

**Lightning Literature  
& Composition  
Grade 6  
Teacher's Guide**

**by  
Elizabeth Kamath**



For Toby and Simon



Edited by Hewitt Staff

Cover drawing by Shutterstock “Ellerslie.”

Illustrations by Maryia Kapitsa

Mailing address . . . . . P. O. Box 9, Spokane WA 98

Phone . . . . . (360) 835-8708; (800) 348-1750

E-mail. . . . . info@hewitthomeschooling.com

Website. . . . . www.hewitthomeschooling.com

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## How to Use This Teacher's Guide

Welcome to the *Grade-6 Lightning Literature* program! With this series I hope to instill a love of great literature in students, to help them expand their ability to read intelligently and deeply and improve their communication abilities, and to prepare them for more advanced language arts concepts. The three key components to this series are literature, grammar and mechanics, and composition.

Even if you've completed previous Lightning Literature programs, I recommend you read this introduction. Each year brings new changes and challenges.

If you have students who struggle in language arts for any reason, please feel free to adjust my instructions here to meet their needs. For example, you may choose to have your students dictate the answers to comprehension questions or grammar exercises rather than writing them. Or you can skip some compositions if you feel the number I have here would overwhelm your students. While I like students to be challenged, I think it's important not to overwhelm them and turn reading and writing into a painful task.

## Literature

### Reading Selections

We've now entered the last two years of the elementary series of Lightning Literature. Students are getting older and more capable of understanding greater depth and nuance in story and character. Accordingly, I've chosen some books that address some more serious subjects such as bigotry, pressure to conform, and oppression. Some of these address these topics in a straight-forward nonfiction way (*I Am Malala*), some take a story-telling but realistic approach (*The Mighty Miss Malone*, *Number the Stars*), and others disguise things a bit with a more fantastical approach (*The Tripods*).

There's always room for pleasantness though, and I end the year with one of the most upbeat of students' books, *Anne of Green Gables*.

As always, I reviewed far more books than I included here, and I strove to include only quality literature while attempting to balance male and female perspectives and a variety of cultural points of view. Of course our world is rich in cultures, and I cannot possibly represent them all here. I have tried, over the entirety of the Lightning Literature curriculum, to bring a variety of voices to students.

I also strive for a variety of genres. This year I've managed three works of nonfiction (one is unusual in that it is written as poetry), two works of historical fiction, one fantastical romp, and our first true work of science fiction. There is also the Newbery winning *Holes* and the classic *Anne of Green Gables*. Of course, not every student will love every book, and for that I'm truly sorry. But my hope is people will find new loves as well.

## Daily Reading

Four days each week, I assign a certain number of chapters until the book is completed. As always, you can read aloud to your students or students can read on their own. You can also do a combination—perhaps reading some books aloud to your student while assigning others as read-alone. Or having the student read the day’s chapters alone first, then reading through the book together while discussing the comprehension questions. Some students will be reading at a level beyond these books, but you will find that reading these books with the questions and lessons that go along with them improves your student’s literary skills and comprehension.

I devoted four weeks to poetry, spread throughout the year. I could not find a poetry book I wanted to use for this year, so instead I’ve included the poems in the guide. As with the books, you can choose how you want to approach the reading of these.

## Comprehension Questions

Each day of reading includes comprehension questions for the chapters read that day. The questions are in the student guide, the answers are in the teacher’s guide. (Note that my answers are not always complete sentences. I do not require students to always answer in complete sentences, but you can if you wish.)

Questions are of various types. Some questions are literal—the answers can be found directly in the reading. Some questions are inferential. These require the student to understand something not directly stated in the text. Another type of question is evaluative. Here students are asked to provide either a judgment about something that happened in the story (“Do you think this character did the right thing?”) or to reflect on some aspect of the story in their own lives (“Have you ever felt the way this character is feeling here?”). Predictive questions ask the student to guess what will happen next in the story. Some questions require literary analysis (“What did we learn about the character from what they just did here?”).

I always prefer comprehension questions as a tool to improve reading comprehension rather than a test of it. Students are still learning to attend fully to books, and these questions can help them learn to focus on their reading in a more mature manner. If a student is stressed because they are afraid they will answer the questions wrong, their focus and love of reading will decrease rather than increase.

## Book Discussion

On the day after the last chapter of the book has been assigned, I provide help for a discussion of the book. This discussion can be between just a parent/teacher and one student or it can be a larger group.

The student guide includes a list of discussion questions for the student to think about (parents or teachers may want to look at these too). Some of these questions address emotional, ethical, moral, and similar considerations of the book. They help the student bring the ideas of the book into their own life. Other questions are more purely literary—helping students to better see such things as character motivation, how an author creates tone, and how an author develops a theme.

The teacher guide has notes on various aspects of each book—story, characters, setting, etc. Sometimes the information is general (for example, the basic story line). Other times I focus on aspects that underscore the theme.

Your student may well have other ideas about the story, characters, etc. than what I have here, and that's fine. Literature isn't math—I can't give you just a series of black and white answers. This is both exciting and (to some) frustrating. The bottom line for any assertion about a book is, can the student support what they say with the book? If a student says a character is friendly, they have to show something in the book that tells us that.

Literature is dynamic. Different people will see different things depending on their outlook, experience, personality, etc. Your student will see some unexpected things in some of these books—and what they see may tell you more about them than about the books. It's important to honor personal responses to books (authors want personal responses from their readers), but it's also important for students to learn how to analyze a story beyond just their own feelings. These discussions are part of that process.

The first aspect I cover for every story is Theme. Although this is the most abstract aspect, it's what these discussions are aiming for—understanding of theme, or the author's message. The other aspects (story, characters, setting) will often underscore the theme, so it's useful to you to know it first. After theme, the teacher's guide provides details in the following areas: Story, Character, Setting, External details, Internal details, and Conflict. I also sometimes include Symbolism, but that is optional for more advanced students.

.....

Story is the main plot-line. I provide a brief summary for each book.

.....

Character includes a description of the main character(s) (physical and personality).

.....

Setting is where and when the story happens.

.....

External details are any pertinent details of the story that aren't captured in any of the other summaries. For example, minor characters in the story. This may also include cause-effect and order of events.

.....

Internal details are emotions and other feelings the characters experience that aren't part of their central personality. For example, a character might normally be happy but experience sadness in response to an event in the book.

.....

Conflict includes telling what the character wants, what keeps the character from getting it, and what the character does to overcome the obstacle.

.....

Symbolism is the use of one thing to represent something else. Usually an author uses something concrete (an animal, a piece of clothing, music, etc.) to represent something abstract (loyalty, companionship, happiness, etc.). Not all books contain symbolism.

Theme

Story

Character

Setting

External  
Details

Internal  
Details

Conflict

Symbolism

## Reading Journal

After the book discussion, turn to the appropriate pages in the Student Workbook. Your student will write two sentences: their favorite sentence from the book and a sentence (or more) stating their thoughts and feelings about the book.

This Reading Journal is optional. If your student is already overwhelmed by the composition assignments, feel free to drop this.

## Grammar and Mechanics

I have grouped grammar, punctuation, capitalization, parts of speech, sentence diagramming, poetry instruction, and even occasional composition and literary concepts under the umbrella term “grammar and mechanics.” The student work text contains basic instruction and examples. Always read the instructions with your students, and be sure they understand them before having them complete the page. The teacher’s guide contains the answers to the workbook pages.

Throughout the year in grammar, I recommend that students take a notebook (any type will do) and make notes about grammar they struggle with. For example, if they have trouble with certain irregular plurals they would record them in their notebook and study them regularly. While I can present the range of grammar skills expected of students each year, I cannot know where your students excel and where they struggle. If they haven’t already, grade 5 is an excellent time for students to start taking a more active part in their learning. I will make notes in this guide about particular things students might wish to put in their notebook, but don’t limit yourself to my suggestions.

Grammar and mechanics are reviewed frequently in the student work text. Sometimes multiple concepts are addressed in one review worksheet. As with all aspects of learning, students vary widely in how easily these concepts will stick with them. Remember that your primary goal is for your student to love language arts. Don’t risk impeding that to ensure an understanding of commas or adverbs by the end of the year. Often something will click easily with a student only a year later that they simply couldn’t understand when it was first introduced.

Correspondingly, unless you have a student who wants grades, I recommend avoiding letter or percentage grades on the workbook pages (or any aspect of this course). Do show your students what they missed on the workbook questions, and review the missed questions together so they understand the problem. But use them as tools to reinforce the concepts and check your student’s understanding rather than a judgment on their performance.

If your student is not getting a concept, rather than forcing them to do the workbook pages on their own, work on them together as a teaching tool. Some lessons assume a previous exposure to the subject. If your student used the previous Lightning Literature courses, they will have had this exposure. They may have also learned the topic from another language arts course. But if your student has not learned the topic previously, some lessons may be too cursory for them. In that case—or if your student struggled previously with this concept—feel free to work closely with them to provide a more thorough understanding.



## A Note About Sentence Diagramming

Once sentence diagramming was always taught in schools; now it is rare. While I don't believe the old ways are always better, in this case I think students have lost something. While word choice, paragraph formation, and logical organization are vital to good writing (as are many other skills), the central unit of written language is the sentence.

Sentence diagramming is not merely drawing lines and repositioning words. It helps teach students the function of words in a sentence. For example, although we give adjectives, articles, and possessive pronouns different names, they are often diagrammed in the same manner because they often function in the same manner—to modify a noun. The reverse is also true—the same word may function as different parts of speech depending on its placement in a sentence. I can illustrate this succinctly with a bit of silliness: Don't allow your horse (noun) to horse (verb) around on the horse (adjective) track.

Diagramming can be particularly helpful to students who are visual learners or those who enjoy puzzles. Try the diagramming this year—you might be surprised at how your student does. But if they struggle with it excessively and it continues to frustrate rather than illuminate, feel free to drop those questions. My focus with diagramming is not just to learn diagramming. Rather, I find it can be a useful tool to help students better understand sentence formation and word functions. If it is not helping your student do that, it's not worth the trouble.

## Composition

The composition portion of this course should, as with all aspects, be tailored to your student's level. The best way to do this is usually paper length. While an average student in language arts can be expected to write a one- to two-page paper for most assignments, if this will overly stress your student, feel free to require less. You could also assign longer papers for those types of assignments your student is more motivated by. The same student who can barely produce three paragraphs of a research paper might happily hand you a 30-page short story (after which you would be perfectly within your rights to assign not just a minimum but a maximum paper length).

The composition assignments cover a variety of writing aspects—creative writing, essays of all sorts (descriptive, personal, opinion, etc.), research papers, poems, etc. Again, you want to make this an enjoyable experience for your student while also starting to push them towards quality work. Work closely with them on the compositions (unless they specifically ask you not to). At the end, stress what they did well in the composition; then discuss together how it might be improved.

**COMPOSITION BOOK:** Unless students will be typing their papers, they will need lined composition pages. We have provided masters for 1/2" and 3/8" ruled lines (to be used according to your student's ability) in the back of this Teacher's Guide, which you can copy and collect in a three-ring binder. You may wish to purchase a composition book. If you are able to find a choice of composition books, your student can pick from the selection, making the book more personal. A couple of other options are ordering online and finding a site that has lined paper of various ruled lines free to print.

## Tailoring This Course to Your Needs

These three things—literature, grammar and mechanics, and composition—are the core of this class. Regardless of your student's ability or interest, I urge you to complete, at least in some fashion, all of these.

The following portions are optional. Although I believe all are valuable, and I have reasons for including them, they are not central to the program. Depending on your student's existing skills, strengths, interests, and your time constraints, you may skip any or all of them. You could also do some on only some weeks.

**READING JOURNAL PAGES:** Pages are in the Student Workbook for the student's response to each book. I ask the student to write a favorite sentence from the book and give their opinion of the book.

**EXTENDING THE LESSON:** These are meant for the more advanced student, or for when any student is particularly excited by the reading or any of the extension ideas. They allow students to explore a book, its concepts, or its author in more depth, and can provide ways to extend the lesson into other areas such as science, history, and art.

## Preparing for the Week

Before the week begins, complete the reading if you are unfamiliar with it. This will be especially important when you do the book discussion at the end of each book. Preview the grammar and composition assignments.

Gather any materials you need. The basics for this course rarely require extra materials, but if you plan on doing the lesson extensions you will likely need more. Please note that I have not read all of the books by all of these authors. If you plan on reading other books by the same author, preview the books beforehand.

## Free Days

Once each week I give a free day. You can take a day off language arts, use the day to complete any work from earlier that was missed, add extra projects—whatever you want. This can vary from week to week.

**EXTENDING THE LESSON:** At any time during the week, including weekends, you can extend the lesson. You might choose to extend some lessons and not others, depending on your student's interest in the material. I give some suggestions for extending the lesson at the end of each week, but you don't have to wait until the end of the week to do extra projects. Some of these extra projects relate to languages arts while others extend into other subjects (history, geography, science, art, etc.).

## Week 1 at a Glance

Book for the Week: *The Wonderful World of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, chapters 1-6. Answer comprehension questions in the Worktext.

### Optional Materials:

Notebook for a Language Arts notebook (strongly recommended)

Information on Kansas, lions, tornados

Materials for making a scarecrow

*The Wizard of Oz* movie

Grammar and Mechanics: Complete grammar pages in Worktext on  
Nouns

Composition: Begin a fairy tale



This week I ask students to set up a language arts notebook for them to write in throughout the year. This can be a regular spiral notebook, a three-ring binder, or something special. The assignment for this is on Day 2, but you may want to shop early for this.

## Day One

### Literature

Today’s reading is chapters 1–2 (“The Cyclone” and “The Council With the Munchkins”) of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

#### Answers to Reading Comprehension Questions

1. The most important color is gray. Any three of the following: the prairie; the plowed land; the grass; the house; Aunt Em’s eyes, cheeks, and lips (each of these can be one answer); Uncle Henry (students may specify his beard or his boots); the sky.
2. Toto makes Dorothy laugh.
3. Any three of the following: grass, trees with fruit, flowers, beautiful birds, a brook, the munchkins. The Witch of the North is also acceptable (though she is not one of the first things Dorothy sees).

### Grammar and Mechanics

Although most grammar pages will be devoted to grammar, punctuation, and mechanics, several this year will instruct on composition and literary elements. Today, I talk about setting, using examples from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

#### Answers to Workbook Page

Students are asked to write their favorite sentences from chapters 1 and 2 (one per chapter) of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* that describe the settings. They then underline the words in these sentences that best help them experience the settings. There are no right answers here—other than the chosen sentences should actually describe something about the settings. The underlined words would most likely be nouns and adjectives (possibly verbs) that paint a clear picture.

Here are two examples, but any sentences describing the settings are acceptable:

1. The sun had baked the plowed land into a gray mass, with little cracks running though it.
2. Banks of gorgeous flowers were on every hand, and birds with rare and brilliant plumage sang and fluttered in the trees and bushes.

### Composition

Note that the composition for Weeks 3 and 4 is a comparison/contrast paper. I highly recommend watching the movie *The Wizard of Oz* then giving the assignment of comparing the movie with the book. You may want to reserve this for students who excel in language arts, as it will require them both to watch the movie and to read the book at a quicker pace. But if these issues can be worked out, I think it’s an excellent paper topic for any student.

This week and next, students will write a fairy tale. Creative writing is often a student favorite, so it can be easier for them to start the year off with a story. A fairy tale need not include fairies—it just needs to be something fanciful like *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The one requirement is the setting of this story should be important or remarkable in some way. (This could be as simple as being remarkable because it’s a fantasy setting, like Oz.)

Today students should brainstorm ideas for their story and come up with a short description. This could be a single sentence such as “A girl from Kansas gets taken to a magical land and must find her way home.”

By the end of today, students should have an idea for their story.

## Day Two

### Literature

Today’s reading is chapter 3 (“How Dorothy Saved the Scarecrow”) of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

#### Answers to Reading Comprehension Question

1. The Scarecrow wants brains.

### Grammar and Mechanics

Today I instruct students to keep a language arts notebook. This can be as simple as any spiral notebook or three-ring binder. If you wish to make a bigger deal of it, it can be fun for students to go choose a special notebook for the purpose. How students set up their notebook is up to them. One note: This notebook should be like a journal or diary in that it should be private. It should not be for teacher or parent or even peer review. It’s where students can feel safe putting down all the things they have trouble remembering, in any fashion that best suits them.

Students should enter into it anything (grammar, spelling, punctuation, composition skills, etc.) that they have trouble remembering, then review the items on a regular basis until they master them. You may want to set aside five minutes at the beginning or end of each language arts period for them to do this. Another alternative is for them to spend fifteen minutes or so once a week reviewing the items. This should be according to their preference and yours (though I would lean toward shorter reviews more often over a longer review once a week).

#### Answers to Workbook Pages

Today’s work is to set up the notebook.

## Composition

Today students should describe the setting in their story. If necessary, they can review the grammar instruction for Day 1, or you can discuss the settings in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Students should choose a time and place for their story and write at least one paragraph describing each major setting the story will contain. (For example, if *Oz* were written as a short story, I would expect a student to write one paragraph describing Kansas and one describing the entire land of Oz, but not necessarily one for each land within Oz.)

By the end of today, students should have brief descriptions of their settings. They should also have chosen a time period for their story.

## Day Three

### Literature

Today’s reading is chapters 4–5 (“The Road through the Forest” and “The Rescue of the Tin Woodman”) of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

#### Answers to Reading Comprehension Questions

1. The first sign is that the road is getting rougher and harder to walk on.
2. A crow convinced the Scarecrow that he needed brains.
3. The Tin Woodman wants a heart.
4. If he gets a heart, he will marry the Munchkin he used to love.
5. At this point, Dorothy does not much care about the Scarecrow or Woodman. We know because she decides that as long as she can get back to Kansas, she doesn’t care if they get what they want.

### Grammar and Mechanics

Today I cover many basic aspects of nouns, including types of nouns (singular, plural, common, proper, etc.) and basic rules for plurals, the possessive, and capitalization.

#### Answers to Workbook Page

Students are to write examples (one each) of many types of nouns. I give sample answers below, but of course many are possible:

1. Singular noun: dog
2. Plural noun: bushes
3. Common noun: popcorn
4. Proper noun: Alaska
5. Concrete noun: book
6. Abstract noun: encouragement

7. Collective noun: flock

Write a plural noun that:

8. ends in *es*: benches

9. changes one or more letters in the middle: women

10. changes in some other way: children

11. is the same as the singular: corn

Choose any noun you wrote above, make it possessive, and put it in a sentence:

12. The book's cover is torn.

Choose any noun you wrote above, and make it the subject of a sentence:

13. This popcorn is delicious!

Choose any noun you wrote above, and make it the receiver of an action in a sentence:

14. I brushed the dog last night.

Choose any noun you wrote above, and make it the receiver of an object in a sentence:

15. Then I fed some bread to the flock of ducks.

## Composition

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Today students create their characters and the problems the characters face.

First, students should write a paragraph describing each character. This should include things like name, age, brief physical appearance, personality, and anything else that is important to the story. Once this is done, students write another paragraph describing what the main character wants, what keeps the character from getting what they want, and how they overcome this problem. For example, Dorothy wants to get home, but she has to see the wizard first.

By the end of today, students should have descriptions of their characters, the characters' wants and needs (only the main character needs to have this), the obstacles, and how the character overcomes.

## Day Four

### Literature

Today's reading is chapter 6 ("The Cowardly Lion") of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

#### Answers to Reading Comprehension Questions

1. The Cowardly Lion wants courage.
2. He feels very upset and cries when he accidentally kills a beetle.
3. The Scarecrow is the only one who understands to oil the Tin Woodman's jaws after he cries.

### Grammar and Mechanics

Today I teach on some more advanced concepts about nouns: more irregular plurals, plural possessive and possessive of proper nouns ending in *s*, noun-verb agreement for collective nouns.

#### Answers to the workbook pages

1. fox's
2. bass's
3. people's
4. fish's
5. canopies'
6. lasses'
7. Dorothy's
8. Thomas's
  
9. algae
10. alumni
11. geniuses
12. calves
13. wolves
14. bases
15. emphases
16. radios
17. banjos or banjoes
  
18. The battalion is/are scattering under the enemy onslaught.
19. The group discuss/discusses a different book each week.



## Composition

Today students create an outline of their story. This does not need to be a formal outline, but they should list the major plot points so they know where the story is going. For example, if I were writing the story *Little Red Writing Hood*, my simple outline might look like this:

- I. LRRH’s mother gives her food to take to her sick grandmother.
- II. On the way through the woods, she meets a wolf and tells him where she is going.
- III. The wolf gets there ahead of her and eats the grandmother.
- IV. When LRRH gets to her grandmother’s, she is fooled by the wolf, and he eats her too.
- V. A passing woodsman hears her cries, rushes in, kills the wolf, and saves Red and her grandmother.

By the end of today, students should have an outline of their story.

## Day Five

Today is a free day to use however you choose. Finish any unfinished work from the week, review, explore some of the ideas below, or simply take a day off language arts.

## Extending the Lesson

Learn a bit about Kansas. Unless you live in Kansas, I don’t know that you want to devote four weeks to it, but it’s worthwhile for everyone to learn where it is in the US, study the map, learn some of the major cities, natural features, etc. What is grown and produced in Kansas? Learn something of its history. When was it made a state? What does its flag look like? What are its state bird, flower, etc.? What famous people are from Kansas?

Make a scarecrow together. If you have a garden at home or at your school, you can put it up. If not, you can save it for a Halloween decoration. You could also just make a smaller, table-top scarecrow.

Learn about lions. Where do they live? How do they hunt? What do they eat? What natural enemies do they have, if any? Where did the term “King of the Beasts” come from, and is it an apt description of them?

Do a study of tornados (referred to as a cyclone in the book). Where do they happen? What causes them? How dangerous are they? Find some interesting tornado survival stories (there are bizarre stories of people being picked up by tornados and deposited safely elsewhere or tornados jumping over one house to pick off a neighbor’s).

If possible, sometime during these four weeks, watch the movie *The Wizard of Oz*. This is rarely a suggestion I make in any of my books (to watch a movie version) because the movie versions are so often far inferior to the book. That is not the case here—though the movie is vastly different from the book. Also, see the instructions for the composition for weeks 3 and 4.



## Week 2 at a Glance

Book for the Week: *The Wonderful World of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, chapters 7-11. Answer comprehension questions in the Worktext.

Optional Materials:

Anything from Week 1

Poppy seeds

Grammar and Mechanics: Complete grammar pages in Worktext on

Verbs

Sentence diagrams

Comparison and contrast papers

Composition: Finish the fairy tale



Starting next week, students will be writing a comparison/contrast paper. I encourage you, if possible, to assign students the task of comparing this book to the movie version. It’s always interesting to look at how two different forms of media tell a story differently. If you choose to do this with your students, you’ll want them to watch the movie as soon as possible. You may want to do that this week, or use this week to obtain the movie to watch early next week. I also encourage you to have a discussion with students after watching the movie (and finishing the book) about points of comparison and contrast between the two. This discussion will help students when writing their papers.

It’s fine if you choose not to do this. I realize some people may not have the resources, or the extra time required might be too much, or some people simply don’t watch movies. I allow for the option of writing a comparison/contrast paper on any topic.

## Day One

### Literature

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Today’s reading is chapter 7 (“The Journey to the Great Oz”) of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

#### Answers to Reading Comprehension Questions

1. The Cowardly Lion jumps over the ditch, even though he’s terribly afraid of falling. He also faces down the Kalidahs. Either answer is acceptable.
2. The Scarecrow comes up with the most ideas.

### Grammar and Mechanics

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Today I teach on verbs. Everything I cover today is review from previous years. Even if your student is using Lightning Lit for the first time this year, most likely they’ve covered this basic information about verbs before.

#### Answers to Workbook Pages

For today’s assignment, students should review the irregular verbs in the appendices of their guide and write any they aren’t solid on in their grammar notebook.

### Composition

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Today students write the first half of their rough draft. They can decide how long it should be (or you can set a page or even paragraph limit—no one would blame you). This isn’t precise, they just need to know that they have today and tomorrow to finish the rough draft and plan accordingly.

## Day Two

### Literature

Today's reading is chapters 8–9 ("The Deadly Poppy Field" and "The Queen of the Field Mice") of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

#### Answers to Reading Comprehension Questions

1. The Scarecrow and Tin Woodman aren't affected by the poppies because they aren't made of flesh.
2. The Woodman treats Toto more kindly because he likes him (or possibly because Dorothy is his friend, and he knows Dorothy loves Toto—anything along these lines is fine).
3. Either of the following: Dorothy is upset when the Scarecrow is stuck in the river and sits by the shore trying to think of how to save him. Dorothy "had grown fond" of the Lion, and was very happy when he was rescued from the poppies.

### Grammar and Mechanics

Today I cover some new verb tenses: past perfect continuous, present perfect continuous, and future perfect continuous. I also cover modals, the active/passive voice and gerunds. The most important information for students to learn today is the active/passive voice, as this will impact their writing.

#### Answers to Workbook Pages

1. Could you go tomorrow?
2. We might eat dessert if we have time.
3. Melicent shouldn't have spread that rumor.
4. I know we ought to attend the graduation, but can we?
5. Must you prattle on like that while I'm meditating?
  
6. Reading expands your view of the world.
7. While on vacation, Roland enjoys hiking, surfing, and diving.
8. Lydia was washing the dog when I called.
9. Of all the things she did at camp, canoeing was Bridget's favorite.
  
10. My mother planted that tree.
11. Aunt Evelin prepared dinner.

### Composition

Today students finish the rough draft of their story.

## Day Three

### Literature

Today’s reading is chapter 10 (“The Guardian of the Gate”) of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

#### Answers to Reading Comprehension Question

1. They have to wear green glasses. The city guard says this is so they won’t be blinded by the brightness and glory of the city. Answers to the third part will vary. (The actual answer is that everything in Oz is a usual color, but the green glasses make everything look green. The book isn’t clear on this point yet though, so it’s fine if students don’t think of it.)

### Grammar and Mechanics

Today I introduce diagramming. I discuss this in the introduction, but it’s worth repeating here. Some students are not comfortable diagramming sentences. It just never clicks with them. I urge you not to force it. I think all students should try diagramming—and most will do fine, at least for awhile. But while sentence diagramming can be helpful, it is not worth heartache and fights and tears. Different people will learn grammar and good writing in different ways, and while diagramming can be a useful tool, for some people it remains a closed book. This is OK.

If you’re teaching multiple children, and some take to diagramming while others don’t, but you want to be fair about workload, on diagramming days you can assign those students to write sentences modeled on the diagramming sentences and label the parts. For example, today a student could model a sentence on “Toto is hungry” by writing “Jack was tired,” then they should label “Jack” a noun, “was” a linking verb, and “tired” an adjective. (They need only label the parts they know.)

Some students will happily diagram while it’s easy, but start to balk later on (for example, at compound subjects and predicates). In my opinion, it’s also fine to let students drop out of diagramming at some point and, again, replace the exercises with modeling sentences on the assignments.

#### Answers to Workbook Pages

1. Toto | is \ hungry

2. Dorothy | is hurrying

### Composition

Today students revise their rough draft with special attention to the setting. Is it important to the story or remarkable in some way (this could be the time or the place or both)? Is it well described? Even if it is, can the description be improved in any way? Of course, students need not limit themselves to improving the setting, but can also think about characters, plot, etc. if they wish.

By the end of today, students should have an improved rough draft.

## Day Four

Today's reading is chapter 11 ("The Wonderful Emerald City of Oz") of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

### Answers to Reading Comprehension Questions

1. The Wizard is interested by Dorothy's shoes and the mark on her forehead.
2. Their new goal is to kill the Wicked Witch of the West, or at least bring back proof of her death to the Wizard (any answer like this is fine).

## Grammar and Mechanics

Today I teach on comparison/contrast papers (the next writing assignment), including brainstorming and organization.

There is no assignment for today.

## Composition

Today students write their final draft. Students should be sure all the grammar and mechanics they learned previously are correct. If they wish, students can add illustrations. They can also add a cover, dedication, etc. to make this more of a real book.

## Day Five

Today is a free day to use however you choose. Finish any unfinished work from the week, review, explore some of the ideas below, or simply take a day off language arts.

## Extending the Lesson

Any of last week's activities can be done during all four weeks of this book.

Depending on where you live, you may be able to plant poppy seeds now to enjoy them in the spring.

Here's a fun math problem: If the Cowardly Lion weighed 420 pounds (typical, for a male lion), and the average field mouse can pull 50 grams of weight (honestly, I looked that up), how many field mice did it take to pull the lion? (I intentionally wrote this to force a conversion from pounds to kilograms. If you normally teach metric, you can start with 190 or 191 kilograms.) Feel free to adjust these numbers a bit if you wish, or just use pounds and ounces. (Fifty grams is about 1.76 ounces, but you can make them strong mice and up it to 2 ounces.)