

BLOSSOM & ROOT

INTEGRATED LANGUAGE ARTS // LEVEL 4

Heroes & Myths

LESSON GUIDE

LEVEL 4

Integrating Creativity, Geography, Reading, and Writing with Mythology and the Hero's Journey



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Blossom & Root

Integrated Language Arts,
Level 4:

Heroes & Myths

A Complete, Hands-On Language Arts Curriculum

Blossom & Root Integrated Language Arts
Level 4: Heroes and Myths

By Kristina Garner - www.blossomandroot.com

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1 – 12; 25 – 36	Poetry (Optional): <i>Poetry for Kids: Emily Dickinson</i> edited by Susan Snively, PhD (optional); <i>Hip Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat</i> by Nikki Giovanni (optional)
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Week No. 1: Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of NIMH

☐ Literature Selections to Read This Week:

Read from "The Sickness of Timothy Frisby" to the end of "The Owl" in Robert C. O'Brien's *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*. Try to start the selection at the beginning of Day 1 and finish it by the end of Day 3.

☐ Optional Poetry Selection(s) to Read This Week:

Read "It's All I Have to Bring Today" and "I'm Nobody! Who Are You?" by Emily Dickinson.

Day 1

☐ In the student notebook, complete the journal prompt: "What is a Hero?"

Read the full prompt in the student notebook, then write and illustrate your response.

☐ Elements of Story: Introducing the Hero's Journey

(read the passage below, or ask an adult to read it to you)

During many of our literature units this year, we're going to be exploring a kind of story called the Hero's Journey. Many stories, movies, and plays follow a Hero's Journey model. Stories that use this model all have key elements in common. During our unit on *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*, you will be introduced to each of these elements. You should know that some lists of the Hero's Journey stages look slightly different from others, but they all contain the same elements, more or less.

All Hero's Journey stories have a hero. The hero is usually the main character of the story. All of the action in the story usually happens to the hero, or because of the hero. Who do you think the hero is in our first book, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*?

The first stage of the Hero's Journey is called The Ordinary World. We meet our hero in this first stage, and get a glimpse into their normal, everyday life. Nothing has really happened yet--the hero is just going about their normal day in their normal world. This stage is often very short in the story.

The second stage of the Hero's Journey is called The Call to Adventure. In this stage, the hero is suddenly confronted with a problem or situation that cannot be ignored. This problem or situation will require them to leave their normal, everyday world in order to solve or correct it. What problem arises at the beginning of *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* that cannot be ignored?

☐ Complete the literature project: "Mrs. Frisby's Ordinary World"

Paint or draw a picture of an ordinary morning in the Frisby house. You could also use LEGO bricks or other toys to set up a scene of a typical morning in the "ordinary world" of Mrs. Frisby and her children.

☐ Optional Independent reading for 30 minutes or more

Week No. 1: Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of NIMH

Day 2

- ☐ **In the student notebook, complete the word list: Reviewing Concepts from Year 3**
Read the list and practice passage out loud to an adult. This week, you will simply read some words we've covered in previous levels. Don't worry if you don't know them all. If you get stuck on a word, just mark it and review it again later in the week.
- ☐ **In the student notebook, complete the copywork page.** Be sure to complete the grammar prompt at the top of the page first, then copy the passage (or a portion of the passage) in your best printing below.
Parents: Cursive copywork passages can be found in the Cursive Copywork and Dictation Passages PDF.
- ☐ Optional **Independent Reading for 30 minutes or more**

Day 3

- ☐ **In the student notebook, complete the vocabulary page:** Use some, or all, of the words in the word bank to create a labeled illustration, original sentence, poem, meme, joke, rap, song lyric, etc. Use the provided hints in the student notebook or a dictionary to figure out what each word means first. This week's words: rancid, hermit, tonic, nimble.
- ☐ **Review weekly word list if needed**
- ☐ Optional **Complete the prompt for week 1 in the Super Secret Notebook Guide**
- ☐ Optional **Independent Reading for 30 minutes or more**

Day 4

- ☐ **In the student notebook, complete the narration page.** Illustrate and retell an event from this week's literature selection.
- ☐ Optional **In the student notebook, complete the dictation exercise.** Ask an adult to read the dictation passage in this guide out loud to you a few times, slowly and clearly. As you listen, copy the passage onto the dictation page in your notebook. When you are finished, use the dictation passage in this guide to check your work. Correct any spelling, punctuation, or grammar mistakes as needed.
- ☐ **Review weekly word list if needed**
- ☐ Optional **Independent Reading for 30 minutes or more**

Week No. 1: Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of NIMH

Dictation Passage (optional)

She gripped the feathers on his back, felt the beat of his powerful black wings, felt a dizzying surge upward, and tightly shut her eyes.

Parents: Cursive copywork / dictation passages can be found in the Cursive Copywork and Dictation Passages PDF that came with your purchase of this curriculum. If you'd prefer your child to use the passage in cursive to check their work, please provide this week's passage from that PDF to your child.

Week No. 1: Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of NIMH

Day 5 (optional)

☐ Catch up on any work from the week, if needed

☐ Optional **Complete this week's bonus activity: Model or Map of the Cinderblock House**

The problem in this story revolves around the Frisby's winter home and where it is located. Reread the descriptions of the cinderblock house in the story, if needed. Then, create a model or a map of the house.

If you're making a model, you can use a shoebox, scrap cardboard, and / or sturdy paper to make the two rooms of the cinderblock house. You can make tiny furniture for the house by folding and taping card stock or thick paper. You could also use LEGO bricks or clay to create your model.

If you're making a map, use art supplies (watercolor paint, colored pencils, etc.) to create a view of the Fitzgibbon's farm from above. Show where the cinderblock house is located. Be sure to add any important features in addition to the cinderblock house that you've read about in the story, and label everything clearly. You can add onto the map as we learn more in the story in later weeks, if you like.

☐ Optional **Complete Tasty Geography Week 1: Canada**

- **Step One:** If you haven't hung up a world map somewhere in your homeschool space yet, do that first. A globe would be even better. If you can find one, place it in your homeschool space now. You'll refer to it at the beginning of every tasty geography lesson. Our first "stop" is Canada. Can you find it on the map or globe? Which continent is it located on? (If you don't know the names of the continents yet, take a moment to go over those with a parent first.)
- **Step Two:** Complete a "tasty geography" page for your country. The "tasty geography" pages are all at the back of your student notebook. To complete the page, you can use an atlas or a book about the countries of the world, the internet, or the suggested links and books on the following page. Parents, you can keep the "tasty geography" lessons short and sweet, or build entire week-long units for each country--it's completely up to you!
- **Step Three:** Time to get tasty! If you're using the book *Cooking Class Global Feast!: 44 Recipes That Celebrate the World's Cultures* by Deanna F. Cook, you'll be making the recipe "Fried Bannock Bread" on pages 28 and 29. (You may also want to begin by reading all of the intro material first--there is a lot of great stuff in there to prepare for a year of tasty recipe-making!) If you aren't using that book, choose another recipe from Canada, either in another cookbook or by searching on the internet. Here is a recipe for a gluten-free version of bannock bread:
<https://glutenfreeinternational.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/gluten-free-bannock-fry-bread/>.
- **Step Four:** Enjoy your tasty creation with your family!

Week No. 1: Canada

Optional Supplemental Resources for Tasty Geography

Parents: Please screen videos, books, and other resources first. For videos, we tried to focus on finding clips that show the current culinary scene of each country, and these were often made by adult vloggers for an adult audience. Not every video will be appropriate for every family. Clickable links can be found at the end of this guide.

Books

- *A Canadian Year: Twelve Months in the Life of Canada's Kids* by Tania McCartney
- *Weird But True Canada: 300 Outrageous Facts About the True North* by Chelsea Lin
- *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story* by Kevin Noble Maillard

Videos: Always Screen First!

- From GRRRLTRAVELER | Christine Kaaloo, "10 ICONIC FOODS of Vancouver | Vancouver Food Tour": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXC9j4oauQo> (some mild language, nothing shocking)
- From Jay del Corro, "Quick Bannock - Traditional Native Frybread Recipe": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5xxbEROs94>
- From TourRadar, "Canada: The Ultimate Travel Guide": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUMAUlL65gU> (spends a brief moment on adult beverages at the end)
- From CBC, "Poutine: From rural Quebec delicacy to national icon. Here's where it all started": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryS-0Eo0f7Q>

Other

- <https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/canada-facts-for-kids.html>

Week No. 2: Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of NIMH

☐ Literature Selections to Read This Week:

Read from "Go to the Rats" to the end of "The Marketplace" in Robert C. O'Brien's *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*. Try to start the selection at the beginning of Day 1 and finish it by the end of Day 3.

☐ Optional Poetry Selection(s) to Read This Week:

Read "A Bird Came Down the Walk" and "Answer, July!" by Emily Dickinson. You may also wish to take time to learn about Emily Dickinson's life over the next few weeks. See following page for recommended resources.

Day 1

☐ In the student notebook, complete the journal prompt: "The Rosebush"

Read the full prompt in the student notebook, then write and illustrate your response.

☐ Elements of Story: The Hero's Journey, cont.

Last week, we began exploring a storytelling model called the Hero's Journey. We learned about the first step or stage, called The Ordinary World. We also learned about the second stage, The Call to Adventure. Do you remember what these two stages were? Review last week's notes if you need to, before moving on.

The third stage of the Hero's Journey is called The Refusal of the Call. This often happens shortly after The Call to Adventure, when the hero wrestles with the decision to act or not. Sometimes this happens quickly--a single pause or doubtful thought. Sometimes it takes awhile for the hero to accept the call, and their ultimate decision to act may require pressure from someone or something else. Sometimes this just looks like someone else reminding the hero of the risk and danger that might be ahead. In *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*, this stage is a very short pause, during which Mrs. Frisby wonders to herself what to do.

The fourth stage is called Meeting the Mentor. This stage usually happens after the hero decides to answer the call. The mentor--sometimes a character, sometimes an object or a tool (like a map or a journal)--helps the hero by providing them with wisdom, advice, and / or training. Can you think who the mentor might be in our story? Who does Mrs. Frisby consult with for advice about what to do? What do they tell her to do?

The fifth stage is called Crossing the First Threshold. Armed with help from the mentor, the hero is now ready to leave The Ordinary World as they know it, and they step into unfamiliar territory. In some stories, this is when the hero leaves to begin a journey. There's no turning back now. What new territory does Mrs. Frisby enter (literally) shortly after leaving the mentor? (A threshold is the starting point for a new state or experience.)

☐ Complete the literature project: "The Mentor"

Create a painting, a drawing, or a model of the mentor in our story (the owl.) This could be a peg doll, a puppet, a pine cone with paper wings and eyes glued to it, a clay sculpture, a LEGO creation--anything you like. Refer to the book for a description of the owl if needed.

☐ Optional Independent reading for 30 minutes or more

Week No. 2: The Life of Emily Dickinson

Optional Supplemental Resources

Parents: Please screen videos, books, and other resources first. Emily Dickinson's work was often inspired by her religious beliefs, and not all resources may be a fit for all secular families. Clickable links can be found at the back of this guide.

Books

- *On Wings of Words: The Extraordinary Life of Emily Dickinson* by Jennifer Berne
- *Emily Writes: Emily Dickinson and Her Poetic Beginnings* by Jane Yolen
- *Emily* by Michael Bedard

Videos: Always Screen First!

- From Studies Weekly, "Emily Dickinson": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oyZYIO48u4
- From Saved you a spot - The Education Channel, "Who Was Emily Dickinson?": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXf2txnJwlg>
- From BrainPOP, "Emily Dickinson": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAqrpWW0Qdg> (this one breaks down one of her poems and its meaning)

Other

- Take a virtual field trip to the Emily Dickinson Museum: <https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/>. On a piece of paper, write down three things you learned or saw on your field trip.

Week No. 2: Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of NIMH

Day 2

- ☐ **In the student notebook, complete the word list: Alphabetizing, and Continued Review**
Read the list and practice passage out loud to an adult. This week, you will continue to read some words we've covered in previous levels. Don't worry if you don't know them all! If you get stuck on a word, just mark it and review it again later in the week. You will also complete an alphabetizing activity.
- ☐ **In the student notebook, complete the copywork page.** Be sure to complete the grammar prompt at the top of the page first, then copy the passage (or a portion of the passage) in your best printing below.
- ☐ Optional **Independent Reading for 30 minutes or more**

Day 3

- ☐ **In the student notebook, complete the vocabulary page:** Use some, or all, of the words in the word bank to create a labeled illustration, original sentence, poem, meme, joke, rap, song lyric, etc. Use the provided hints in the student notebook or a dictionary to figure out what each word means first. This week's words: expedition, gnarled, cordial, dank.
- ☐ **Review weekly word list if needed**
- ☐ Optional **Complete the prompt for week 2 in the Super Secret Notebook Guide**
- ☐ Optional **Independent Reading for 30 minutes or more**

Day 4

- ☐ **In the student notebook, complete the narration page.** Illustrate and retell an event from this week's literature selection.
- ☐ Optional **In the student notebook, complete the dictation exercise.** Ask an adult to read the dictation passage in this guide out loud to you a few times, slowly and clearly. As you listen, copy the passage onto the dictation page in your notebook. When you are finished, use the dictation passage in this guide to check your work. Correct any spelling, punctuation, or grammar mistakes as needed.
- ☐ **Review weekly word list if needed**
- ☐ Optional **Independent Reading for 30 minutes or more**

Week No. 2: Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of NIMH

Dictation Passage (optional)

The strange rat was named Arthur. He was stocky, square, and muscular, with bright, hard eyes. He looked efficient.

Week No. 2: Mrs. Frisby & the Rats of NIMH

Day 5 (optional)

☐ **Catch up on any work from the week, if needed**

☐ Optional **Complete this week's bonus activity: Beeswax Models of the Rats**

Using modeling beeswax, play dough, or clay, create the characters of Brutus, Nicodemus, or Justin. You can also make a model of Isabella if you like. Think about the small differences that might exist between the characters. Are some taller? More muscular? Thinner? Do any have larger ears or tails than the others? If you're using modeling beeswax, remember to warm it up in your hands before beginning. Cold beeswax is difficult to work with, but warm beeswax is easy to form, pinch, and bend. Instead of trying to "stick" pieces together, try to pinch and pull the character out of one large piece of beeswax. Take your time and enjoy the process.

☐ Optional **Complete Tasty Geography Week 2: Germany**

- **Step One:** Our next "stop" is Germany. Can you find it on the map or globe? Which continent is it located on?
- **Step Two:** Complete a "tasty geography" page for your country. The "tasty geography" pages are all at the back of your student notebook. To complete the page, you can use an atlas or a book about the countries of the world, the internet, or the suggested links and books on the following page. Parents, you can keep the "tasty geography" lessons short and sweet, or build entire week-long units for each country--it's completely up to you!
- **Step Three:** Time to get tasty! If you're using the book *Cooking Class Global Feast!: 44 Recipes That Celebrate the World's Cultures* by Deanna F. Cook, you'll be making the recipe "Apfelpfannkuchen" on pages 30 and 31. If you aren't using that book, choose another recipe from Germany, either in another cookbook or by searching on the internet. Here is a recipe for a vegan, gluten-free version of pfannkuchen (pancakes): <https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=de&u=https://www.mrsflury.com/pfannkuchen-vegan-glutenfrei/&prev=search&pto=aue> (this link uses Google translate, as the page is originally published in German.)
- **Step Four:** Enjoy your tasty creation with your family!

Week No. 2: Germany

Optional Supplemental Resources for Tasty Geogaphy

Parents: Please screen videos, books, and other resources first. For videos, we tried to focus on finding clips that show the current culinary scene of each country, and these were often made by adult vloggers for an adult audience. Not every video will be appropriate for every family. Clickable links can be found at the end of this guide.

Books

- *Kids' Travel Guide - Germany: The fun way to discover Germany* by Shiela H. Leon

Videos: Always Screen First!

- From Learn German with Anja, "GERMAN LESSON 29: Must EAT & DRINK in GERMAN": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QZDtyKj7a8> (bonus: it's a German language lesson, too!)
- From German Recipes by All Tastes German, "German Main Dishes - 8 Recipes You Need To Try": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYnbQIKaRWs>
- From Rick Steve's Europe, here is a playlist of Germany videos. Be sure to screen first (they briefly mention brothels in one video, for example): <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9gkZtiFqhakVmxCKp-X9mgTSOXhzJX8>
- From Cooking the World, "10 German Breakfast Foods - What do Germans eat for breakfast?": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TznZX7Bu9gQ>

Other

- <https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/germany-facts.html>