

Week 20 at a Glance

Book for the Week: *Make Way for Ducklings*

In Dover's *Aesop's Fables*: "The Astrologer," p. 71

Optional Materials:

More books by Robert McCloskey

Materials for making a "Safety" Poster

Books about mallards

A book about and map of Boston and photos of the places mentioned in
Make Way for Ducklings

Grammar and Mechanics: Commas in a list

Composition: A list of safety rules



Monday

Literature

Read *Make Way for Ducklings* with your child, ask the following questions, and record the responses in the space to the right:

What is the main thing the Mallards have for breakfast their first day in Boston? (Peanuts)	
At first Mrs. Mallard likes the pond but then changes her mind. Why? (Mr. Mallard is almost run over by a bike.)	
Where do they finally settled down? (An island in the Charles River)	
Why does Mrs. Mallard have to stop visiting Michael the policeman? (She lays her eggs and has to sit on them to keep them warm.)	
Why does Mr. Mallard leave for a week? (He wants to see what the rest of the river is like.)	
Name at least three things Mrs. Mallard teaches the ducklings. (Any three of the following: to swim, dive, walk in line, come when they're called, keep a safe distance from things with wheels.)	
Who helps Mrs. Mallard and the ducklings cross the first street? (Michael the policeman)	
After the other policemen help the ducks across the street, what do the ducks do? (They thank the policemen.)	
Where do the ducks move to? (They move to the island in the pond.)	

Grammar and Mechanics

This week's lesson is the first of many comma rules: Using commas in a list. This is one of the easier comma rules, as children understand what a list is and usually have no trouble separating the items with commas.

This rule, however, is not without controversy, as there is disagreement about whether to include the comma before the final conjunction. (For example, some people argue that "Moe, Larry, and Curly" is correct while others argue for "Moe, Larry and Curly.")

I teach the former rule—to include the comma before the conjunction ("Moe, Larry, and Curly"). This is the more common American English rule (per the *Chicago Manual of Style*, among others), and I think is also easier for children to remember. You should be aware of this difference though because if you look for other examples you may see the alternate rule followed (especially in journalism, where the final comma is more often omitted), so you may want to avoid those examples.

I also review the rules for capital letters.

For the workbook page, students are to put commas where they are needed in the list. (We've circled them here for your convenience.)

Answers to Workbook Page

1. Some birds that swim are ducks, geese, swans, and penguins.
2. She put broccoli, peppers, noodles, and shrimp in the stir fry.
3. At the zoo we saw elephants, camels, zebras, and giraffes.

Composition

This week your child will write a list of their safety rules (or at least some of them). The ducklings learn things that help keep them safe where they live, and all children have rules about keeping them safe. Today, brainstorm with your child to choose at least three rules to write about. You could choose the rules you consider most important or rules that are connected in some other way. For example, you might choose Rules of the Kitchen or Rules for Playing Outside or Rules for the Swimming Pool. Also come up with a title for the rules (like those I have above). Your child will be writing these rules in two different ways this week—as a list and as a sentence.

For a gentler introduction, choose only one of these ways. Either is fine. But read through the composition instructions this week ahead of time to choose which way you prefer.

Tuesday

Literature

When discussing the book with your child, use these guidelines to help you:

This is the story of a pair of ducks who find a place to live and raise their family. After the ducklings are born, the mother teaches them what they need to know, and they make their way from the river to the pond with the help of several policemen. The ducks like the pond so much they decide to stay there.

Story

.....
The main characters are Mr. and Mrs. Mallard. Mrs. Mallard is a very concerned mother. She is particular about where to live because she wants to bring up her ducklings in just the right place. She takes the time to teach them well.

Characters

Mr. Mallard works hard to please Mrs. Mallard. He is less involved with the ducklings, but does care about them. He is somewhat adventurous, as he goes to see more of the river.

A third important character is Michael. Michael is very kind to the ducks, giving them peanuts, and he goes out of his way to make sure they get safely to the pond.

.....
This is set during a few weeks in Boston.

Setting

.....
Some specific places in Boston are mentioned. There are a few other characters, including all the ducklings, but we don't really learn anything about any of them.

External Details

.....
The Mallards are frightened by the boy on the bike. Mrs. Mallard is proud when the people comment on her ducklings.

Internal Details

There's no strong conflict here. Mrs. Mallard does try to cross the street on her own and is unable to until Michael comes and helps.

Conflict

Grammar and Mechanics

Students are to put in commas where they belong (We've circled them here for your convenience.) and underline any words that should start with a capital letter.

Number 3 is more of a challenge than the previous exercises as the items each have more than one word. If your child struggles with this, do this exercise together.

Answers to Workbook Page

1. This year I have read about people named Harold, Peter, Momo, Joseph, and Alexander.
2. Ducklings are born in March, April, or May.
3. In this book the ducks see Beacon Hill, the Charles River, and Louisberg Square.

Composition

Today your child will write the safety rules as a list. Sometimes a list of safety rules (like you might see at a swimming pool) is written as a list of imperatives (you don't need to introduce that word yet).

For example:

Rules of the Pool

- Do not run near the pool.
- Do not dive into the shallow end.
- Do not play around the diving board.

Another method often used is simply a series of No's: No running near the pool
No diving into the shallow end
No playing around the diving board

Use whatever method appeals most to your child.

Reading Journal

Turn to the appropriate pages in the Student Workbook. Have your child write or dictate one sentence summarizing the story, then a second sentence expressing their response to the book. Finally, have your child choose one sentence from the book to copy, at least in part, for handwriting practice.

Wednesday

Literature

Read the book with your child, ask the following questions, and record the responses in the space to the right:

<p>Who is pickier about where to live, Mr. Mallard or Mrs. Mallard? (Mrs. Mallard)</p>	
<p>Why doesn't the big bird answer Mr. Mallard when he said hello to it? (It isn't real.)</p>	
<p>Why do the Mallards visit Michael the policeman every day? (He feeds them peanuts.)</p>	
<p>How do the Mallards feel when their ducklings are born? (They are proud.)</p>	
<p>Is Mrs. Mallard a good mother? Why do you think so? (Yes she is. Answers to the second will vary, but the book shows us that she teaches them everything they need to know.)</p>	
<p>Does Mrs. Mallard understand how to cross a street? (no)</p>	
<p>How do the ducklings make the policemen and other people feel? Why do you think they feel that way? (The people feel happy and amazed when they see the ducklings. The people live in a big city and seeing the ducklings is unexpected and ducklings are cute. Also, the policemen are probably happy to help.)</p>	
<p>Why do the Mallards move to the pond at the end of the book when they decided at first that they couldn't live there? What has changed? (They can move there now because the ducklings are older and have learned how to be safe.)</p>	

Grammar and Mechanics

Today, have your child choose five to ten words to put in their dictionary pages. They can be words from their reading, from daily life, etc. For extra challenge, aim for ten words and require that one or more be from their reading, preferably words they weren't familiar with before the book.

Have your child complete the Sentence Puzzle. The underscored words are those missing in each sentence in the puzzle.

Sentence Puzzle

1. Mr. and Mrs. Mallard were looking for a place to live.
2. There was a nice pond in the Public Garden, with a little island on it.
3. When they got to Boston, they felt too tired to fly any further.

Composition

Today your child will write the same list of rules as a sentence. This sentence will have a comma between each rule.

This exercise has the following benefits: It helps reinforce the comma-in-a-series rule, it helps show the child that items in a list can be several words (not just one), and it introduces the idea that you can write the same thing more than one way (this is a concept I will be reinforcing and developing throughout this series).

My pool safety rules are no running near the pool, no diving into the shallow end, and no playing around the diving board.

Thursday

Literature

Read the Aesop's fable, "The Astrologer," p. 71. As usual, either you or your child can read it, or you can share the reading (each taking part of the story). Discuss the moral with your child, ideally coming up with a way they can apply it to their own life.

Grammar and Mechanics

Today your child writes one sentence using a list with commas. Be sure the sentence has a list of at least three things and that commas appear between each of them (including before the conjunction). The student should also follow all grammar rules learned so far. If your child is not writing yet, they can dictate the sentence to you, telling you where the commas should be.

Composition

Today your child completes their final draft. Review both versions of the safety list with your child:

1. Do both contain the same information?
2. Are capital letters and final punctuation correct?
3. Are commas in a list correct?

Write the final of both in the composition book.

Friday

Today is a free day to use however you choose. Finish any unfinished work from the week, review, reread the book and/or fable, explore some of the ideas below, or simply take a day off language arts.

Extending the Lesson

Read more books by Robert McCloskey.

If the safety list is something that applies to home, your child might want to make a poster of it for that area (this can be done in place of putting the list version in the composition book).

Do some research on mallards to find out more about these birds.

Research Boston. Find it on a map, look for photos of the places mentioned in the book, read about the many historic places there.

Go to googlelittrips.com. Check on the K-5 tab and scroll down. There you can find a free downloadable file that will take you and your child on the same journey through Boston that the ducks took. With photos (both current and historic), notes, questions to promote thinking, etc., in each Lit Trip, this is a site well worth bookmarking and revisiting.

Week 21 at a Glance

Book for the Week: *Stellaluna*

In Dover's *Aesop's Fables*: "The Fox and the Grapes," p. 20

Optional Materials:

More books by Janell Cannon

Books about bats

A mango

Alphabet Page: Flying things

Grammar and Mechanics:

Question marks

Review of all ending punctuation

Composition: An imaginative piece about what you would do if you could fly



Monday

Literature

Read *Stellaluna* with your child, ask the following questions, and record the responses in the space to the right:

What kind of bat is Stellaluna? (a fruit bat)	
At the beginning of this story, can Stellaluna fly? Why not? (No, she is too young to fly.)	
How does Stellaluna feel after she is knocked away from her mother? (She is afraid.)	
After she is with the birds, what one thing about being a bat does Stellaluna keep doing? (She still sleeps hanging by her feet.)	
Why does Mama Bird make her stop doing this? (because the baby birds are imitating Stellaluna, and that is dangerous for them)	
Stellaluna eats and sleeps differently from the birds, but what is one thing they do that she can do too? (fly)	
Why does Stellaluna hang from the branch by her thumbs to sleep? (She promised she wouldn't hang by her feet.)	
When her mother finds her again, what does she teach Stellaluna? (how to fly at night and how to find fruit)	
Why can't Stellaluna's bird friends fly at night with her? (They can't see at night.)	

Grammar and Mechanics

This week I introduce question marks and review all ending punctuation. This book has all three (question mark, period, exclamation point), so if your child is struggling with this concept, go through the book looking for examples together.

For the workbook page, the student is to put in questions marks and periods as needed at the end of each sentence.

Answers to Workbook Page

1. Who wrote this book?
2. Janell Cannon wrote this book.
3. Has she written other books?
4. Yes, she has written five other books.
5. Have you read her book about Verdi the snake?
6. Do you like her other books?

Composition

This week your child will write a fanciful piece answering the question, “What would you do if you could fly?” Today, they should come up with at least two things they would do if they could fly. These can be unrelated things (I would fly to Arizona; I would do lots of spins and loops and other tricks) or they can be related (I would fly to Arizona then I would fly into the Grand Canyon).

For more challenge, require your student to provide more than two ideas.

Tuesday

Literature

When discussing the book with your child, use these guidelines to help you:

This is the story of a young bat named Stellaluna who is separated from her mother and ends up with a family of birds. She tries to be like the birds, though she doesn't do too well at it. Finally she is reunited with her mother, but she and the birds stay friends, understanding that they're very alike in some ways but very different in others, and that's fine.

.....

The main character is Stellaluna. She is a young bat who still needs to be cared for. She is adaptable, learning how to act like a bird as best as she can, even though it goes against her nature. She is obedient to the mama bird, even when the

Story

Character

mama bird isn't around to see her. She is a good friend with the baby birds, keeping the friendship even after she is reunited with her bat family.

.....

This takes place in a forest, and part of it takes place in the birds' nest. It's unclear how much time passes, but at least several days and not more than a few weeks.

.....

There are several minor characters: Stellaluna's mother, the mama bird, and the baby birds (Flap, Flitter, and Pip). Because this is from Stellaluna's perspective, we learn only the names of the young birds, not the adult animals. Stellaluna's mother is loving and caring. The birds' mother also cares for her babies. She is firm with Stellaluna but generous in letting her stay in the nest and providing for her. The baby birds are curious and adventurous. They are also good friends to Stellaluna, accepting her as their family.

.....

Stellaluna is naturally afraid when she is separated from her mother. She is also afraid at first when she falls into the birds' nest, but she overcomes her fears. She feels embarrassed when she thinks she is not as graceful as the birds.

.....

The conflict is unusual in this story. Stellaluna is trying to be something she is not. The birds' ways are not bad—but they are not right for a bat. This conflict is within Stellaluna more than between Stellaluna and anyone else. This conflict is resolved when Stellaluna is reunited with her bat family and can now act like a bat.

Setting

External Details

Internal Details

Conflict

Grammar and Mechanics

Today I review all three ending punctuation marks. If your student is struggling with end punctuation, review the rules for exclamation points. If this isn't enough, find these sentences in the book together, and discuss why they each end with the punctuation marks they do.

For the workbook page, the student is to put the correct punctuation at the end of each sentence (all of which come from *Stellaluna*).

Answers to Workbook Page

1. Mother, where are you?
2. What was that?
3. You're going to fall and break your necks!
4. Her bat ways were quickly disappearing.
5. Get back up here this instant!
6. Stellaluna behaved as a good bird should.
7. Why are you hanging upside down?
8. I must rescue them!
9. How can we be so different and feel so much alike?
10. How can we feel so different and be so much alike?

Composition

For the composition, think of something extra to say about each thing your child would do if they could fly. For example, they might explain why. (I would do rolls and loops and other tricks because it would be so fun!) Or they might add some details. (I would fly into the Grand Canyon and skim along the Colorado River and scare a bunch of campers.) They could add internal detail instead. (I would do rolls and loops and other tricks even though they would probably scare me and make me feel a little sick.) Or they could add a simile (though you don't need to introduce that term yet). (I would do rolls and loops and other tricks like a Blue Angel.) The point is simply to take the basic ideas they came up with yesterday and give each one a little more depth and/or color.

If your child struggles with writing, you can require that they add details to only one of their ideas.

Reading Journal

Turn to the appropriate pages in the Student Workbook. Have your child write or dictate one sentence summarizing the story, then a second sentence expressing their response to the book. Finally, have your child choose one sentence from the book to copy, at least in part, for handwriting practice.

Wednesday

Literature

Read the book with your child, ask the following questions, and record the responses in the space to the right:

<p>Why does the owl attack Stellaluna's mother? (Most likely the owl wants to eat her.)</p>	
<p>Why does Stellaluna climb out of the bird's nest and hang below it? (She is afraid of the birds.)</p>	
<p>Why does Stellaluna finally go back into the nest? (She is hungry.)</p>	
<p>Do you think it's good or bad that Stellaluna acts like a bird while she is living with the birds? Why? (Answers will vary. Some children might say it is good because she is following the rules of the nest. Others might say it is bad because she is a bat so she should act like a bat. There is no right answer—it is just a question for discussion.)</p>	
<p>Why does Stellaluna fly so far ahead of the birds and get separated from them? (She can't land gracefully on a branch like they can, so she doesn't want them to see her land.)</p>	
<p>How do you think Flitter, Flap, and Pip feel when they spend time with Stellaluna's bat family? (They probably feel somewhat out of place and awkward, just like Stellaluna felt with the birds.)</p>	
<p>In what ways are Stellaluna and the birds alike? (They can all fly. They live in the trees. They were raised—for awhile—by the same mother. Students may have more subtle answers too, like they are all kind and friendly.)</p>	
<p>In what ways are Stellaluna and the birds different? (Stellaluna eats fruit and the birds eat bugs. Stellaluna sleeps hanging by her feet in the daytime while the birds sleep in their nest during the night. Stellaluna flies at night and the birds fly in the daytime. The birds can land gracefully on a branch while Stellaluna cannot—at least not right-side-up.)</p>	
<p>What do you think will happen with Stellaluna and her bird friends after this?</p>	

Grammar and Mechanics

Today, have your child choose five to ten words to put in their dictionary pages. They can be words from their reading, from daily life, etc. For extra challenge, aim for ten words and require that one or more be from their reading, preferably words they weren't familiar with before the book.

Turn to the Alphabet Page. This week you will do an alphabet of flying things. These can be animals (don't forget insects) or man-made objects. Work with your child to come up with your own first, without any help. Once you've filled in what letters you can, feel free to go online (together), etc. Some will be unfamiliar to your child, but one purpose of these exercises is to expand vocabulary. Whether you use any from your previous list of birds is up to you, but try to make it something other than just birds. Here is a list if you get stuck on any letters:

Airplane	Nightingale
Butterfly	Oriel
Canary	Partridge
Dragonfly	Queen bee
Egret	Raven
Fruit bat	Seaplane
Gnat	Tsetse fly
Helicopter	Ultralight
Ibis	Vampire bat
Jet	Wasp
Kingfisher	Xenops
Lady bug	Yellow jacket
Mosquito	Zebra finch

Composition

Your child will write the rough draft of their paper. Do not do this in the composition book but instead on scratch paper or on a computer. Think together how to best phrase each sentence. Be sure your child says them aloud and you are both happy with them before writing any down (but don't do too much correction—you want these to be your child's sentences, not yours). Strive for clarity, and worry less about perfect sentence structure or word choice. Those will come later. If your child is writing the sentences, rather than dictating them to you, don't worry about correcting any spelling mistakes they make.

Thursday

Literature

Read the Aesop's fable, "The Fox and the Grapes," p. 20. As usual, either you or your child can read it, or you can share the reading (each taking part of the story). Discuss the moral with your child, ideally coming up with a way they can apply it to their own life.

Grammar and Mechanics

Today your child writes one sentence that ends in a question mark. Make sure the sentence is a question. Also check for correct capital letters (for rules learned this year).

Composition

Today your child completes their final draft. (If there is still a lot to do and it would be too stressful to complete the composition today, they can use tomorrow for this as well.)

Review the rough draft together:

1. Is it clear what your child would do if they could fly?
2. Is there extra detail about at least one of ideas?
3. Check all grammar and mechanics learned so far.

The final draft of the paper should be in the composition book.

Friday

Today is a free day to use however you choose. Finish any unfinished work from the week, review, reread the book and/or fable, explore some of the ideas below, or simply take a day off language arts.

Extending the Lesson

Read more books by Janell Cannon.

Read more about bats to learn about these interesting animals. Stellaluna is a fruit bat, but there are other types as well.

Tell a story about an adventure Stellaluna goes on with Flap, Flitter, and Pip after the end of this story. (Either your child can make it up on their own or you can do it together. One fun way to do this is to take turns adding a sentence to the story.)

Enjoy a mango together just like Stellaluna does with her mother.