

timberdoodle

# Fourth Grade Handbook



Curriculum Handbook | 2025-2026

**NONRELIGIOUS EDITION**

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**Get Started**

# Meet Your Handbook

Simple Is Better

## 1. Planning Your Year

Begin with essential tools like the annual planner and sample weekly checklists, which are the foundation of Timberdoodle's curriculum kits.

## 2. Kit Introductions

Explore brief overviews of each kit item, including its purpose, learning goals, and teaching tips to simplify your school year.

## 3. Further Resources

You'll find your weekly assignments for *Mosdos Ruby* in this section.

## 4. Reading Challenge

Track your child's reading with a log that encourages variety, featuring hundreds of book suggestions for inspiration.

## Curriculum Levels Explained

Timberdoodle kits come in Basic, Complete, and Elite options, allowing you to choose based on your child's needs, schedule, and budget. This guide offers overviews and teaching tips for every item in the Elite kit. If you have a Basic, Complete, or customized kit, just focus on the items in your selection.



Photo: The Liwanag Family in Chester, New York

# Tips & Tricks

## Starting Your Homeschool Year

### Find Your Rhythm

The first week might feel bumpy, but that's normal! Most families using the Timberdoodle Fourth-Grade Kit settle into a rhythm within a few weeks, spending 2-4 hours daily, depending on the schedule.

### Plan Your Day

Some kids prefer to finish bookwork first and save the fun activities for later, while others thrive by mixing in STEM, art, and thinking games. Find what works best—there's no right or wrong approach!

### Set a Schedule

Focus on practicing core subjects like math, phonics, and spelling daily. Tackle history and science in a single session each week to simplify your life. For courses you don't need as often, plan for them weekly or monthly, or save them for summer fun!

### Check State Requirements

Visit [hslda.org/laws](https://hslda.org/laws) for your state's homeschool rules. Weekly checklists and work samples usually meet most requirements, but some states may require subjects like P.E. or state history.

### Include P.E. and Health

Make P.E. fun with activities your child enjoys—like swimming, soccer, or dance. Many science programs also cover health topics.

### Use Your Checklist

The weekly checklist helps keep things organized. Check off tasks as you complete them, and cross out anything you don't need to do that week.

### Balance Hard and Easy Days

If your child struggles, start with something fun, like art or reading. Teach him how to work through challenges but also allow breaks when needed.

### Sample Schedules

Use the sample annual and weekly planners (page 10) as a starting point, then adjust them to fit your family's needs. You've got this!

Should  
I Join a  
Homeschool  
Group?





# Why Use a Weekly Checklist?

## Flexibility and Structure Unite

Starting homeschooling can feel overwhelming. How do you know you're doing enough? Your Timberdoodle kit gives structure, but here's how to simplify it.

Without a plan, it's easy to start randomly, quit when things get hard, and feel lost. But overscheduling your day with rigid time slots can be just as stressful—life happens, and interruptions can derail everything.

The solution is a flexible structure. Instead of strict schedules, use Timberdoodle's checklist system and time blocks. Plan key activities like lessons, independent work, reading, outdoor time, and chores. Let your routine adapt to your family's natural flow.

Track tasks with checklists. Your child can check progress as he goes, whether on paper or online.

Every week will be different. Focus on core subjects—language arts, math, and thinking skills—while adjusting others as needed. Real-life experiences like outdoor play or helping siblings also count as learning. The goal is not perfection but finding a rhythm that works for your family. Celebrate the wins, adjust as needed, and enjoy the journey!

Why  
Timberdoodle  
Encourages  
Independent  
Learning



Photo: The Johanson Family

# Meet Your Online Schedule Customizer

Getting the Most Out of Your Planner

## Use the Schedule Customizer

Launch your homeschooling plan using the online Schedule Customizer included with your kit. It allows you to adjust school days, customize your schedule, print personalized checklists, and even log your progress!

## First Time? Activate Your Account

- Log in to [schedule.timberdoodle.com](https://schedule.timberdoodle.com) to easily access your kit if you ordered it from our website.
- If you ordered elsewhere or need to activate a different email, use the activation code inside the front cover of this handbook, plus your order number, to activate your account.

## Things to Decide before You Start

- How many weeks will you do school? Thirty-six school weeks plus 4 weeks of breaks is standard. You can shorten this or extend it year-round to accommodate sports, activities, or preferences.
- When will you start? Any day works—you don't need to match the local school calendar.
- What breaks do you want? Thanksgiving, Christmas, spring break, or custom breaks for travel or family visits.

## Calendar Tips

- Single-day breaks: Most families don't log these but fit the work into the rest of the week.
- School days: Set your schedule to match your needs, like using a 4-day week or doing school on Saturday.

## Customize Your Schedule

- Add: You can include Timberdoodle items, books you already have, or custom courses.
- Habits: You can add any habits you want to incorporate into your schedule, such as reading, music practice, or taking a walk.
- Edit schedules: You can fine-tune your schedule to reflect your preferences and plans. See a few options on the following page.

## Celebrated Feature

One of the most appreciated features of our Schedule Customizer is the ability to easily see what you skipped in previous weeks. This celebrated tool has made catching up simpler and more efficient for countless users, helping you stay on track with ease!

Want to make your checklist even more customized to your plans and schedule? Read on!

## Exclude Items

You can skip specific items during certain weeks. For example:

- Save an art kit for a May trip.
- Pause science to prepare for a local fair.

## Front-Load vs. Back-Load

Decide how to handle extra lessons (e.g., 40 lessons in 36 weeks):

- **Front-Load:** Finish extra lessons early, which is ideal for easier items like games.
- **Back-Load:** Save them for later if they build on other skills.
- **Default:** Lessons are spread evenly throughout the schedule.

## Weekly vs. Daily Schedules

**Weekly Schedule:** Offers flexibility for unexpected events like dentist appointments or robotics camp. This option teaches time management.

**Daily Schedule:** Great for beginners. Divides work evenly, with extra tasks at the start of the week to avoid end-of-week burnout.

For daily schedules, you can fine-tune by selecting which days a course appears. For example:

- Schedule history on co-op day (Wednesday).
- Alternate science and STEM to avoid overlap.

## Finalize Your Schedule

- Review your schedule summary.
- Click "Save & Continue" to complete.
- Access Your Dashboard: Click "Checklist" to log progress or print.

## Printed Checklists

- Print weekly or daily checklists.
- Choose whether to include unit range reminders (e.g., "pages 50-56").
- Use the large-font version for easier reading.
- Try it for a few weeks before printing an entire year to ensure it works for you.

## Track Progress Online

Alternatively, log completed work in the "Progress" section of the Schedule Customizer. Watch progress bars fill up for a visual representation of your achievements throughout the year.

With these tools, you can easily tailor and manage your homeschool schedule!

Access Your  
Schedule  
Customizer





# Your Annual Planner

Curriculum	Lesson or Pages	= Per Week
Language Arts		
Language Smarts, Level E	363 pages	10 pages
Mosdos Literature Ruby	36 weeks of work	1 week’s work
Spelling You See, Level E	36 weeks	10 minutes a day
Daily 6-Trait Writing Grade 4	25 weeks	1 week’s work
CursiveLogic U.S. Presidents & Citizens	69 pages	2 pages
Math		
Thinking Skills		
History & Social Studies		
Geography		

# Sample Weekly Checklist

Elite

Curriculum	This Week	Check It Off!
Language Arts		
Language Smarts, Level E	10 pages	<div></div>
Mosdos Literature Ruby	1 week’s work	<div></div>
Spelling You See, Level E	10 minutes a day	<div></div>
Daily 6-Trait Writing Grade 4	1 week’s work	<div></div>
CursiveLogic U.S. Presidents & Citizens	2 pages	<div></div>
Math		
		<div></div>
		<div></div>
Thinking Skills		
		<div></div>
		<div></div>
		<div></div>
History & Social Studies		
		<div></div>
		<div></div>
		<div></div>

# Introducing the Reading Challenge

## Fourth Grade: Read Around the World (Modern World History)

With 36 weekly themes, the Reading Challenge encourages your child to explore a wide variety of books while covering key topics.

### Why Read Together?

Reading to children isn't just enjoyable; it's incredibly valuable. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) highlights 3 key benefits:

1. Strengthen language skills: Reading introduces your child to new words, ideas, and emotions. As books become more complex, he'll learn grammar, pronunciation, rhyming, and more.
2. Build literacy development and interest in reading. When you read together, your child sees that books are fun and valuable, building a lifelong appreciation for reading.
3. Create nurturing parent-child relationships: Reading creates meaningful moments in a busy life. By stepping into stories together, you'll share experiences and build a connection through discussion, wonder, or even shared grief.

### Emotional Intelligence

Reading expands your child's understanding of emotions and fosters empathy. It's a simple way to teach emotional fluency and compassion for others' perspectives.

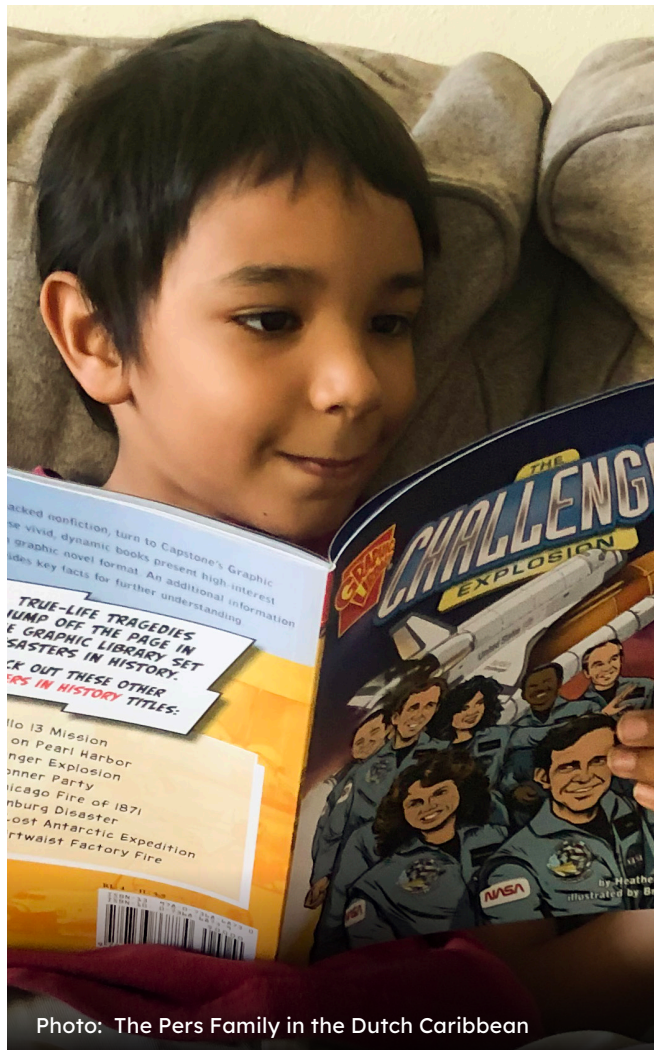


Photo: The Pers Family in the Dutch Caribbean

## How the Reading Challenge Works

Each challenge page (starting on page 68) includes:

- Book Suggestions
- Space to Track What You Read Together
- On page 66, you'll find a progress chart to track your overall challenge.

## Set Your Pace

Choose a goal based on your schedule and family dynamics.

- Light Reader: 1 book every 2 weeks (18 books)
- Interested Reader: 1 book per week (36 books)
- Avid Reader: 3 books every 2 weeks (54 books)
- Committed Reader: 2 books per week (72 books)
- Enthralled Reader: 5 books every 2 weeks (90 books)

Pick a pace that feels realistic and enjoyable!

## No Idea What to Read?

We've got you covered! On page 68 you'll find thousands of book suggestions for the year or browse more online.

Access Online  
Reading  
Challenge  
Booklist



## Need More Ideas?

Ask your local librarian, listen to the Read-Aloud Revival podcast, or explore Timberdoodle's Facebook groups. Don't forget to look at the extra reading suggestions in your history or science textbooks—especially if a recent topic piqued your child's interest.

## Reading Levels and Variety

This year's list includes a range of titles perfect for most fourth-graders. Choose books that fit your child's interests, but also try adding a few outside his usual preferences. For instance, if your child loves graphic novels, include more complex read-aloud books. Exposing your child to diverse literature helps him discover new favorites!

## Keeping It Affordable

Reading doesn't have to break the bank. Use library books or free e-books, borrow from friends, or buy used ones. Many libraries also offer free e-books; services like Kindle Unlimited or Everand may have the needed titles.

## Flexible Challenges

You don't need to follow the challenges in order! Match seasonal topics with holidays, or let your child dive into his current passion (e.g., reptiles). Feel free to skip or substitute topics to make the experience more relevant or enjoyable for your child.

## Let's Get Started!

Pick a plan, select some books with your child, and begin your reading adventure.

# **Item-by-Item Introductions**

# Language Arts

## Practice Makes Perfect

Reading is one of the most important skills your child will practice this year, second only to critical thinking. Whether he is a natural reader or not, it is essential to make reading as fun and rewarding as possible.

Our experience indicates that the best way to cultivate an eager reader is to supply him with reading materials that interest him. Future doctors want to read up on anatomy, young explorers are drawn to adventurers, and the child fascinated by babies will be captivated by adoption stories.

Knowing how hard it can be to load the whole family up and get to the library, we're including a brilliant anthology of reading material in *Mosdos Ruby*. With so many excellent selections, every student is sure to find reading that resonates deeply with him and some that he would never have chosen but finds surprisingly interesting. Assign reading as needed, but encourage it at all costs; a child who enjoys reading will find it easier to excel in most other areas of learning.





# Mosdos Press Literature

Basic | Complete | Elite

*Mosdos Press Literature Ruby* begins with beautifully illustrated student readers, featuring full-color photos, drawings, and black-and-white images. Each story introduces a literary element—such as character, theme, conflict, or climax—explored throughout the narrative. The text highlights vocabulary words in boxes at their first appearance.

Comprehension and analysis questions follow each story. Each unit concludes with optional activities such as writing a skit, crafting, or memorizing a poem. Select activities that match your child's interests. You can reduce writing tasks since courses like *Daily 6-Trait Writing* and *Language Smarts* cover them.

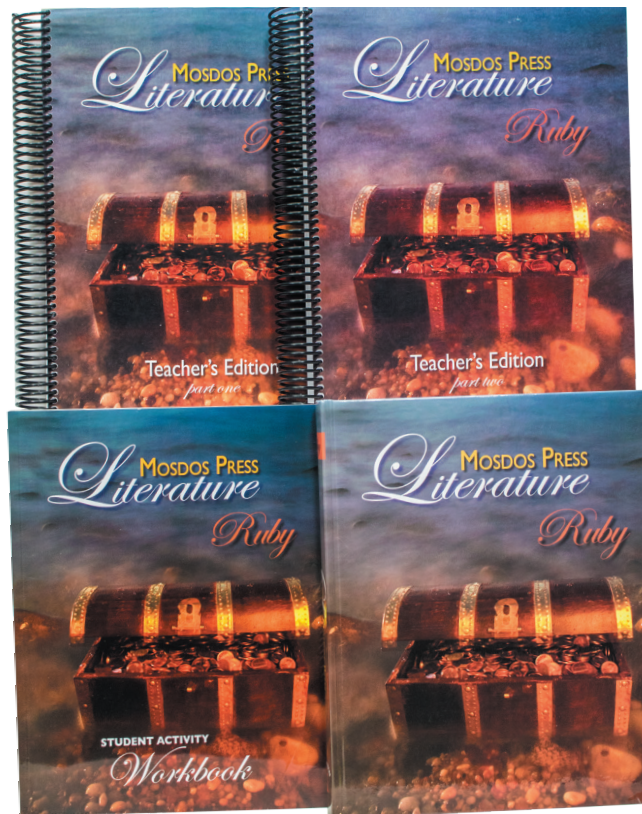
The student workbook reinforces literary concepts with vocabulary, creative writing, and comprehension questions for each story. These assignments assess your child's progress and understanding.

The teacher's edition includes reduced copies of the student reader pages, notes on literary elements and story analysis, and answers to workbook questions.

## Scheduling

Complete 1 subsection per week, starting with the Lesson in Literature. Refer to the 36-week schedule starting on page 57 for guidance.

Finish the workbook pages, but skip creative writing if desired. One option: complete Studying the Selection questions orally and select 1 activity for further study.



Since there are no workbook pages for poetry, students can prioritize writing tasks from the Think About It section.

Busy families may skip the Unit Wrap-Ups, while others can include them for additional hands-on learning.

# Language Smarts, Level E

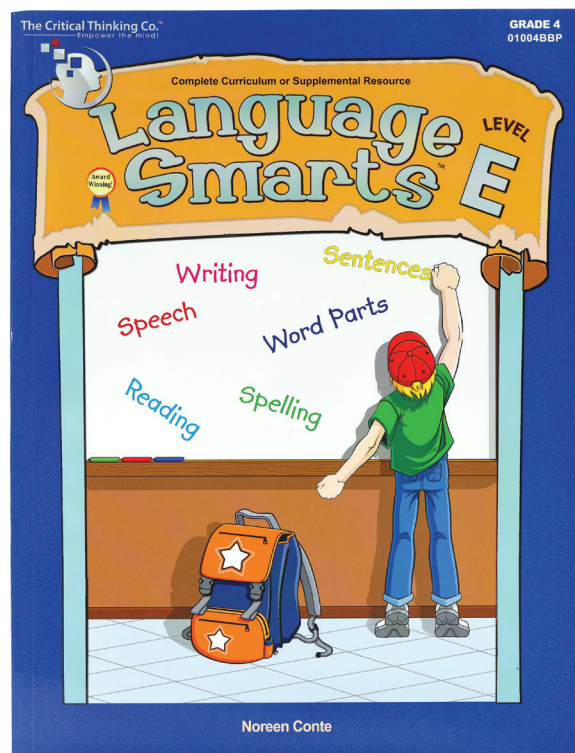
Basic | Complete | Elite

*Language Smarts* is a complete language arts curriculum that develops reading, writing, spelling, punctuation, and grammar skills and encourages both convergent and divergent thinking.

Ideal for independent learners, the workbook features colorful, engaging pages with plenty of white space. Activities include rhymes, riddles, editing challenges, and sequencing, making language arts more enjoyable and less tedious than traditional workbooks.

## Scheduling

With 363 pages, complete 10 pages per week to stay on track.



# Spelling You See, Level E

Basic | Complete | Elite

*Spelling You See* builds confident, natural spellers by focusing on visual memory instead of rote learning. No weekly spelling lists, tests, or extensive prep are required. Each daily lesson uses actual words within nonfiction stories about American history and culture.

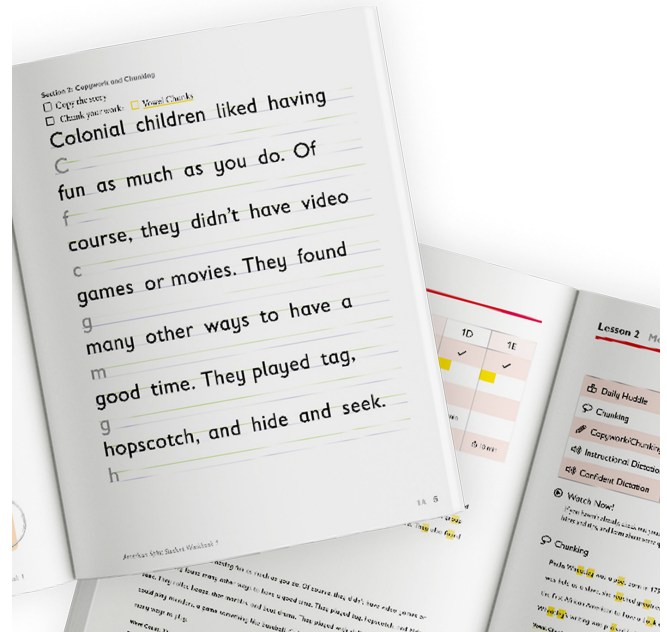
## Scheduling

The course plans 36 weeks of work with 5 daily activities per week—just open it and get started!

### Pro Tip

Limit spelling to 10-15 minutes daily. Fast writers will have plenty to do, while slower writers won't feel overwhelmed. Use a timer, and move to the next day's lesson when it rings—no need to finish every part of the current one.

For a 4-day schedule, simply complete the first 4 days of work and skip the fifth. While it may feel odd to leave a page unfinished, the course will work best with this flexible approach.



# Daily 6-Trait Writing, Grade 4

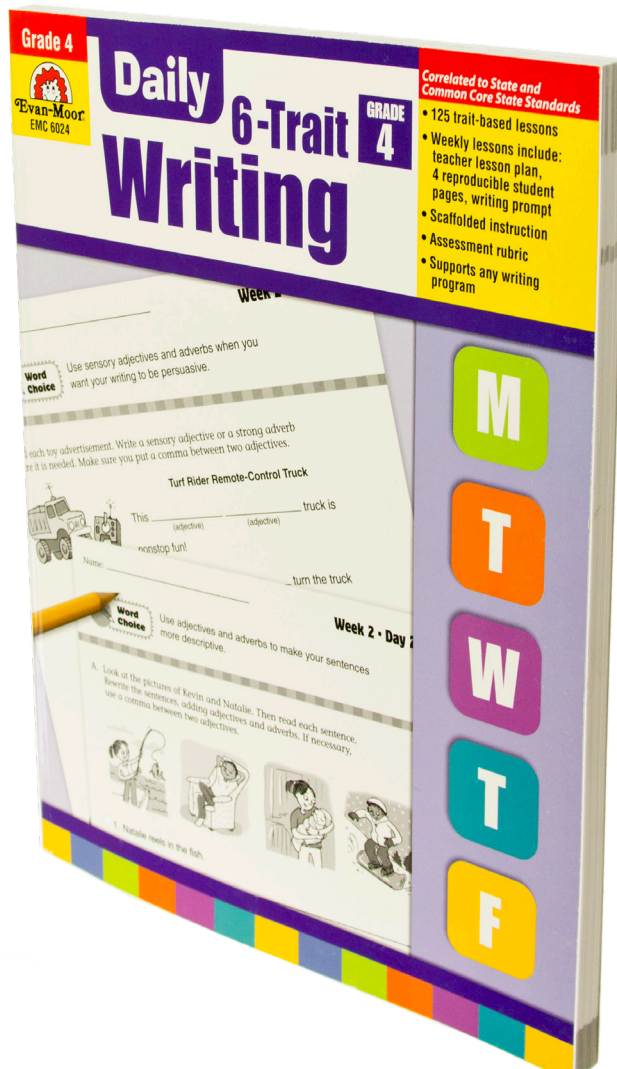
Basic | Complete | Elite

*Daily 6-Trait Writing* teaches key traits of quality writing: content, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions (grammar, spelling, and mechanics). Despite sounding complex, this program simplifies the process with short, practical daily lessons that build writing skills without being overwhelming.

## Scheduling

The course includes 25 weeks of lessons. We recommend starting in week 12 of school and completing 1 short lesson daily. If you start later, your child can use the extra pages for summer review.

For students with developing motor skills, separate writing from motor tasks by allowing dictation or using tools like a whiteboard or tablet. This approach helps strengthen writing skills without motor challenges getting in the way.



# CursiveLogic U.S. Presidents & Citizens

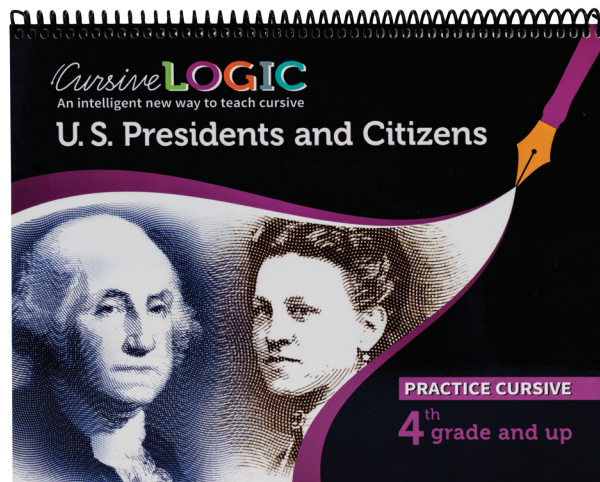
Basic | Complete | **Elite**

This workbook offers extra cursive practice using the CursiveLogic method. *CursiveLogic U.S. Presidents and Citizens* introduces notable Americans from the 50 states, including well-known figures like George Washington and lesser-known individuals like Ida Lewis and Sequoyah.

The spiral-bound format suits both right- and left-handers. Each lesson includes a review of the CursiveLogic handwriting method, lowercase alphabet practice, and inspirational quotes to trace. Students will also see an etching of each featured citizen, his state, and the date of its ratification.

Scheduling

Complete 2 pages per week to finish the workbook within the school year.



# **The Reading Challenge**



# Reading Challenge Questions & Answers

## Practical Details to Set Up a Productive Routine

Are you excited about the reading challenge but need a jumpstart? You're in the right place!

These book suggestions are just a starting point—feel free to customize and find what works best for your family. There are hundreds of great options, so use this as inspiration, not a rulebook!

### Will the Same Books Repeat?

Some books may appear more than once, but not often. Each grade has its own book list, and about 25% of titles appear in multiple grades when they align with different challenges. Many books could fit multiple categories within a grade, but we list each book only once to keep things simple. If you want to read more from a challenge, check the list—you'll likely find another category where it fits!

### A Mix of Reading Levels

Some books are for reading aloud, while your child could read most independently. Reading aloud builds literacy, language, and a love for stories, sparking the desire to read.

Access Online  
Reading  
Challenge  
Booklist



Photo: The Dale family in Idaho

# West Africa

## Challenge 10

### Benin

*The Adventures of Obi and Titi: The Great Walls of Benin*  
by O.T. Begho

*Benin* by Martha Kneib (Cultures of the World)

*Country Jumper in Benin* by Claudia Dobson-Largie

*Explore! Benin* by Izzi Howell

*The Genius of the Benin Kingdom* by Sonya Newland

*The Great Benin Empire* by John Adoga

*Idia of the Benin Kingdom* by Ekiuwa Aire (Our Ancestories)

*Queen Idia of Benin* by John Adoga

### Burkina Faso

*Country Jumper in Burkina Faso* by Claudia Dobson-Largie

*The Red Bicycle* by Jude Isabella (CitizenKid)

### Ghana

*Country Jumper in Ghana* by Claudia Dobson-Largie

*Cultural Traditions in Ghana* by Joan Marie Galat

*Ghana* by Ettagale Blauer (Enchantment of the World)

*Ghana* by Lyn Larson (Country Explorers)

*Ghana* by Thomas Persano (Countries We Come From)

*Ghana* by Barbara Aoki Poisson (The Evolution of Africa's  
Major Nations)

*Grace Goes to Ghana* by M. Mimi Sutton

*One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference* by  
Katie Smith Milway (CitizenKid)

*Sosu's Call* by Mashack Asare

*The Spider Weaver: A Legend of Kente Cloth* by Margaret  
Musgrove

*We Visit Ghana* by John Bankston (Your Land and My Land)

### Ivory Coast

*Akissi: Tales of Mischief* by Marguerite Abouet

*Cote d'Ivoire* by Ruth Bjorklund (Enchantment of the World)

*Country Jumper in Cote d'Ivoire* by Claudia Dobson-Largie

*Ivory Coast* by William Mark Habeeb (The Evolution of  
Africa's Major Nations)

### Liberia

*Liberia* by Brian Baughan (The Evolution of Africa's Major  
Nations)

*Liberia* by Ruth Bjorklund (Enchantment of the World)

*Liberia* by Robin Doak (Countries Around the World)

*Liberia* by Muriel L. Dubois (A Question and Answer Book)

*Why Leopard Has Spots: Dan Stories from Liberia* by Won-  
Ldy Paye

### Mali

*Jaja: King of Opobo* by John Adoga (Nigeria Heritage  
Series)

*Mansa Musa: The Lion of Mali* by Khephra Burns

*Meet Our New Student from Mali* by Oludamini Ogunnaike

*Never Forgotten* by Patricia C. McKissack

*Sunjata of the Mande Empire* by Ekiuwa Aire (Our  
Ancestories)

*Sunjata: Warrior King of Mali* by Justine Fontes (Graphic  
Myths and Legends)

*Yatandou* by Gloria Whelan (Tales of the World)

### Nigeria

*Beat the Story Drum, Pum-Pum* by Ashley Bryan

*Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti* by John Adoga

*Hajiya Gambo Sawaba* by John Adoga

*Hoping for a Home after Nigeria* by Heather C. Hudak  
(Leaving My Homeland)

*Ladi Kwali: The Pottery Queen* by John Adoga

*Lost in the African Forest of Zuki* by Onyeka Opara

*Margaret Ekpo: A Woman of the People* by John Adoga

*Mary Mitchell Slessor* by John Adoga

*Meet Our New Student from Nigeria* by Anna M. Ogunnike

*Nigeria* by Lisa Owings (Exploring Countries)

*Nigeria* by Lura Rogers Seavey (Enchantment of the World)

*Nigeria* by Kristine Spanier (All Around the World)

*Nigeria* by Kristin Thoennes Keller (Countries of the World)

*Nigeria* by Ida Walker (The Evolution of Africa's Major  
Nations)

*The No. 1 Car Spotter* by Atinuke

*Olaudah Equiano: A Voice for Africa* by John Adoga

*A Refugee's Journey from Nigeria* by Ellen Rodger (Leaving  
My Homeland)

*Samuel Ajayi Crowther: From Slave Boy to Bishop* by John  
Adoga

*Travel to Nigeria* by Matt Doeden (Searchlight Books: World  
Traveler)

### Senegal

*Senegal* by Ruth Bjorklund (Enchantment of the World)

*Senegal* by Tanya Mulroy (The Evolution of Africa's Major  
Nations)

*Senegal* by Debbie Nevins and Elizabeth Berg (Cultures of the  
World)

*Senegal* by Anna Obiols (On the Way to School)

### Sierra Leone

*Sierra Leone* by Judy Hasday (The Evolution of Africa's Major  
Nations)

*Sierra Leone* by Suzanne Levert (Cultures of the World)

*Tamba and the Chief: A Temne Tale* by Melinda Lilly

The Book You Chose		Date Completed
<b>10.1</b> <i>Light Reader</i>		
<b>10.2</b> <i>Interested Reader</i>		
<b>10.3</b> <i>Avid Reader</i>		
<b>10.4</b> <i>Committed Reader</i>		
<b>10.5</b> <i>Enthralled Reader</i>		

**When You're  
Done**

# Have an Amazing School Year!

You're Going to Make Some Epic Memories

At Timberdoodle, our goal is to make your homeschooling experience both effective and enjoyable.

If you have any questions about your curriculum kit or about homeschooling, please reach out—we'd love to help!

Email: [mail@Timberdoodle.com](mailto:mail@Timberdoodle.com)

Call: 800-478-0672

Live Chat: [Timberdoodle.com](https://www.Timberdoodle.com)

Ready to share your experience with a review? Your insight can help other homeschooling families find the right fit.

From our family to yours,  
Timberdoodle

Contact  
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Review Your  
4th Grade Kit



About  
Timberdoodle







## <- Meet Timberdoodle

Need help getting started? Our team is standing by and eager to assist!



800-478-0672



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mail@timberdoodle.com