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## EDUCATORS' GUIDE

For more than 20 years, the Magic Tree House books have changed the lives of young readers. With endless possibilities for discovery and imagination, the books are often the first chapter books read aloud to young children.

Reading can be even more fun when shared, especially when someone older reads with someone younger. Along with the fun, something else very important happens when a younger reader is paired with an older, more experienced reader. Both Reading Buddies come to see the value of reading. When *everybuddy* makes books a part of kids' lives, they develop a love of reading and greater motivation to read.



## MAGIC TREE HOUSE READING BUDDIES IN YOUR SCHOOL

The benefits of creating a Reading Buddies program are numerous—for the younger reader, who gains a mentor, improves fluency, and builds vocabulary, and for the older student, who typically ends up gaining as much in self-confidence and good reading habits as their younger Buddy. While older Reading Buddies could also be adults from your community, the Magic Tree House Reading Buddies program focuses on school-age readers to deliver improvement in reading skills and attitudes in multiple grade levels.

## SETTING UP YOUR MAGIC TREE HOUSE READING BUDDIES PROGRAM

- **STEP 1.** Find your Teacher Buddy! Together, determine what you expect older and younger Buddies to accomplish and how often Reading Buddies will meet. Once a week for about 30 minutes works well. Plan on having the program run for several months at least.

Also buddy up with your school librarian for help in getting plenty of Magic Tree House titles, reserving library space and/or computer time for Reading Buddies, and brainstorming ideas to keep Buddies motivated and engaged.

- **STEP 2.** Figure out where your Reading Buddies will meet. Your students might spread out across classrooms of both older and younger Buddies or in common spaces (library, gym, cafeteria, multipurpose room, auditorium), or head outside to the playground or outdoor learning space.

- **STEP 3.** Set a schedule for your Reading Buddies program. In addition to regular reading sessions, include dates in your program schedule for Reading Buddies to do special activities together, work on projects, and present their projects to the entire group. Your schedule should also include dates for literacy training for older Buddies and ongoing opportunities for them to talk, ask questions, and reflect on their role.

## THINGS FOR TEACHER BUDDIES TO CONSIDER:

- Will your Magic Tree House Reading Buddies program use technology? (There's a lot online for Reading Buddies at [MagicTreeHouse.com](http://MagicTreeHouse.com)!)
- What other supplies will you need? At the very least, your Reading Buddies will need a notebook and other writing and drawing materials for activities.
- Can you make time for student reflection? Older students will benefit from sharing their thoughts about the Reading Buddies program and what they have learned and discovered about themselves.
- What are the “house rules” for your Reading Buddies sessions? You and your Teacher Buddy need to make sure *everybuddy* is clear about when bathroom breaks are allowed, the acceptable noise level during read-aloud and activities, and who Buddies should go to if there is a problem.

- **STEP 4.** Provide literacy training and materials for older students and offer instruction on how to interact with their younger Buddies. Pay attention to the “buddy” in every Reading Buddy. The relationships that develop play a big part in motivating readers!

- **STEP 5.** Tell younger students what to expect from the program and describe the kinds of interactions they will have with their Buddies—younger students may feel intimidated by older, bigger kids. A class discussion about making friends may help younger Buddies feel more comfortable meeting their older Reading Buddies.

- **STEP 6.** Pair up students based on personalities, interests, and abilities. Realize that in some cases you may need to make changes, or create a trio or small group if you have an uneven number of younger and older students.

- **STEP 7.** Launch your Magic Tree House Reading Buddies program with a special kickoff session. Give Buddies plenty of time to get to know each other and learn more about the magic tree house before they begin their first reading mission!

## TRAINING OLDER READING BUDDIES

Older students may be more experienced readers, but to be successful Reading Buddies, they still need guidance on how to read both to and with their younger Buddies. Providing literacy training and opportunities to role-play will help older Reading Buddies feel well prepared and confident to read aloud, act as a responsible and responsive audience, and support the development of reading skills.

Be sure to share and explain your goals for younger Buddies. Keep in mind that older Buddies may need more explanation of a goal like “building fluency” than a goal like “increasing interest in books and reading.” **The Reading Buddies Mission Guide** included on the back of the poster in this Classroom Kit is a special resource designed to help older Buddies lead Reading Buddies sessions. Make a copy of the guide for each older Buddy and use it as part of your training to help older Buddies understand what’s expected of them.

Each older Reading Buddy should also have a new notebook just for Reading Buddies. During training, they should use it during role-play and to take notes. Once paired with a younger Buddy, the notebook is where both Buddies record details of their shared reading experience.

## BEGIN YOUR TRAINING WITH BOOKS

As Magic Tree House Reading Buddies, students will be sharing both the fiction titles in the Magic Tree House series and the nonfiction Magic Tree House Fact Tracker books. Explain the Reading Buddies concept to them and bring out the books they will soon be sharing with their younger Buddies! Find out who has read the series, and give kids some time to browse through the titles. Ask a student familiar with the books to give an overview of the series, and let students chime in with details they remember or talk about their favorite books.

Your older Buddies may wonder, *Why Magic Tree House books? Aren't chapter books for kids who already know how to read on their own?*

Assure them that by reading aloud the more complex, vocabulary-rich Magic Tree House titles, they are helping younger Buddies build knowledge, strengthen comprehension skills, and learn how to make connections to texts. And for younger Buddies who are already getting good at decoding, these books are great practice, especially with an older Buddy nearby to cheer them on and offer help when needed. Regardless of their younger Buddies' reading levels, older Buddies are sharing stories that will capture their Reading

Buddies' imaginations and get them excited and motivated to read.

Let older Buddies know that younger Buddies are even more motivated when they get to have a voice in deciding which books to read together. Some will want to start at the beginning of the series, and some may have an interest in a specific title. Urge older Buddies to get familiar with the themes and topics covered in both the fiction and nonfiction Magic Tree House books so they are more effective in guiding their Reading Buddies to titles of interest. Be sure to discuss how to distinguish the differences in fiction and nonfiction titles as part of older Buddy training.

Since these are chapter books, Reading Buddies should know that it may take several read-aloud sessions to finish a title.



Make copies of the **Reading Buddies Mission Guide** for each older Buddy. You can find it on the back of the poster in this classroom kit.

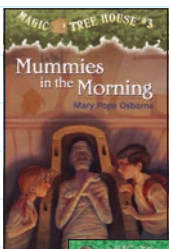
## PREPPING READING ROLE MODELS

Once older Buddies are familiar with what they will be reading, they need information on how to read with their younger Buddies. Give each older Buddy a **Reading Buddies Mission Guide**. Between the Mission Guide and the Magic Tree House books themselves, you'll find everything you need to launch them as Reading Buddies!

**Talk with your older students about the reading role models they've encountered in life and in books. What do they think of Jack as a reading role model?**

- Jack sets a purpose for reading, previews the book, thinks about what he already knows, and predicts what information the book might have.
- He checks if what he's reading makes sense, asks questions about what he reads, uses the pictures for clues, connects what is happening around him to the book, and makes notes to review and remember.
- He always talks about what he's read with Annie (even though she doesn't always listen!), draws conclusions, and writes about what he's read in his notebook.

Demonstrate to your older Buddies how to read like Jack! You will need a notebook and pencil, along with a Magic Tree House title and Fact Tracker to read aloud. As you read, show older Buddies how to have fun reading aloud! Model various strategies for reading and sharing fiction and nonfiction, including those recommended in the **Reading Buddies Mission Guide**. Write in your notebook as you wonder; question; make predictions; point out interesting words, facts, or ideas; and discover things you want to know more about. Share techniques that Jack uses, but also others.



For example, in *Mummies in the Morning*, Jack reads about an Egyptian funeral but gives up when trying to pronounce "sarcophagus." Since younger Buddies will likely also read to or with their older Buddies, older students will benefit from a refresher on the reading and decoding strategies their younger Buddies use. Take them through sounding out a word, thinking about what word will make sense, looking for a part of the word they know, reading

on, looking at the picture, and rereading the whole sentence once the difficult word is decoded. Discuss what strategies they remember using as beginning readers, and how to know when to tell a younger Buddy a word he or she just doesn't know.

Talk about the methods you used to read and ask questions, and go over the components of a **Reading Buddies Mission**. Invite older students to share their own ideas for keeping a younger Buddy engaged and how to handle a situation where a younger Buddy won't pay attention. Get older students to rehearse their read-aloud techniques by pairing them up to practice reading Magic Tree House titles. Encourage them to create different voices for Jack and Annie and read with dramatic flair!

It is also very important that older students practice leading discussions, work on writing with Buddies about books, and prepare for doing activities and projects with a younger Buddy. Have them continue to work in pairs and try all the different approaches and test out various activities included in the **Reading Buddies Mission Guide**.

Older Buddies should also prepare for meeting their younger Buddy. Provide them with the questions below and encourage them to think of other things they want to know about their younger Buddy. They might want to keep a running list of questions in their notebook so they have something new to ask their Buddy at every session.

## PAIRING UP AND KICKING OFF

The first session of Magic Tree House Reading Buddies is for Buddies to get to know each other. But you want some reading to happen too! So have Buddies write about themselves before the initial meeting. It will be easier for younger Buddies if there is a list of specific questions they can answer, like: *How old are you? When is your birthday? Do you have any brothers or sisters? Do you have any pets? What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite color? What is your favorite food? What is your favorite book? Do you play any sports? What is your favorite movie? What do you like to do for fun?*

When Reading Buddies meet for the first time, older Buddies can read the questions and both sets of answers. They should ask their younger Buddies follow-up questions to get them to share more details about themselves and their interests. Older Buddies can also share more information about what Reading Buddies sessions will be like. Older Buddies should also find out what book their Buddy thinks they should read

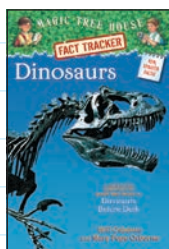
first, what kinds of activities seem interesting, and how the Reading Buddies notebook will be used. Encourage Buddies to decorate a cover for their Reading Buddies notebook and put both Buddies' names on it.

## KICK OFF THE FUN

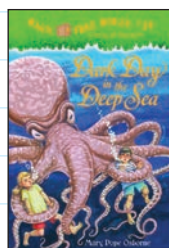
It will be very exciting for Reading Buddies to meet, but you'll also want to use the first meeting to build enthusiasm for the books they'll be reading. You can do that with a display of the books, along with fantastic food from the adventures!

**Have labels for the food that also give a little taste of the book. Here are some ideas:**

- Fossil cookies (sugar cookies with imprints of shells or other shapes). "Almost everything we know about dinosaurs we know from fossils." Want to know more about fossils and dinosaurs? Read the Magic Tree House Fact Tracker: *Dinosaurs*.



- Lime juice (limeade). "It prevents scurvy." Avoid sores and rotten teeth while sailing with a shipful of explorers and scientists. Drink up and read *Dark Day in the Deep Sea*.



- Fruits of the rain forest (chocolate-dipped bananas). "Many things we use every day come from rain forests around the world." Want to know what other foods we eat and products we use that are from the rain forest? Read the Magic Tree House Fact Tracker: *Rain Forests*.



## SENDING BUDDIES ON A READING MISSION

The focus of every Magic Tree House Reading Buddies session should be that Buddies enjoy a book together. Talking about the story and further exploring topics and questions raised during and after reading are also vital parts of each Reading Buddies Mission. Reading Buddies can extend their mission and make their sessions even more memorable with projects and activities that enhance the shared reading experience.

Your older Reading Buddies will use their **Reading Buddies Mission Guide** to run each session, but you and your Teacher Buddy are still "mission command"! Each Teacher Buddy will need to be active during the Reading Buddies sessions to ensure that reading is taking place, observe and offer feedback, deal with issues like absent Buddies, and help keep Buddies on schedule.

**To complete a Reading Buddies Mission, Reading Buddies need to:**

- **Read** a book from the Magic Tree House series or a Magic Tree House Fact Tracker. It may take several sessions to finish a title.
- **Discuss** the book before, during, and after reading, and use reading, writing, and drawing to **explore** more about the book's topic.

**As part of each Reading Buddies Mission, they should also:**

- **Do an activity** that's fun but also has a purpose, such as building comprehension skills or reinforcing new vocabulary.
- **Work on a project** that results in a product they can share with *everybuddy!* Projects will take multiple sessions to complete, and Buddies can also work on components of the project individually.





## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

How do you celebrate Reading Buddy success?  
With more reading!

**Plan a Reading Buddies Read-In for an extra-long final Reading Buddies session that includes one, some, or all of these ideas:**

- Presentations of projects by Reading Buddies
- Stations where Buddies can get hands-on with what they've read about, such as examining a moon rock or fossil, trying on a knight's helmet, playing a drummer boy's drum, or making a tornado in a jar
- A photo booth where Reading Buddies can take their photo together with fun props from favorite Magic Tree House books
- Opportunities to play games online at [MagicTreeHouse.com](http://MagicTreeHouse.com)
- Recognition of *everybuddy* for all the time spent reading and sharing books
- A special guest reader from your school or community to read the opening chapters of the newest Magic Tree House title

Or take a vote and let Reading Buddies choose a theme for their special celebration! Whether you end up having moon buggy races or a toga party, know that your Reading Buddies are celebrating great strides as readers, leaders, and learners.

**The components of a complete Reading Buddies Mission correlate with **COMMON CORE** State Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Missions are aligned below with standards for first and fourth grades. If your Reading Buddies are from other grades, you can easily find the coordinating standard at [CoreStandards.org](http://CoreStandards.org).**

## GRADE 1 STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.7
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.5	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.2	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.5
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.4	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.5
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.5	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.6
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.1	

## GRADE 4 STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.8
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3	