

— LANGUAGE ARTS TOGETHER —

The Magician's Nephew



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The Language Arts Together Philosophy

The idea behind Language Arts Together is that you can teach all of your children from grade 8 and below by reading aloud the same literature selection. All of the activities in this guide are leveled so that you can increase the difficulty and expectations for older students and decrease it for younger students.

The role of the parent-teacher is to share the story by reading it aloud and then allow the children to make their own connections with the events, characters, and ideas of the story.

For a complete discussion of how we choose our books, our current recommendations for companion writing and grammar curriculum for older children, and an explanation of our methods, please visit pambarnhill.com/lat. There you will find recommendations, book lists, and a short video masterclass on how to use our language arts program.

Visit pambarnhill.com/lat for your free “Teaching Language Arts Together” masterclass.

The Magician's Nephew

The Magician's Nephew is the first book chronologically in C.S. Lewis's series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. It narrates the adventure of young Digory Kirke and Polly Plummer, who find themselves unwittingly embarking on a fantastical journey through various worlds, guided by the enchanted rings created by Digory's eccentric Uncle Andrew. Their expedition leads them to the desolate world of Charn, where they mistakenly awaken the malevolent Queen Jadis. Upon returning to London, chaos ensues with Jadis's attempt to dominate the new world, leading to their subsequent venture to the newly born realm of Narnia, orchestrated by the majestic lion Aslan.

Amidst Narnia's pristine and enchanting landscape, Digory undertakes a perilous quest to obtain a magical fruit to thwart the potential terror from Jadis. The tale cleverly foreshadows the adventures that follow in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* or can be read as a stand-alone adventure in the *Narnia* series.

Study Topics

- Vocabulary
- Narration
- Sentence Types and Ending Punctuation
- Descriptions with the Five Senses
- Copywork and Dictation

Our journey through "The Magician's Nephew" promises an enriching exploration of profound themes, delightful imagination, and the endless allure of adventure that beckons from the heart of Narnia. Through interactive discussions, reflective writing assignments, and creative projects, we will unravel the tapestry of meaning woven by C.S. Lewis in this enduring tale of creation, courage, and friendship.

The Four-Square Story Chart

As you progress through the novel, you and your children will complete a tool called the Four-Square Story Chart. This tool is an aid to narration and discussion in the story. In some chapters, you may add a great deal to this chart. In other chapters, you may add very little.

You can draw the chart on a whiteboard or large butcher paper. I suggest you create it where it can stay for the entire study so you don't have to erase and recreate it. You will want it to be visible to everyone as you read, narrate, and discuss daily.

A single chart will be created for the entire family, but you can have older children who write fluently create a copy of the chart. We have provided a blank copy of the chart in the Printables Appendix for this purpose. This gives them practice in taking notes and provides material for a portfolio if needed, but it isn't required if it doesn't fit your goals.

We have provided a completed chart on the following page, but we also tell you each day what words to add to the chart for that lesson. After the day's readings, you can ask the children what they would add to the chart. If they struggle to remember, no worries, add the words yourself.

Special notes about Ideas and Connections

Ideas

We have provided some suggested ideas for the Ideas Square. We will be using these ideas in our discussion throughout the book. Note that your children may also offer other ideas as well. Add those to the square and your discussion, even if they are not on our list. Your child is thinking about the book! In addition, if some of the suggested ideas seem too old for your young family, feel free to leave them off.

Connections

Note that we have provided you no suggestions for this square. That is because connections are personal to the reader. You and your children will need to make your own connections. Note that you can add connections that you make, but give your children a chance to suggest theirs first and resist the urge to lecture about the connections that you see. Mention, record in the square, and move on.

| Characters | Settings |
|---|---|
| <p> Digory Polly Uncle Andrew Aunt Letty Digory's mother Mrs. Lefay (mentioned) Queen Jadis London Policeman Cabby/King Frank * Strawberry/Fledge ** Aslan Narnian Animals Cabby's Wife/Queen Helen* </p> <p> * Wait until chapter 11 to add "King Frank and Queen Helen" **Wait until chapter 12 to add "Fledge" </p> | <p> London, England, 1900 Atlantis (mentioned) The Wood between the Worlds Charn The Hall of Images The Bell Room Narnia The Mountain Garden The country house </p> |
| Ideas | Connections |
| <p> Friendship Destruction, creation, renewal Good versus evil </p> | |

Grammar Focus Mini Lesson: Exploring Ending Punctuation and Sentence Types

Objective

Younger: Students will be able to identify and use the correct ending punctuation for different types of sentences: statements, questions, commands, and exclamations.

Older: Students will be able to identify and use the correct ending punctuation for different types of sentences and understand the advanced vocabulary for sentence types: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory.

Introduction

Begin by briefly explaining the importance of ending punctuation in writing. If we didn't have ending punctuation, all the thoughts would run together and become jumbled up.

Mention that ending punctuation helps convey the tone and intent of a sentence.

Direct Instruction

Introduce the four types of sentences:

Note: If you only have students in third grade and under, you may want to mention the terms declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory one time, but not continue to use them.

1. Statements (Declarative sentences): Sentences that provide information.
 - Example: "In those days, Mr. Sherlock Holmes was still living in Baker Street and the Bastables were looking for treasure in the Lewisham Road."
2. Questions (Interrogative sentences): Sentences that seek to gather information.
 - Example: "What on earth are you talking about?"
3. Commands (Imperative sentences): Sentences that give orders or instructions.
 - Example: "Come back at once, you young rascal."

Activity Two

From Chapter 12:

All Narnia, many-colored with lawns and rocks and heather and different sorts of trees, lay spread out below them, the river winding through it like a ribbon of quicksilver. They could already see over the tops of the low hills which lay northward on their right; beyond those hills a great moorland sloped gently up and up to the horizon. On their left the mountains were much higher, but every now and then there was a gap when you could see, between steep pine woods, a glimpse of the southern lands that lay beyond them, looking blue and far away. "That'll be where Archenland is," said Polly. "Yes, but look ahead!" said Digory. For now a great barrier of cliffs rose before them and they were almost dazzled by the sunlight dancing on the great waterfall by which the river roars and sparkles down into Narnia itself from the high western lands in which it rises. They were flying so high already that the thunder of those falls could only just be heard as a small, thin sound, but they were not yet high enough to fly over the top of the cliffs.

Discuss what the children saw, felt, heard, smelled, etc.

Activity Three

Using your whiteboard or a large sheet of chart paper brainstorm words to describe a location. It can be a location in your home, a place you recently visited, or some place you go often.

Try to include words from all five senses in your brainstorming.

As a group, create a paragraph describing your location. I usually do this right on the whiteboard. Let the children take turns suggesting sentences for the paragraph. Once you are done writing, snap a photo with your phone.

More practice for older students:

- Have students complete the exercise in Activity Three on their own. Provide as much help as they need. Give them time to read their paragraphs to their siblings during Morning Time if they desire.

Narration Notes

Narration is the process of telling back what you have heard. With narration the student sometimes culls and curates the material to tell only the most important parts. Other times they may add additional thoughts about the story.

Narration is a skill that must be practiced and the student's abilities will develop the more they practice and the older they get. The following list of expectations might be helpful as you evaluate the effectiveness of narrations.

Level 1: Very young children or those new to narration. Not before age six unless offered voluntarily

Narrations are short and perfunctory, often one sentence in length.

Level 2: Burgeoning narrator with a bit of practice

Narrations are growing longer, and the narrator is more confident. Narrations might be two to three sentences.

Level 3: Practiced narrator

Oral narrations are robust and confident. Often, five or more sentences, and they contain thoughts and descriptions of the student.

Level 4: Beginning written narrations.

Start this about age 10 for the typical child. If the child has no experience with narration, adjust expectations to Level 1 or 2 for a while, reach Level 3 and then progress to level 4.

First written narrations will be shorter than previous oral narrations. Do not grade narrations or correct them. Do one per week while you continue oral narrations on the other days.

Level 5: Confident written narrations

Student's skill in writing grows, and written narrations become longer and more detailed, growing closer in length and detail to formal oral narrations. Continue to do one literature narration per week.

Some ideas for narration success

- Finishing the reading selection before asking for a narration is unnecessary. As soon as you read the passage related to the narration prompt, stop and ask for a narration before returning to the reading.

Copywork and Dictation

Copywork allows your child to practice forming letters and the conventions of language.

Dictation allows your child to practice spelling words from memory, writing with the conventions of language, and holding thoughts in their mind while practicing the act of writing.

Because your children will be at different levels, you can modify and scaffold these assignments for their skill levels.

Level One Copywork: Level one assumes that the child can form letters and is beginning to copy short sentences.

Level Two Copywork: Lengthens the copywork to build stamina and fluency. Move to this level when the student can easily and neatly copy the work from Level One.

Level Three Guided Dictation: For this level, the student is studying specific words and conventions and adding those to the blanks of a more extended passage as the parent dictates.

Level Four Studied Dictation: For this level, the student studies a passage and then writes a small portion of it from the teacher's dictation.

Level Five Studied Dictation: The same as level four, but now the student writes the entire passage.

The Passages

Chapter 4

They stood still and listened, but all they could hear was the thump-thump of their own hearts. This place was at least as quiet as the Wood between the Worlds. But it was a different kind of quietness. The silence of the Wood had been rich and warm (you could almost hear the trees growing) and full of life: this was a dead, cold, empty silence. You couldn't imagine anything growing in it.

Day 1

Supplies: Whiteboard, dry-erase markers, globe or map showing London, England

Activity: Discuss the Activating Prior Knowledge section below.

Preview: Today, we meet two characters as they meet each other for the first time.

Four Square Story Chart: Characters – Digory, Polly, Aunt Letty, Uncle Andrew, Digory's mother. Settings – London, England, 1900. Ideas – Friendship

Read: Read the first half of Chapter 1: The Wrong Door. The section where Polly and Digory decide to explore the attics is a good place to stop. "I'm game if you are," said she.

Narration: Can you tell me what happened when Digory and Polly met? How did they act towards each other?

Activating Prior Knowledge

Genre Awareness

- Have you ever read a fantasy book before? What was it about?
- Can you name some common elements found in fantasy stories?
- What do you like about the fantasy genre?

Historical Context

- What do you know about the early 20th century in England? (The period of the book would have been right around the 1900s or even a little before.)
- Are you familiar with any historical events from this period? How were their daily lives different from our own?

Geographical Knowledge

- Can you find England on a map?
- What do you know about England's capital, London?

Series Familiarity

- Have you read any other books in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series?
- What do you remember about the characters or the setting from other books in the series?

Day 24

Supplies: Whiteboard, dry-erase markers

Review: Ask students what they remember about yesterday's reading. If they do not remember anything, provide a one-sentence synopsis of an event from the chapter.

Preview: Today, we learn what happens to Fledge and the children on their adventure.

Four Square Story Chart: Nothing new.

Read: Read the second half of Chapter 12: Strawberry's Adventure

Narration: What are the challenges faced by Digory and Polly in this chapter, and how do they overcome them?

Discussion: Talk about some of the ideas on your story chart. Does anyone have any connections to add?

Activity: Do Activity Three from the Write Like C.S. Lewis Mini-Lesson

Activity Three

Using your whiteboard or a large sheet of chart paper brainstorm words to describe a location. It can be a location in your home, a place you recently visited, or some place you go often.

Try to include words from all five senses in your brainstorming.

As a group, create a paragraph describing your location. I usually do this right on the whiteboard. Let the children take turns suggesting sentences for the paragraph. Once you are done writing, snap a photo with your phone.

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| <p>Characters</p> | <p>Settings</p> |
| <p>Ideas</p> | <p>Connections</p> |

Vocabulary Cards

cataracts

ostentatious

cistern

muddled

mutton

frowsy

Vocabulary Quiz Answer Key

1. The classroom was filled with a loud **din** as all the children talked at once.
2. We ordered **mutton** curry at the Indian restaurant last night.
3. We enjoyed hiking to the waterfall that crashed over the rocks in a series of **cataracts**.
4. The directions were so **muddled** that I couldn't follow the map.
5. The millionaire had an **ostentatious** house with gold fixtures and marble floors.
6. The old farmhouse had a large **cistern** in the basement to collect rainwater.
7. The **tawny** lion stalked its prey on the savanna.
8. The crab closed its powerful **pincers** around the clamshell.
9. We heard the loud **braying** of the donkey at the petting zoo.
10. I opened the drawers of the antique **bureau** hoping to find some old letters.
11. She sang a **lilting** melody that sounded like a cheerful folk song.
12. I opened the windows to air out the **frowsy** bedroom that had been closed up all winter.

Level 1 Copywork

Instructions: Copy the following passage in your best handwriting, paying attention to spelling, neatness, and punctuation.

Chapter 4

This place was at least as quiet as
the Wood between the Worlds.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline for letter height guidance. There are seven sets of these lines provided for copying the text above.

Level 2 Copywork

Instructions: Copy the following passage in your best handwriting, paying attention to spelling, neatness, and punctuation.

Chapter 4

The silence of the Wood had been rich and warm (you could almost hear the trees growing) and full of life: this was a dead, cold, empty silence. You couldn't imagine anything growing in it.

Level 3 Dictation Page 1

Instructions:

1. Study the passage below with your teacher. Note the punctuation in the passage and any words that you might struggle to spell.
2. Listen as your teacher reads the passage. Fill the missing words and punctuation into your leveled dictation worksheet. (Choose print on the next page or cursive on the page after.)
3. Check for errors with your teacher and make corrections.

Chapter 4

They stood still and listened, but all they could hear was the thump thump of their own hearts. This place was at least as quiet as the Wood between the Worlds. But it was a different kind of quietness.

Level 3 Dictation Page 2

Chapter 4

They stood still and listened, but all they could hear was the thump thump _____
_____ This place was
at least _____ the Wood
between the Worlds. But it was a different
kind of _____

Level 4 Dictation

Instructions:

1. Study the passage below with your teacher. Note the punctuation in the passage and any words that you cannot spell.
2. Listen as your teacher reads the passage. Write the passage onto your own paper being careful to spell and punctuate correctly.
3. Check for errors with your teacher and make corrections.

Chapter 4

They stood still and listened, but all they could hear was the thump thump of their own hearts. This place was at least as quiet as the Wood between the Worlds. But it was a different kind of quietness.

Level 5 Dictation

Instructions:

1. Study the passage below with your teacher. Note the punctuation in the passage and any words that you cannot spell.
2. Listen as your teacher reads the passage. Write the passage onto your own paper being careful to spell and punctuate correctly.
3. Check for errors with your teacher and make corrections.

Chapter 4

They stood still and listened, but all they could hear was the thump thump of their own hearts. This place was at least as quiet as the Wood between the Worlds. But it was a different kind of quietness. The silence of the Wood had been rich and warm (you could almost hear the trees growing) and full of life: this was a dead, cold, empty silence. You couldn't imagine anything growing in it.

About the Author

Pam Barnhill has a BA in Literature from Florida State University. She spent seven years teaching middle and high school language arts and journalism. For the past 13 years, she has been homeschooling her children, teaching them to love books and enjoying spending time together. She is the author of three homeschooling books and two podcasts for homeschool parents, including *Your Morning Basket*, all about the practice of learning together as a family.

