

SAMPLE

EXPLORING THE WORLD THROUGH STORY
LEVEL C: WONDER TALES

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ABOUT QUIDNAM PRESS

Quidnam Press helps homeschooling parents share the wonder of words with their children. Our literature and language programs bring the classical liberal arts into the 21st century with a thoroughly modern, inclusive, global perspective. For more information, visit quidnampress.com.

Welcome to *Exploring the World through Story!*

Exploring the World through Story introduces children to the wonder of words and the diversity of human cultures through the study of world literature. In the primary grades—K-2 or ages 4-8—students enjoy folktales from around the world, gaining both cultural literacy and an understanding of basic narrative forms. Simple geography readings, map/globe work, and memory work round out the program, helping students put the stories in context. Detailed teaching notes and schedules make it easy for parents to teach literature and geography to their children, even if they have never taught these subjects before.

The elementary and middle school levels build on the foundation laid in the primary levels, preparing students to study world literature in high school and beyond.

About Level C

Exploring the World through Story: Level C provides a gentle introduction to world literature for students ages 6-8 (second grade). This year, students dive deep into the world of wonder tales with a mix of classic stories from the European fairy tale canon and tales of imagination from every corner of the globe. They develop their oral narration skills with a combination of prompts and comprehension questions as they learn to identify narrative structures and compare literary themes across cultures. Copywork gradually increases in length and complexity as students become more adept at handwriting, mechanics, and usage, and dictation is introduced in the second trimester. After a review of key memory work items from previous levels, students identify geographical regions within the inhabited continents and memorize one key country in each region.

The program presents one folktale per week for the 36 weeks of the standard US school year. **Each lesson takes 45-60 minutes, including read-aloud time.** Narrations are completed orally and recorded by the instructor; students practice handwriting and writing mechanics with copywork and dictation. Map coloring is included as part of the geography memory work.

Exploring the World through Story: Level C is just one component of a complete English Language Arts program for second graders. Your child also needs a phonics-based [reading program](#) and instruction in [grammar](#), [writing](#) (composition), and handwriting. Read aloud to your child for at least 30 minutes a day from high-quality fiction and nonfiction books in a wide range of genres and styles. Books you read to your child as part of this and other homeschooling programs—history, science, art,

and so on—count toward this total, as do audiobooks, bedtime stories, and other leisure reading.

About the Lesson Plans

Each lesson plan is numbered by level (A, B, or C) and week (1, 2, 3, etc.) to help families who are using multiple levels of the program with different children.

At the top of the page, you will find the title of the week's story, the book it appears in with the page number, and the country or people group the story originates from. You will use some of this information to introduce each story to your child.

The **Teaching Notes** contain background information for you, the teacher, and are not meant to be read verbatim to students. In the first few lessons, the Teaching Notes include scripts that show how to introduce the tales to your child. The instructions become more streamlined as you gain experience and confidence with the program. You will also find a **printables checklist** here, showing which printables you will need for that lesson.

Next you will find a list of **vocabulary words** that may be unfamiliar to your child. In place of complex formal dictionary definitions, you'll find student-friendly language you can use to clarify the readings for your child. There is no need to introduce the words before reading the story, nor do students need to memorize definitions at this stage. Simply read the text and add the substitution afterward as an aside: "When we hear the bell ringing, we will know *immediately*—that means *right away*—that our enemy is coming."

Following the vocabulary words you will see the **Narration** section. The notes and prompts in this section, along with various graphic organizers, will help you teach oral narration and the basic elements of story structure to your child.¹ This section also includes occasional comprehension questions and discussion topics. As you progress through the curriculum and your child gets used to the narration process, you may find that you don't need to rely on the prompts or the graphic organizers. Use the Narration printable to record your child's narrations.

It's fine to let children narrate in other ways on occasion. They can draw a scene from the story, for example, or act out the story with stuffed animals. I have suggested alternative narration methods for certain stories.

¹ For an explanation of oral narration as a foundational pre-writing skill, see Susan Wise Bauer's [Writing with Ease: Strong Fundamentals](#).

The Literature section ends with **copywork and/or dictation**. Dictation is introduced at the beginning of the second trimester. Copywork and dictation sentences emphasize capitalization and punctuation, plus some spelling. You will find a reproducible **copywork sheet on page 16** and the **dictation sheet on page 17**. Instructions for implementing copywork and dictation are given in the lesson plans, and you will also find a reference guide in Appendix A on page 132.

The **Geography** section consists of map work, a short reading from a colorful reference book, and memory work. As this year's stories are somewhat longer than those in previous levels, you may want to **schedule geography and the related memory work as a separate lesson**.

You and your child will **identify the country** or area that the week's story comes from on your world map and place a sticker on it. Next, you will explore the country's entry in the **geography reference book**; the pages to read are listed in the *Map Work and Reading* section. Note that many of the European fairy tales read this year come from Germany, France, or England, so there will be some weeks when you will not need to mark the map or read anything new in the geography text. You may review the relevant pages or supplement with other print or video resources.

Then you will prompt your child to **recite previous memory work** and **teach them any new memory work items** listed. Instructions for introducing memory work are given in the lesson plans, and the material for review appears in each lesson.

During the first nine weeks of Level C, your child will review the memory work from the two previous levels of EWS. If your child has not completed these levels, they may need extra time to master this material. If so, introduce items one at a time, and be sure your child has mastered the definitions before moving on. There is no rush; the new memory work slows down considerably after the review, so there is time for your child to work on both the review and the new material.

For the rest of the year, students will be learning twenty world regions and one key country located in each. **Memory work should be reviewed daily, not just during the weekly lesson**. Some of the memory work requires the use of the **reproducible maps** at the end of this book, and this is noted in the lesson plans.

A Note about Intense Stories

The reading lists for Level C include a number of important fairy tales from the European canon and beyond. I have left out some of the more gruesome cautionary tales and stuck to classic stories that are widely recommended for this age group. However, some children find stories that feature witches or wicked parental figures frightening. Although psychologists suggest that fairy tales provide children with a safe way to explore their fears and to develop their moral imaginations,² you should not force your child to listen to stories they find genuinely upsetting.

I've noted potentially intense themes in the Teaching Notes, and I urge you to pre-read any stories you're unfamiliar with before introducing them to your child. If a story seems too intense, substitute a tale from the same region as the assigned one, if possible. Between the two core literature texts, you have many options. The curriculum will still work with an occasional modification of this sort.

To learn more about these tales, I highly recommend *A Children's Guide to Folklore and Wonder Tales* by professor and professional storyteller Hannah B. Harvey (Great Courses, 2017). It's an accessible audio/video course for parents who want to know more about the history of these stories and how best to approach them with their children. You can find it at [Wondrium](#), on Amazon, or on Audible. For more in-depth study, see *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 2nd ed., ed. Maria Tatar (Norton, 2016), which contains texts, criticism, and an extensive bibliography.

² Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (Vintage Books, 2010). For counterpoints to Bettelheim, see Maria Tatar, *Off with Their Heads: Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood* (Princeton UP, 1993) and Jack Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*, rev. ed. (UP of Kentucky, 2002).

Required Materials for EWS: Level C

Core Literature Texts

- Best-Loved Folktales of the World* - Joanna Cole (ed.)
([paperback](#))

This classic collection of global folktales belongs on every homeschooler's shelf. This year's selections come from the European fairy tale canon, and you can substitute picture book versions of them if you prefer. If you do, look for the same kind of rich, literary language that Cole uses.

- Wonder Tales from Around the World* - Heather Forest
([paperback/audiobook](#))

This book offers retellings of world folktales from an award-winning storyteller. Some stories appear in both this book and *Best-Loved Folktales of the World*, and you can read whichever version you prefer to your child. I've noted this option in the lesson plans.

Geography Reference Text

- DK Countries of the World: Our World in Pictures* - Andrea Mills
([hardcover/ebook](#))

This colorful reference book is used in all three levels of this curriculum. You'll see it referred to in the lesson plans as "the geography text."

Additional Materials

- A [large, current world map](#) you can mark³
- Small star and dot stickers in bright colors
- A current globe
- Multiple copies of the printables on pages 12-17
- Multiple copies of the printable maps (see lesson plans)
- Pencils for copywork and dictation
- Colored pencils or crayons for map work

³ If you used a previous level of this curriculum, you can use the same map for this level.

Optional Supplements, References, and Bridge Texts

- *Draw the World* - Kristin J. Draeger ([paperback](#))

This book takes you step-by-step through drawing a simple world map. Use it at the end of the year or over the summer before the beginning of third grade as a review of the information in this curriculum.

- *Evan Moor Beginning Geography* ([paperback/ebook](#))

This workbook covers geography information for the primary grades. It makes a good review book to use in the summer between second and third grades.

- *Geography from A to Z: A Picture Glossary* - Jack Knowlton ([paperback/ebook](#))

Use this as a reference guide for geography-related vocabulary that your student may encounter in their reading. The drawings are colorful, and the descriptions are accurate but clear enough for younger children to understand. It's perfect for curious kids who want to know how a knoll relates to a hill, or what the difference is between a stream, a brook, and a creek. Older students will find it useful too.

LESSON C-1

“The Magic Brocade”

Wonder Tales, p. 11 or *Best-Loved Folktales*, p. 539

Zhuang people (China)

Literature

Teaching Notes

► **Printables:** Story Summary Triples Three Acts Narration Copywork

Folktales are stories that originate in popular (“folk”) culture and are passed on by word of mouth. As part of an **oral tradition**, they do not have authors per se. Instead, we identify the people or country that the story originated from, if known, with the understanding that there are as many variations of the tale as there are storytellers.

EWS Level C introduces children to the class of folktales known as **wonder tales**. The terms **fairy tale** and wonder tale are often used interchangeably; another term in common use by scholars is the German *Märchen*. Folklorist Stith Thompson defined this last term as “a tale [...] that moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite creatures and is filled with the marvellous.”⁴ It is this **sense of the marvelous** that defines the wonder tale and sets it apart from other types of folktales, like fables or wisdom tales.

Some scholars distinguish between the fairy tale, in which the main character lives “happily ever after,” and the **cautionary tale**, in which the main character comes to a bad end. Even in fairy tales, not every character lives “happily ever after” even in fairy tales. It’s very common for characters who have behaved badly to be punished at the end of the story.

Tales can fall into more than one category. In Level B, we saw a number of tales that could be classed as **trickster tales, myths, or pourquoi tales (“how and why” or origin stories)**. Often the **genre** assigned depends on the aspect of the story being analyzed: Are we looking at the main character’s behavior (trickster)? Whether the character is divine (myth)? The purpose of the tale (pourquoi tale, fable)?

⁴ Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (Dryden Press, 1946), p. 8.

“The Magic Brocade” appears in both of the core literature texts. The version in *Wonder Tales* is written for independent reading by upper-elementary students, grades 4-6. The style and vocabulary are therefore appropriate for reading aloud to younger children. The version in *Best-Loved Folktales* is essentially the same, although with slightly more challenging vocabulary, more complex sentence structure, and a few additional descriptive details. Choose the version you think will be most accessible to your child. The vocabulary below is from the *Wonder Tales* version.

The **Zhuang or Chuang people** are the largest ethnic minority group in China. Most of them live in the Guangxi Autonomous Region in southern China, near the border with Vietnam.

► When introducing this year’s stories to your child, use words like the following:

Today we are going to be reading a wonder tale told by the Zhuang people in China. The title is “The Magic Brocade.”

Vocabulary

brocade: rich fabric woven with a raised pattern
thatched: with a roof made of straw or similar material
exquisite: extremely beautiful
shuddered: shook, trembled
squandered: wasted

Narration

This year, your child will be **orally narrating, or telling back**, the stories you read aloud. Your initial goal is to elicit a **brief summary of the story**, with all of the action in the correct order.

Some children will need little or no prompting to narrate at length and may echo the language of the story verbatim. In that case, simply **scribe (write down) your child’s narration** for them on a copy of the sheet provided on page 15. If the narration is too long for you to write down, you can record it with your computer or phone. It isn’t necessary to scribe or record every single narration, especially if they are long; record one every 6-8 lessons to track student progress.

Other children will benefit from more explicit structure. The **Story Summary graphic organizer** on page 12 provides the student with helpful scaffolding to narrate the main points of a story. Here is how the parts of the graphic organizer correspond to the aspects of story structure.

Somebody	Character (usually the main character)
Wanted	Goal, Orientation
But	Conflict, Complication
So	Plot, action, episodes
Then	Conclusion, Resolution , outcome

If your child needs help narrating today's story—and most will— begin by modeling narration. Read the following summary of the first part of the story aloud:

A weaver bought a painting and made a beautiful brocade of it, but it blew away. The weaver was so sad that she got very sick. Two of her sons went to find the brocade, but they didn't want to do what they had to to get it back.

Then ask the child the following questions. The numbers and underlined words indicate where to place the information in the Story Summary graphic organizer.

1. Who is the story about?
2. What did they want?
3. But what was the problem?
4. So what did they do?
5. Then what happened? How did it turn out?

Somebody	The weaver's youngest son
Wanted	to get his mother's brocade back
But	he had to knock out his two front teeth first.
So	he did, and an old woman gave him a magic horse that took him to Sun Mountain where fairies were making a copy of the brocade.
Then	the fairies gave him the brocade, and when he got home, it turned into a real place where he and his mother lived happily ever after.

You will notice that this narration leaves out certain details, such as the fairy in red and the fate of the two older brothers. Experienced narrators may include them, but it is perfectly acceptable for beginners to stick to the bare bones of the story.

Narration is a complex skill that children develop over time, and a beginner's narration will not resemble what an adult would produce. Meet your child where they are with narration and look for progress, not perfection. As students progress through the curriculum, their narrations will become longer and more detailed.

Copywork

To implement copywork with your child, follow these steps:

1. Write the copywork sentence at the top of the copywork sheet or on a separate piece of lined paper.
2. Highlight capital letters, punctuation, and challenging spelling words.
3. Read the sentence aloud, and ask your child to repeat it back to you.
4. Ask the child to copy the sentence carefully.
5. Check the finished copywork to see that it is complete and correct.

At last, they came to Sun Mountain, where warmth and light drenched the sky.

Geography

Map Work and Reading

If you have completed Level A and/or B of this curriculum with your child, you will already have **China** marked on your world map. If not, locate and mark it now. I suggest using stars to mark countries and dots to mark states. Read or review the entry for China on pages 160–161 of the geography text.

Memory Work

At the beginning of this year, your student will review the geography memory work taught in Levels A and B. This gives newcomers to the program a chance to establish a good foundation for Level C knowledge and reinforces the memory work for children who completed Levels A and/or B.

► If you are teaching this material to your child for the first time, use the explanations and demonstrations in the “Introduce” section below. Then read the questions and answers above to your child and **ask them to repeat the answers to you three times.**

► Review:

Q: What is a world map?

A: A world map is a flat drawing of the Earth.

Q: What is a globe?

A: The Earth is shaped like a sphere (a ball), and the globe shows what the Earth looks like from outer space.

Q: What are the cardinal directions?

A: The cardinal directions are North, East, South, and West.

► Introduce:

To teach the world map and globe definitions, show the child both objects, and explain the difference between them: the map is a drawing of the Earth’s surface, while the globe shows it in space.

To teach the cardinal directions, explain to your child that **the sun rises in the eastern part of the sky every morning**. Show your child where that is in real life. If possible, go outdoors and show them a stable physical landmark to the east; otherwise, show them which wall in your home is (roughly) in the east.

Show them that, if they stand with the east at their right hand, they will be facing north, south will be behind them, and west to their left.

Now look at your world map, and point out the **compass rose** to your child. Show them how the four cardinal directions are labeled (usually N, E, S, and W) and what those abbreviations stand for. Explain that, on most maps, **North is toward the top, East toward the right, South toward the bottom, and West toward the left**.

During the coming week, have your child **practice locating the cardinal directions** both indoors and outdoors. If your child has trouble remembering the clockwise order of the directions, you can teach them the mnemonic device **“Never Eat Slimy Worms.”**

LESSON C-2

“Snow White”

Best-Loved Folktales, p. 53

Germany

Literature

Teaching Notes

► **Printables:** Story Summary Triples Three Acts Narration Copywork

With “Snow White,” we begin our exploration of European wonder tales. This story and many of the others we’ll read this year were collected by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and first published in Germany in 1812. Their original collection, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Nursery and Household Tales*) was later expanded to include many more tales, which we now know collectively as “Grimms’ fairy tales.”

Your child may already be familiar with this story, either from bedtime read-alouds or from the famous Disney animated film. If so, ask them to listen carefully to the version you’ll be reading, which is a translation of the Grimms’ tale. Some adaptations change or leave out details that appear in the original. For example, when the seven dwarfs arrive home and discover Snow White, their dialog may remind your child of the story “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” Some adaptations leave this section out, but catching these types of resonances between stories is an important part of literary analysis, and we want to encourage it.

This story contains themes that some children may find upsetting. Snow White’s birth mother dies, and the wicked queen repeatedly tries to kill Snow White, first through an intermediary and eventually by her own sorcery. In the end, the wicked queen is punished by being forced to dance in red-hot iron shoes until she dies. If you suspect that your child is sensitive to these types of stories, try reading the tale in a quiet, matter-of-fact tone. Assuring the child that “this is a fairy tale, and fairy tales always end with ‘happily ever after’” may also help. You can also substitute a less intense story from Cole’s anthology.

Vocabulary

ebony: a black wood from a tropical tree
overbearing: domineering, bossy
surpassed: was better or more than
looking glass: mirror
fairest: most beautiful
contented: happy and satisfied
token: sign
consented: agreed
devour: eat up
committed herself to heaven: said her prayers
astonishment: wonder
comrades: companions, friends
lace: ribbon, cord
variegated: multicolored
hastened: hurried
paragon: example, model
refrain: resist
morsel: small piece, bite
glance: look
bier: a movable frame for carrying a coffin
lamented: grieved
beseech: beg
brethren: brothers
pomp: ceremony

Narration

Because this story is so well-known, your child may be able to give a pretty complete narration of it despite its considerable length. In this lesson, however, we will focus on one of the common structural aspects of wonder tales: triples. **Triples are any set of three parallel characters or actions.** In “The Magic Brocade,” the three brothers form a triple, and in many stories we’ll see this year, the main character must perform three tasks to achieve their goal. While triples are not a universal feature of world folktales—some cultures prefer a fourfold structure—they are extremely common.

The **Wonder Tale Triples graphic organizer (p. 13)** shows that the triple structure expands the part of the story where the character tries to achieve their goal: “So the character does *this* and *this* and *this*.”

Today we will look at a series of episodes in the middle of “Snow White” as an example of how the triple structure works.

Begin by reading the following narration of the beginning of the story aloud to your child as a model.

A queen wished for a beautiful baby girl. She gave birth to Snow White but then died.

The king remarried a beautiful but vain lady who wanted to be the most beautiful woman in all the world. The new queen was envious of Snow White’s beauty, so she ordered a huntsman to kill her, but the huntsman secretly let Snow White go and tricked the queen into believing she was dead.

Snow White wandered through the woods until she came to a cottage that belonged to seven dwarfs. They offered to let her stay and keep house for them. They warned Snow White to beware of her stepmother.

Next, use the following questions and the Wonder Tales Triples graphic organizer to help your child narrate the next part of the text.

- 1. What did the wicked queen want?**
- 2. But why couldn’t she get what she wanted?**
- 3. She tried three things to get what she wanted. What was the first thing?**
- 4. What was the second thing she tried?**
- 5. What was the third thing?**
- 6. What happened then?**

Write your child’s answers in the graphic organizer. When it is complete, it should look like this:

Somebody wanted	The wicked queen wanted to be the most beautiful woman in the world.
But	Snow White was more beautiful than the queen.
So 1. 2. 3.	The queen disguised herself and tried to do away with Snow White with 1. a corset lace 2. a poisoned comb 3. a poisoned apple
Then	The dwarfs saved Snow White the first two times, but they could save her the last time, so they put Snow White in a glass coffin.

Now read the following narration of the end of the tale to your child as a further model.

A prince rode by and fell in love with Snow White. The dwarfs agreed to give him the coffin, but as it was being moved, the piece of poisoned apple popped out of Snow White's mouth. The prince asked to marry her, and she agreed.

The wicked queen heard from her magic mirror that a new bride was more lovely than she. When she went to the wedding, she saw that it was Snow White. The wicked queen was punished by dancing in red-hot iron shoes.

Copywork

“Oh, that I had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the embroidery frame!”

Geography

Map Work and Reading

Locate and mark **Germany** on your world map, if you have not done so already, and read pages 94-95 in the geography text. Many of this year's stories come from Germany, so it is not necessary to re-read the geography text every time.

Memory Work

► Review:

Q: What is a world map?

A: A world map is a flat drawing of the Earth.

Q: What is a globe?

A: The Earth is shaped like a sphere (a ball), and the globe shows what the Earth looks like from outer space.

Q: What are the cardinal directions?

A: The cardinal directions are North, East, South, and West.

► Introduce or review:

Q: What country do you live in?

A: I live in...

Q: What is the capital of _____ [home country]?

A: _____ [city] is the capital of _____ [home country].

Q: What state [province] do you live in?

A: I live in the state [province] of _____.

Q: What is the capital of _____ [state/province]?

A: The capital of _____ [state/province] is _____ [city].

Q: What is your street address?

A: My street address is...

END OF SAMPLE

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