

Family Literacy Guided Lesson

For Amelia's Road / El camino de Amelia

NY State Learning Standards

Learning Standards for English Language

Arts Standard 1:

Students will read for information; collect data, facts and ideas; discover relationships, concepts and generalizations; and use written language to acquire, interpret, and apply information.

Learning Standards for Mathematics

Standard 3

Students will apply mathematics in real-world settings and solve problems through geometry and trigonometry.

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About the Book

Amelia's Road / El camino de Amelia

Linda Jacobs Altman, Author and
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In this poignant story of a young girl's dream for a permanent home, the author conveys a realistic yet hopeful picture of the travel, hard work and disrupted lifestyle of migrant farm workers. Although the story's protagonist, Amelia, does not realize her dream, she does discover a special place beneath a *most wondrous tree* at the end of the *accidental road*. And, she finds a way to make it her own. A simple hand-drawn map serves as a guide to her special place just as her father's road map guides the family to their next destination.

Contents

- 1.....About the Book
- 1.....The Language/Literacy Connection
- 1.....NYS State Learning Standards
- 2-3..... PLS-4 Related Skills
- 2.....Early Childhood Education
 - Infant/Toddler Level
- 3.....Early Childhood Education – Preschool and School age Levels
- 4.....Parenting Education Activity
- 5.....Interactive Literacy Between Parents and Their Children
- 6.....Adult Literacy – ABE and GED Levels
- 7.....Adult Literacy – ABE and GED Levels
- 8.....Adult Literacy – ELL Lesson

The Language/Literacy Connection

Reading Maps

Stories are often the catalyst for learning new skills. A skill suggested by *Amelia's Road* is map reading. Maps are invaluable tools for travelers, and can be complicated to read. Spatial sense, directional concepts, visualization of abstract details, and an understanding of time and distance are needed to interpret the points, lines and symbols used in maps. Like so many other skills, the development of math and literacy skills needed for map reading begin in the experiences of childhood. When children crawl through tunnels, draw roadways in sand, build communities with blocks, and play games like the *Hokey Pokey* that emphasize directional words, they build the knowledge base needed to understand maps. Games like hide and seek and treasure hunts help children understand the purpose of maps.

Early Childhood Education-Infant/Toddler Level

Over, Under and Around on the Brown Bag Road

PLS-4 Skills

Auditory

Comprehension

- 26. Understands spatial concepts (in, off, out of)
- 32. Follows two-step related commands without cues

Expressive

Language

- 29. Uses words for a variety of pragmatic functions
- 33. Answers what and where questions

Before the Visit

Gather Needed Materials

- ♦ Several brown paper grocery bags
- ♦ Masking tape
- ♦ A carrot
- ♦ A large cardboard box

Prepare Lesson Props

- ♦ Cut the bags into 12" by 12" squares

- ♦ Say to the parent: *Amelia's family used a road map to help them as they traveled. Reading maps is complicated even for adults, but like so many things, it is a skill that begins at an early age. For example, learning position and direction words is the first step in map reading. I brought paper bag squares to make a brown bag road. As (child's name) walks along the road, we can help him/her learn position and direction words.*
- ♦ Tape several squares onto the floor to make a road. Tape the road around a chair, over a pillow, through a doorway, etc. Holding the child's hand, walk on the brown bag road. Talk or sing about what you are doing. *We are walking around the chair. We are walking through the doorway, etc.*
- ♦ Large cardboard boxes can be used to teach position words. As children climb into, out of and around the box say, (child's name) is in the box, out of the box, behind the box, etc. Using the child's whole body to experience positions really reinforces the concepts!
- ♦ Singing helps young children learn new words. While on a trip in the car, sing songs like those below. The more language children hear, the more language they will understand and use.

During the Visit

- ♦ With the parent and child sitting together say to the parent: *The text and the concepts in this story are rather mature for young children, and they may enjoy hearing the story "told" rather than read. Naming objects in the pictures is another way for young children to enjoy the book. For example, the girl on the cover is pulling carrots with her parents. Point to the carrots and say to the child: Do you see the carrots? Show a real carrot to the child. Say: This is a carrot. Say to the parent: This is a way to teach new words to children and help them see how books and real life are related. Ask the parent: What else do you see in the picture that you can name for (child's name)?*

Accept all relevant suggestions the parent offers such as hat, pocketbook, eyes, nose.

Sing this song to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb".

*We are riding in our car,
In our car, in our car.
We are riding in our car,
In our car together.*

Use truck or the name of the vehicle you are riding in. Add new verses as you drive along to describe what you are doing.

*We are driving over a bridge
We are driving down the road
We are stopping at the corner
We are turning to the left
We are driving through the tunnel*

What other verses can you add?

Early Childhood Education-Preschool and School Age Levels

Talk it Through

PLS-4 Skills

Auditory

Comprehension

44. Understands spatial concepts (under, in back of, next to, in front of)

Expressive

Language

44. Answers questions about hypothetical events
45. Responds to where questions

Before the Visit

Gather Needed Materials

- ◆ Photograph of the family
- ◆ Small box
- ◆ Garden trowel

Prepare Lesson Props

On the visit before the lesson, take a picture of the family.

Accept whatever answers the child offers. The goals of the questions are to encourage thinking and conversation, and to help the child relate to the book.

- ◆ Turn to the page that tells the items that went into Amelia's box and review the items with the child. Say: *I have a box for you to bury some special things like Amelia did. We can start with this picture of you and your family that I took last week.* Give the box and family photograph to the child. Say, *What else would you like to put in the box?* Suggest inexpensive items such as a school paper, a button from an old favorite shirt.
- ◆ Go outside with the parent and child to bury the box, or hide it inside. If the family lives in a place that does not have an outside area, suggest hiding the box in a special place in the house.
- ◆ Once the box is in its special place, work with the parent and child to draw a map that shows the location of the special spot. The child's job is to talk through directions from the house to the box's location. The parent's task is to draw a map that illustrates the child's directions. The family educator's job is to ask questions that help clarify the child's thinking. *Where is the box buried? Under which tree? Is there a special marker—a stone or a bush—near the spot? How far is it from the door to the tree? How many steps? When you go out the door do you turn left or right?*

Which Way?

Try this game to reinforce children's knowledge of direction.

Standing with your back to the parent and child, point in four directions—up, down, left, right. Can the child follow your lead? As you point, call out the direction. Point up and say up, point down and say down, etc. Ask the child and parent to call out the direction words with you. Try calling out the direction word without pointing. Can the child point in the correct direction? Let the child be the leader. As he/she points, follow his/her lead and call out the direction word.

During the Visit

With the parent and child sitting together read *Amelia's Road*. If the parent and child are readers, ask them to share in the reading. If the text is too long to hold the interest of the child, tell some parts of the story. Ask questions to involve the child in the story. *Do you think Amelia likes to move? How do you feel when you move? What kind of house does Amelia want to live in? What does Amelia's teacher do that makes Amelia feel happy at school? Why does Amelia bury a box of her things under her special tree? Do you have a special place? Do you think Amelia's idea of burying her favorite things was a good one? If you buried something what would it be? Where would you bury it?*

Parenting Education Activity

Giving and Following Directions

To follow directions, children must first learn the meaning of many words. Two-year-olds can follow simple directions like *get your shoes and bring them to me, or put your teddy bear on your bed*. To give directions, children must be able to use oral language and understand the ideas of distance and direction. Giving accurate directions is a difficult task for school age children and even for adults.

From Here to There

♦ Say: *Giving directions from one place to another is difficult. You must visualize the route between the two places, think about the direction and distance from one place to the other, and have enough language to tell another person how to get there. You may need to know road names or route numbers, which way to turn at stop signs and crossroads, and how many miles to drive on each road. Talk through directions from the parent's home to the Even Start office. When you complete the directions say, do you think you could find my office based on those directions? Now it's your turn. Give me directions from your house to a place that you visit often such as the grocery store. As the parent gives the directions, write them and then read them back to him/her. Ask for clarification or more details where needed. How many miles do I drive on Stone Road before turning onto Babcock Hill Road? Do I turn left or right at the stop sign? Is there a landmark I can look for at the crossroad?*

♦ Say: *You can see that giving good directions is difficult. To help your children learn to give directions, play a game of **From Here to There**. The game is easy and fun and can be played anytime with no special equipment.*

1. Think of a place to "send" the child. It can be in the house, around the farm or neighborhood, or some distance away.
2. Make up direction cards. On one side of an index card write a destination—like Johnny's bedroom, the hay barn or the grocery store. On the other side of the card write directions from your house, or from someplace in your house, to the destination.
3. Read the directions to the child, but don't tell the destination.
4. Does the child know the destination? If he/she guesses correctly reward him/her by letting him/her hold the card, or read the next direction card to you.

♦ With the parent prepare a few direction cards. Say: *As you think of more places to "send" players, write new direction cards. School age children can write direction cards too. If their directions are not clear, remember that this is a learning game. With your patience and their practice, their ability to give directions will improve!*

Take a Walk-About

♦ Take a walk around your home or farm. Point out landmarks—the maple tree, the milk house, the apple orchard, the chicken coop, the doghouse. Together draw a map that illustrates your walk. Draw in the landmarks that you saw and label them with words. Give the map to Dad or an older brother or sister. Can they follow your map and take the same walk-about that you took?

The next time you drive to Grandma's, or some other familiar place, let your child navigate!

Interactive Literacy Between Parents and Their Children

Directions to Treasure

Treasure hunts are a great way to help children learn to follow directions to obtain a goal. Instructions that are written in the format of a map require children to use reading and math skills. On sunny summer days draw maps to treasures hidden outside. If the weather is cold or stormy, inside treasure hunts are as much fun and equally as challenging.

Treasure Hunt Maps

Anything can be a treasure – a treat to eat, a small trinket, or a favorite toy hidden for the hunt. Hide the treasure in a secret location, and draw a map the family can follow to find it. Use arrows to point out directions and geometric shapes to symbolize landmarks. For example, a circle might represent the large rock. Draw footsteps to indicate distances between landmarks. Mark the location of the treasure with an X or a picture of the treasure. Hunt for the treasure as a team, especially if the family includes young children who need help reading the map or, for safety's sake, require close supervision.

Follow the Drinking Gourd

Some cherished treasures are not objects at all, but ideas or ways of living. And some maps are not drawn on paper, but passed from person to person by word-of-mouth. Follow the Drinking Gourd is a pre-Civil War song that gave enslaved African Americans a "map" of the Underground Railroad and the path to freedom in the North. Words in the song identified important landmarks along the route to freedom.

Follow the drinking gourd,
Follow the drinking gourd,
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom,
If you follow the drinking gourd.

Now the riverbed makes a very good road,
The dead trees will show you the way,
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on.
Follow the drinking gourd.

Now the river ends between two hills.
Follow the drinking gourd.
There's another river on the other side.
Follow the drinking gourd.

When the great big river meets the little river,
Follow the drinking gourd.
For the old man is a-waiting to carry you to freedom.
Follow the drinking gourd.

A Family Project

The drinking gourd referred to the constellation of stars known as the Big Dipper. It pointed the direction to a treasure that was more important to slaves than nearly anything in life - freedom. As a family project, look in books or on the Internet to discover the meaning of words in this song. What is important to you? What do you treasure more than things? As a family project, cut out several paper stars. Make the stars large enough to write a few words on them. On each star write a word or two, or perhaps a sentence, to describe an important family treasure. Hang the stars where the family can see them everyday. Add to the star galaxy from time to time.

To learn more about the meaning of the words in this song, look up "Underground Railroad" in books or on the Internet. This information and computers with Internet access will be available at most local libraries. A trip to the library can be another family project.

Adult Literacy - ABE and GED Levels

Activity Sheet

Getting From Here to There

Notes:

Consisting of a variety of symbols, colors, shapes and textures, maps are scaled models of real-life locations. Through a system of lines, points and areas, cartographers represent the essential information needed to answer where, how and what questions. Where is the health clinic located? How do I get from my house to the mall? What is the shortest route between Buffalo and Albany? Plan a trip from your house to Niagara Falls. Using a road map, calculator, and ruler, estimate the time and money needed for the trip.

How many miles will you travel?

- ◆ On the road map, circle the town you live in and Niagara Falls.
- ◆ Look at the map's mileage scale. How many miles is represented by an inch?
- ◆ Using the miles-per-inch ratio, estimate the distance between your home and Niagara Falls.
- ◆ Double the mileage to find the total estimated mileage from your home to Niagara Falls and back.

How much time do you need for the trip?

- ◆ Plan to spend 4 hours at the Falls.
- ◆ Add the time needed for driving. If you drive an average of 55 miles per hour, how much driving time do you need?
- ◆ Add time for rest stops. Plan 20 minutes for each 2 hours of driving, especially if you have young children!

Activity Sheet (Continued)

How much will the trip cost?

- ◆ What is the round trip mileage to Niagara Falls?
- ◆ How many miles per gallon of gas do you get in your car?
- ◆ If gas costs an average of \$1.35 per gallon, how much money do you need for gas?
- ◆ Do you need money for tolls? Look at the map's legend. Will you travel on a toll road? How far? Plan about 1 cent per mile for each mile traveled on a toll road.
- ◆ Kids need to eat! Will you take a picnic lunch or buy food on the road? How much money will you need?
- ◆ Will you stay overnight in a hotel or a camp ground? What will that cost?

Notes:

What will you see along the way?

- ◆ Look at the legend. What are the symbols for wildlife areas, camping areas, and points of interest?
- ◆ What interesting areas are on the route you plan to take?
- ◆ What are the 3 largest cities or towns you will pass through?
- ◆ Will you be driving near a state park?
- ◆ What lakes and rivers are on your route?

Time and Money

Based on your estimates:

How far will you travel? _____

What will the trip cost? _____

How much time is needed? _____

Adult Literacy - ELL Lesson

Position and Direction

While ELL students are likely to be experienced travelers, positional and directional vocabulary will help with local directions.

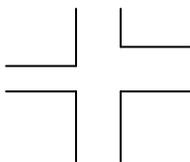
Vocabulary

Left
Right
Turn left
Turn right
In front of
In back of

Before the Visit

Gather Needed Materials

- ♦ Masking tape
- ♦ A small box
- ♦ A small toy car



- ♦ Sketch of masking tape road (see above)

Note:

Throughout the lesson, stand next to, in front of or behind the student facing the same direction as the student.

Introduce Vocabulary

Left and Right

- ♦ Extend your left hand out to your side. Say, *this direction is left*. Extend your right hand out to your right side. Say, *this direction is right*.
- ♦ Point with your left hand. Say, *this direction is left*. What direction is this? Motion to the student to repeat *left*. Repeat procedure for right.

Total Physical Response

- ♦ With the masking tape, map out a large intersection on the floor. See sketch in the lower left corner.
- ♦ With the student behind you, walk down the center of one of the "streets." At the intersection, turn left. Say, *I am turning left*. The student should turn behind you. Say, *what direction did you turn?* Motion to the student to reply, *I turned left*. Repeat several times using left and right.
- ♦ With the student in front of you, walk down one of the streets. At the intersection say, *turn left*. When the student turns say, *what direction did you turn?* Motion for the student to reply, *I turned left*. Repeat several times using left and right.

Practice

- ♦ Place the box on the workspace. Place a car on the left side of the box. Say, *the car is on the left side of the box*. *Where is the car?* Motion to the student to repeat, *on the left*. Repeat procedure for right.
- ♦ Give the car to the learner. Say, *Put the car on the left*. Say, *where is the car?* Motion for the student to repeat, *on the left*. Repeat procedure for right.

Word Drill - Yes/No Questions

- ♦ Place the car on the right side of the box. Say, *is the car on the right?* Motion for the student to answer, *yes, the car is on the right*. Say, *is the car on the left?* Motion for the student to answer, *no, the car is on the right*.

Introduce Vocabulary

In front of and in back of

- ♦ Stand in front of the student. Say, *I am in front of you*. Ask, *where am I?* Motion for the student to answer, *in front of me*. Repeat procedure for in back of.
- ♦ Stand in back of a chair. Say, *I am in back of the chair*. *Where am I?* Motion for the student to reply, *in back of the chair*. Repeat procedure using other objects in the room. Repeat for in front of.
- ♦ Use practice and word drill exercises, outlined above, to reinforce in front of and in back of.