

Week 1

Sarah, Plain and Tall

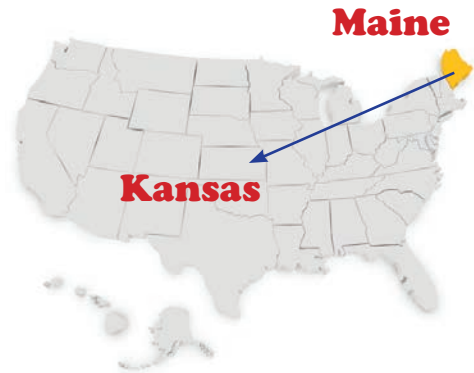
by Patricia MacLachlan

Chapters 1–6



Nouns

Nouns are words that name people, places, things, or ideas. The first three are easier to understand, so we will start with them. We will learn about the last type in a later lesson. Here are some nouns in each of the first three categories from the first chapter of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*:



People

Caleb
mother
Papa
cousin
Sarah
uncle
housekeeper

Places

house
prairie
plains
town
Tennessee
Maine

Things

fire
dog
chair
wagon
song
wind
stew

These are all things you can sense. You can see a house, *feel* the wind, *hear* a song, *smell* a fire, *taste* a stew. Write three of your own nouns for each category — people, places, and things. One example of each is given.

teacher

theater

book

Adjectives

Sometimes we want to describe a noun in some way. For example, the stew could be hot or delicious. Your cousin might be funny or smart. Words that describe nouns are called adjectives.

Here are some nouns from chapters 2 and 3 of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, and the adjectives that describe them:



Nouns

Adjectives

Caleb	loud, pesky
house	small, lovely, cool, damp, quiet
bedding	new
bonnet	yellow
Old Bess	calm, kind
hands	large, rough
Sarah	plain, tall

Adjectives can describe different things about nouns: something about the way they look (*yellow, tall*), the way they sound (*loud, quiet*), the way they feel, taste, or smell (*cool, damp*), or even things you can't tell with your senses like personality (*calm, kind*). Adjectives can help you picture nouns more clearly in your mind.

[continued]

1

In each sentence, underline every noun and circle every adjective. Draw arrows from the adjectives to the nouns they describe. Remember that not all nouns will have adjectives describing them.

Example: The days grew short and dark as winter approached.

1. They sat by the large, warm fire.



2. Anna thought Caleb was homely and plain when he was born.

3. The old housekeeper was round and slow.



4. Sarah loved the blue, grey, and green sea.

5. The gentle, loving dog nuzzled her hand.



2

Choose one noun from yesterday. Write a sentence using the noun and two adjectives that describe it.



Subject and Diagramming

Sometimes the first words in a sentence are a noun or a noun with its adjective:

Anna baked bread.

The black dog slept.

The sea is beautiful.

These words tell us who or what is doing something or being something in the sentence. We call this the **subject** of the sentence. Who is baking? Anna. What is sleeping? The black dog. What is beautiful? The sea.

One way to learn more about sentences is to diagram them. Think of it as drawing a picture of the sentence. The first step is to underline the sentence:

Anna baked bread.



The second step is to find the subject and draw a line that separates it from the rest of the sentence, like this:

Anna | baked bread.

That is so easy, I'm going to teach you one more thing about diagramming. You know about adjectives, but how do we diagram them? Remember that adjectives need nouns—they stick to them to tell us more about them. So, we stick the adjective to the noun when we're diagramming it. But the adjective isn't quite as important as the noun, so we stick it below the noun, like this:

The dog | slept.
 black

Do you see that this is no different than the workbook page you did on Day Two? But instead of circling words and drawing arrows, you're writing them under the noun they go with.



large



Week 2

Sarah, Plain and Tall

by Patricia MacLachlan

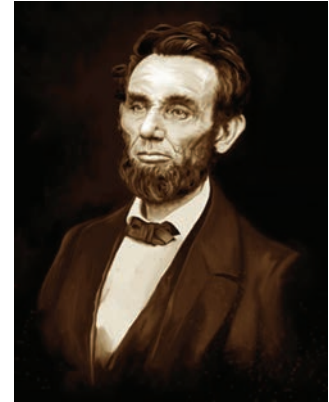
Chapters 7-9



Fiction and Nonfiction

Sarah, Plain and Tall is a work of **fiction**. That means the author made up the story—it didn't really happen. Another type of writing is called **nonfiction**. Nonfiction writing tells stories that actually happened or provides information.

Fiction includes novels, short stories, plays, and poetry. Nonfiction includes biographies, autobiographies, books on history or science, textbooks, and instruction manuals.



Next to each title or description, write F if it is most likely a work of fiction or NF if it is most likely a work of nonfiction.

1. _____ Biography of Abraham Lincoln
2. _____ Short story about Abraham Lincoln traveling through time
3. _____ *My Adventures in Unicorn-Rainbow World*
4. _____ Car repair manual
5. _____ *How to Cook on a Budget*
6. _____ *Introduction to Chemistry*
7. _____ Book about how the movie *Star Wars* was made
8. _____ French language textbook



Nonfiction Descriptive Writing

There are different types of nonfiction books and different types of nonfiction writing. The first one we're going to look at is **descriptive writing**.

Descriptive writing is meant to describe something. Why do writers want to describe things? You might want to share something about your life with someone—telling a friend who has moved about a new pet or writing to relatives back home about the beach where you're staying on your vacation. If you write a story, you will want to describe the characters and the world they live in. And sometimes people are told to write a description—like you have been in your assignment this week.

The description you're writing this week is nonfiction description. Description in a short story is fiction description. These are the same, except in nonfiction the thing described is real, not part of a story you've created. This means we can learn how to write nonfiction description from great fiction as well as great nonfiction.

Here are some descriptions from *Sarah, Plain and Tall*:

Maggie's hair was the color of turnips and she laughed.

Sarah came through green grass fields that bloomed with Indian paintbrush, red and orange, and blue-eyed grass.

She gave Caleb a shell—a moon snail, she called it—that was curled and smelled of salt. And she gave me the smoothest and whitest stone I had ever seen.



[continued]

There is ice on the windows on winter mornings.
We can draw sparkling pictures and see our breath
in the air. Papa builds a warm fire, and we bake
hot biscuits.



But I've touched seals. Real seals. They are cool
and slippery and they glide through the water like fish.

Notice that description often uses nouns and adjectives so you can
see in your mind what the author wants you to see or feel what the
author wants you to feel.

In each of these descriptive sentences, underline the nouns. Circle
the adjectives and draw a line from the adjective to the noun it
describes. Remember that not every noun will have adjectives with
it, and some will have more than one.

Example: Her room had a quilt on the bed and blue flax
in a vase on the table.

1. Hilly was round and slow and shuffling.
2. My house is tall and the shingles are gray
because of the salt from the sea.
3. Strange clouds hung in the northwest, low and black and
green.
4. Our faces looked yellow in the strange light.
5. The chickens watched me, their eyes small and bright.



Sentence Diagramming

Diagram each sentence using what you learned last week.



Example: We | bake ~~hot~~ biscuits.



1. Dark clouds gathered.

2. Sarah wore old overalls.



3. The shiny hail covered the ground.

Review

Write five nouns and five adjectives. Write a sentence using at least one of your nouns and one of your adjectives. Circle the subject of your sentence.



Nouns

Adjectives

My Sentence

What I Think of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*

What this story is about

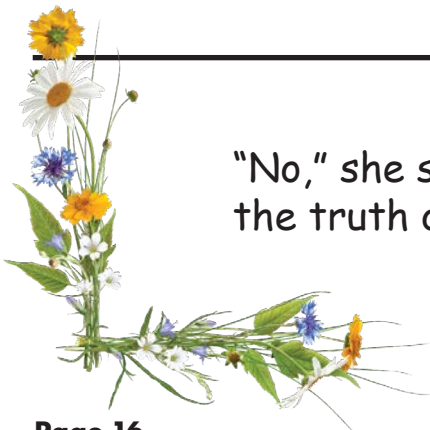
The message of this story is



What I Think

What I think of this story

My favorite sentence is



"No," she said. "I will always miss my old home, but the truth of it is I would miss you more."—p. 65