

The Geography of Mary Pope Osborne’s Magic Tree House Series

OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES	GRADES
<p>Step into a world of adventure—go back in time or to distant lands with Jack and Annie. From France in the Middle Ages to the prairies of America to the Moon, Jack and Annie make history and geography fun by taking you right there! In this first book, <i>Dinosaurs Before Dark</i>, Jack and Annie go back 65 million years ago to the Cretaceous period. Through this adventure students will learn about the physical features of this period and how the physical features give structure to habitats of living things. This series of lessons integrates Mary Pope Osborne’s <i>Magic Tree House Series</i> into the social studies curriculum by concentrating on landscapes.</p> <p><i>Students will be able to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate Minnesota and Pennsylvania on a U.S. map. • Compare the locations of Minnesota and Pennsylvania on a U.S. map. • Identify travel between the two states using positional terms. • Identify human and physical characteristics of a place. • Locate the Cretaceous period on a time line and compare it to the times of the dinosaurs. • Differentiate the world’s major habitats. • Describe how people adapt to the environment. • Describe how people adapt to a changing environment. • Draw the physical features of the story’s setting to convey spatial understanding. • Respond accurately to questions regarding plot, characters and setting. 	1 st & 2 nd
	TIME
	1 week (5-45 minute periods)
	REQUIRED MATERIALS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Dinosaurs Before Dark</i> from <i>Magic Tree House Series</i> by Mary Pope Osborne ✓ Large time line or transparency featuring dinosaur periods ✓ Note cards to make vocabulary word cards ✓ Blank U.S. map with states outlined for each student ✓ Crayons ✓ Classroom map of the U.S. ✓ Literature Response Journal (to be created by teacher) ✓ “Around the World in the Magic Tree House” Travel Log (to be created by teacher) ✓ Gold foil paper and circular plastic lid (approximately 3 inches in diameter) ✓ Large pictures of the world’s major habitats (mountain, desert, ocean, rainforest and polar) ✓ Picture of a magnolia tree and a magnolia flower from florist (optional) ✓ Projections or transparencies of <i>Dinosaurs Before Dark</i> pages: 1, 31, 35 and a blank web ✓ Art materials to make triorama’s vegetation and physical features ✓ Large laminated dinosaur outlines (optional)

MINNESOTA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS & BENCHMARKS

1st GRADE

Standard 1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.

1.3.1.1.1 Create sketch maps to illustrate spatial information about familiar places; describe spatial information found on maps.

1.3.1.1.2 Use relative location words and absolute location words to identify the location of a specific place; explain why or when it is important to use absolute versus relative location.

1.3.2.3.1 Compare physical and human characteristics of a local place and a place far away on a globe or map (such as a place in an equatorial or polar region).

2nd GRADE

Standard 1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.

2.3.1.1.1 Create sketch maps to illustrate detailed spatial information about settings from stories; describe the spatial information found on the maps.

2.3.1.1.2 Locate key features on a map or globe; use cardinal directions to describe the relationship between two or more features.

Standard 9. The environment influences human actions; and humans both adapt to, and change, the environment.

2.3.4.9.1 Identify causes and consequences of human impact on the environment and ways that the environment influences people.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

Lesson 1: Chapters 1 & 2

Begin by explaining to the students that we are about to begin a wonderful adventure together. We will get to this new destination through the stories told in the *Magic Tree House* series. Each week a book will take us somewhere. Today we will begin by reading book #1, *Dinosaurs Before Dark*.

Students will make predictions about some of the things they think might be in the story.

As an introduction to book #1, the students will participate in a whole group pre-reading activity called Key Word Categorization in which students make a prediction of the reading and review their prediction. Vocabulary used in the story will be displayed on individual word cards on the board (including the names of dinosaurs). Through group discussion, students will move the words into categories. As the story is read, the categories will be reviewed for accuracy. Revisions will be done if needed. (Key Word Categorization can be a closed sort with categories provided or open sort without categories provided.)

The teacher will read chapters 1 and 2 aloud expressing think-a-loud as the story is read. (Example: "I wonder where Pennsylvania is on the map and how close it is to Minnesota?") As the story is read we will take time to create mental pictures in our minds of what the area looks like. At the end of chapter 2 students will respond to the question in their Response Journal, "What do you think happened to the tree house?" Students will be given the opportunity to share with one another these responses.

Next, students will receive a blank United States map. We will locate and color the state of Minnesota. The students will then locate and color the state of Pennsylvania using their directional wording skills (north, south, east, west). Compare the locations of Minnesota and Pennsylvania.

Ask students to describe Frog Creek, Pennsylvania. What is it like? What are the people and nature (human and physical) characteristics? How is this place similar to and different from where you live?

Using the Sketching My Way Through the Text technique, students will begin drawing in their Travel Log the physical features that were discussed in the chapters. Students will draw the woods, the tall oak tree, the setting sun, the neighbor's black dog, and they could add Frog Creek. They may add the human features including the tree house, rope, books, the library, the school, the park, and their white house with the green porch. This drawing activity at the end of each reading will become a mural at the end of the book.

Lesson 2: Chapters 3 & 4

We will begin by retelling what happened in the story yesterday to refresh our memories. The teacher will read chapters 3 and 4 aloud, stopping along the way to answer questions. A discussion explaining the time line (transparency) of the Cretaceous period will help them to compare and contrast the times of the dinosaurs. Referring to page 31 (transparency) we will gather a mental image of what the physical features were like (ferns, tall grass, sloping hills, volcanoes in the distance) to describe the new land. Taking into consideration these characteristics, we will discuss what we think the climate was like using pictures of the world's major habitats. Compare these world habitats to our habitat and to each other. How are they similar (landforms—with plains, hills, plateaus, mountains) and how are they different (climate—various temperature and precipitation)?

We will then look at our classroom United States map and make an educated guess at the approximate location of where this time period could have taken place (Montana/Wyoming) and add it to our U.S. maps. Explain that the environment changes and Montana/Wyoming are no longer in a tropical climate. Students will describe the new land in their Travel Log by adding the features to the mural they have started.

After we finish reading chapter 4 the teacher will model how to use a web (transparency) to gather information. We will construct on the overhead a story web that identifies characteristics about our two main characters, Jack and Annie. The students will give one-word responses about each character that the teacher will record on the spokes of the web. In turn, students will record this same information in the blank space at the top of page 2 of their Response Journal. This activity will aid them in answering the question on page two of the Response Journal concerning the description of Annie and Jack.

Discuss with the students "How were Jack and Annie prepared for their adventure?" What did they have with them to make their adventure successful? What could they have brought with them if they had known they would be on this adventure? How did you prepare for today? How does the environment affect you?

Lesson 3: Chapters 5 & 6

After we finish reading chapters 5 and 6 we will discuss, "Were all the dinosaurs alike?" Referring back to the dinosaurs named in the Key Word Categorization from lesson 1, we will draw upon

prior knowledge to support the responses. We will divide the dinosaurs in the story into two categories—plant eaters and meat eaters (herbivores and carnivores). We will discuss the differences between them. Ask students, “What are some examples of plant and meat eaters in our environment?” Students will answer the questions on page three of their Response Journals.

The teacher will also introduce the students to another physical feature in the story, a magnolia tree. Using illustrations from additional resources and an actual magnolia flower, students will gain a greater understanding that magnolia trees are uncharacteristic for Minnesota. They will add a magnolia tree to the mural they have started in their Travel Log. On page 34 (transparency) Jack and Annie stumble upon mud nests of Anatosaurus dinosaurs (duck-billed). Students will add these mud nests to their drawing. Students will continue their drawings of the new land including the hill, fat bush, and plain.

Ask students, “How did Jack and Annie adapt to their new environment?” (Examples: They walked slowly and carefully, kneeled behind a fat bush, were quiet, used non-verbal communication, and crawled. They also looked around, picked flowers, pretended to chew, and fed flowers to the Anatosaurus.) Highlight for students that adapting to the environment means what they have (clothing, backpack) and what they do (run, hide).

On page 31 Jack finds a gold medallion in the grass. Using gold foil wrapping paper and a small plastic lid, students will create their own gold medallion. This medallion will be theirs to keep and can be used as a prop to help answer the last question for the day, “Where do you think the medallion came from?”

Lesson 4: Chapters 7 & 8

We will begin by discussing the characteristics of the physical features brought out in the story so far (tall grass, hills, volcanoes, magnolia trees, muddy ground, etc.). Our discussion question will be, “How were these things important for the survival of the dinosaurs?” We will discuss and list the different things a habitat must provide for living things to be able to survive in their Response Journals.

After reading chapters 7 and 8 and doing think-a-loud while reading, ask students, “How was the environment changing? How did Jack and Annie adapt to their changing environment?” Explore adaptation to the environment further by asking, “Did the environment change Jack and Annie—in what they had or did—or did Jack and Annie change the environment?” Students will add to their Travel Log.

Next, students will respond to the question on page 4 of their Response Journals, “What do you think will happen next?” Students will then pair off and share their response with a partner.

Lesson 5: Chapters 9 & 10

Begin by having the students retell what happened in the story until this point. Discuss what the habitat was like and how the dinosaurs depended on it for their survival.

Read the rest of the book. To help students understand the importance of the environment and how people adapt to it even as it changes, ask students, “What should Jack and Annie bring with them the next time they go to the Tree House?”

Have the students take out their medallion and try to imagine what the M on the face means. Discuss the pros and cons about returning to the tree house the next day; then have them record their answer and why on page 5 of their Response Journal. Next, students will turn to their Travel

Log and fill in the bottom of the page with what they have learned about the land they traveled to. Both writings can be shared with a friend when they have finished. Post the murals and have a “gallery walk”.

Closing

Students will complete a triorama of a favorite scene in the story. Requirements of the triorama are that it shows at least 2-3 of the physical features identified in the book and at least two characters from the book. When complete, the students will share their triorama and something they learned from this story they didn't know before.

Assessment:

Class Discussions

Literature Response Journal

“Around the World in the Magic Tree House” Travel Log (mural)

Triorama

Extensions:

1. We will continue to read the rest of the Magic Tree House series. Through the readings children will be exposed to a variety of physical features throughout the world. This exposure will give students understanding that not all the world has the same physical features and that those features aid in the survival or demise of living things that try to live there.

2. Science: We will explore habitats. Define a habitat as being “A place where a living thing can find the three things that it needs to live: food, water and shelter.” Using large posters that depict the major habitats in the world (mountains, desert, rainforest, oceans, polar, etc.) students will be divided into small groups. Groups will discuss the habitat they were given. They will speculate what type of living thing could survive there, analyze previous knowledge regarding those speculations, and give examples of living things that could and could not survive in that habitat.

3. Science: Investigate dinosaurs further by examining other dinosaurs. The teacher will lead a discussion on the demise of the dinosaurs: “Could changes in their habitat have had anything to do with dinosaurs becoming extinct?”

4. Value outside the classroom: How can we help the natural habitats that surround our school grounds? Team up with the fifth grade class who care for the osprey stands and birdhouses. Pick up litter on a regular basis on the school grounds that could put animal and plant life in danger.

RESOURCES

Dinosaur Time Lines:

“The Dino Directory” from Natural History Museum

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/life/dinosaurs-other-extinct-creatures/dino-directory/timeline/late-triassic/gallery.html>

“Prehistoric Time Line” from National Geographic

<http://science.nationalgeographic.com/science/prehistoric-world/prehistoric-time-line/>

“Dinosaur Timeline” from Dinosaur Jungle

http://www.dinosaurjungle.com/dinosaur_facts_timeline.php

“Era of the Dinosaurs” from Fact Monster

<http://www.factmonster.com/dk/science/dinosaurs/era-of-the-dinosaurs.html>

Blank Webs:

“Web (Concept Map)” from Teacher Vision

<https://www.teachervision.com/graphic-organizers/printable/6298.html>

“Semantic Map Sheet” from Student Handouts

<http://www.studenthandouts.com/Assortment-01/Graphic-Organizers/Semantic-Map-Printables-Instructions.html>

Literature Response Journal

- Page One: Chapters 1-2 question: “What do you think happened to the tree house?”
- Page Two: Chapters 3-4 web. Students record the same information from class on their web at the top of the page. At the bottom of the page, students describe Annie and Jack.
- Page Three: Chapters 5-6 questions: “Were all the dinosaurs alike?” “List the plant eaters and meat eaters.” “Where do you think the medallion came from?”
- Page Four: Chapters 7-8 questions: “List the different things a habitat must provide for living things to be able to survive.” “What do you think will happen next?”
- Page Five: Chapters 9-10 question: “What are the pros and cons about returning to the tree house the next day?”

Discussion Questions

Chapters 1-2

- a) Describe Frog Creek Pennsylvania. What is it like? What are the people and nature (human and physical) characteristics? How is this place similar to and different from where you live?

Chapters 3-4

- a) Compare these world habitats to our habitat and to each other. How are they similar and how are they different?
- b) How were Jack and Annie prepared for their adventure? What did they have with them to make their adventure successful? What could they have brought with them if they had known they would be on this adventure? How did you prepare for today? How does the environment affect you?

Chapters 5-6

- a) How did Jack and Annie adapt to their new environment?

Chapters 7-8

- a) How was the environment changing? How did Jack and Annie adapt to their changing environment? Did the environment change Jack and Annie—in what they had or did—or did Jack and Annie change the environment?

Chapters 9-10

- a) What should Jack and Annie bring with them the next time they go to the Tree House?

“Around the World in the Magic Tree House” Travel Log

Using the Sketching My Way Through the Text technique, students will draw the physical features that were discussed in the chapters. This drawing activity at the end of each reading will become a mural at the end of the book. Students also record at the bottom of the last page what they have learned about the land they traveled to.