



GL3 LITERATURE STUDY GUIDES

TEACHER TEXT

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GL3 Literature Teacher Study Guide

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Front Cover

Title: The Nicolaus Copernicus Monument in Torun, the home town of astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)

Location: Torun, Poland

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Teacher Instructions

NOTE TO THE INSTRUCTOR

This study guide offers teachers materials to help students understand the plot, vocabulary, and themes of the text. The introductory portions of this guide should be read first, in order to establish a strong vision for the guide's objectives. Additionally, the teacher should be certain to read the introductory documents, Breakdown of Language Arts two-hour time allotment, Quotable Quotes on Books and Reading, Introduction to Classical Methods of Teaching Language Arts, and Classical Methods of Teaching Literature, before beginning to plan for teaching this literary selection. They are a resource for specifically classical methods of teaching literature as well as inspiration for receiving the most profit and pleasure in any book.

BREAKDOWN OF GL3 LANGUAGE ARTS TWO-HOUR TIME ALLOTMENT

Literature: 30-35 minutes

Literature lessons are built around curriculum guides for grade-specific reading lists.

Before discussing questions with students, the wise teacher will plan to employ some of the tools of learning listed in these introductory documents. See *Introduction to Classical Methods of Teaching Language Arts*.

Penmanship: 10 minutes

This involves formal penmanship instruction from the *Handwriting Teacher Text* as well as informal application through Quotable Quote and Daily Dictation entries, should they be used in GL3. Do not overlook the importance of good penmanship. Training the hand trains the mind to think through a process. Penmanship enhances the logical progression of thought in motor skills and thus strengthens the brain.

Spelling Lessons and Vocabulary Exercises: 10-15 minutes

The teacher should alternate weeks between vocabulary lists for the paragraph exercise and spelling lessons from the GL3 Spelling Lessons and Lists. This does not include words from the Vocabulary section of each lesson in the *GL3 Language Arts Teacher Text*. Those words should be handled according to directions within the lessons.

Grammar and Classical Writing: 30-35 minutes

This covers the full content of the *GL3 Language Arts Teacher Text*. Detailed daily lessons for grammar and writing emphasis are provided for four days of each week, allowing for one day devoted to the national English text.

Formal Assessments:

Plan to keep record of one formal assessment weekly in each of the components of language

arts. At the end of each week you should have at least one grade for literature, penmanship, spelling or vocabulary, grammar, and composition.

QUOTABLE QUOTES ON BOOKS AND READING

“For great books there must be great readers.” Victor Hugo /HYOO goh/ (1802-1885)

According to Mortimer Adler, author and professor (1902-2001), a great book is one that is relevant to any time and place; it deals with human nature. One can always learn more from it, therefore it invites being reread. It deals with the great ideas: the good, the true, and the beautiful. But a book without a reader cannot convey those great ideas. And the reader must herself be in constant pursuit of the true, the good, and the beautiful. God directs us, through the words of the Apostle Paul, to this same pursuit: *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me - practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you”* (Philippians 4:8-9).

“No book can be so good, as to be profitable when negligently read.” Lucius Annaeus Seneca /SEHN uh Kuh/ (4 BC – AD 65)

Before presenting this quote, and if possible, bring in a small cake, cupcakes, plate of sweet fruit, or other favorite treat of your students. Set it before them and ask students to tell you how delicious this dessert is. Some will mention memories of eating this or similar desserts. Bring them back to this particular treat. Ask again, how good is it? You want them to tell you that they cannot know unless they taste it. Then ask if they would be content with one bite. Some may be particularly shy and say that would be enough; certainly a few students will say that they want more. That is the idea you are attempting to draw out. To get the full enjoyment of this dessert, it is nice to have many bites, to eat them slowly and relish [appreciate and think about] the flavors and many delightful aromas and textures found in this. Now, place a good book next to the treat. Ask for students to compare and contrast [tool of learning] between getting the most out of the dessert and getting the most out of the book. That is the truth of this quote. No matter how good a book may be, we will not know its full treasures if we read it briefly and just to get it done. When we come intentionally and purposefully to a book, if it is a good book, we will profit much.

“That is a good book which is opened with expectation and closed with profit.” Amos B. Alcott

When a reader brings curiosity and enthusiasm to the reading of a book, he is well-prepared to learn from it. When he finishes the book, it will have profited [benefited] him.

“Books should to one of these four ends conduce (lead): For wisdom, piety, delight, or use.” Sir John Denham

The benefits that should be expected to come from any book considered worth reading are wisdom, devotion to God, entertainment or pleasure, and practical value or advantage for living life well.

“Good books are true friends.” Francis Bacon (1561-1626) lawyer, statesman, philosopher and master of the English language

Friends are those people who make us feel at home when with them, encourage us to do well, share new adventures with us, remain faithful whether we are together or not. True friends bring goodness, truth, and beauty into our lives; and they inspire us to do the same

for others. Good books do the same thing for us as we get to know the characters, watch them deal with conflict, develop relationships, and persevere. A book is a good (quality) book if it does those things for us. If it does not, we might consider reading something else.

All quotes taken from Kerber, August. *Quotable Quotes on Education*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1968.

INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL METHODS OF TEACHING LANGUAGE ARTS

While effective and efficient classical teaching of language arts in grades 1-6 draws most heavily from methods suited to the grammar stage of learning, it cannot be completely removed from aspects of logic and rhetoric. Remember that the students you teach have been created in the image of God who is complex; therefore, your students are complex learners. But the stages of the trivium can direct the teacher to those most useful, comfortable, and profitable ways to make the teaching-learning process delightful and successful for each age group. Therefore, these suggestions say, "Yes!" to the grammar stage of learning, but not without some intentional incorporation of strategies from the logic and rhetoric stages.

Additionally, these general *tools of learning* [various and different ways to teach and learn a concept] that enable this process should be intentionally used throughout the trivium and quadrivium: *definition, memory, penmanship, phonetic decoding, reading comprehension, computation, critical thinking, analysis, problem solving, research, synthesis, effective writing, public speaking, and sound moral judgment*. Note, however, that this list is not exhaustive.

One final perspective that is crucial to the heart of the classical educator—Remember that classical education is not the downloading of volumes of information into the mind as much as an uploading of a passion for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. This is so that in every subject and at every level, you are drawing your students in to the Great Conversation, constantly integrating the skills and concepts you are teaching into the pursuit of the good, the true, and the beautiful. You are equipping your students to be good men and women, well-spoken, who facilitate the transformation of individuals and thereby the transformation of societies. As stated by Robert Littlejohn and Charles T. Evans, "We want to prepare our graduates not only to make a living, but also to make a profound difference in the world into which they emerge" (*Wisdom and Eloquence: A Christian Paradigm for Classical Learning*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois. 2006. p. 13). As the book title implies, the goal of a distinctly classical education is wisdom delivered with eloquence at every stage of life.

CLASSICAL METHODS OF TEACHING LITERATURE

- Radio Drama – "tell" a story through drama, dialogue, sound effects, and music but without any visual effects. Students participating in the "drama" stand behind a screen or at the back of the audience. Audience must engage without seeing the participants.
- Re-enactments – students write the narration and dialogue for short sketches to tell the story – very basic props may be used
- Memorization and recitation of favorite passages
- Favorite character day – students dress up as a favorite character from a recently studied literary selection.
- Cumulative Event Days – for example, after reading *A Wrinkle in Time*, have a Mrs. Ws contest. Students dress up as their favorite among the three Mrs. Ws and compete

for most likely, most humorous, most accurate awards.

- Read aloud times – if possible, gather students closely around teacher in casual, comfortable setting.
- Drop Everything and Read – DEAR time can be a reward for a season of diligent work and attention to studies, a planned quarterly activity, or a time-filler for efficient students who need re-directing. It is what the name states: stop all other activities, take up your book, and enter into the adventure of reading.
- Using sensory experiences to take students into story – try to recreate the sounds, smells, feelings that are set in the mood of a story or portion of a story.
- Antiphonal readings – Divide the class into two groups. Each group will take turns reading through a portion of a passage “as one voice”, i.e., altogether so as to sound like only one voice. If it is a Bible passage, one group begins with verse 1, the other group reads verse 2, and so on. This is particularly effective for poems, hymns, and Scripture readings as it creates a sense of reverence and intensity.
- Socratic questioning – systematic, ever-deepening questions to get at truth; often answers questions by asking another question to lead students to the answer.
- When asking questions about the content or meaning of what is being read, challenge students to answer in complete sentences which support or prove their answers.

A Chair for My Mother

by Eleanor Estes

This study guide is designed to help students understand the language, details, and themes of *A Chair for My Mother* and to aid the teacher in presenting these elements effectively. It is important, however, not to rely solely on the activities of this guide for teaching, but to prepare diligently in order to develop a class dialogue.

Meet the Author

Vera Williams was born in California in the USA on 28 January 1927, but grew up on the opposite side of the country in New York. Her father was frequently absent during her childhood, which might in part explain the absence of a father figure in this text. Her mother encouraged her to explore the arts, and at an early age, she developed a proclivity [natural tendency] for painting and design. After graduating from the Music and Art High School of New York City, she continued her education at Black Mountain College where she studied art. She began a career as a teacher and started a family with a man named Paul Williams. She oftentimes wrote imaginary stories for her three daughters, but her relationship with her husband did not maintain the same endurance. They divorced in 1970, and, soon after, she began her career as a professional writer and illustrator. She has published numerous books that have received several awards, including *A Chair for My Mother*, the crowning member of her Rosa trilogy, a series of children's stories about a Hispanic girl named Rosa. Currently she lives in New York where she continues to write and spend time with her children and grandchildren.

INTRODUCTION

A Chair for My Mother is a charming book that, in addition to reinforcing the language skills students are expected to master at this grade level, also presents an important message about generosity. The title alludes to the loving relationship between a mother and daughter, but the spirit of kindness extends beyond the family into the community. Hopefully this attitude of generosity toward human flourishing will take root in the classroom as well.

The language and syntax of *A Chair for My Mother* are not complicated, so this study guide should be used as a tool to help students master their language skills. At this stage, students should be able to learn new vocabulary and then apply this knowledge when reading independently. Students should also be capable of recognizing the events that are most central to the plot line and the details that enrich the body of the story. The exercises of this guide are shaped to reinforce these skills, but it is the teacher's responsibility to make sure they are practiced well.

The guide also requires students to make connections within, as well as outside of, the text. Some questions require students to recall details from different places in the writing and to compare the story content with the illustrations; some require students to consider the story through a biblical lens and through their own perspective. Make sure that these connections are made logically.

The time frame to teach this text allows ample time to review students' work through open class discussion and one-on-one interaction during work periods. Remember to emphasize accuracy as well as completion. As a practical approach, institute a system of evaluation that encourages diligence and discourages laziness. At the end of each part, space has been provided to consider the disciplines each student has completed successfully and the disciplines each student needs work on. After diagnosing the areas in which the student is having difficulty, revisit them before moving on. Students are likely to fail the second time if nothing has changed since they failed the first time. Make it your personal goal to see that by

the end of the guide the entire class is able to successfully complete each section.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Understanding Vocabulary**—Students will understand unfamiliar words from clues in the context of the writing and should be able to substitute these unfamiliar words with already familiar terms.
- **Remembering Details**—Students will discern the most important details of the story and catalogue these in their memories to support further reading.
- **Appreciating Language**—Students will recognize the importance of descriptive language as a tool for making descriptions more specific and more interesting.
- **Thinking Ahead**—Students will predict the direction of the text based upon their understanding of the most important details of the story.
- **Examining Characters**—Students will understand that characters have unique actions and thoughts.
- **Thinking Biblically**—Students will appreciate the relationship between the themes of the text and the true message of Scripture.
- **Applying Themes**—Students will process the reading in a way that is applicable to themselves and the world they live in.
- **Making Connections**—Students will perceive the relationships between various events in the story and how these events unify into the primary message of the book.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE OF LITERATURE GUIDE

The following pages of this literature guide contain questions and activities that address vocabulary and comprehension skills for each chapter of the book. Teachers may use these activities in various ways:

Students first read a section of the book independently and then complete the questions and activities. Teachers should check for student understanding before proceeding to the next section.

Teacher reads part of the chapter aloud; then students finish reading the chapter independently and complete the questions and activities.

Teachers may pre-teach vocabulary words before students are assigned a chapter to read.

Teachers may emphasize a specific comprehension skill as each section is read. It is recommended that teachers teach skills that are covered in “GL3–6 Reading Strategies Handbook. See the Headmaster for this resource.

This book does not have page numbers. Teachers may wish to lightly pencil in numbers in the book they use; you may also wish for students to lightly write numbers in the upper corners of pages. Begin with page 1 on the title page so that the text of the story begins on page 5.

For purposes of this study guide, it is divided into three parts. Part 1 begins at the beginning and continues through page 11 (the page that starts “My mother works as a....”). Part 2 begins with the following page (“My mother and I were coming home....”) and continues through page 19.

Part 3 begins on the following page (“That was last year....”) and continues to the end

of the book.

An answer key is provided at the end of this study guide. Students' answers do not have to be exactly like the answer in the answer key, but key elements need to be present for a correct answer.

To calculate the percentage score, divide the total possible points, 130, into the number of points a student earns. For example, if a student has 125 correct answers out of a possible 130, you divide 125 by 130. The percentage score is $96/100$.

Grade Report

Student: _____

Part 1: _____/40
Each question: 2 points

Part 2: _____/40
Each question: 2 points

Part 3: _____/40
Each question: 2 points

Participation: _____/10

TOTAL: _____/130

Percentage Score: _____/100

Letter Grade: _____

Teacher's Signature _____

Guardian's Signature _____

Part 1, pp. 4-11

Understanding Vocabulary

Directions: Read the sentence from the book and then answer the question about the underlined word.

1. "My mother works as a waitress in the Blue Tile Diner."
The little girl's mother works as
 - a) a cook in a kitchen.
 - b) a server in a restaurant.
 - c) a tax collector in a building.
2. "... I peeled all the onions for the onion soup."
What does the little girl do before she puts the onions in the soup?
 - a) She washes them with soap.
 - b) She covers them with salt and pepper.
 - c) She removes their outer layer.
3. "My mama empties all her change from tips out of her purse for me to count."
The little girl counts her mother's change from
 - a.) the money that she was given by customers.
 - b) the coins that she found in the street.
 - c) any extra food that she was given by the cook.
4. "Some days she has only a little. Then she looks worried."
What word best describes the look on Mama's face when she has only a little money from tips?
 - a) happy.
 - b) anxious.
 - c) angry.
5. "Usually Grandma sits with us too. While we count, she likes to hum."
What does Grandma like to do while the little girl and Mama count?
 - a) talk quickly.
 - b) shout loudly.
 - c) sing quietly.
6. "Whenever she gets a good bargain on tomatoes or bananas or something she buys, she puts by the savings and they go into the jar."
Grandma also puts her savings in the jar whenever she gets
 - a) a good price on her groceries.
 - b) a smile from the shopkeeper.

- c) something at the children's school.
7. "All our chairs burned. So did our sofa and so did everything else."
What is the difference between a sofa and a chair?
- a) A chair is for one person to sit on and a sofa is for one person to eat on.
b) A chair is for one person to sit on and a sofa is for one person to store food in.
c) A chair is for one person to sit on and a sofa is for two or more people to sit on.

Remembering Details

Directions: Use complete sentences as you write your answers to these questions.

8. What jobs does Josephine provide for the girl at the Blue Tile Diner?

9. What does the little girl do with half of the money she earns?

10. Who else puts money into the jar?

11. What does the family plan to do when the jar is filled?

12. Why does the family want to buy a new armchair?

Appreciating Language

In this book, the author uses descriptive language to help the reader understand details about events and objects. For example, instead of simply writing, "I worked for my mother's boss at the Blue Tile Diner," the writer describes her responsibilities: "I wash the salts and peppers and fill the ketchups. One time I peeled all the onions for the onion soup."

Directions: What descriptive details does the writer provide for each event or item listed below? Fill in correct descriptions to complete each sentence.

13. When Mama comes home from work, she sometimes

14. Grandma keeps her money in her

15. The family plans to buy a chair covered in

Thinking Ahead

At the end of this part, the writer introduces two problems. First, the family needs a chair but does not yet have the money to buy one. Second, the family has no chairs because their other house burned down some time ago. As intelligent readers, you may be able to guess or predict what the rest of the story will be about.

Use complete sentences when answering each question.

16. Do you think the family will be able to buy a new chair? Why or why not?

17. If the fire burned everything in the house, how do you think the family was able to find a new place to live and things with which to fill the rooms?

Examining Characters

Each character in the story contributes to the jar in different ways. Review the details about how each character saves money to buy a new chair; then complete each of these sentences by filling in the correct details.

18. The little girl saves money by

19. Mama saves money by

20. Grandma saves money by

TOTAL: _____ / 40

The student performed well in sections: _____

The student needs to improve in sections: _____