

## Week 1 at a Glance

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

### 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 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 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 through 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*.

#### Answer 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 *The Wonderful Wizard of 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 possessives, and capitalization.

#### Answers to Workbook Page

Students are to write one example for each type of noun. 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

---

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 these obstacles.

## 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. The Tin Woodman 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, possessive of proper nouns ending in *s*, and noun and verb agreement for collective nouns.

#### Answers to Workbook Page

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* (LRRH), 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 United States, study its map, learn some of its 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 usually 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 Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum,  
chapters 7-11. Answer comprehension questions in the Student Workbook.

Optional Materials:

Anything from Week 1

Poppy seeds

Grammar and Mechanics: Complete grammar pages on

Verbs

Sentence diagrams

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

---

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

---

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 Page

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

### Composition

---

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 Page

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*.

#### Answer to Reading Comprehension Question

1. Dorothy and her friends 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. But the book isn’t clear on this point yet, 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 Page

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

### Literature

---

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.)