

# Guide to Teaching the Early Grades



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# Introduction

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Homeschooling is a journey for the parent as much as for the child. The main requirement is a willingness to learn together (and maybe a dose of courage!). However, many parents approach homeschooling with very little, if any, teaching experience. Some parents can feel uncertain about what to do and may worry that if they don't do something "right," their child will suffer. After decades of working with homeschooling families, we can assure you that if you are willing to learn and keep your love for your child as the focus of your intentions, you are almost certain to succeed.

The art of teaching is a noble art and one to which many people dedicate their lives. Even if you have never taught other children, you have been teaching your children since they were born. Your parenting instincts can help guide you in your teaching. Because you know your child best, you will be able to use your innate sensitivity to your child's needs to help you shape and customize your learning activities.

*Oak Meadow Guide to Teaching the Early Grades* is designed to give you some important information about the learning process and the art of teaching. We've drawn on the vast and varied experience of Oak Meadow's teachers in creating this guide, and we hope it provides you the support you need to become a confident, effective home teacher. You are encouraged to read this book before you begin teaching and to refer to it often throughout your homeschooling years. As you become more experienced as a teacher, you will be able to more fully use and expand on the information here. You will find Oak Meadow's *The Heart of Learning* to be another essential resource in your development as a teacher.

Above all, remember to enjoy this incredible time with your children. Learning is an exciting process of discovery for both teacher and student. By sharing a natural curiosity and love of learning with your children, you will have a rich and wondrous educational journey.



Guide

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# Learning Processes

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Learning is a process, and facilitating this process is what the art of teaching is all about. There are many activities we can offer children that support a rich learning experience. These activities don't have to be elaborate, though—even the simplest activity can be used in a learning process. It is the amount of life you bring to the activity that determines the depth of experience you will have together.

As teachers, we may not always feel filled with life and energy, and in those cases we must consider what kinds of activities actually have the ability to draw us into a deeper experience, even when we're not feeling up to it. Some activities seem, by their very nature, to thwart the very possibility of deeper experience. Others seem to have the power to inspire and delight while bringing us into a fuller sense of our potential.

## Elements of Successful Learning Processes

How can we determine which activities will support the learning process best? There are several elements that are common to activities that provide opportunities for deeper expression. Some activities have all of these elements, while others have only one or two. An activity does not necessarily have to have all three of these elements, but for an activity to offer real opportunities for deeper expression, it must have at least one of these elements present:

### The Activity Is Rhythmical

This should be understood in a broad sense, and does not mean the activity must have drums beating in the background, or involve singing, clapping, or dancing (although it might!). Rhythm has to do with the repetition of a particular motion numerous times, eventually resulting in a finished activity. This includes such activities as knitting, sewing, weaving, form drawing, singing rounds, and folk dancing. Reciting the times tables can be a rhythmic activity, as can reading poetry aloud, if it has a clear, repetitive meter and rhyming scheme. The repetition of a particular action creates an opportunity for focus that is not available in other, more erratic activities where the mind is constantly making decisions. It provides the mind and body with an activity that is steady, consistent, and nonthreatening (because it is familiar). Once we are able to relax our minds in this way, we can open to the experience of process.

## The Activity Is Creative

This includes such activities as clay sculpting, woodworking, painting, and drawing, as well as any activity that allows you to use the imagination to create something. In creative activities, there is a flexible medium present that allows the child to give form to an inner impulse. These activities encourage strong connection between your child's physical being and the inner creative nature and innate abilities. The particular medium used in the creative process influences the nature of the experience. In general, materials that are softer and more malleable are preferred over anything harsh or brittle, and it is usually preferable to choose a natural material over a synthetic one. For example, if you are doing a sculpting project, clay would be better than commercial Play-Doh. If you are drawing, crayons generally encourage a freer form of expression than markers. Natural colors are more conducive to a reflective experience than "day-glo" colors, and wood has a richer feel than plastic.

## The Activity Embodies Archetypes

We'll talk in greater detail about archetypes in the storytelling section of this guide, but essentially, the basic concept is that all physical forms and activities are reflections of deeper realities. If an activity incorporates or embodies archetypes, that activity has the power to help those who are involved (children and adults) to transcend their limiting emotional and mental patterns. This lets them begin to experience the deeper movements of life, opening them up to expressing their natural capacity for intelligence and loving concern for others. Although archetypal symbols can appear in many activities, the activity in which this can occur most clearly and strongly is storytelling.

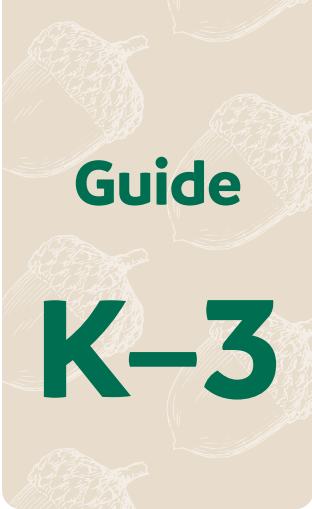
These are some of the fundamental elements that comprise effective, beneficial learning processes, and should be considered before you begin an activity.

# Facilitating the Learning Process

As you prepare to enter into a specific learning process with your child, we suggest reflecting on the following areas so that you can feel confident in your approach. These guidelines are based on the experiences of many teachers over many years. If you feel unsure about what you are doing, they can be a helpful tool for getting started. However, as you progress in your understanding of the elements involved, you will begin to rely less on formal guidelines and more on your own perceptions.

If things do not go according to plan, don't worry! Just stop doing whatever it is you are doing, relax, reestablish the relationship between you and your child, and then decide whether you want to continue with the process, or move on to something else. As you reflect later on the experience, review in your mind the sequence of events and see where you might have done something differently. Then, let it go and get ready for the next day's learning processes.

Here are the guidelines for entering into an effective, satisfying learning process:



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# The Art of Storytelling

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In the Oak Meadow approach to learning, storytelling has great significance. Some parents and teachers might view storytelling as something that may help the child to feel more secure or bring a few moments of happiness, but do not see stories as a powerful educational tool. At Oak Meadow, we believe that storytelling is one of the most important skills that a teacher can develop. What is it about storytelling that is so important?

Storytelling is something that children of all ages love, and it can lead to some wonderful experiences together for both children and adults. Through storytelling, parents and teachers can create a magical space, where children and adults can experience deeper realities and communicate in ways they rarely do otherwise.

Children will love almost any story that is told to them, simply because the very act of having someone tell you a story gives you a feeling of security and contentment that is rarely found in any other experience. This is because a story creates a “safe space,” psychologically and emotionally. While the story is going on, the child enters into a state of timelessness, created by the knowledge that, while this story is happening, nothing else is going on. In addition, if the adult who is telling the story is someone the child knows and loves, the child enters into a state of trust, in which they become completely receptive to the experience that is occurring. These two elements of trust and timelessness are qualities that are conducive to a deeper experience, and when you add to that the uplifting experience provided by a story that has genuine humor or deeper meaning, the total experience is quite extraordinary, both for the child and the adult telling the story.

The basic skill of a storyteller is the ability to draw others into the experience of what is being told. In telling stories to younger children, we often read from a book or tell the story from memory, and sometimes we even create stories that have never been told before. Whatever the source of the story may be, it is usually not based on concrete physical facts, but is drawn from myths, legends, or archetypal themes. However, this lack of physical basis in no way detracts from the importance of the story, for the greatest truths known to humanity are often hidden in such stories, and so they are far more important and more real, especially to young children, than the stories based on hard facts or mundane reality.

Older children also enjoy stories immensely, and their need to experience stories is as deep as it is for younger children. With adolescents, the teacher can utilize the benefits of storytelling most effectively by telling stories that use the basic facts of the subject as guidelines, and imbuing them with life. In



this way, the facts virtually “come alive” through the being of the storyteller, and children begin to experience the life of the subject, not just the form. As such, a creative teacher will use the facts of a situation as background scenery in a fascinating story, and draw the children into a real experience of the subject that will have meaning to them.

Most people have read stories aloud from a book, which is an excellent place to start. You can also develop your storytelling skills by creating original stories, which gives you yet another powerful tool to help children transform themselves.

## Choosing Stories

In choosing stories for children, it is helpful to consider the child’s age and the purpose of the story. There are many wonderful stories to be told, but a thrilling story for a twelve-year-old is usually too complex for a seven-year-old to follow and enjoy. Stories for younger children usually have a very simple plot, uncomplicated characters, and move along rather quickly. As the age of the child increases, the plots generally become more complex, the characters display more subtleties, and more attention is given to detail to bring a greater depth and richness to the overall story.

When we tell stories from memory, we have more freedom to adjust the story than when we read it aloud from a book. So, when telling a story from memory, if the story is a little too complex for a younger child to understand, it can often be adapted by leaving out some of the details. Conversely, a very simple story can be made more enjoyable for older children by adding details to the plot and subtleties to the characters.

When choosing a story, you’ll want to consider the purpose of the story. We tell stories for varying reasons: to help lighten a melancholy mood, to share a laugh together, to convey a deep truth, to learn about a particular time period or explore a particular theme, or maybe just to help a scattered child become focused. Whatever the purpose may be, by considering beforehand the elements in the story, you will be better able to choose one that meets the needs of the situation.

Above all, remember and respect your child’s needs and sensibilities. It is very important, in choosing a story, to respect this safe space that has been created, and not to violate the receptive, trusting attitude of the child by choosing or creating a story that will leave the child with unresolved or upsetting feelings. This doesn’t mean that we can’t choose or create stories that contain elements of discord or conflict because these certainly are part of the human condition, and any story would be quite boring without them. However, we have to make sure that these elements are resolved in some way before the story is finished. This way, the child comes out of the story feeling whole and restored. It is especially important for young children to see reflected in their literature an abiding sense that good conquers evil and love is stronger than hate. These underlying themes will feed your child’s perception that the world is a good place to live, and nurture a desire to create good in the world.

## Telling the Story

Once you have decided which story to tell, there are several elements that will help you create the magic of the story, which is what gives the story its potency and its transforming capabilities.

- First, be fully present. Try to put aside the worries and distractions of the day while you are experiencing the story with your child. This is important for both of you, so that you can have your own moment of escape with your child. Children can sense when your mind is elsewhere and will react with less interest. The main thing about a story that really attracts children is the sense of power that builds as a story is being read or told. Being fully present helps you convey and maintain this literary tension.
- Second, use your voice expressively. Change the tone of your voice as the story seems to call for it, reflecting the differences in the characters and the qualities they represent. A monotone delivery can make even the best story seem dull. Of course, you don't have to adopt a completely different voice for each character! Just try to vary your tone of voice, and use inflection to indicate the different lines that are being spoken. Express the character's surprise, sadness, anger, confusion, teasing, etc. This makes the story characters feel more real and more relevant. You might think of it as performing the story as a radio or movie voice-over actor might do. Changing the tone of your voice in this way brings a greater range of feeling to the overall story, which helps to strengthen the potency of the mood that is created.
- Third, vary the pace of the story. Even if we change our tone of voice, the story can become stagnant unless we vary the pace. Use the events of the story as a guide to the pace, slowing down during the more dramatic, important times, speeding up to heighten the sense of excitement during those periods of the story, and using a more steady pace during the other parts. In this way, the story begins to come alive with life and action. These changes in pace also help children keep their awareness focused on the story because a change of pace draws attention to what is occurring at that moment, and keeps the listener connected with the movement of the story.
- Fourth, support your voice. This means you will consciously project yourself through your voice, so that the voice becomes a vehicle for what you want to accomplish through the story you are telling. This doesn't mean you have to speak loudly, like an actor in a theater, but that the quality of your voice comes across as strong and well-supported. In order to do this, you must first become aware of the location of your voice, that is, the place in which you can feel your voice resonating or vibrating in your body. This can be anywhere from the top of your head to your diaphragm. Unless you have done a lot of public speaking or singing, you will probably find your voice coming from somewhere in your head, often from the sinus cavities, which gives the voice a "nasal" quality. Generally, our voices do not tend to naturally arise from a great depth within us; we must learn how to develop our voices to do this with intention. By bringing your voice more deeply into your body, it can bring a greater fullness to your spoken words.



## Guide

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# Art Instruction

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Artistic expression is a very important part of the Oak Meadow curriculum because we believe it is an important element of the human experience. The primary media used throughout the curriculum are beeswax crayons, watercolor paints, modeling beeswax, and clay. Crayon drawing is used extensively as children create their own main lesson books. Watercolor painting offers a unique expression of flowing color and form, and it helps to develop an understanding of the subjective value of colors. Modeling with beeswax and clay gives children the opportunity to create three-dimensional forms with their hands, pairing artistry and imagination with practicality.

Any activity can be approached in a considered, focused manner (consciously) or haphazardly (unconsciously). Art is no exception. If an artistic activity is approached consciously, it can open opportunities for the expression of the rich inner world within the individual.

In many educational situations, children are not given much (if any!) guidance in the early stages of artistic activity. Children are often left on their own to learn to draw, paint, and sculpt, and after they pass through the early years of gleeful, unselfconscious abandon, begin to doubt their artistic abilities within a few short years. It's not uncommon to hear a child in third or fourth grade say, "I can't draw," a sentiment echoed wholeheartedly by the majority of adults.

However, once these children (or adults) set aside their doubts and approach artistic activities with open and willing head, heart, and hands, most discover that they can learn to draw and benefit from creating art as much as any accomplished artist. By consciously helping your child learn to draw, paint, and sculpt in the early years, you are opening doors to a world of creative opportunities.

## Crayon Drawing

As imitation is the child's primary means of learning in the early grades, the best way you can teach your child to draw is to participate fully in drawing. If you have a chalkboard (and good quality chalk in a wide selection of colors) or your own main lesson book, you can demonstrate drawing technique for your child, who will initially copy your work. This lets your child learn in a natural, organic way, by copying what you do, rather than approaching it from an intellectual viewpoint of angles, lines, colors, shading, etc. Formal art instruction will come in fourth grade, but for now, it is most beneficial for your child to simply imitate your actions.

The illustrations that you will be doing for your child to copy are simple, basic forms. These forms encourage a child's early experiences in artistic expression and can be easily created by any parent willing to try. Sophisticated talent is not necessary, and in many cases can be a detriment as children will not find themselves able to copy a professional level drawing.

In the early stages of development, children tend not to focus on forms as sharply as an adult, but rather see the world more as an interplay of changing colors, shapes, and inner feelings. Thus, the appropriate artistic forms for imitation by a child just learning to draw are not detailed figures or line drawings (or stick figures), but full shapes composed of rich natural colors without intricate details. As the child's objective awareness of the world grows, the shapes will gradually become more detailed, reflecting this change in awareness. But a child shouldn't be pressured into expressing detail too early, for it has the effect of bringing forth the mental faculties too early, which can result in a premature development of the critical nature, causing unhappiness in parent and child alike.

You will note that in the lessons, children are often asked to draw illustrations of a story they have heard and to include specific story details in the story. This should not be confused with a detailed picture. A story detail might be Little Red Riding Hood's red hood or her basket. These story details can be drawn in a very simple form, without the need for artistic details, such as a tie for the hood or a blue checkered napkin in the basket. This type of detail will show up in a child's drawings when they are ready; until then, simply focus on encouraging the inclusion of story details, not artistic detail.

## Tips on Teaching a Child to Draw

As you begin to experiment with drawing and with teaching your child to draw, you will find the illustrations in the lessons to be helpful. You are encouraged to copy them, if you'd like, until you feel more confident in your own drawing skills. These illustrations are designed to help children express themselves through the use of rich colors and full figures, drawing "from the inside out," rather than outlining a form and coloring it in.

We highly recommend using beeswax block crayons for drawings, and beeswax stick crayons for writing in the first and second grades, switching to colored pencils for writing in third grade. The block crayons provide a particularly forgiving experience for children learning to draw. They do take some getting used to, however, and we recommend you taking some time to explore how to use the different edges to create shapes or drag the crayon across the page to lay down a large swath of color for, say, the sky or ground.

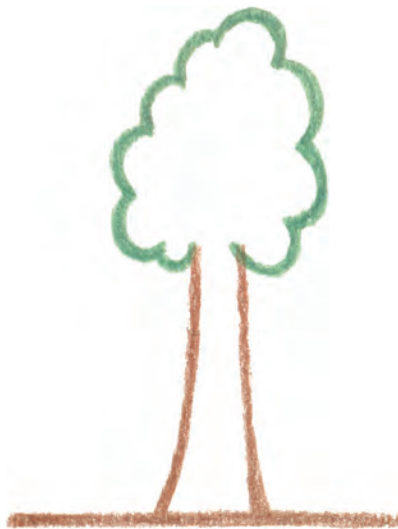
Block crayons make it easy to form shapes from the inside out, and allow a child to use softer, more muted lines rather than the bold lines often made by stick crayons. Coloring an oval shape that becomes a person's body, with a smaller oval on top for the head, and long thin ovals for limbs, all colored using the wide strokes of a block crayon, helps children see and feel the human form emerge organically. The shapes feel fully formed when drawing in this manner, as though they have substance and are not just a flat drawing on a page.

As a practical guide to understanding the means of creating full, rich drawings, we offer the following suggestions:

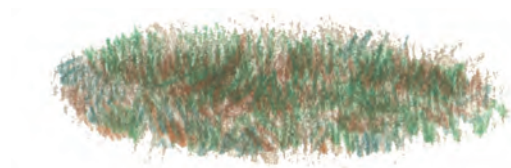
- 1. Model and encourage your child to draw shapes from the inside out, instead of outlining.** If a child has spent many years outlining shapes and coloring them in (or using coloring books with bold outlined shapes), it may be challenging to help your child learn a new technique, but with a little persistence and patience, you will both be happier with the results. An outline creates a rigid line, which is immovable, so if the line isn't "right" when it is first drawn, it cannot be adjusted to conform to the image the child is trying to create. This can be a source of great frustration to a child learning to draw.

Generally, not even an accomplished artist would create an image by first outlining with a bold line. An artist generally creates images using a sequence of lightly drawn lines, drawing the general shape of the form over and over, until the lines gradually merge and darken as the intended image becomes more accurate.

If you wish to draw a tree, therefore, don't start by doing this:



Instead, develop the tree as a movement of color rising from the ground, just as a tree would naturally grow.



**First, the earth**



**Next, the root**





Then, the trunk



Then, the branches



Finally, the leaves

In this way a child is able to adjust the image as it develops, instead of being bound by the first line drawn. The result feels much more organic and authentic.

2. **“Feel your way along.” Encourage your child with these words as they draw.** In our example of the tree, this would mean imagining that you are standing in front of the tree and feeling each part of the tree—the roots coming out of the ground, the trunk rising up, the limbs branching off,

etc. As you feel your way in imagination, you move the crayon along the paper, “feeling your way along” with the edge of the crayon. Not only does this often produce a more accurate drawing, but more important, it allows a fuller, richer artistic experience by connecting the inner image with the outer representation.

**3. Show your child how to fill the entire page with color.** Blue sky above should reach all the way to the edges of the page and to the green grass below. If the picture is of the inside of a house, the walls should be colored in, perhaps with something on the walls. Create a feeling of reality about the picture, and an expansive sense of space.

**4. Spend some time practicing on your own before asking your child to do a particular drawing.** This will help give you the confidence to guide your child’s work with firm purpose and presence. Remember, your child is not expecting you to be another Rembrandt; focusing your own intention and willingness on learning to draw will help your child to do the same.

In the beginning, it will help your child to have you draw an illustration that they can copy. After a month or so, however, you can begin to encourage them to try drawing now and then without copying from anything. This will help keep your child from believing that they must always copy another drawing. However, remember that imitation is a child’s lifeblood in the early years; it is the child’s nature. Therefore, you can support your child by creating an imaginary picture through the story that you tell, and make the images strong and clear, so the child has something definite to imitate in drawing. In this way, your child can learn how to give outer form to the images that arise within the imagination.

Don’t expect a child to sit down and just create a picture without first having a vivid image planted in the imagination. Most children will need assistance with this before they learn to create vivid, detailed images from their own resources.

## Drawing Forth Your Own Inner Artist

As you begin to work with art in your teaching, it may be helpful to reflect on your own artistic process. This can help you present a clear presence to your child, rather than worrying about your own drawings. If you worry that your drawing doesn’t look “right,” your child is likely to pick up on this and begin worrying about their own drawings.

In the first few weeks of learning to draw, take some time to consider your experience:

1. Were you able to move your crayon on the paper, letting the form arise in an organic way, or did you feel compelled to outline the form first and fill it in? If now you are able to let go of the outline and draw from the inside out, how do you feel about your picture? Does the inner experience of creating art change when you fill in fuller forms rather than outlining?
2. Do you find yourself judging your drawings against the standard of how they are “supposed to look”? What would you say to your child if they crumpled up a drawing, crying that it didn’t look like it was supposed to? You would probably find it very easy to say something encouraging

and nonjudgmental about your child's art. Can you be encouraging and nonjudgmental with yourself?

3. Do you feel a need to hurry through your picture or are you comfortable taking a half hour or more to complete a picture? Do you feel yourself becoming calmer as you sink into the process? How does your experience change when you are rushed as opposed to taking the time to consider color choices, running the crayon over and over the form to get the shape that feels right, and setting aside the tasks of the day and a to-do list to just breathe into the experience and enjoy making art? Perhaps you can think of some things that you can do to create an atmosphere of expansive time while your child is drawing, so that it doesn't just feel like another thing that needs to be accomplished so that you can move on.

As you become more aware of your own artistic process, you will be better able to support your child's artistic experience. Together, the two of you can find out the best way for you to open up artistically and get the most out of the creative experience.

## Form Drawing

Another artistic activity that you should begin to explore is called form drawing. In addition to developing a greater control of the hand, these exercises foster inner poise and balance, strengthen the imaginative faculties, and unfold an appreciation for order and symmetry. They can become increasingly complex as you continue to develop variations. It is important that the focus always be on quality rather than quantity.

In the Oak Meadow curriculum, we introduce form drawing as part of the math program. Its form and symmetry is an excellent foundation for geometry and spatial awareness. In addition, form drawing leads nicely into cursive handwriting in the third grade. You will find specific directions in the lessons about when and how to use form drawings, but this introduction to form drawing will help you familiarize yourself with the process beforehand.

The exercises are primarily of two types in the early grades. First, the child learns to reproduce a line form drawn by the parent or teacher on a separate paper. Second, the child learns to create a mirror image of a line form drawn by the teacher. In mirror image drawings, the teacher draws one side of a form and the student draws a mirror image of the form. Forms are done in both horizontal and vertical alignment.

### Basic Types of Form Drawing

Form drawing exercises are best approached very informally when you have a quiet moment with your child. However, they can also be very helpful if your child has just had a minor emotional upset and needs some attention and something tangible to focus on. The easiest way to begin is simply by sitting down with your child, two pieces of paper, and a pencil. At first, you can introduce your child to the two basic line forms: a straight line and a curved line. You can say that these two kinds of forms are very



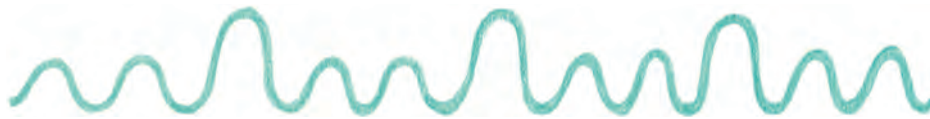
different, as different as night and day, but everywhere we look, we see these forms. You only have to look around to see that it is true—every form is either straight, curved, or a combination of the two.

As always, evoking a story or image will help your child grasp the concept of form drawings and enter into the experience. You can say that straight and curved lines like to do different things.

For example, if a curved line is running, it might show it like this:



If it is running and hopping, it might show it like this:



But straight lines would rather march than run,



and they don't care to hop, but they will climb walls.



Curved lines can show happiness very easily,



or even sadness.



But when it comes to being cross or irritable, they leave that to the straight line,



who can even fight if it has to.



But curved lines would always rather love than fight.



This gives you an idea of the possibilities of simple form drawings (this type is sometimes called a running form, as it runs across the paper, repeating a predictable pattern). As you and your child become familiar with the basic character of straight and curved lines, together you can create many forms to represent shades of feeling or different story scenarios. Always give your child plenty of time to practice each form—it can be harder than it looks, as you will soon see! Once you draw your form, feel free to go over it several times with the crayon, working to smooth out bumpy edges or increase the symmetry of the form. Then, create the form again on a new piece of paper, seeing if you can create a more consistent, accurate form after you have practiced. This is the process your child will go through as well.

Of course, you don't always have to have a certain mood or story attached to the form. As you and your child become more adept at form drawing, it can be fun just to create new forms and take turns reproducing each other's forms.

The second type of form drawing, mirrored form drawings, are beneficial in helping the child integrate the left and right hemispheres of the brain. They also help to develop the imaginative faculties as the form has to be clearly pictured in the mind before it can be copied in reverse. When introducing mirrored form drawings, you might begin by explaining that a line that is perfectly straight and not moving can act as a mirror, just like the mirrors we have in our houses.

Draw a vertical line to be your "mirror," and then draw a simple shape on the left side of the line. Then, pretending that the straight line is a mirror, draw the reflection on the other side.



Start with very simple shapes until your child begins to understand what is meant by a mirror image. When this becomes clear, you can begin to create more challenging shapes. Go very slowly, however, because the benefits from this exercise arise from the focus required to duplicate the form. As with painting one beautiful painting rather than a dozen ones thoughtlessly done, a form drawing takes concentration and should not be rushed.

As you experiment with different shapes, you begin to see that the possibilities of forms are unlimited. In a short time, we can develop more complex forms such as these, all starting with a single vertical line to act as the mirror,

using curved lines,



using straight lines only,



or even using combinations of curved and straight lines.

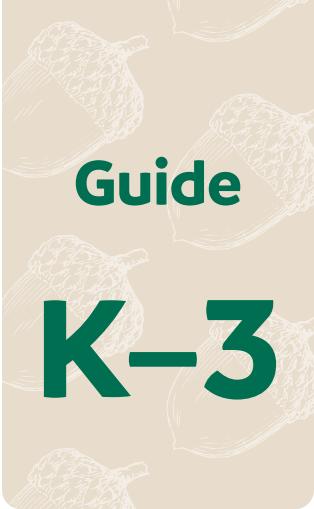


Next, this can be developed in the horizontal realm. In this case the teacher draws the form above, and the child reflects that figure below:



Form drawings can be used to embellish the borders of your child's main lesson books, and they can be used to create decorative cards. Friends and relatives are especially pleased when they receive a hand-made card, rather than one from the store.

As you begin to explore form drawing with your child, be patient with yourself! It takes some time to develop a steady hand and symmetrical, consistent forms. Some people enjoy putting on quiet music to help set a calm mood for form drawing. Others prefer silence so that concentration is encouraged. However you choose to approach your form drawing, just do your best, stay focused, and don't rush. This will encourage your child to do the same.



## Guide

# K-3

# Guidelines for Handcrafting

---

Handcrafts, such as knitting and crocheting, are exceptional activities for integrating thoughts, feelings, and actions. They can be tremendously harmonizing and satisfying.

Handcrafting requires us to enter into repetitious activity in a smooth rhythmical manner. It is important to continue on even when you have made a mistake. If you know how to correct your mistake and can do so, by all means do, but if you don't have the expertise at this time, don't stop or start over, simply continue working. Getting into the habit of making purposeful progress on a project will help deepen your awareness, focus, and rhythmical nature.

There is a connection between the outer form that you create and your inner state. Of course, this is true of all activities, but there are some activities that reflect this connection more clearly and accurately than others. Watch carefully the form that your crocheting and knitting take, particularly whether it is loose, very tight, whether your stitches are consistent, etc. At the same time, watch your inner states—your feelings, your thoughts, and your awareness of what you are doing. Did your own focus wander, or were you feeling tense while you knit? Use the feedback of the outer form of your knitting project to help you tune into your inner state and bring it into more balance.

As children learn handcrafting, this connection between the outer and inner state still applies, but we would never want to consciously force their attention on it. As parents and teachers, however, we can use this valuable information to help us work more effectively with our children.

## Using Color in a Purposeful Way

It can be helpful to put some thought into the colors you select when handcrafting. The choice of color is usually an aesthetic one but we can become aware of how working with different colors affects us. Working intently with a certain color, particularly if that color is very strong and clear, can have a pronounced effect on your emotional and mental state. When handcrafting, we are often working with a single color for quite some time, as the project may take weeks to complete. By choosing certain colors, we can nurture the mind, body, and spirit. The effect of colors is an entire study in itself so we can't really go into it in much depth, but there are just a few principles that may help as you prepare to begin a new project.

Consider the qualitative value of the colors themselves. What feeling does each of the colors convey? Obviously, this is a very subjective experience. Some people find red to be uplifting and stimulating,

for instance, and others find it puts them on edge. A lot of it has to do with your own temperament and needs: a fiery individual may feel an affinity for red because it reflects their own inner state, or may crave the soothing tones of blue and green to help balance this inner fire. And of course, this fiery individual could very well benefit from working with red at certain times and blue at other times. As always, a balanced life is the goal; using color gives us just one more way to achieve that.

So how does this help us in choosing colors for handcrafting projects? In general, colors are divided into groups: “warm” shades—reds, yellows, and oranges—are stimulating, and “cool” shades—blues, purples, and greens—are more soothing. Likewise, we can often see a general tendency in our own children (and in ourselves) toward either excitability or calm. Your own explorations with color will help you gain experience in determining how your child reacts to the different cool and warm colors.

As mentioned earlier, there are two ways to think about using color. The first is to select the opposite color from what we are feeling, to provide a balance to our inner state. For example, if we are feeling very excited, we might want to surround ourselves with the cool shades; this might help to calm us down. The second way to use color is as a reflection of our inner states, with the expectation that by having our inner state validated and nurtured by color, we will naturally want to embrace the opposite state in order to come into better balance. This opposite color will spontaneously arise within us. Think of it this way: if we are feeling angry or excitable and we surround ourselves with a bright red, we may soon reach inside ourselves to find a place of calm, to balance out all the excitement.

You can feel this phenomenon in an experiential way because our eyes naturally switch to a complementary color. To find the “opposite” (or complement) of a certain color, try this: Put the color you want to test on a white piece of paper and stare only at the color for about 30 seconds. Then, take the color away and stare at the white paper. You will see a color appear before your eyes, superimposed on the white paper, the exact opposite of the color you were just staring at. There are specific physiological reasons why this occurs (having to do with fatigue in the retina and rods and cones in the eye), but it reflects the color opposites found on a color wheel. This information can help us in our explorations of color. If you want to experiment with encouraging an inner experience of the opposite of a particular color (the second method for using color mentioned above), then the second color that you see when doing this experiment—the “nonphysical” color—is the color that will arise within you from using the original color.

Which approach is best for your child? There is no one right answer, of course, and you will probably find, through experimentation, that both seem to work at various times. However, by giving thoughtful attention to these principles, color can become a valuable tool in the learning process.

## Finger Knitting

Finger knitting is an excellent activity for kindergarteners, and a great precursor to learning to knit. It is easy to learn and a child can make a long chain of finger knitting in a single session—very satisfying!



Purchase a skein of bulky yarn. The fat yarn is easier to manipulate and makes a nice, thick chain that can be used for a variety of projects. It is best for you to learn to finger knit first so you can teach your child without having to refer to the directions.

Once you have learned, start finger knitting when your child is around. At some point, they will probably become interested in what you are doing, at which point you can demonstrate how to do it and let your child give it a try. If your child becomes confused or can't do it right away, let it go until another time. Once your child gets the hang of it, you will have to decide what to do with all the long strings of knitting that are coming off your child's fingers!

There are many project possibilities. The finger knitted yarn can be coiled and sewn together to make pot holders or trivets, or it can be wrapped, then glued on cans or jars to make decorative holders. A longer strand or several strands can be coiled to make a small rug or a blanket for a dog's or cat's bed. Strands of finger knitting can be woven together (or looped back and forth and sewn together) to make a square or rectangular shape for place mats, a blanket for a doll's cradle, etc. You can also finger knit your finger knitting, or braid three strands together, to make a cord with an even bigger diameter. Whatever you choose to do with the final product is entirely up to you and your child.

A ball of yarn with a loose end



Loose end crosses UNDER



Loose end crosses OVER



## NOW, TO BEGIN

1. Make a slipknot in the yarn.

Now it looks like this



2. Sit in a chair
  - a. Your left foot is next to the ball of yarn and holds it down.
  - b. Your left hand holds the loose end up—vertical and taut.
  - c. Your right thumb and forefinger are inside the loop, holding it wide apart and forming a triangle.
3. With right thumb and forefinger remaining inside the loop, grasp vertical yarn about one inch below slipknot.
4. While holding right hand stationary, pull loose end of yarn down with left hand until the loop slips snugly around the yarn. (Remember to keep your left foot on yarn.)
5. Continue holding the loose end with your left hand and pull up, letting loop slip on your right forefinger until it goes back to the size it was when you began step 3.
6. Put thumb and forefinger through loop, as shown in step 2, and then repeat steps 3, 4, and 5.
7. Adjust tension as you knit, so that the stitches are neither too tight nor too loose.
8. If you are left-handed, reverse “left” and “right” indications in the instructions.



## Knitting

Knitting is a very practical skill to teach to children, not only in terms of what they can create, but in terms of helping them develop fine motor coordination. This is particularly beneficial for children who are just learning to write. Knitting strengthens their fingers and hands, and helps them become more aware of and in control of their hand and finger movements. This makes the physical act of writing easier and less fatiguing.

If you do not yet know how to knit, we have provided simple knitting instructions at the end of this section, but ideally you will be able to learn from someone who can sit next to you and show you first-hand. Knitters are usually happy to pass along their knowledge of this traditional craft. If you don't have a friend, relative, or neighbor who can teach you, check with your nearest yarn, fabric, or craft store. Once you learn the basics, you may want to get a book on knitting (check your local library or knitting store) to pick up helpful tips and great project ideas. You don't need to learn, nor teach, anything complex at this time. Casting on, the knit stitch, and casting off (or binding off) are all that you and your child need to learn for now.

When you have learned how to knit, practice a bit until you are comfortable with all phases of the process. If possible, use natural wool yarn, as this has a lovely feel to it and a resiliency that gives it good stretch and shape. Wool yarn comes in many different types, so choose one that feels soft and pleasing to you. Using large (fat) needles and chunky yard is helpful at first, for both children and adults. We recommend a No. 10 size needle for your child to use, so you may just want to get two sets of them. Wooden needles cost more than metal ones, but the yarn is less likely to slide off of wooden needles when you are working, which is also helpful for the beginning knitter.

If you would like to make knitting needles instead of buying them, this is a fun and simple project, and can be an excellent way to begin your child's knitting lessons. Buy dowels that are about the same width as No. 10 knitting needles (about  $\frac{5}{16}$  of an inch), and cut them in one-foot lengths. Sharpen one end with a pencil sharpener. With sandpaper, sand them thoroughly, blunting the pointed tips and polishing the dowels meticulously so the yarn won't snag anywhere. This will require starting with quite rough sandpaper and progressing to finer paper. The finished needles will gradually become softer and darker as they are used because they absorb the natural oils from your child's hands. To prevent the stitches from sliding off the end of the needle, you can glue a fat bead on the end, or wrap colored rubber bands around the end until you have a fat ball.

## Knitting Instructions

There are three steps you need to know to begin knitting: casting on, the knit stitch, and casting off (or binding off).



# Music Instruction

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Music is an extraordinarily powerful element and has far-reaching effects in our lives. In many public and private schools, music is considered to be one of those subjects, such as arts and crafts, that is “nice” for children to have, but certainly shouldn’t take too much time away from the “more important” academic subjects. This is unfortunate both for students and teachers. When children are introduced to music in a balanced manner, they will be able to use its great power to effect positive change in their lives. Music can become a powerful ally in teaching and learning, and an invaluable source of enjoyment, inner harmony, and self-expression for all students.

The most effective way that we have found to unfold the musical capabilities in young children is through imitation. If a home teacher tries, in a formal manner, to hold “music class,” a child will often rebel against this. However, if that home teacher plays or sing songs for the feeling of joy or peace that they bring, this attitude will spread to the children present.

We encourage you to bring music into your home and your child’s life in a variety of experiential ways, and enjoy together the harmony it brings.

## Singing

Singing is one of the most important talents that a teacher can have. By developing this ability and gradually adding to the assortment of songs that are known by heart, it becomes an invaluable asset in working with children of all ages, and even with adults.

### Choosing Songs for Children

When choosing songs for children, one must be very careful, for children absorb the wholeness of a song and do not discriminate as to the worthiness of that which is being absorbed. If a parent sings a popular song with a depth of feeling, the child is likely to imitate all of the subtleties inherent in the song, even if the parent is unconscious of them. If the song is full of feelings of despair, loneliness, or sexual longing, the child might later give voice to those expressive feelings, regardless of how adult they might be, complete with shocking innuendo. For this reason, it is best to select songs as consciously as possible, and only choose those that convey feelings that will be a source of strength to the child in their growth.



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# Tongue Twisters and Letter Rhymes

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## A

My dame hath a lame tame crane.  
My dame hath a crane that is lame.  
Pray, gentle Jane,  
Do you have the same  
As my dame's lame crane that is tame?

## B

Betty Botter bought some butter  
But, she said, the butter's bitter.  
If I put it in my batter,  
It will make my batter bitter.  
But a bit of better butter,  
That would make my batter better.  
So she bought a bit of butter  
And she put it in her batter  
And the batter was not bitter.  
So 'twas better Betty Botter  
Bought a bit of better butter.

## C

You make a proper cup of coffee  
In a copper coffee pot.

Chris carries cute cats in a cozy carton.  
Can you carry a carton of cute, cozy cats?

## D

Daisies, daffodils, and dandelions  
Dance and dip at dawn

Remember always  
when reciting these  
verses, precise  
speech is key! See  
how fast you can go  
pronouncing every  
single consonant.



# Songs, Verses, and Fingerplays

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Fingerplays and other children's verses and songs can easily be adjusted by using finger puppets, as small dramas to act out with the whole body. They work well with a group of children too. Feel free to experiment and adapt these verses to suit you and your child.

Many fingerplays and verses present counting and other simple number stories involving adding and subtracting, such as when children hold up five fingers to show five frogs, and one by one the frogs go away, or when two blackbirds fly away and then come back. These early math games help establish a solid number sense, and their importance cannot be underestimated as learning tools for beginning mathematicians.

Children's verses also help foster a love of words, and can ease the transition into reading. Enjoy them daily as a part of your circle time, language arts activities, creative play, or any other time!

## Opening Verses for Circle Time

1. Morning has come  
Night is away.  
We rise with the sun  
To welcome the day.
2. The sun is in my heart  
It warms me with its power  
And wakens life and love  
In bird and beast and flower.
3. With joy we greet the morning sun  
Shining light on everyone  
It shines in the sky, on land and sea,  
And fills me with light when it shines on me.

## Closing Verses for Circle Time

1. Guide my hands, left and right,  
As I work with all my might.
2. Here we are with joyful hearts,  
Working well and working hard.  
Helping gladly, quick and bold,  
Bringing joy to young and old.
3. We are truthful, and helpful, and loving in trust,  
For our heart's inner sun glows brightly in us.  
We will open our hearts to the sunbeams so bright  
And we'll fill all the world with our heart's inner light.

## Songs, Verses, and Fingerplays

### A Diller, a Dollar

A diller, a dollar,  
a ten o'clock scholar,  
What makes you  
come so soon?  
You used to come  
at ten o'clock,  
But now you come at noon.



### Aiken Drum

There was a man lived in the moon  
(Make circle over head with arms)

And his name was Aiken Drum.

And he played upon a ladle, a ladle, a ladle  
(Pretend to strum an instrument)

And his name was Aiken Drum.

And his hat was made of green cheese, green cheese, green cheese  
(Make a hat with hands on head)

And his name was Aiken Drum.

And his coat was made of roast beef, roast beef, roast beef  
(Point to arms and chest to show the coat)

And his name was Aiken Drum.

And his buttons were made of penny loaves, penny loaves, penny loaves  
(Show the buttons)

And his name was Aiken Drum.

And his waistcoat was made of crusts of pie, crusts of pie, crusts of pie  
(Point to chest and stomach to show waistcoat or vest)

And his name was Aiken Drum.

And his britches were made of haggis bags, haggis bags, haggis bags  
(Point to pants)

And his name was Aiken Drum.

There was a man lived in the moon  
(Make circle over head with arms)

And his name was Aiken Drum.  
(Drop hands down)



## All the Year

This poem by Sara Coleridge is an excellent verse for memorization.

January brings the snow, makes our feet and fingers glow.  
February brings the rain, thaws the frozen lake again.  
March brings breezes, loud and shrill, to stir the dancing daffodil.  
April brings the primrose sweet, scatters daisies at our feet.  
May brings flocks of pretty lambs, skipping by their fleecy dams.  
June brings tulips, lilies, roses, fills the children's hands with posies.  
Hot July brings cooling showers, apricots, and gillyflowers.  
August brings the sheaves of corn, then the harvest home is borne.  
Warm September brings the fruit; sportsmen then begin to shoot.  
Fresh October brings the pheasant; then to gather nuts is pleasant.  
Dull November brings the blast; then the leaves are whirling fast.  
Chill December brings the sleet, blazing fire, and Christmas sweet.

## Ants Go Marching

The ants go marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah  
The ants go marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah  
The ants go marching one by one,  
The little one stops to suck his thumb  
And they all go marching down to the ground  
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!  
The ants go marching two by two . . . The little one stops to tie his shoe  
The ants go marching three by three . . . The little one stops to climb a tree  
The ants go marching four by four . . . The little one stops to shut the door  
The ants go marching five by five . . . The little one stops to take a dive  
The ants go marching six by six . . . The little one stops to pick up sticks  
The ants go marching seven by seven . . . The little one stops to pray to heaven  
The ants go marching eight by eight . . . The little one stops to shut the gate  
The ants go marching nine by nine . . . The little one stops to check the time  
The ants go marching ten by ten . . . The little one stops to say “THE END”  
And they all go marching down to the ground  
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!



## The Apple Tree

Here is an apple tree with its leaves so green.  
(Stand tall and strong like a tree with arms outstretched)  
Here are the apples that hang in between.  
(Make little circles with each hand to show apples hanging)

When the wind blows, the apples will fall.  
(With arms waving, show wind blowing and apples falling)

Here is a basket to gather them all.  
(Hold arms in front like a basket to hold apples)

## Autumn

The leaves are floating gently down,  
(Wave arms up and down showing leaves floating)  
They make a soft bed on the ground. Then WHOOOO!  
(Wave arms wildly, showing wind)  
The wind comes whistling by,  
And sends them dancing back to the sky.  
(Hands flutter and dance showing leaves being lifted up)



## The Beehive

(Do this first with one hand and then the other)

Here is the beehive,

(Hold fist closed with fingers inside)

Where are the bees?

Hidden away where nobody sees.

Watch and you'll see them come out of the hive.

(Watch closely to see them coming)

One, two, three, four, five!

(Creep the fingers out slowly while counting one at a time)

## Bingo

There was a farmer had a dog and Bingo was his name-o

B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O

And Bingo was his name-o.

There was a farmer had a dog and Bingo was his name-o

(Clap)-I-N-G-O, (Clap)-I-N-G-O, (Clap)-I-N-G-O

And Bingo was his name-o.

There was a farmer had a dog and Bingo was his name-o

(Clap)-(Clap)-N-G-O, (Clap)-(Clap)-N-G-O, (Clap)-(Clap)-N-G-O

And Bingo was his name-o.

(Continue replacing letters with claps until you are clapping five times to replace the five letters)

## Bow-Wow

Bow-wow, says the dog;

Mew, mew, says the cat;

Grunt, grunt, goes the hog;

And squeak, goes the rat.

Tu-whu, says the owl;

Caw, caw, says the crow;

Quack, quack, says the duck;

And moo, says the cow.





## Chickens

Chickens are fun to imitate—enjoy!

Come and watch the clucking chickens as they search for things to eat.  
They chirp and chatter cheerily and scratch about their feet.  
From the garden patch and wayside ditch, as much as they can catch,  
They eat and then each other chase, a choicer bit to snatch!

## Chip, Chop

Pronunciation is key in speech exercises. When you model these for your child, feel free to exaggerate the consonants, particularly those at the ends of words. Children have a wonderful time with exaggerated speech!

Chip, chop, chip, chop! The woodsman with his chopper chops.  
Chip, chop, chip, chop! Stout and strong and proper chops.  
On beeches, oaks, and birches too, his hatchet gaily rings,  
As he chops so cheerily, as cheerily he sings.

## Chubby Little Snowman

A chubby little snowman had a carrot nose.  
(Show long nose with closed fist like a trumpet in front of face)

Along came a bunny, and what do you suppose?  
(Hands show the bunny hopping)

That hungry little bunny, looking for his lunch,  
(Wiggle nose like a bunny)

Ate the snowman's carrot nose,  
Nibble, nibble, crunch!  
(Pretend to eat the carrot)

## Clap with Me, One, Two, Three

(Do all the hand motions while speaking—try using the body as much as possible!)

Clap with me, one, two, three  
Clap, clap, clap, just like me.  
Shake with me, one, two, three  
Shake, shake, shake, just like me.  
Roll with me, one, two, three,  
Roll, roll, roll, just like me.  
Snap with me, one, two, three,  
Snap, snap, snap, just like me.  
Fold with me, one, two, three,  
Now let them rest so quietly.

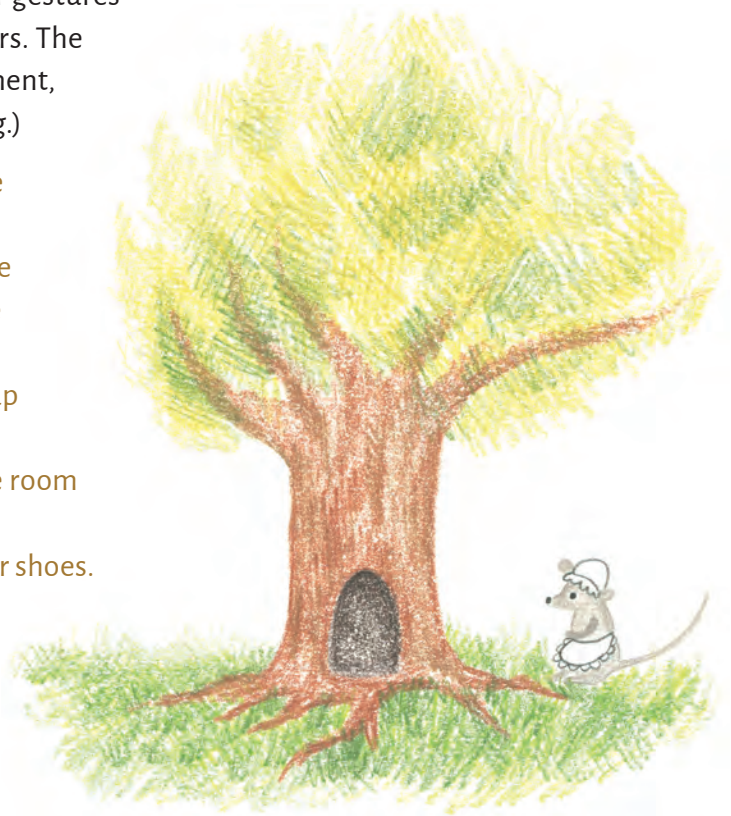
## The Cobbler and the Mouse

(This is a delightful little tale. It can be used as a finger play or a puppet play for which you use either gestures or small hand puppets to depict the characters. The child can also perform this verse with movement, acting out the washing, tidying, and mending.)

There once lived a cobbler and he was so wee  
He lived in a hole in a very big tree  
He had a good neighbor and she was a mouse  
She did his wee washing and tidied his house  
Each morning at seven he heard a wee tap  
And in walked the mouse in her apron and cap  
She lit a small fire and fetched a wee broom  
And she swept and she polished his little tree room  
To take any wages, she always refused  
So the cobbler said thank you by mending her shoes.

## Daffy-Down-Dilly

Daffy-Down-Dilly has come up to town,  
In a yellow petticoat, and a green gown.





# Poems

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## Poems by Maud Keary

(from *Enchanted Tulips and Other Verses for Children*)

### The Alphabet

Long the Alphabet  
In my blue reading book:  
There is each letter set,  
With its peculiar look —  
Some seeming fat and glad,  
Others a little sad.  
Some seeming very wise,  
Some with a roguish look,  
Making all kinds of eyes  
In my blue reading book!  
While a few seem to say,  
“Shall you know us today?”

### A Beetle Tale

“O come,” the elder beetle said,  
“For every one is safe in bed,  
‘Tis time to seek our nightly bread.”  
Then forth he crept with stealthy tread.  
The clock ticked on—you would not deem  
Aught could have broke that peace supreme,  
The children slept, they scarce did dream,  
The young moon cast a fitful gleam.  
From crack and cranny beetles crept;  
In black and polished coats they stepped  
Upon that floor, which Jane had swept!  
Ah me! How fast those children slept!

The elder beetle scratched his head  
And thought a moment—then he said:  
“Follow me, children, and be fed.”  
Forth to the larder door he led.  
The Cook turned in her sleep—too late!  
She should have covered with a plate  
The dish that none shall save from fate;  
She dreams the clock is striking eight!  
But ah! Not yet the night has run,  
Not yet appears the morning sun —  
Cook’s handiwork is soon undone,  
The tarts are eaten every one!

## A Dream

Last night when I was fast asleep,  
Who do you think ran after me?  
But A, B, C, each holding hands —  
It was the strangest sight to see!  
A danced a jig on nimble feet,  
Fat B sat down upon the bed,  
And C, to show what he could do,  
Turned round and stood upon his head!  
In blank surprise I stared at them —  
How odd the dancing letters seemed!  
And then I rubbed my eyes and woke,  
And knew that I had only dreamed!

## A Fly

Come and see this busy fly  
Rub his skinny hands together,  
Now he stops and wonders whether  
He feels clean again and dry.  
Is it to the left or right,  
The way back to the windowpane?  
He thinks he’ll go and dance again,  
He feels so tidied up and bright!

## A Snail

A snail crept up the lily's stalk:  
"How nice and smooth," said he;  
"It's quite a pleasant evening walk,  
And just the thing for me!"

## At Night

Silence and night were in the air,  
I heard their whispers everywhere;  
And wind-breaths through the wallflowers went  
Like unseen bees in search of scent.  
Deep in the sky some stars were burning,  
And then—I heard the round world turning!

## Beneath the Sea

Were I a fish beneath the sea,  
Shell-paved and pearl-brocaded,  
Would you come down and live with me,  
In groves by coral shaded?  
No washing would we have to do;  
Our cushions should be sponges —  
And many a great ship's envious crew  
Should watch our merry plunges!

## Birthdays

When birthdays come, we always write  
Our names upon the nursery door,  
And carefully we mark the height,  
Each standing shoeless on the floor.  
How strange to think birthdays will be  
When we shall never add one more  
To all those marks which gradually  
Are climbing up the nursery door!

## Blackberries

In the garden strawberries grow,  
Where anybody may not go,  
But blackberries grow by the road,  
Where all may get a basket-load;  
So, little children, take your fill —  
Then carry homewards what you will.

## Clouds

Curly clouds of snowy white,  
Fleecy islands in the light,  
Prettier than cotton-wool,  
Come and be my bed to-night  
E'en a king would not disdain  
Golden cloud for counterpain,  
White ones for the sheets so cool,  
Pillows like a silken skein!  
Oh! to sleep and dream, and wake  
With the cloud's first morning shake,  
Hear the broad Earth stir below,  
Watch the shining daylight break!  
Lying safe upon my cloud,  
Feeling like a fairy proud,  
Sailing softly I should go,  
Singing like the larks aloud!

## Cuckoo Flowers and Daisies

Cuckoo flowers and daisies,  
Grasses grey with dew,  
Sunbeams of buttercups,  
And a sky all blue.  
Primroses and cowslips,  
Bluebells and sweet may,  
And a cuckoo calling  
Far, far away.  
Forget-me-nots and cresses,  
In the streamlet blue,  
Fly a little nearer,  
O Cuckoo, do!



# Verses and Poems Especially for Grade 3

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## Am I

(Add gestures to indicate “above” and “below.”)

Upon the Earth I stand upright.  
I lift my arms up to the light.  
My feet Earth-bound below remain.  
Hands and feet together again.  
Hands above . . . feet below . . .  
Here in the middle am I!

## Autumn Color

(This is a nice descriptive verse of Lady Autumn. Movement with silks may be fun here. If it is warm outside, play in the leaves with autumn verses!)

The world is full of color! 'Tis autumn once again,  
And leaves of gold and crimson, are lying in the lane.  
There are brown and yellow acorns, berries and hips of rose,  
Golden broom and purple heather growing near the road.  
Green apples in the orchard, flushed by the growing sun;  
Mellow pears and brambles when the colored pheasants run!  
Yellow, blue, and orange, russet, rose and red;  
A gaily colored pageant, an autumn flower bed.

## Building a House

(You can add house building gestures or even build as you go!)

Let us bravely now build with fine bricks both a high and handsome house.  
That it first may be firm and well founded, we will dig a good depth for foundations.  
On the clay we will cast molds of concrete, then we'll mix and we'll make good mortar.

The bricks layer upon layer we will lay, till the top is as tall as the trees.  
As it grows we leave gaps for some glass, that the sunlight in splendor may stream.  
It has views over vale and over valley, with its polish and paint it looks proud.  
And we know we have nothing neglected.

## Cow Talk

(This is a funny, rambling poem, moseying along just as a cow might! It paints an amusing picture of two cows with nothing much to do. The children really enjoy living into the cow's slow, ponderous nature.)

Half the time they munched the grass  
And all the time they lay  
Down in the water-meadows,  
in the lazy month of May.  
A-chewing and a-mooing  
To pass the hours away.  
"Nice weather," said the brown cow.  
"Ah," said the white.  
"Grass is very tasty,"  
"Grass is all right."  
Half the time they munched the grass  
And all the time they lay  
Down in the water-meadows,  
in the lazy month of May.  
A-chewing and a-mooing,  
To pass the hours away.  
"Rain coming," said the brown cow.  
"Ah," said the white.  
"Flies are very tiresome."  
"Flies bite."



## Farewell Summer

(This is a fun verse to act out. If you have many family members participating, you can take turns being various animals with a narrator.)

The maples flare among the spruces,  
The bursting foxglove spills its juices;  
The gentians lift their sapphire fringes,  
On roadways rich with golden tinges.  
The waddling woodchucks fill their hampers,  
The deer mouse runs, the chipmunk scampers.  
The squirrels scurry, never stopping,  
For all they hear is apples dropping.  
With walnuts plumping fast and faster,  
The bees weigh down the purple aster.  
Yes, give your honey, little hummer,  
The woods are waving, "Farewell summer."

## The Farmer

(This verse can be performed through movement or recited and memorized as speech work.)

To dig the ditch,  
To plough the land,  
To this the farmer  
Turns a hand.  
To sow the seed,  
To hoe and weed,  
To give the plants  
The light they need.  
To milk the cows,  
To feed the hens,  
To clean the pigs  
Within their pens.  
To cut the corn,  
To store the grain,  
To bring the sheep  
To be sheared again.  
To care for the soil,

To let it rest,  
To feed it—so  
It gives its best.  
The farmer works  
And so do we,  
Helping flower,  
Bird, and bee.

## Go with Me

(Repeat a minimum of three times. Speak faster and faster, as fast as you can.)

Though they go there with me,  
I will go there with thee,  
Then we'll all go together.  
How funny that will be!  
For these are these and those are those,  
As soon as we come hither.  
But these are those and those are these  
As soon as we go thither.

## In March

(This verse can be used as a challenge for poetry memorization or it can be performed as role play. It is fun to act like a storm!)

In March the wind blows loud and strong  
And roars among the trees.  
It sings a wild exultant song  
Like waves on stormy seas.  
The tossing branches madly strive,  
The treetops bow before its drive.  
Assaulted by the frantic gale,  
The slender branches yield.  
It seems their strength cannot prevail  
On such a battlefield.  
Yet when the wind is dead and gone  
Unharm'd the frail young buds live on.



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