

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for The Wizard of Oz/The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (Unabridged)

by
L. Frank Baum

Book Information

L. Frank Baum, The Wizard of Oz/The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (Unabridged)

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Book Level: 7.0

Interest Level: MG

Lifted from Kansas to the magical Land of Oz, Dorothy Gale meets a Scarecrow, a Tin Woodman, and a cowardly Lion, all of whom set off to find the Wizard and defeat the Wicked Witch of the West.

Topics: Classics, Classics (All);
Fantasy/Imagination, Misc./Other; Series,
Oz; U.S. States/Regions, Kansas

Main Characters

Aunt Em and Uncle Henry Dorothy's aunt and uncle, who are farmers in Kansas

Dorothy a young girl who is carried in the center of a tornado to the Land of Oz

the Lion a cowardly lion who accompanies Dorothy to the Wizard to ask for courage

the Munchkins the small people who were ruled by the Wicked Witch of the East before Dorothy arrived in Oz

the Scarecrow a scarecrow who goes with Dorothy to the Wizard in order to get a brain

the Tin Woodman a woodcutter who is made of tin and travels with Dorothy to the Wizard in order to request a heart

the Winged Monkeys a group of flying monkeys who are cursed to obey the charm of the Golden Cap

the Witches of the East and West the evil witches in the countries of Oz

the Witches of the North and South the good witches who help Dorothy with her adventure

the Wizard of Oz a man who had come to the Land of Oz in a hot air balloon and is thought to be a great and powerful wizard

Toto Dorothy's little black dog, who accompanies her wherever she goes

Vocabulary

bondage enslavement

daunted disheartened or discouraged

industrious hard-working

plague to bother or tease

vexed angry or annoyed with someone or something

Synopsis

Dorothy is a young girl who lives with her aunt and uncle on a farm in Kansas. One day Dorothy and her dog Toto are caught inside her home when a tornado strikes. The tornado lifts the home in the air and carries her to a strange place called the Land of Oz. When the home is set down in Oz, it kills the wicked Witch of the East, thus freeing the people from enslavement. The people of that area believe Dorothy is a powerful sorceress, and they cheer her for what she has done. While Dorothy is happy to have helped the people, she only wishes to return home to Kansas. The good Witch of the North tells her the only person who can help is the Wizard of Oz, who lives in the Emerald City. Dorothy is instructed to follow the yellow brick road to reach the Wizard. Before she leaves, she is given a pair of silver shoes from the dead witch and is kissed on the forehead by the Witch of the North. This kiss will protect her from all harm along the way.

Dorothy sets off on the yellow brick road with only her dog, Toto, for a companion. Along the way she meets and befriends three individuals who wish to go with her to see the Wizard. She meets the Scarecrow, who wishes for a brain; the Tin Woodman, who wants a heart; and the Lion, who feels he needs courage. The five encounter many dangers, but use their ingenuity and abilities to overcome all of them. Once they reach the Wizard and make their requests, they are told they will only be helped if they kill the Witch of the West.

Disappointed but determined, they head to the West. Along the way they fend off attacks by different villains sent by the Witch. At last the Witch

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calls upon the Winged Monkeys to capture the Lion and destroy the others. Upon seeing that Dorothy is marked by the good Witch, the Winged Monkeys destroy the Woodman and Scarecrow but bring Dorothy and the Lion to the Witch. The Witch sees Dorothy has the Silver Shoes of the Witch of the East and attempts to get them from Dorothy. This upsets Dorothy, and she throws water on the Witch, causing her to melt. Having completed her task, Dorothy rescues her friends and returns to the Wizard of Oz, only to discover he is a fraud and does not possess any magical powers.

The Wizard knows the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Lion already possess the qualities they seek. He is able to give them confidence, and they are satisfied. It is only Dorothy who is disappointed and, after a failed escape by hot air balloon and flying monkeys, she decides to call on the Witch of the South for help. The Witch of the South tells Dorothy she has had the power to go home all along -- using the Silver Shoes. Dorothy returns to Kansas, and the others go to rule different areas of the Land of Oz.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Initial Understanding

When Dorothy finally returns to Kansas, she tells Aunt Em she has just come from the Land of Oz. How do you think Dorothy's aunt and uncle will react to her story when she tells it?

Students may say the two will be skeptical of the adventure or even believe Dorothy is crazy. They may also be so happy to have Dorothy home that they will not care whether or not the story is true.

Literary Analysis

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz might be considered by some people to be a classic piece of literature. Explain what elements a story must have to qualify as a classic and determine whether you feel this story meets those standards.

Some might consider it a classic because it was written a long time ago and has had a lasting significance in American literature. Its potential as a classic may have increased when it was made into a movie that has been popular for many years. In this way, many Americans have been exposed to the story and have enjoyed it over the years.

Inferential Comprehension

What do you think would have happened if the Wizard of Oz had not pretended to be a wizard?

Students' answers may vary, but might include that the Emerald City would not have been built, and the wicked Witches may have enslaved the people.

Constructing Meaning

As the story progresses the reader can see that the Lion, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Woodman already possess the qualities they wish to receive from the Wizard. What examples illustrate this in the story?

The students can cite many examples, including the time the Scarecrow came up with a plan for how the group could cross the river, the time the Lion courageously carried the others over the great ditch in the road, or the time the Tin Woodman chopped off the wolves' heads.

Teachable Skills

Recognizing Setting The author's descriptions of the different scenes in this story paints clear pictures in the reader's mind. Have the students choose a scene in the story, such as the Emerald City, Dorothy's home, or the China Country, to illustrate.

Making Predictions Throughout the story it is repeated that Dorothy does not know about the power of the different magical things she has in

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her possession, such as the Silver Shoes and the Golden Cap. Have the students each choose an event and predict how it could have been different if Dorothy had known about the powers she possessed.

Recognizing Detail In order to leave the Land of Oz, the Wizard constructs a hot air balloon made of silk coated with a layer of glue. Though he is not sure where it will take him, the Wizard is certain the wind will carry him away from the Land of Oz. If necessary, request the help of a science teacher and have the students construct miniature hot air balloons and experiment with how the wind moves them. To extend the activity, have the students research worldwide wind currents and speculate where the wind would take them if they launched a balloon from the school grounds. Invite a balloonist to share his or her knowledge and experience with the students.

Responding to Literature Though Dorothy is caught in the center of the cyclone, she manages to remain calm and level-headed. Have the students share their thoughts on how they might react or have reacted in similar situations. Ask them to share their thoughts on what helped them survive a frightening experience.