



Language Lessons *for Children*

by Kathy Weitz



Primer Two

Teaching Helps

for Autumn, Winter, & Spring



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PREFACE

When I began educating my children at home more than two decades ago, one of the first books I read was *For the Children's Sake* by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay. Here I was formally introduced to the philosophies of Charlotte Mason, a Victorian education reformer. In my girlhood, L. M. Montgomery had given me a first glimpse of similar methods via *Anne of Avonlea*, so Charlotte Mason's ideas immediately attracted me. Later, I read her complete series on education which provided additional insight and encouragement. After all these years and after teaching many students of all ages (my own and others), I continue to consider many of her methods ideal for teaching young children and the perfect preparation for a rigorous classical education later.

All of the ideas and methods contained in the *Language Lessons for Children* series have been field tested and honed in several educational settings with students of differing ages, abilities, and learning styles. The primary testers have been my own five sons and one daughter in our homeschool classroom.

Language Lessons for Children is a work of "heart". It is the series I wish I had had when my children were young. It is the result of much trial and error on my part. I pray that it will provide structure, simplicity, and much delight for those tasked with the instruction of young students in our extraordinary English language.

~kpw
Soli Deo Gloria!
April, 2014

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Although my name is on the cover, the Primer series in many ways has been a collaborative effort. I owe a great debt of gratitude to many folks. The gorgeous cover designs are the craftsmanship of my friend Jayme Metzgar, with image credit to The Graphics Fairy (www.thegraphicsfairy.com). Many other friends have helped with both editing and content: in particular, Kimberlynn Curles, Emily Cook, Cheryl Turner, Karen Gill, Carolyn Vance, Lene Jaqua, and the exceptional teachers, moms, and students of Providence Preparatory Academy. And of course, the main source of help and encouragement in myriad ways—from design consultation to field testing to dinner duty—has come from my dear husband and my wonderful children.

~kpw

Primer Two Teaching Helps

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INTRODUCTION

*My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.
~ Psalm 45:1, ESV*

All Language Lessons at Cottage Press aim to develop *ready scribes* who pen *pleasing themes* flowing from a heart of truth, goodness, and beauty. The *Primer* series is designed to provide gentle yet meaningful lessons for early elementary students in preparation for more rigorous grammar and composition instruction in late elementary, middle, and high school.

Weekly copybook and narration selections are drawn from classic children's literature and poetry. These time-proven imitation methods fill students' minds with a ready supply of elegant and beautiful words and patterns of expression, and equip their imaginations with a delightful treasury of stories. Nature and art study lessons included each week also provide "scope for the imagination", and hone the students' powers of observation, description, and attention to detail—necessary attributes for *ready scribes*.

Primer books are sequential in skills: *Primer One Autumn*, *Primer One Winter*, and *Primer One Spring* followed by *Primer Two Autumn*, *Primer Two Winter*, and *Primer Two Spring*. Familiarity with the concepts from the preceding book is assumed, but the lessons are so straightforward that students may begin at their current skill level.

Students beginning *Primer One* should have achieved

INTRODUCTION

beginning spelling and phonics proficiency, be ready for beginning chapter books, and be able to copy words and sentences. Students beginning *Primer Two* should have achieved intermediate spelling and phonics proficiency, be able to read beginning chapter books with basic fluency, and be able to copy sentences and short paragraphs. *Primer One* is very generally appropriate for 2nd to 3rd grade students, and *Primer Two* for 3rd to 4th grade students, but both could be used very effectively by older students as well.

🌀 LESSON FORMAT

Each *Primer* book is divided into twelve weeks of study. Each week is divided into four days' work, with a poetry or prose selection at its heart. Each day's lesson includes a short copybook exercise from the copybook selection and a brief grammar or phonics review exercise connected with the copybook selection. The weekly routine also includes narration exercises on Days 1 and 3, a nature study lesson on Day 2, and a picture study lesson on Day 4. Detailed directions for each of these lesson components is provided in the Pedagogy & Practice section below.

🌀 LESSON PREPARATION

The lessons in this book are designed to free teachers from as much preparation work as possible. For the most part, you will just open to the week's lesson and begin. Additional preparation may be necessary if you opt to add the enrichment ideas included *Teaching Helps*, but even that preparation is minimal.

WEEKLY ROUTINE

“Habit is either the best of servants or the worst of masters.” ~ Nathanael Emmons

Routine (habit) is one of the most important things to establish in students’ schoolwork, and extremely beneficial to them in every area of life. Charlotte Mason often likened habits to train tracks that allow a child’s life to run smoothly and evenly through the day. Her thoughts on this apply to both home life and school life:

“The mother who takes pains to endow her children with good habits secures for herself smooth and easy days; While she who lets their habits take care of themselves has a weary life of endless friction with the children.”

~ Charlotte Mason, *Home Education*, p. 136

Young children thrive when they know what to expect next; the daily routine or order of schoolwork creates an environment that optimizes learning.

An important habit for children to develop is the that of paying careful attention to what they are doing. Short lessons at this age make this habit much easier for all children to learn. Consider moving to a different kind of activity between each section of the daily lessons. For example, just after completing copybook, have students do some kind of physical motion—even if it is just getting up and stretching or sharpening their pencils. Particularly after any part of the lesson that requires strong concentration and close eye focus, try to incorporate a short physical activity.

 SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Here is a suggested order for completing the daily work in *Language Lessons for Children Primers*.

1. Begin each day's session with students by reading the weekly selection aloud. Make sure you read with proper pauses and with feeling and expression. On the first day of a new lesson, talk with students about the copybook selection and make sure they understand it. On subsequent days, continue to read the copybook selection aloud to students, and then have them read it to you. Set a goal to have the students read with good feeling and expression by the end of the week. Encourage students to memorize the copybook selection. Each week's selection has a drawing page opposite. Have students illustrate the copybook selection on this page at some point during the week.
2. Have students write the date in the "Today is..." section. As they are learning how to do this, write the date out for them to copy. Use this format:

Monday, October 3, 2014

3. Go over the day's copybook selection with students as detailed in Pedagogy and Practice above. At first, students may need you to sit with them as they complete their work. Do this as long as necessary, but work towards more independence in completing lessons over time. Copybook sessions should be short (five to ten minutes). If necessary, complete this over several copybook sessions in one day. Have students check their work at the end of each session.

4. Help students complete the spelling or grammar lesson accurately.
5. Do the reading and narration, picture study, or nature study lesson.

It is worth repeating: keep lessons short and varied. Avoid having young children complete all of this work in one long sitting. Here is an example of how I might structure Day 2 for my eight-year-old son at home.

- ♦ Read weekly selection together.
- ♦ Complete about half of the copybook selection and check it.
- ♦ Feed the cat.
- ♦ Review the spelling or grammar lesson; complete and check.
- ♦ Go over the vocabulary for the narration lesson.
- ♦ Get up and do a little bit of stretching or run around the outside of the house three times.
- ♦ Move to the sofa to do the reading and narration lesson.
- ♦ Enjoy a snack.
- ♦ Complete the rest of the copybook selection and check it.

Of course, your particulars will vary. Some students will be able to sit and focus for longer periods of time, but I have found that most students, particularly boys, do best with this kind of routine.

A NOTE TO HOME EDUCATING PARENTS¹

*“Richer than I you can never be-
I had a Mother who read to me.”*

~ Strickland Gillilan

Read, read, read to your child! I cannot emphasize this strongly enough. Take it from a mom of grown children—this is a fleeting opportunity, so treasure the time reading with your child. And keep reading to your child even as he reaches the teen and young adult years. The ideas, characters, and language in the books you read together will become part of the ‘language’ of your family, and give you countless opportunities for discussion.

Do not allow busy schedules to crowd out this vital component of developing the soul of your child. Prioritize reading with your child above co-ops, enrichment classes, and even sports. It is one of the best investments you can make in your child’s education, as well as in your relationship with him. Make reading aloud a routine in your homeschool and in your daily life with your child. Guard this time with your life.

Select worthy books with lovely illustrations. Choose books both you and your child will enjoy, and do not forget to reread favorites. There are so many marvelous classic children’s books. Do not waste time reading ‘twaddle’—books that are shallow and condescending to children, as unfortunately many children’s books are. Be discerning in your choices. Just as setting healthy eating patterns early

¹ This note is excerpted from a talk entitled *Joy in the Homeschool Journey* which I have given to several local homeschool groups.

A NOTE TO HOME EDUCATING PARENTS

in life can create lifelong healthy habits, so establishing a taste for worthy books in his early years can help train his appetite for great books in later years.

Horace E. Scudder, the late nineteenth century editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* and compiler of great literature for children wrote, "There is no academy on earth equal to a mother's reading to her child." I could not agree more.

AUTUMN, WEEK 4

from THE REAL PRINCESS

One evening a fearful tempest arose, it thundered and lightened, and the rain poured down from the sky in torrents: besides, it was as dark as pitch. All at once there was heard a violent knocking at the door, and the old King, the Prince's father, went out himself to open it.

It was a Princess who was standing outside the door. What with the rain and the wind, she was in a sad condition; the water trickled down from her hair, and her clothes clung to her body. She said she was a real Princess.

"Ah! we shall soon see that!" thought the old Queen-mother; however, she said not a word of what she was going to do; but went quietly into the bedroom, took all the bed-clothes off the bed, and put three little peas on the bedstead. She then laid twenty mattresses one upon another over the three peas, and put twenty feather beds over the mattresses.

~ Hans Christian Andersen

🌀 COPYBOOK & DICTATION

Our copybook selection this week is from another version of the fairy tale *How to Tell a True Princess* (sometimes called *The Princess and the Pea*) which students read in their Narration lesson last week. This is our first copybook selection in *Primer Two Autumn* with quotations. Make sure students carefully observe where the punctuation and capitalization are placed.

🌀 SPELLING, GRAMMAR, & WORD USAGE

Day 1 Noun Review After students have identified the possessive names in the selection on Day 1, ask them what belongs to the Prince in the selection (father).

Persons: King, father (if students say Prince's, accept that as well), Queen-mother, Princess

Things: tempest, rain, sky, door

Possessive Noun: Prince's

Day 2 Singular & Plural Nouns

Plural nouns from the selection: torrents, clothes, bed-clothes, peas, mattresses, beds

Make plurals: tempests, rain or rains, skies, winds, fathers, Princesses, mattresses, feathers, peas

Singular/plural: The Princesses were standing outside the door.

Day 3 Synonyms, Antonyms, & Homonyms

Synonyms (will vary): loud (in context of the model); genuine, actual

Antonyms (will vary): quiet, gentle; fake

Homonyms: herd; hare, heir

Day 4 Simile

Answer: dark is compared to pitch

NATURE STUDY

Rivers Introduce this lesson with *Home Geography* lessons:

Lesson XV: How Vapor Is Changed Into Water

Lesson XVI: Dew, Clouds, and Rain

Lesson XXVII: How Rivers Are Made

Lesson XXVIII: More About Rivers

Lesson XXI: Work of Flowing Rivers

There are some fun and interesting activities in these lessons. You may wish to do them over several days. Lesson XXII is an imaginative story retelling the water cycle. We will learn more about the water cycle in *Primer Two Spring*.

WINTER, WEEK 4

from PINNOCHIO

How it happened that Mastro Cherry, carpenter, found a piece of wood that wept and laughed like a child.

Centuries ago there lived—

“A king!” my little readers will say immediately.

No, children, you are mistaken. Once upon a time there was a piece of wood. It was not an expensive piece of wood. Far from it. Just a common block of firewood, one of those thick, solid logs that are put on the fire in winter to make cold rooms cozy and warm.

I do not know how this really happened, yet the fact remains that one fine day this piece of wood found itself in the shop of an old carpenter. His real name was Mastro Antonio, but everyone called him Mastro Cherry, for the tip of his nose was so round and red and shiny that it looked like a ripe cherry.

As soon as he saw that piece of wood, Mastro Cherry was filled with joy. Rubbing his hands together happily, he mumbled half to himself:

“This has come in the nick of time. I shall use it to make the leg of a table.”

🌀 SPELLING, GRAMMAR, AND WORD USAGE

Day 1 Singular & Plural Verbs

You may wish to point out to students that singular verbs often have an -s added at the end. This is just the opposite of nouns. Examples: *He sings. They sing.* But this is not a hard and fast rule. What if the subject is *I*? *I sing.* That is why we tell students they must look at the subject in order to determine whether a particular verb is singular or plural.

Sentences: The carpenters found pieces of wood. A (The) log is put on the fire. Pieces of wood were found in the shops. We shall use them to make the legs of tables.

Day 2 Suffixes: Two Syllable Base Words

Review the rule for adding a suffix which begins with a vowel to a two-syllable word (Autumn Week 10, and also Spelling Rules & Tips in the Appendix).

Answers: happened, commonly (suffix does not begin with a vowel), winterize (accent is on the first syllable), permitting, disobeyed (can see but not hear the vowel + consonant, **ey** makes the single sound /ay/), worshiper (accent is on first syllable), renewal (can see but not hear the vowel + consonant, **ew** makes the single sound /ū/), commitment (suffix does not begin with a vowel), rebellion

Day 3 Verb Review

Present: The old carpenter is filled with joy.

Future: The old carpenter will be filled with joy.

Singular/Plural: They rub their hands together happily.

Day 3 Homonyms, Synonyms, & Antonyms

Homonyms: would

Synonyms & antonyms (will vary): woodworker, despair

Day 4 Spelling Rule: i before e

Answer: piece

🌀 NATURE STUDY

The Little Dipper and Polaris Before you read this introduction to students, find the link to a picture of the Little Dipper on the *Primer Resources Webpage*. Write the bolded words on the board.

Notice how the *bowl* of the **Big Dipper** points in a straight line toward the **North Star**, or **Polaris**. Polaris is the brightest star in the **Little Dipper**, the familiar asterism in the constellation of **Ursa Minor** (the Little Bear).

Polaris is a very important star, because it is a *fixed* star, always directly above the horizon at due north. The other stars appear to rotate around it. Because of this, Polaris can always be used for finding direction at night.

Teach this lesson with oral exercises from *Home Geography*:

Lesson III: How the Stars Show Direction

SPRING, WEEK 4

from **THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS**

It all seemed too good to be true. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the hedgerows, across the copses, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting—everything happy, and progressive, and occupied. And instead of having an uneasy conscience pricking him and whispering ‘whitewash!’ he somehow could only feel how jolly it was to be the only idle dog among all these busy citizens. After all, the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working.

He thought his happiness was complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed river. Never in his life had he seen a river before—this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver—glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. By the side of the river he trotted as one trots, when very small, by the side of a man who holds one spell-bound by exciting stories; and when tired at last, he sat on the bank, while the river still chattered on to him, a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea.

~ Kenneth Grahame

🌀 SPELLING, GRAMMAR, AND WORD USAGE

Day 1 Adverbs Modifying Verbs

Answers: Hither and thither *tells* where he rambled; busily *tells* how he rambled. Now *tells* when he stood beside the river. The Mole was exhausted. The Mole was finally exhausted. He sat. He sat down. The river chattered. The

river chattered noisily.

Day 2 Adverbs Modifying Adjectives

Adverbs: The very happy Mole stood beside the river. Very *modifies* happy, *telling* to what extent.

Adverbs (modified adjectives will vary): more happy, very sleek, most insatiable, too idle, less busy, so fresh, least, quite jolly, really uneasy, not small.

Day 3 Adverbs Modifying Other Adverbs

Adverbs: He rambled so busily. (So is an adverb which modifies the adverb *busily*, which in turn modifies the verb *rambled*. So answers the question *to what extent?*)

Adverbs (modified adverbs will vary): more sweetly, very gently, least quietly, too loudly, quite aimlessly, rather freely, always exuberantly, often happily.

Day 4 Personification & Onomatopoeia

Personification: river given characteristics of a living being - sleek, full-bodied, sinuous, having playmates; river given actions of a living being - chasing, chuckling, laughing, chattering, babbling

Onomatopoeia: chuckling, chattering, babbling

Day 4 Homonyms, Synonyms, & Antonyms

Homonyms: flour

Synonyms & antonyms (will vary): grove, thicket; purposefully, carefully; wander, ramble, traipse; released, dropped, freed

🌀 NATURE STUDY

Plants See Weeks 1-2 Spring Nature Study Teaching Notes.

For this week's experiment, have students skip a watering or two and observe the effects. *Primer Two* students should also draw the plants on successive days in their nature notebooks as they observe. or two and observe the effects. *Primer Two* students should also draw the plants on successive days in their nature notebooks as they observe.