

LANGUAGE LESSONS

FOR TODAY

GRADE 4



MY FATHER'S
WORLD®

Language Lessons for Today is adapted from ***Intermediate Language Lessons*** by Emma Serl, American Book Company, 1914, as well as portions of *Primary Lessons in Language and Composition* by William Maxwell, American Book Company, 1886; *First Book in English* by William Maxwell, American Book Company, 1894; and *Language Lessons* by Lawton Evans, American Book Company, 1908, with significant revisions, updated language and examples, and additional new content.

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ANSWER KEY

Most of the lessons in this book do not require an answer key. The Answer Key for lessons that require it is available online at mfwbooks.com/LLTAnswers (free download; login required) or in the *Answer Key Language Lessons for Today* available separately from My Father’s World.

Introduction

Language Lessons for Today follows the Charlotte Mason method of language arts instruction that encourages children to explore and expand upon the language that they already know. Learning to use language better to communicate with others becomes the reason for study, rather than analyzing language for purely academic reasons. We believe a study of language arts must go beyond grammar, mechanics, usage, and spelling. These are servants that lead to a higher goal—the art of communication: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Through short, interactive, teacher-led lessons, *Language Lessons for Today* gives children an opportunity to improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Their powers of observation and elocution are enhanced through simple picture study and conversation lessons. Their exposure to fine examples of our language by hearing short stories and poems read aloud and by memorizing or retelling those increases their understanding of sentence structure and improves their vocabulary. Copying a passage introduces them to the rules of mechanics, grammar, and spelling in a gentle and natural way. An introduction to the function of words in earlier years provides a foundation for the study of the parts of speech in later years.

Informal language arts lessons for vocabulary, composition, listening comprehension, and handwriting are found in the history, science, and Bible activities in My Father's World curriculum. *Language Lessons for Today* is a resource that fits well with My Father's World curriculum; add spelling for a well-rounded language arts program.

This book is designed to be non-consumable to keep the cost lower as books may be reused. Even more important, this format encourages oral (instead of written) lessons. Children love the one-on-one time with parents/teachers. Oral lessons allow the adult to give immediate feedback on errors, focus on the student's needs, and modify the lesson (or add more explanation) when needed. Consumable workbooks tend to be done independently without immediate feedback if an error is made. Oral lessons can also focus on specific language concepts without the stress of writing. For many students, the labor of handwriting keeps them from learning the actual concept you are trying to teach!

The short, focused lessons generally take about 15 minutes to complete. Plan to complete three lessons a week. Simply open the book and read the lesson to the children. They will answer many of the questions orally. When written responses are required, use notebook paper and file the sheets in a 3-ring binder. Younger children may find it easier to write on every other line when using notebook paper.

The lessons may be used exactly as written or adapted for a child's specific needs and learning style. Many of the lessons that seem to require written work are easy to adapt so that a child simply answers orally. This is especially important with a younger child who finds writing too laborious. Also, you may increase *or* decrease the amount of written work in lessons based on how much writing the child is doing

in other subjects that day.

Some lessons have directions such as “Fill the blanks” or “Tell...” which allow the option of written or oral answers. Lessons that are specific with directions such as “Write...” should generally be completed as written, but this is at the teacher’s discretion.

Preface from Original 1914 Edition of Intermediate Language Lessons (excerpt)

The purpose of this book is to aid pupils to speak and write the English language correctly.

Attention is called to the following features: Literature studies, not only in poetry, but also in fine prose selections. Letter writing on subjects that appeal to child life. Drill on correct forms of speech and words often misused. Many exercises to increase the pupil’s vocabulary. The various forms in composition, including description, narration, conversation, and dialogue. Both reproduction and original work in oral and written composition. Sequence and careful gradation in arrangement of lessons. The careful treatment of capitalization and punctuation. Observation lessons which furnish material for talking and writing.

The oral composition in connection with the observation lessons not only aid the pupil in telling readily and accurately what he has seen, but give him self-possession and train him to logical thought.

When an essential fact is taught, the pupil is given practice in using the fact again and again, through dictation, reproduction, and original composition.

Explanation of Lesson Types

You will encounter a variety of lessons in *Language Lessons for Today*, some of which may be new to you and are described below:

Oral Composition (See Lesson 2) — These lessons can look simple, but we encourage you not to skip any. Oral composition lessons help develop the thought process needed later for written composition. If students give one- or two-word answers, you can provide good models by answering similar questions with complete sentences.

Picture Study (See Lesson 5) — One of the purposes of picture study is to increase the power of observation. Many of the pictures in this book are copies of the works of great artists. You read the questions, and the children answer by looking carefully at the picture. Prompt them to use complete sentences when answering. A few suggestive questions are given with each picture. You may supplement these with a few questions of your own.

Poem to Memorize (See Lesson 7) — Poetry memorization helps children internalize excellent models of the English language. A child who memorizes

vocabulary words and sentence structure in poems will more easily use those words and structures in daily conversation.

We encourage you to help your students memorize some of the poems in this book. (You may choose just the first part of the poem if it seems too long.) When the book requires a poem to be memorized, spread that work out for the whole week. Students do not need to memorize all the poems in the book, but we do encourage you to stretch their abilities and expect some memorization. All of these selections should be read aloud to the students and discussed whether they are memorized or not. Children can often memorize much more than we think if we approach the task positively and give support and encouragement. Our children enjoyed the reward of calling Grandma and reciting the memorized poem or stanza.

Some children memorize poems easily and quickly and need minimal adult assistance. However, many children will need more adult guidance. You might post the poem on a wall or the refrigerator, and read the poem together once or twice daily for a week.

Copywork (*See Lesson 8*) — The purpose of copywork is to familiarize students with spelling, mechanics, and usage while practicing handwriting. Have them copy part or all of the selection on appropriate handwriting or notebook paper. If you find the copywork too long in a lesson, then assign just a part of it, or allow more than one day to complete it.

Dictation (*See Lesson 11*) — Let students look at the book as you discuss the more difficult words and the punctuation. Point out difficult words to spell and practice them. Then remove the book, and slowly read the sentence aloud. Have the students repeat the sentence aloud and then write it. You may break up the sentence into smaller phrases if needed.

Poem to Read Aloud (*See Lesson 16*) — These poems are to read aloud to the students. They are not memorized but simply enjoyed.

Oral Narration (*See Lesson 31*) — The children simply listen to you read the story aloud, and then let one or more retell it. Before you begin, remind the children to listen carefully and be ready to tell the story in their own words when you are finished reading. Don't worry if a child gives an incomplete narration. If your children are new to narration, you may ask a few guided questions to help them remember the basic plot of the story. Narration takes practice and will improve over time.

Dictionary Usage is introduced beginning in Lesson 10. We recommend *Merriam-Webster's Elementary Dictionary*, which is available from My Father's World.

Lesson 5

Picture Study—Noah’s Ark

» *Teacher: Before teaching today’s lesson, read the information about Picture Study on page 8.*

In the painting *Noah’s Ark*, the animals are not wildly running or panicked; they are peaceful. Two by two they wait in a line, patiently waiting their turn to enter the ark that invites any that will come to be saved from the storm. Edward Hicks’s paintings are invitations to the peace of Christ.

Contrast means to see the differences. Contrast what you see in the upper part of the painting to the lower part. Contrast any other items in the painting.

Why do you think Mr. Hicks had the lion and lamb standing near one another? Why is this unexpected, or ironic? What is in the center of the painting? Why do you think this is an important part of the painting?

Many different types of lines are used in this picture. Point to curved lines. Point to horizontal lines. Point to slanted lines. (The slanted line on the entrance to the ark helps emphasize its importance.)

Find and name as many different types of shapes as you can.

What message is Mr. Hicks giving through his painting?

» *Teacher: See answers for today’s lesson on page 4-2 of the Answer Key (available in print or online; see page 5).*

Imagine being a thirteen-year-old living in Pennsylvania in 1793. No cars zoom down the road. Instead, horses pull carriages. Imagine you are painting a new carriage. You carefully write the letters that spell the name of the company buying the coach. Then you decorate the coach, painting



Edward Hicks

NOAH'S ARK

Lesson 34

Poem to Memorize

Out in the Fields with God

The little cares which fretted me,
I lost them yesterday
Among the fields, above the sea,
Among the winds at play;
Among the lowing of the herds,
The rustling of the trees,
Among the singing of the birds,
The humming of the bees.

The foolish fears of what might happen—
I cast them all away
Among the clover-scented grass,
Among the new-mown hay;
Among the husking of the corn,
Where drowsy poppies nod,
Where ill thoughts die and good are born—
Out in the fields with God.

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Can you find the word *fretted* in the poem?

Find *fret* or *fretted* in a dictionary. What are some words that might be used instead of *fretted*? Which do you like better, a word you found in the dictionary or the one the author uses?

The parts of a poem are called *stanzas*. How many stanzas are in this poem? With what kind of letter does the first word of each line of a poem begin?

1. What can you “hear” in the first stanza? What words does Browning use to help you hear these sounds? (Words that sound like the actual sound that is made are termed *onomatopoeia*.)
2. What can you “see” and “smell” in the second stanza?
3. What do you think the author is trying to tell us in this poem?

» *Teacher: See answers on page 4-4 of the Answer Key.*

Trotting her pony through the lush fields of England was one of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s most loved activities as a child in the early 1800s. Elizabeth, or “Ba” for short, lived on her father’s farm, 500 acres of land which he bought when he sold Jamaican sugar plantations he had inherited. Elizabeth loved spending time with her father, Edward Barrett, and often said life was no fun without him. At age six she wrote her first poem, and by age fourteen her father had published her epic poem called *The Battle of Marathon*. Elizabeth was the oldest of twelve children, who enjoyed performing plays for their mother and father. Primarily educated at home, she read advanced books and poems by William Shakespeare, John Milton, and others before she was ten. She also learned Latin and could read the Old Testament in Hebrew. Elizabeth moved to Italy after she married Robert Browning, who was also a famous poet.

Begin to memorize and copy “Out in the Fields with God.”

Lesson 35

Copywork

Finish memorizing and copying “Out in the Fields with God.”

Optional: Draw an illustration for the poem.

Lesson 36

More About Possessive Nouns

What do you call more than one cat? What letter did you add?

Do you remember what *plural* means? The word *cats* is plural because there is more than one cat.

The cats love milk.

The cats' bowls are empty.

What is the difference between *cats* and *cats'* in the sentences above? What is the mark at the end of *cats'* called? You can look at Lesson 29 for help.

When a plural noun ends in *s*, add an apostrophe after the *s* to make it possessive.

Read these phrases. Say if the underlined noun is singular or plural and explain why the apostrophe is placed before or after the *s*.

1. boys' voices
2. girl's hair
3. lions' dens
4. butterfly's wings

Write sentences making these nouns possessive.

1. tigers
2. tree
3. table
4. Sam
5. rabbits
6. pony
7. ladies

» Teacher: See answers on page 4-4 of the Answer Key.