Lesson Plan Summary  
Magic Tree House #1: Dinosaurs Before Dark  
A Special Education Edition

This lesson is used in a 3rd to 5th grade Special Education class with additional activities to engage the pre-symbolic learner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DURING THIS BOOK STUDY, EACH STUDENT WILL:</th>
<th>COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Answer comprehension questions</td>
<td><strong>READING – Key ideas and details</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make chapter predictions</td>
<td>• Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when why and how</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Draw settings in composition book</td>
<td><strong>Integration of knowledge and ideas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Write vocabulary words and definitions on index cards</td>
<td>• Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, settings, or events</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Compare and contrast Frog Creek setting to prehistoric setting</td>
<td>• Comprehend new vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discover silent /p/ in pteranodon</td>
<td><strong>READING - foundational skills:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Syllabicate words</td>
<td>• Phonological awareness:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participate in social skills interactions such as shaking hands and greeting one another</td>
<td>• Apply knowledge of basic syllabication rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Examine emotions by drawing Jack’s and Annie’s expressions on their faces on a whiteboard</td>
<td><strong>SPEAKING AND LISTENING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discuss a.m. and p.m. concepts</td>
<td>• Comprehension and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discuss elapsed time</td>
<td>• Presentation skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Respectful audience behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sing “The Adventure Song”</td>
<td><strong>MATH:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contribute to making a Magic Tree House prop</td>
<td>• Tell and write time using a.m. and p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mold clay figures</td>
<td>• Know relationships of time</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>MUSIC AND VISUAL ARTS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Creative responses to texts</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Created by: Sheila Byrnes-Nedoma, Dillard Drive Elementary School, Raleigh, North Carolina

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Lesson Plan
Magic Tree House #1: Dinosaurs Before Dark

A Special Education Edition

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE UNIT

Lesson in a Box

Along with this lesson plan, I have included the idea of “lesson in a box” as a way to organize materials in an efficient and easy storage system.

- Cover the outside of the box lid with paper and attach a similar drawing of the Magic Tree House. Store all of the materials for your Magic Tree House Book Club in the box.

This is a student drawn tree house picture with a Frog Creek Woods label. We hang it on the board and spin it when we read chapter one. The ladder is a piece of yarn that has been laminated for texture. Students trace the steps to follow along in the story for a sensory participation. A larger photo of this tree can be found in the appendix.

- To complete the prehistoric landing, you will need a small quart size bag of sand, rocks, and natural twigs and leaves from outside. During the activity, you can use the box lid as a tray for the students to explore this sensory experience for the setting.

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ROUTINE FOR YOUR DAILY LESSONS:

- **Social Skills: Welcome to Book Club** - Shake hands with each student and say “Welcome to the book club!” Continue around the circle. Provide visual prompt for students to respond.

- **Remove the lid of the box:** Refer to the tree house picture on the lid as the initial setting. During the story, turn the lid over and place the sensory materials, sand, in the lid for the students to explore. Open the box; take out the sand and the backpack.

- **Unpack the Backpack:** “This is what we need for our adventure” Prediction jar, Magic Tree House picture (the picture on the lid of the box), clock, Magic Tree House journals, white board, shoe box lids, clay, sand and the book: Dinosaurs before Dark.

- **Sing “The Adventure Song”** (chant like the rhyme “Brown Bear, Brown Bear”) *(See words to song in appendix.)*
- **Read chapter**
- **Follow activities** for comprehension, wh questions, vocabulary, and differentiated activities for all learners.
### Chapter 1

**COMPREHENSION**

- **Spin the Magic Tree House prop** as you read about Jack and Annie going on their adventure.

- **Write predictions** on a slip of paper and put them in the prediction jar at the start of each chapter.

### Chapter 1

**WH QUESTIONS/VOCAB**

- **When** does it get dark?

  Using clocks review the title and set the time for when it gets dark. *(7:00 p.m.)*

- Make the connection to the text. **Do we go to bed when it is dark?**

**VOCABULARY WORDS:**

- *dinosaur, dark*

- Use index cards to draw a picture and write the meaning.

### Chapter 1

**ACTIVITIES FOR THE PRE-SYMBOLIC LEARNER**

- **Present two faces** of Jack and Annie without mouths on the whiteboard. **How do Jack and Annie feel?**

- **Draw** in their emotions for the trip.

- **Explore** the sand in the box lid.

- **Make the connection** that the new setting will be in a natural setting of sand along with rocks and trees.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMPREHENSION</strong></td>
<td><strong>WH QUESTIONS/VOCAB</strong></td>
<td><strong>ACTIVITIES FOR THE PRE–SYMBOLIC LEARNER</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| - Review the tree house picture on top of the box lid. This was the first setting - Frog Creek Woods. Turn the box lid over and place the sand in the box to represent the new setting. | - *Where do you think Jack and Annie landed?*  
- **VOCABULARY WORD:**  
  *prehistoric*  
  - Use the index card to draw a picture and write the meaning  
  - Students can also draw a picture of the setting in their composition books. | - Take a picture walk from the cover to chapter 2.  
  *What do we see?*  
  - Place the sand, rocks, twigs, and leaves in the lid of the box to create a scene |
| - Explain that the setting is where the story takes place.  
- Make a chart on the whiteboard labeled Frog Creek Woods and prehistoric times. | | |
| - Comprehension questions:  
  *What do we see and know about Frog Creek Woods?*  
  *What do we see and know about the new setting?*  
  - Are there any predictions? | | |
| | | |
### Chapter 3-6

#### COMPREHENSION

**REVIEW AND READ**

- **Using your white board,** make a Venn diagram on animals that fly, walk, and swim.

- Are there any new predictions?

- Discuss previous predictions.

#### WH QUESTIONS/VOCAB

- **What** dinosaurs did Jack and Annie meet? Pteranodon, Anatosaurus, Triceratops

- Write “fuzzy skin” in composition notebook, just as Jack writes it in his book.

- **Draw** Jack’s face and Annie’s face in the notebook when they meet the Pteranodon, and again when they see the Anatosaurus.

**VOCABULARY WORDS:**

- Pteranodon
- Anatosaurus
- Triceratops

- Discuss the silent /p/ sound of the word Pteranodon.

- Spell the words in chunks.

#### ACTIVITIES FOR THE PRE-SYMBOLIC LEARNER

- Using clay, make a dinosaur to add to the setting.

- Using the lid and the sand, trace the name of the dinosaur in the sand.

- Hide plastic toy dinosaurs in the clay, and then bury them in the sand. Have the students dig out the dinosaurs. This is a great occupational therapy activity.

- Practice saying the word “Pteranodon” in syllables.

  Put out 4 index cards (or sand paper) and have them touch each card as they say each syllable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 7-9</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COMPREHENSION</strong></td>
<td><strong>WH QUESTIONS/VOCAB</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVIEW AND READ</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Write dinosaur names on the whiteboard in column A:</td>
<td>• What other dinosaur does Jack and Annie meet?</td>
<td>• Using clay, make another dinosaur and some eggs to add to the setting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| *Triceratops*  
*Pteranodon*  
*Anatosaurus* | • Who is writing down the facts (Jack) | • Using construction paper, tear up paper to make a tree and grass. |
| • Ask the students to match the following words with the correct dinosaur to column B: | • Who is a friend to the dinosaur? (Annie) | • Draw a dinosaur |
| *fuzzy skin*  
*fly*  
*friendly*  
*protective*  
*three-horned*  
*wings*  
*four-legged* | • How is this dinosaur different from the pteranodon? | • Draw a picture of night and day |
| | • What do they eat and drink? | • Present two faces of Jack and Annie without mouths on the whiteboard. |
| | • When do they live? | • Draw in their emotions when the dinosaur chased them. *(List happy, afraid, silly)* |
| | **VOCABULARY WORDS:**  
*protective, Triceratops, herbivore, carnivore* | |
Chapter 10

COMPREHENSION

- Remove the Magic Tree House prop from the box cover. Allow the students to trace the ladder as Jack and Annie head back home.

- Check the prediction jar.

- Chart the answers.

Chapter 10

WH QUESTIONS/VOCAB

- When did Jack and Annie leave? (before dark)

- When did they return? (also, before dark).

- Introduce the concept of “no elapsed time”.

- Review times of when it gets dark. Set the clock.

- Use a marker to draw Jack and Annie’s face when they were back in the tree house. (Help students draw conclusion that they were surprised that no time elapsed.)

- Where is Frog Creek Woods? Locate Pennsylvania on the map.

Chapter 10

ACTIVITIES FOR THE PRE-SYMBOLIC LEARNER

- Assist students in the packing of the backpack and materials.

- Place the backpack in the box.

- Pack up the sand, rocks, twigs and trees and place it in the box.

- Sing The Adventure Song, while putting the Magic Tree House prop back on top of the lid and closing the lid of the box.

The book is finished.
The Adventure Song

I am going on an adventure, (student repeat).
I am in my tree house; I am in my tree house.
I have my backpack, (student repeat)
I have my journal, (student repeat)
I have my pencil, (student repeat)
I have my book, (student repeat)
I have my sister, (student repeat)
Her name is Annie, (student repeat)
I am going down the ladder, (student repeat)
It is very hot and very quiet.
No one is here, (student repeat)
No buildings, (student repeat)
Uh oh I think I see an animal, a very big animal. (student repeat)
Wait for me Annie, (student repeat)
Where are we... (trail off) (student repeat)

(Patting hands on legs as if marching on a bear hunt.)

Place emphasis on this line...

These lines should change with each new book. Use descriptive words to provide clues for each new book.

(patting hands faster and faster) patting hands faster and faster patting hands faster and faster
Magic Tree House Prop

This tree house was made by one of my students and it is the perfect prop for our lessons. After making the tree house out of construction paper, he found a tree house picture in a magazine to paste onto the tree. He zig-zagged yarn up the trunk to make the ladder. Once I laminated the tree, the yarn gave a perfect texture for the students to walk their fingers up and down the tree. We use it to begin and end every Magic Tree House adventure!