

An illustration of two children, a boy and a girl, sitting in a large, leafy tree. The boy on the left is wearing glasses and a red backpack, holding a notepad and pen. The girl on the right is holding a camera. The title 'MAGIC TREE HOUSE RESEARCH GUIDES' is written in a stylized, arched font across the top of the tree.

MAGIC TREE HOUSE RESEARCH GUIDES

The Facts Behind the Fiction Educators Guide



Grades 1–4



About the Magic Tree House Research Guides:

Magic Tree House Research Guides provide easy-to-digest information about the times, places, and cultures Jack and Annie visit in the beloved Magic Tree House fiction adventures. Scrupulously prepared by award-winning author Mary Pope Osborne, along with her husband Will Osborne or her sister Natalie Pope Boyce, the kid-friendly research guides include fun facts, photos, definitions, illustrations, and more.

In the Classroom:

It is essential for students to use fiction and nonfiction texts in tandem with each other to illustrate that facts can support stories and stories can breathe life into facts. The Magic Tree House adventures and their companion research guides are the perfect vehicle for exploring the fiction-nonfiction connection with young readers and researchers.



www.randomhouse.com/teachers/magictth



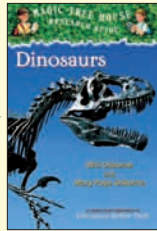
Book List

FICTION



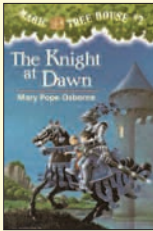
Dinosaurs Before Dark
PB: 978-0-679-82411-4 (0-679-82411-1)
GLB: 978-0-679-92411-1 (0-679-92411-6)

NONFICTION



Dinosaurs
PB: 978-0-375-80296-6 (0-375-80296-7)
GLB: 978-0-375-90296-3 (0-375-90296-1)

FICTION



The Knight at Dawn
PB: 978-0-679-82412-1 (0-679-82412-X)
GLB: 978-0-679-92412-8 (0-679-92412-4)

NONFICTION



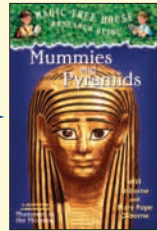
Knights and Castles
PB: 978-0-375-80297-3 (0-375-80297-5)
GLB: 978-0-375-90297-0 (0-375-90297-X)

FICTION



Mummies in the Morning
PB: 978-0-679-82424-4 (0-679-82424-3)
GLB: 978-0-679-92424-1 (0-679-92424-8)

NONFICTION



Mummies and Pyramids
PB: 978-0-375-80298-0 (0-375-80298-3)
GLB: 978-0-375-90298-7 (0-375-90298-8)



Pirates Past Noon
PB: 978-0-679-82425-1 (0-679-82425-6)
GLB: 978-0-679-92425-8 (0-679-92425-6)



Pirates
PB: 978-0-375-80299-7 (0-375-80299-1)
GLB: 978-0-375-90299-4 (0-375-90299-6)



Afternoon on the Amazon
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GLB: 978-0-679-96372-3 (0-679-96372-3)



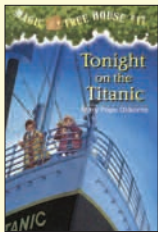
Rain Forests
PB: 978-0-375-81355-9 (0-375-81355-1)
GLB: 978-0-375-91355-6 (0-375-91355-6)



Midnight on the Moon
PB: 978-0-679-86374-8 (0-679-86374-5)
GLB: 978-0-679-96374-5 (0-679-96374-X)



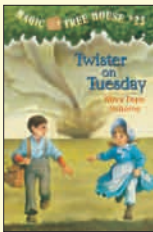
Space
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GLB: 978-0-375-91356-3 (0-375-91356-4)



Tonight on the Titanic
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GLB: 978-0-679-99063-5 (0-679-99063-1)



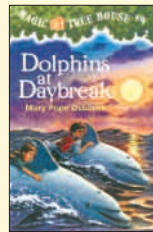
Titanic
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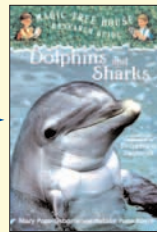
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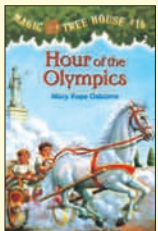
Twisters and Other Terrible Storms
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GLB: 978-0-375-91358-7 (0-375-91358-0)



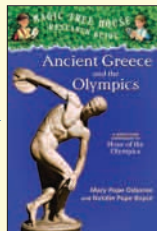
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GLB: 978-0-679-98338-5 (0-679-98338-4)



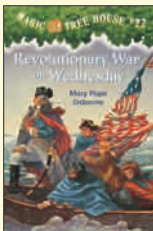
Dolphins and Sharks
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GLB: 978-0-375-92377-7 (0-375-92377-2)



Hour of the Olympics
PB: 978-0-679-89062-9 (0-679-89062-3)
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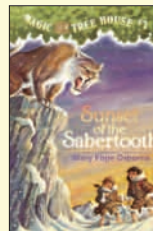
Ancient Greece and the Olympics
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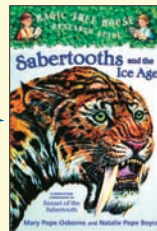
Revolutionary War on Wednesday
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American Revolution
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Sunset of the Sabertooth
PB: 978-0-679-86373-1 (0-679-86373-7)
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Sabertooths and the Ice Age
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Thanksgiving on Thursday
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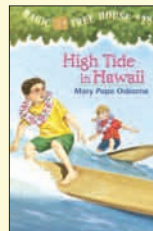
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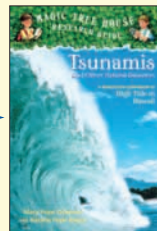
Vacation Under the Volcano
PB: 978-0-679-89050-8 (0-679-89050-5)
GLB: 978-0-679-99050-5 (0-679-99050-X)



Ancient Rome and Pompeii
PB: 978-0-375-83220-8 (0-375-83220-3)
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High Tide in Hawaii
PB: 978-0-375-80616-2 (0-375-80616-4)
GLB: 978-0-375-90616-9 (0-375-90616-9)



Tsunamis and Other Natural Disasters
PB: 978-0-375-83221-5 (0-375-83221-1)
GLB: 978-0-375-93221-2 (0-375-93221-6)



Polar Bears Past Bedtime
PB: 978-0-679-98341-8 (0-679-98341-X)
GLB: 978-0-679-98341-5 (0-679-98341-4)



Polar Bears and the Arctic
PB: 978-0-375-83222-2 (0-375-83222-X)
GLB: 978-0-375-93222-9 (0-375-93222-4)

NEW!



Skill-Based Activities

Reading Comprehension

Host a classroom Fact or Fiction Challenge! Ask students to read one of the Magic Tree House fiction adventures and its corresponding research guide, paying close attention to details like places, times, character names, and vocabulary. Distribute index cards and have students write down three facts and three fictional (false, made-up) pieces of information. (They can alter information from the books or bring in previous knowledge for the fictional cards). Have students trade cards with one another and seek to determine which cards are facts and which are fiction. The student being quizzed can use the books to verify the facts on the cards. This activity can be modified to include an entire class. For a reproducible Fact or Fiction Challenge template, visit the Magic Tree House Classroom Club at www.randomhouse.com/teachers/magictreehouse

Embellishing a Story

Have students add another character to the story in a Magic Tree House fiction adventure. This character should join in the dialogue with Jack and Annie or add to the existing scenes in order to insert bits of information learned in the corresponding research guide. The story line is not substantially changed, but more information is offered to the reader. This activity can be done through written or verbal communication, depending on the age of the student. It is best to do this after the student has read the fiction and the nonfiction books in their entirety so the addition of information will not affect the ability to follow the story line. For an example of a story embellishment from *Hour of the Olympics*, visit the Magic Tree House Classroom Club.

Using the Table of Contents and Index

Using several Magic Tree House research guides, create a list of rather obscure topics, names, or vocabulary words that are listed in an index. Have students tell you which research guide and what page you could find information on the topic, name, or word. Make sure to explain that a table of contents is a generalized index, useful if you plan on reading an entire chapter or would like to find the chunk of information on the topic. The index is more specialized and is an asset to spry nonfiction readers.

Linking Artifacts to Text

Create a classroom of travelers who bring back artifacts to share. Ask students to find or create five objects that are important to the fiction adventure or research guide, specifically if they are linked to a vocabulary term or new piece of information. Use the artifacts in one of two ways:

1. Have students share their (small) "suitcase of treasures," explaining why artifacts were chosen and details surrounding their use in the story.
2. Have students take turns contributing a small number of artifacts (as assigned by the teacher) to a class "suitcase of treasures." The class, then, should try to guess the items in the secret suitcase of treasures, asking yes or no questions of the teacher, who reveals the items when the students guess them correctly.

Incredible Five!

Kids: As you read each research guide, fill in this bookmark as you go along.

FIVE places or names:

FOUR important events:

THREE new facts:

TWO vocabulary words:

ONE way this information affects people today:

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Note: Student answers will vary, but this can serve as a quick visual check to see that the student was tracking and organizing information while he or she reads the book.

Skill-Based Activities

Choice Boards

Choice boards can be used in the classroom to facilitate differentiation (offering choice and differing levels, depth, or complexity to student based on interest and readiness). The board can be offered as a set of options to practice a skill, or the teacher can help students select work from the board that is most appropriate and interesting to the student. The choice board can be laminated and reused.

Magic Tree House Vocabulary Choice Board

Skill: Using New Vocabulary Words in Context

Find five new words in this book. Ask an adult to help you define them in your own words.

Draw pictures to show the meaning of five vocabulary words from the book. Label each drawing with the matching word.

Create flashcards with the definitions of five vocabulary words. Quiz a friend or family member. Have them quiz you.

Use the dictionary to find the meaning of five vocabulary words from the book. Write the words on index cards. Sort the words according to verbs, nouns, and adjectives.

Use five new words from the fiction adventure or research guide in a new paragraph. Make sure that you know what the word means before you use it!

Find five new words in the glossary or index. Mix up the words and definitions to make a "Matching Words and Definitions" worksheet. Be sure to make a key.

Make a poster showing four important facts from the research guide. Include five vocabulary words and definitions like the authors of the research guides do.

Make a crossword puzzle from 10 vocabulary words in the fiction adventure and research guide. Include clues so others can guess the words you chose.

Use five unique words from the fiction adventure or research guide. Make up a song to go with a familiar tune that uses the words in new sentences.

Magic Tree House Vocabulary Choice Board

Skill: Visually Showing Factual Information

Write a poem inspired by the fiction adventure or research guide. Read it aloud.

Create a poster-sized web to show the topic and eight pieces of related information.

Make a diorama to show a time or place described in the research guide. Be ready to answer questions about your work.

Dress up as a person from a research guide. Tell the class about your work and teach them something new!

Explore a Web site listed in the back of the research guide. Make a PowerPoint presentation with new information you find.

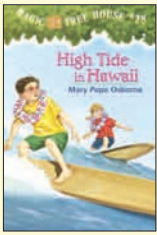
Is there any food, dance, tradition, or skill mentioned in the fiction adventure or research guide? Become an expert on it and share with the class.

Make a collage of images (pictures) that remind you of events or facts in the book you just read. Write a short explanation to post below the collage that explains your thinking.

Come up with questions for a person featured in a research guide. Interview a partner who will answer as if he/she is that person.

Create a newspaper that includes an event from a fiction adventure or research guide. Include pictures, quotes, and exciting information!

Classroom Connections



Using **HIGH TIDE IN HAWAII** and **TSUNAMIS AND OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS**

- Ask the class about how we tell stories. Remind students that In *High Tide in Hawaii*, Jack and Annie learn that early Hawaiians told stories with hula dancing, a blend of dancing and chanting poetry. Set the students to task telling the story of the 2004 tsunami in the way they find most appropriate.

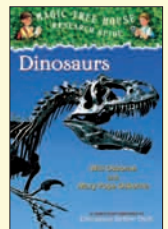
- Scientists use the moment magnitude scale to describe the strength of an earthquake. Discuss with the class what other scales we use on a daily basis.
- Have students take turns role playing as a scientist making an announcement about a tsunami on the way. Include what causes a tsunami, what people could expect, and how they can keep themselves safe.
- Use a world map and the nonfiction guide to point out the places on the earth where tsunamis have occurred.
- Using the time line of “Some Modern Disasters” in the *Tsunamis* research guide, graph the casualties from each event as a class.
- Create a class book of disasters. Each event can be described as before and after with pictures or diagrams. Organize the events according to natural disaster type, and preface each disaster with a page description of how and why the disaster occurs. Add the good news about the warning systems in place today to prevent deaths in similar disasters.



Illustration © 1992 by Sal Murocca.

Using **DINOSAURS BEFORE DARK** and **DINOSAURS**

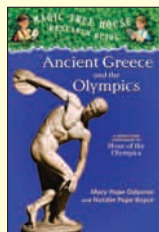
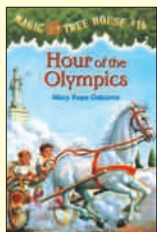
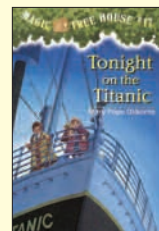
- Ask students to think about the creatures that lived a long time ago and what they would need to live today. What would a dinosaur need to be able to survive today? What might a dinosaur of the 21st century look like? What would it eat? What would be its most important characteristics? Where would it get its food?
- Discuss with the class how most dinosaurs got their names. Explain that there are other animals that are named using Latin words or researcher's last names. Have students research to find and report on one of the animals.
- Ask students what adaptations did dinosaurs have that allowed them to live? What adaptations do Jack and Annie have that give them the skills they need to live today? Do you have those same skills Jack and Annie have?
- It is hard for us to picture how big a dinosaur really was. The research guide shows comparisons of size using the shadow of the dinosaur and Jack or Annie. Challenge students to find an object that is the size of a dinosaur you read about.
- Jack and Annie visit the Cretaceous period in *Dinosaurs Before Dark* and meet the Pteranodon, Triceratops, Anatosaurus, and Tyrannosaurus Rex. Have students use the research guide to look up the special adaptations or skills that the dinosaurs had including their bone structure, size, mouth, shape, and habitat.



Classroom Connections

Using TONIGHT ON THE TITANIC and TITANIC

- This fiction adventure and research guide cater nicely to focusing on perspectives of individual people. Have students create a biography of a character, talking from that character's perspective, telling of what he or she saw and thought while involved with the *Titanic*. This could be extended by the teacher or student imagining additional people who were involved in the disaster that were not spoken of in either book—e.g., shipbuilders, passengers from the boat that rescued the *Titanic* passengers from the icy water.
- Have students create a flyer advertising passage on the *Titanic*. They should include a picture, some unique facts about the book, and artistic decorations that seem to fit with the time period (looking at clothes and decorations).
- Assign students to write a newspaper article telling of the launch of the *Titanic*, the joys of the journey along the way, and the arrival of the passengers in America after the disaster.
- As a class, create a song telling of the lessons learned on the *Titanic*. Include character names and details. Put to a familiar tune.



Using HOUR OF THE OLYMPICS and ANCIENT GREECE AND THE OLYMPICS

- As a class, create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast life in Athens with life in Sparta.
- Have students create an old-fashioned Olympic flag on paper or cloth (with marker). Divide the flags into four sections. The students are to draw a different picture or diagram on each section of the flag in order to represent an aspect of the Olympic games in ancient times.
- Choose three Greek gods. Use a web to show their characteristics and connections with other gods.
- Tales of the Greek gods are myths. Ask students: Are there other myths told by specific cultures? Have them use the Greek mythological characters to create a new myth. They should use the gods' specific characteristics and relationships as described in the research guide.
- In *Hour of the Olympics*, Annie dresses up as a boy to get into the Olympic games. Ask students why girls were not allowed. Annie might have put herself in great danger because she didn't follow instructions. As you read about ancient Sparta and Athens, are there any other instructions that might be hard for you to follow? Why were those instructions given in the first place? Do we have any difficult instructions to follow today?

Magic Tree House Research Guide Breakdown

Organization and Content:

Designed with curious young readers in mind!

- Short chapters • Multiple topics
- Fun facts • Photos • Illustrations
- Maps • Drawings

Common Nonfiction Elements:

Perfect for building the bridge to more sophisticated nonfiction texts!

- Copyright page • Table of contents
- Vocabulary words with pronunciation
- Word origin information
- Ideas for future exploration
- Index • Research tips

Depth:

Tidbits of information that young readers love!

Some students will find a specific area of interest and take off to find out more about a specific person, event, etc.

Join the *free* Magic Tree House Classroom Club at www.randomhouse.com/teachers/magichouse

Prepared by Beth Fawley, the 2006 Magic Tree House Educator of the Year, who is the K–12 Gifted and Talented Coordinator at Columbia Heights Public Schools in Minnesota.

