identify ingredients				
Demonstrates knowledge of food groups				
Demonstrates focused observational skills				
Describes observations in writing				
Records observations in detailed illustrations				