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Magic Tree House[®]

Series Guide

Mary Pope Osborne

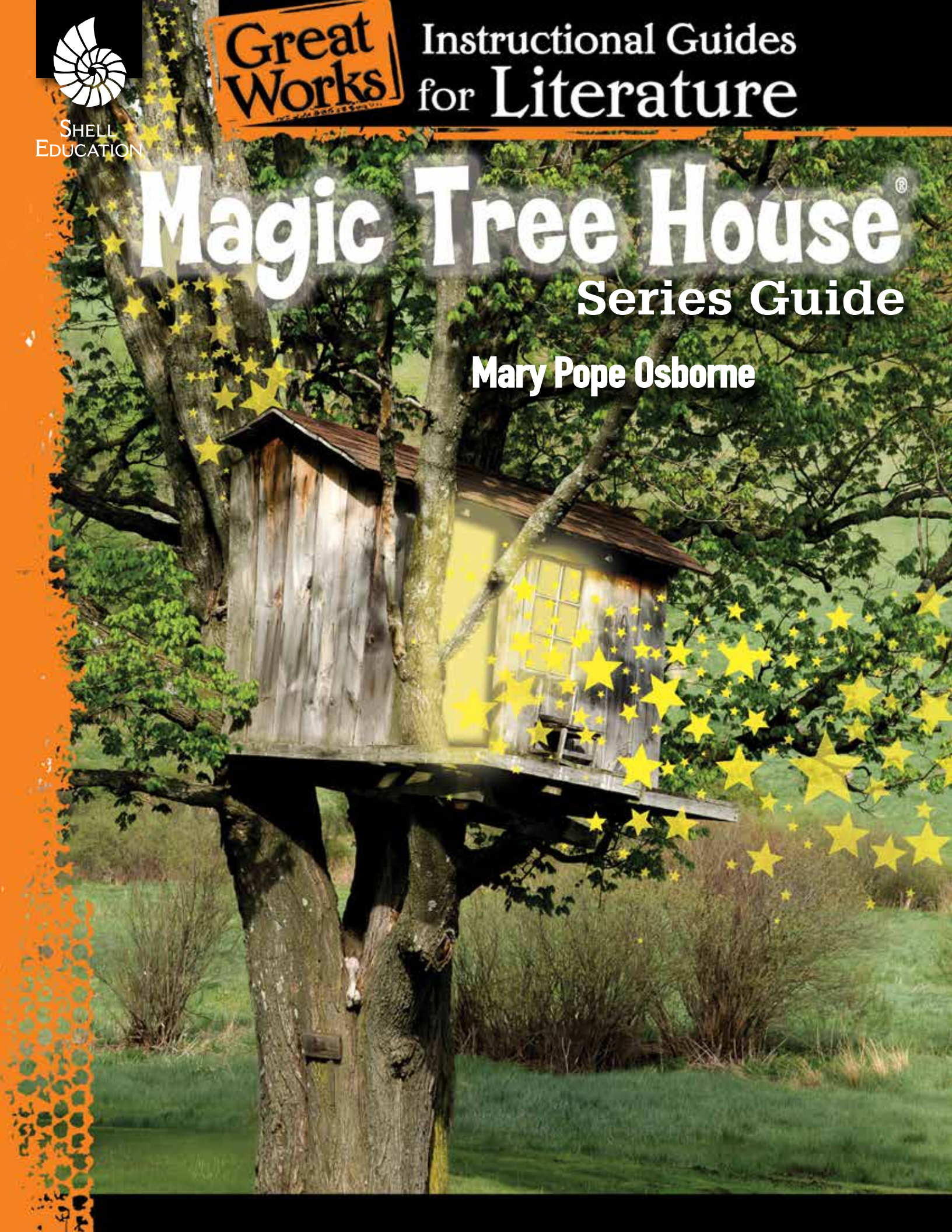


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How to Use This Literature Guide

Today's standards demand rigor and relevance in the reading of complex texts. The units in this series guide teachers in a rich and deep exploration of worthwhile works of literature for classroom study. The most rigorous instruction can also be interesting and engaging!

Many current strategies for effective literacy instruction have been incorporated into these instructional guides for literature. Throughout the units, text-dependent questions are used to determine comprehension of the book as well as student interpretation of the vocabulary words. The books chosen for the series are complex and are exemplars of carefully crafted works of literature. Close reading is used throughout the units to guide students toward revisiting the text and using textual evidence to respond to prompts orally and in writing. Students must analyze the story elements in multiple assignments for each section of the book. All of these strategies work together to rigorously guide students through their study of literature.

The next few pages describe how to use this guide for a purposeful and meaningful literature study. Each section of this guide is set up in the same way to make it easier for you to implement the instruction in your classroom.

Theme Thoughts

The great works of literature used throughout this series have important themes that have been relevant to people for many years. Many of the themes will be discussed during the various sections of this instructional guide. However, it would also benefit students to have independent time to think about the key themes of the books in the series.

Before students begin reading, have them complete the *Pre-Reading Theme Thoughts* (page 12). This graphic organizer will allow students to think about the themes of this series outside the context of the stories. They'll have the opportunity to evaluate statements based on important themes and defend their opinions. Be sure to keep students' papers for comparison to the *Post-Reading Theme Thoughts* (page 62). This graphic organizer is similar to the pre-reading activity. However, this time, students will be answering the questions from the point of view of Jack or Annie. They have to think about how the character would feel about each statement and defend their thoughts. To conclude the activity, have students compare what they thought about the themes before reading to what the characters discovered.

How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Analyzing the Literature

After you have read each book with students, hold a small-group or whole-class discussion. Provided on the teacher reference pages for are leveled questions. The questions are written at two levels of complexity to allow you to decide which questions best meet the needs of your students. The Level 1 questions are typically less abstract than the Level 2 questions. These questions are focused on the various story elements, such as character, setting, and plot. Be sure to add further questions as your students discuss what they've read. For each question, a few key points are provided for your reference as you discuss the book with students.

Reader Response

In today's classrooms, there are often great readers who are below average writers. So much time and energy is spent in classrooms getting students to read on grade level that little time is left to focus on writing skills. To help teachers include more writing in their daily literacy instruction, each section of this guide has a literature-based reader response prompt. Each of the three genres of writing is used in the reader responses within this guide: narrative, informative/explanatory, and opinion. Before students write, you may want to allow them time to draw pictures related to the topic.

Guided Close Reading

Within each section of this guide, it is suggested that you closely reread a portion of the text with your students. Page numbers are given, but since some versions of the books may have different page numbers, the sections to be reread are described by location as well. After rereading the section, there are a few text-dependent questions to be answered by students.

Working space has been provided to help students prepare for the group discussion. They should record their thoughts and ideas on the activity page and refer to it during your discussion. Rather than just taking notes, you may want to require students to write complete responses to the questions before discussing them with you.

Encourage students to read one question at a time and then go back to the text and discover the answer. Work with students to ensure that they use the text to determine their answers rather than making unsupported inferences. Suggested answers are provided in the answer key.

How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Guided Close Reading *(cont.)*

The generic open-ended stems below can be used to write your own text-dependent questions if you would like to give students more practice.

- What words in the story support . . . ?
- What text helps you understand . . . ?
- Use the book to tell why ____ happens.
- Based on the events in the story, . . . ?
- Show me the part in the text that supports
- Use the text to tell why

Making Connections

The activities in this section help students make cross-curricular connections to mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, or other curricular areas. These activities require higher-order thinking skills from students but also allow for creative thinking.

Language Learning

A special section has been set aside to connect the literature to language conventions. Through these activities, students will have opportunities to practice the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation.

Story Elements

It is important to spend time discussing what the common story elements are in literature. Understanding the characters, setting, plot, and theme can increase students' comprehension and appreciation of the story. If teachers begin discussing these elements in early childhood, students will more likely internalize the concepts and look for the elements in their independent reading. Another very important reason for focusing on the story elements is that students will be better writers if they think about how the stories they read are constructed.

In the story elements activities, students are asked to create work related to the characters, setting, or plot. Consider having students complete only one of these activities. If you give students a choice on this assignment, each student can decide to complete the activity that most appeals to him or her. Different intelligences are used so that the activities are diverse and interesting to all students.

Vocabulary Overview

Key words and phrases from this section are provided below with definitions and sentences about how the words are used in the story. Introduce and discuss these important vocabulary words with students. If you think these words or other words in the story warrant more time devoted to them, there are suggestions in the introduction for other vocabulary activities (page 5).

Word	Definition	Sentence about Text
pretend (ch. 1)	make-believe	Jack prefers real things over pretend things.
glanced (ch. 2)	gave a quick look	Jack glances at all the books.
gliding (ch. 2)	moving silently and effortlessly	The Pteranodon is gliding over the tree house.
whistling (ch. 2)	making a shrill sound	The wind is whistling in the trees.
absolutely (ch. 2)	completely	It is absolutely quiet.
stream (ch. 3)	a body of running water	The stream flows through the field.
ancient (ch. 3)	from a period of time long ago	The ancient Pteranodon lands near the tree house.
examine (ch. 4)	to look at or check carefully	Jack wants to examine the Pteranodon.
alert (ch. 4)	watchful and ready to meet danger	The Pteranodon has an alert gaze.
caption (ch. 5)	the description of a picture	The caption says the Pteranodon weighed over 12,000 pounds.
medallion (ch. 5)	a large medal	The medallion has the letter <i>M</i> on it.
panic (ch. 8)	to feel overwhelming fear	Jack tells himself not to panic when he sees the Tyrannosaurus rex.

Name _____ Date _____

Vocabulary Activity

Directions: Draw lines to complete the sentences.

Beginnings of Sentences

Jack read the **caption** . . .

Jack likes real things, but

Jack could not believe

Jack tries not to **panic**

The wind starts **whistling**

Endings of Sentences

when he sees the
Tyrannosaurus rex.

as the tree house begins
to spin.

to learn more about the
Pteranodon.

they were looking at
ancient creatures.

Annie likes **pretend**
things.

Directions: Answer this question.

1. Why does Jack want to **examine** the Pteranodon?

Guided Close Reading

Closely reread the part in chapter 9 when Jack rides the Pteranodon.

Directions: Think about these questions. In the space below, write ideas or draw pictures as you think. Be ready to share your answers.

❶ What do you learn about Jack when he tells himself, “Don’t think. Just do it!”?

❷ What words in this section describe how Jack feels about flying on the Pteranodon?

❸ What words from the text tell you that it is difficult for the Pteranodon to carry Jack?

Story Elements—Character

Directions: Pirate captains are always looking for people to join their crews. Pretend you are Cap'n Bones. Create an ad describing what you want in a new crew member.

