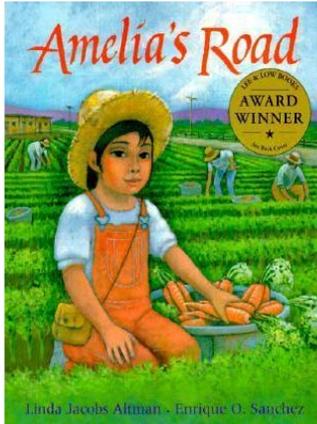


FAMILY LITERACY GUIDE

Amelia's Road / El camino de Amelia



Learning

Objectives

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

These guides are adapted from a copyrighted production of:
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Leicester, NY 14481

ABOUT THE BOOK

Amelia's Road / El camino de Amelia

By Linda Jacobs Altman, Author and Enrique O. Sanchez, Illustrator

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.

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

Auditory Comprehension

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

Expressive Communication

1. Uses words for a variety of pragmatic functions
2. Answers what and where questions

BEFORE THE VISIT

1. Gather needed materials:

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

2. Prepare lesson props:

- Cut the brown paper bags into 12 X 12-inch squares

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

Over, Under and Around on the Brown Bag Road

- 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.
- 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/School Age Levels

Talk It Through

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?"

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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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?

Auditory

Comprehension

1. Identified categories of objects in pictures
2. Identifies an object that does not belong

Expressive

Communication

1. Names categories
2. Names the items that fit into categories

Before the Visit

1. Gather needed materials:
 - Photograph of the family
 - small box
 - garden trowel
2. Prepare lesson props:
 - On the visit before the lesson, take a photo of the family and have it printed.

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. 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.

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 office. When you complete the directions ask, "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.

- Think of a place to "send" the child. It can be in the house, around the farm or neighborhood, or some distance away.
- 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.

- Read the directions to the child, but don't tell the destination.
- 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

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.

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.*