



Lesson Plan Summary

Magic Tree House #26: Good Morning Gorillas

“Actions Speak Louder Than Words.”

THIS EXTENSION WILL ENABLE EACH CHILD TO:

- Learn facts beyond the text about different forms of non-verbal communication.
- Learn a song using American Sign Language and perform with classmates for an audience.
- Use supplemental resources to learn about scientific studies being conducted with gorillas using sign language to communicate with humans.
- Learn to use simple signs to respond to teachers and fellow classmates.
- Participate in a timed Magic Tree House activity with classmates that only allow students to use non-verbal cues.
- Demonstrate comprehension by actively participating in a Magic Tree House game.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Reading:

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Foundational Skills

Speaking and Listening:

- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Language Arts:

- Knowledge of Language

Math:

- Measurement and Data

(Estimation of intervals of time)

26-1S112

Paula Henson, 2007 Magic Tree House Teacher of the Year Knoxville, Tennessee

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Lesson Plan

Magic Tree House #26: Good Morning Gorillas

“Actions Speak Louder Than Words”

(Lessons in Non-Verbal Communication)

***“To find a special kind of magic,
in worlds so far apart,
speak a special kind of language,
talk with your hands and heart.”***

Thank you,

Morgan

At the beginning of the book *Good Morning Gorillas*, Jack and Annie found this puzzling message on a piece of paper sticking out of a book in the tree house entitled *An African Rainforest*. Shortly after, the tree house lands in the volcanic mountains of Virunga in east-central Africa where Jack and Annie meet a family of gorillas. The pair learned exactly what this “special kind of language” was – **sign language!** Their new gorilla friends were able to learn the sign for “I love you” and demonstrated high levels of intelligence as well as the ability to socialize with family members and humans!

This lesson consists of various forms of non-verbal activities including the use of sign language used by the gorillas to communicate with Jack and Annie. The activities will focus on encouraging students to find multiple forms of communication and appropriate ways to express themselves without using spoken language. Many children do not have the ability to send and receive non-verbal cues in a socially acceptable manner, which makes it difficult for them to “fit in” and respond appropriately to their peers. This inability to “read” body language and social cues can sometimes result in a child being the target of bullying and rejection by their peer group. Consistently engaging your class in entertaining non-verbal activities can help to ensure unity and cohesiveness among your students. These types of activities are especially beneficial for students in your classroom who might have special needs such as Autism or Asperger’s syndrome. These children often have significant difficulties with social interaction. The lesson will conclude with an entertaining way to communicate non-verbally with a touch of Magic Tree House fun

26-1LP112

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Activity 1:

As Mary Pope Osborne points out in the “More Facts for Jack and Annie and YOU!” section in the back of the book, gorillas are very intelligent but will never be able to talk like people because they do not have the vocal cords necessary to produce the range of sound needed. However, gorillas have been taught sign language and are able to communicate quite well with humans as demonstrated by a famous gorilla named Koko who is part of a gorilla language project in California. She can make over 1,000 signs and understands about 2,000. After reading *Good Morning Gorillas*, your students will be eager to learn more about these amazing animals and the method by which they are trained to communicate with signs. Visit the Gorilla Foundation’s website with your class to see Koko using the sign language she has learned.

<http://www.koko.org/world/signlanguage.part2.html>

Students will also enjoy the book *Koko’s Kitten* written by her trainer, Dr. Penny Patterson, about Koko’s tender friendship with a kitten. Readers will discover a special bond between a “gentle giant” and a small tabby kitten. Koko uses her sign language to express emotions much like humans do in this moving true story.

Activity 2:

Sign language was of course designed for the deaf and hard of hearing but many of the hearing public have benefitted from its use as well. Parents and teachers of hearing children are discovering that sign language is beneficial for children in a wide variety of situations. Children also LOVE to sign! Songs that incorporate the use of sign language are always favorites in the classroom. Teach the following version of “The Star-Spangled Banner” using ASL (American Sign Language) to your class and allow them to perform at a school function such as a Veteran’s Day celebration or an assembly:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFPpJzLCs98>

Activity 3:

Classroom teachers are discovering that not only is signing fun for their students, it is also proving to be an effective classroom management technique! Much research exists to support the use of sign language in the classroom for all students. Teachers using it effectively found that behavior management became easier, class participation increased and students were more actively engaged with fewer interruptions.

Allow your class to learn a few basic signs to avoid inefficient use of time responding to students who raise their hands with routine questions. This will be fun for the students and will allow you to communicate without interrupting instruction. You will be able to answer questions or send them to the restroom or pencil sharpener with a quick hand signal! Signing with students will also allow you to multi-task when you are working with small groups of students but must attend to the needs of others in the class. You can use American Sign Language or create your own signs. Visit the following website to download a classroom set of sign language posters that are designed to assist teachers with classroom management:

http://www.newmanagement.com/main/sign_language.html

Activity 4:

Non-verbal communication takes on many forms but perhaps one of the most entertaining is the game of Charades. Add to the fun and excitement of this popular game with a touch of Magic!

Magic Tree House Charades

This game works well in the classroom or can be adapted to a transitional or “waiting” activity to help teachers fill the time gaps they encounter on a regular basis as they travel with their class to various activities throughout the course of a day. It is a silent game (non-verbal) and is appropriate to play in most all situations.

Most children will have had some experience with the game of Charades, but explain to your class that now they will give the familiar game a Magic Tree House “twist” and will be able to test their Magic Tree House knowledge!

Materials:

- a stopwatch or other timing device
- a notepad and pencil for scorekeeping - or you may keep score on the blackboard or dry erase board so the class can see their scores
- Magic Tree House Charade Cards (provided)
- card stock or construction paper
- two baskets or other containers for the cards

Procedure:

1. Divide your class into two teams. Make certain that you have avid Magic Tree House readers on both teams.
2. You will play the part of the scorekeeper and will need a timer. After the children become familiar with the game, you may wish to choose a neutral child to be a scorekeeper.
3. Print the Magic Tree House Charade cards (provided) that have instructions for acting out scenes from various Magic Tree House books and divide them evenly into two baskets or other containers. You can use card stock or construction paper for printing. Copy paper may be used but may be too thin and could allow team members to see through the paper and read the answers. If copy paper is used, it would be best to reinforce by attaching to index cards. There should be one card for each player on each team. Most of the scenes to act out require more than one player. This will give children who might be intimidated to roleplay alone the extra confidence they need to participate.

*There is a blank charade card master included as well so that your students can make up their own cards based on other scenes from their favorite Magic Tree House books for future games - and there are hundreds!

4. Have children sit with their teams in an area of the classroom that will provide ample space for “acting out” Magic Tree House scenes.
5. Allow a team leader from each team to roll a die to determine which team will begin play.
6. Decide on a method for order of play (oldest to youngest, number order if your students have numbers, alphabetical order of first or last names, etc...)
7. Place the two baskets of Charade cards at the front of the room and explain the rules to the class:

“Today we will be testing our Magic Tree House knowledge while playing a game of Charades. (Allow children to make connections by sharing any previous experiences with the game.) The most important rule is that players acting out the scenes cannot speak during this game. Players will try to get their teammates to guess the name of a Magic Tree House book by acting out a familiar scene from the book. Hand motions, facial expressions, and body movements will be used to give clues. If your scene requires more than one person to act it out, you may choose a member or members from your team to role play with you, but remember that you will not be allowed to speak with them during play. You may use props from the classroom if you wish and you feel that this would be helpful.

Your teammates may call out their answer as soon as they know the name of the book. They will have two minutes. (You may increase or decrease this time limit as needed.) If your team is unable to guess the name of the book within the 2 minute time limit I will record 2 minutes for your team and call time. You will hear the timer ring when two minutes have passed. If your team guesses the correct name of the book in less than two minutes, I will record the exact time it took to answer. Your team will forfeit their turn if speech is used and will be given the maximum time as a score for the round. The game will continue with the opposing team choosing a Charade card and acting out a scene. Play will continue in this manner until all team members have had a turn. At the end of the game, the team with the least amount of time recorded is the winner.”

Your class will find this game an entertaining way to recall details in the Magic Tree House adventures and will be a useful tool for you in checking for comprehension. Most importantly, they will increase their confidence in their ability to communicate with one another and their skill in making non-verbal connections with others. Sometimes, “actions really do speak louder than words.”!



2 Players

Jack is running with a frightening look on his face from a tyrannosaurus rex. The T-Rex looks fierce and is stomping loudly with his two little arms dangling in front as he chases Jack.

Answer: Dinosaurs Before Dark



3 Players

Captain Bones is pulling on Jack when Annie comes up and (PRETENDS) to kick him! Annie looks mad and Jack looks frightened. Captain Bones looks scary. Suggested Prop: small piece of paper for an eye patch for Captain Bones

Answer: Pirates Past Noon



3 Players

Jack and Annie have a flashlight and shine it into the eyes of the knight. (Remember the knight had never seen a flashlight) so the he is covering his eyes. Annie has a pretend flashlight and shines it into the knight's eyes while Jack stands behind her in fear!

Answer – The Knight at Dawn



2 Players

Jack and Annie get down on their stomachs and “fly” across the ice like the polar bears do to keep the ice from cracking.

Answer: Polar Bears Past Bedtime



1 or 2 Players

Jack and/or Annie cover their heads with pillows (but you could use your backpack for a prop) to keep the pumice and ash from hitting them as they are running from the erupting volcano. A look of fear and terror are on their faces.

Answer: Vacation Under the Volcano



2 players

Jack (or Annie) pretend to be swimming on the back of a dolphin. One player should be the dolphin. The dolphin is making up and down movements (the way dolphins swim) on the floor while Jack (or Annie) holds on for dear life! There is a look of excitement on his (or her) face!

Answer: Dolphins at Daybreak



3 Players

Jack and Annie are in the Dragon King's burial tomb looking around at the 7,000 clay warriors that were made to protect him after he dies. Another player can stand very still looking straight ahead with arms straight by his side to be one of the clay soldiers. Jack and Annie should look frightened! Something to use for a sword is a good prop for the clay soldier.

Answer: Day of the Dragon King



1 or 2 Players

Jack or Annie (or both) give the sign for friend that they learned from their Lakota Indian friend, Black Hawk. They should raise two fingers and have a happy look on their faces.

Answer: Buffalo Before Breakfast



2 Players

One player should be a kangaroo and hold a stuffed animal from the classroom in front of them to be a joey and hop away from a player who is acting like a fierce angry dingo down on all fours. Kangaroo should be very frightened!

Answer: Dingoes at Dinnertime



1 or 2 Players

Player should be Jack or Annie (Two players could be both) doing the moon walk in space. Walk in very slow motion. Jack could slowly fall down and Annie could be approaching him like she did in the scene from the book.

Answer: Midnight on the Moon



3 or 4 Players

Annie should be trying to pull Jack out of the circle as he is caught up in the dancing when they were trying to rescue Sir Lancelot and Sir Galahad. There might be one or two players (knights) who stay in the circle and keep dancing. All but Annie should have blank looks on their faces as if in a trance.

Answer: Christmas in Camelot



2 or 3 Players

Jack and Annie are desperately rowing a pretend canoe with a look of fear on their faces as if trying to get away. A third player could possibly be in the "water" playing a crocodile trying to bite at them.

Answer: Afternoon on the Amazon



3 or 4 Players

Jack and Annie should act like monsters and put their hands up in front of their faces and scare the hyenas away. You can have two hyenas down on all fours acting scared as they did in the book.

Answer: Lions at Lunchtime



3 Players

Prop – cloth to tie around the face of one player.

This player sits with legs crossed on the floor and plays the Ninja Master. Jack and Annie carefully approach with looks of uncertainty.

Answer: Night of the Ninjas



3 Players

One player is a tiger pretending to have its paw caught in a trap. Tiger is in pain. Jack and Annie are trying to free him and have a look of concern and sadness on their face. Annie is petting the tiger's head.

Answer: Tigers at Twilight



2 Players

Jack is doing arm exercises by holding his arms straight out at his sides and making little circles with his arms in the air. Priscilla is looking back and laughing (silently) as Jack looks confused. That is not what Priscilla meant when she said it was time for arm exercises!

Answer: Thanksgiving on Thursday



4 Players

You will need Jack and Annie and two players to be camels. Towels or cloths tied around Jack and Annie's heads with yarn would be great props! The camels get on all fours and Jack and Annie are riding them (but don't really sit down on them with all their weight. Just pretend to ride!)

Answer: Season of the Sandstorms



3 Players

You will need two players to be Jack and Annie and one to be a horse. Jack and Annie pretend to sit in a chariot and hold on to pretend reins of the horse that is down on all fours pretending to run. Jack and Annie look surprised as the horse pretends to lift off the ground and fly!

Answer: Hour of the Olympics



3 Players

Two players will be Jack and Annie. Another boy puts his arms around Jack and Annie so they can help carry him. His head is hung down and his feet shuffle because he is the drummer boy during the Civil War who suffered a heat stroke. He is about to faint. Jack and Annie have looks of concern and are comforting him.

Answer: Civil War on Sunday



3 Players

Jack and Annie are hurrying over to stacks of books and carrying them to a man who pretends to be loading the books on a wagon. There has just been an earthquake so they all are rushing around. The man pretends to drive away in the wagon (as if guiding a horse with the reins). Jack runs after him trying to stop him because Jack accidentally put his research book on the wagon.

Answer: Earthquake in the Early Morning



2 Players

Jack and Annie pretend to be surfing. First on their tummies paddling to catch a wave, and then standing up slowly with their hands out swaying gently from side to side. Annie is doing a great job but Jack is having trouble staying on. Annie is happy and confident but Jack is fearful and unsure.

Answer: High Tide in Hawaii



1 Player

Jack should be making movements with a pretend ax to chop wood. He tries his very best but it is too hard for him and he is getting very tired and frustrated and finally has to give up.

Answer: Abraham Lincoln at Last



3 Players

Jack and Annie are St. Bernards down on all fours digging in the snow to free Napoleon Bonaparte. Finally Napoleon is free and the "dogs" are very happy and pretend to lick him.

Answer: Dogs in the Dead of Night



3 Players

Jack and Annie are pretending to play a drum together. Props could be used for this – tapping a waste basket with pencils. Another player will play the role of Dipper and pretend to play a trumpet. He should make the finger movements on the instrument and puff out his cheeks as if he is blowing into the trumpet.

Answer: A Good Night for Ghosts

