

# Primary Language Lessons

## by Emma Serl

### Answer Key/Teacher Guide

When this book was first published in the early 1900s, Miss Serl intended the book to be used for two years over 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. You can start the book at any time with your child when you feel that his/her handwriting skills are ready for the copywork and dictation lessons. If you are going to complete it in one year, you won't need to do a lesson a day (there are 164 lessons and 180 days in a school year). On the other hand, some of the lessons are so short that your child may be able to do several in one day. You will have to make a schedule that works best for you. If you start in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, you may get to Lesson 91 or 92 doing two lessons a week in the first year and then finish the book in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

This book may be supplemented with lots of free writing and illustration. You might try some of these activities if needed:

1. Observe something in nature and describe it.
2. Write conversations between characters in a book you're reading.
3. Once a week print out or find a picture of a famous painting. Discuss it, describe it, notice the craft of the artist with light, shadow and color, and write/narrate a story about it.
4. Write poems of three or four lines. Choose nature, pets, family members, saints, etc. as topics.
5. Listen to classical music. Tell or write a story that would accompany the music.
6. Read a fable or fairy tale and retell it.
7. Free writing: Designate a notebook for free writing. Leave about 12 pages open in the front of the book. On the first few pages, have the student generate lists of topics. Divide pages into columns and put big categories at the top, like friends, toys, animals, vacation, holidays. Have the student create or add to the lists at least once a week. Then once a week choose once of the topics to do a "free write," which is just writing freely on the topic without worrying about punctuation, grammar or spelling, just for the pure joy of writing.

Since the grammar in Primary Language Lessons is mostly based on usage (such as "had" versus "has"), you also might supplement with a grammar workbook such as Catholic Heritage Curricula's *Language of God* series, *Exercises in English*, or *Easy Grammar*. One criticism of this book has been that it jumps around a lot and it's hard to have continuity. Keep in mind that its main purpose is to provide language experience for the young child and the total effect may not be seen until the book is finished.

Be sure to read the notes by Emma Serl at the beginning of the book, especially regarding dictation.

**Lesson 1**

There are no right or wrong answers with picture lessons. Use the questions to engage your child in a conversation about the picture. You could in addition ask the child to tell a story about the squirrels in the picture.

**Lesson 2**

Be sure to read the notes about dictation in the author's introduction. In this lesson the child copies the entire piece and then does the first 3 lines from dictation. You may divide this into two days of work. Day 1: copy. Day 2: reread the passage and then write the first three lines from dictation. There is a typo in this story. It should say *Jack* Frost instead of *Jake* Frost.

**Lesson 3**

1. are
2. is
3. are
4. is
5. are, are

**Lesson 4**

Read the poem together and talk about it. What does each stanza mean? Begin to memorize by saying one line a time and repeating it. Then repeat the whole stanza. You may divide the memorization over several days.

**Lesson 5**

Go over the questions and engage the child in conversation.

**Lesson 6**

Use the sentences for dictation. If it seems too much for one day, divide it over two days.

**Lesson 7**

Read and discuss the poem. Begin to memorize.

**Lesson 8**

1. the cherry tree
2. the tree
3. the tree
4. just us three
5. The robin

**Lesson 9**

Use the sentences for dictation.

**Lesson 10**

Read the story out loud to the child or have the child read it out loud. Discuss the meaning of the story.

Then ask the child to retell the story out loud.

**Lesson 11**

Discuss the painting using the questions provided. Have a conversation about it without worrying whether you get to all the questions. The student then tells or writes a story about the painting.

**Lesson 12**

Some of these questions may have several possible answers. The child should answer them orally, but the point is to speak or write in complete sentences, so you may have to model it.

Sample:

With what is a cat covered?

A cat is covered with fur.

Simply answering "fur" is not the way to answer.

**Lesson 13**

Make sure the sentences are complete thoughts.

**Lessons 14**

Have a conversation about pets using the questions provided. Encourage the child to speak in complete sentences.

**Lesson 15**

You may have the student copy the sentences one day and then use them for dictation the next.

**Lesson 16**

1. Two
2. too, to
3. Two
4. to
5. too, to
6. to, too
7. two, too
8. two
9. too
10. Two, two

**Lesson 17**

Read the story together, either with the teacher or the student reading aloud. Discuss the story and its meaning. Then the child retells the story.

**Lesson 18**

Read the poem and discuss it. Use the questions provided. Answers may vary. Here are some suggested answers:

1. The author is going to clean the pasture and fetch the calf.
2. It seems like he enjoys them.
3. You can tell because he is encouraging the reader to come along. He seems excited about it.
4. The letter "I" is always written with a capital letter.

**Lesson 19****Part 1**

One boy is mentioned in the first sentence. "Was" was used.  
Two boys were mentioned in the second sentence. "Were" was used.  
"You" is used in sentence number 3. "Were" was used.  
Children are mentioned in number 4. "Were" was used.

**Part two**

1. was
2. were
3. Were
4. were
5. Were
6. were
7. was
8. was
9. were

**Lesson 20**

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 1. was  | 1. is  |
| 2. were | 2. are |
| 3. were | 3. are |

**Lesson 21**

Read and discuss the selection. Ask the student to retell it. Then choose a few to use for dictation.

**Lesson 22**

Have a conversation about trees using the questions. Then the student draws a picture.

**Lesson 23**

Discuss the picture using the questions or anything the student wants to say about it. Student writes or dictates a story about it.

**Lesson 24**

Student copies the sentences.

Words that follow “an” begin with consonants.

**Lesson 25**

1. An, a, a
2. an, a
3. An
4. An, a
5. An, a
6. an
7. an, a

**Lesson26**

Each word for a day of the week begins with a capital letter.

1. seven
2. Sunday
3. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
4. Saturday
5. Sunday

**Lesson 27**

Discuss holidays with the student. The students write about a chosen holiday.

**Lesson 28**

Read the poem together and discuss it. The student starts to memorize and draws a picture to go with it. A capital letter begins the first line of poetry.

**Lesson 29**

Answers may vary. Here are a few samples.

1. early
2. In the morning
3. in the evening
4. On Sunday
5. every day
6. in the spring
7. at night
8. At sunset
9. during the day

**Lesson 30**

Discuss the questions with the student. The student writes using the format given.

**Lesson 31**

Look at the painting and discuss it using the questions provided.

1. soft
2. large, brown

3. carrots, cabbage, celery
4. large
5. Beavers, Woodchucks
6. brown

### **Lessons 32**

Discuss the difference in use of their and there. Then use the sentences for dictation.

### **Lesson 33**

1. there
2. Their
3. Their
4. there
5. There
6. their
7. There

### **Lesson 34**

Use the passage for dictation

### **Lesson 35**

Continue the story for dictation

### **Lesson 36**

Answers will vary. Here are some samples.

1. Faraway
2. Under it
3. In it
4. Around it
5. Nearby
6. Next to it
7. High in the tree
8. over the hill
9. Across the creek
10. To the East
11. In a burrow
12. In a box

### **Lesson 37**

After copying the sentences, fill in the blanks

1. Have
2. has
3. have
4. have
5. has
6. have
7. has
8. Have
9. has
10. has

### **Lesson 38**

Discuss the picture with the student using the provided questions. Let the student add what he wants to the discussion.

### **Lesson 39**

Student writes a story based on the picture.

**Lesson 40**

Student should answer the questions in complete sentences. You can do it orally first and then have the student write the answers.

**Lesson 41**

Students write a sentence for each animal.

**Lesson 42**

The name of each month begins with a capital letter.  
Do the dictation.

**Lesson 43**

1. December
2. February
3. September
4. November
5. January
6. May or October
7. April
8. July
9. February
10. answers will vary

**Lesson 44**

1. winter
2. summer
3. spring
4. fall
5. winter
6. fall, spring

**Lesson 45**

“Have” is used before “seen” in the third sentence.

“Has” is used before “seen” in the fourth sentence.

“Had” is used before seen in the fifth sentence.

1. see
2. saw
3. seen
4. had
5. see
6. seen
7. saw
8. seen
9. saw
10. see

**Lesson 46**

Discuss the poem and decide how much should be memorized.

**Lesson 47**

Students reread the story and then write it from memory.

**Lesson 48**

Answers will vary. Here are some samples:

1. quickly
2. loudly
3. well
4. hard
5. fast
6. slowly
7. contentedly
8. angrily
9. sweetly
10. swiftly
11. softly
12. carefully

**Lesson 49**

Copy the letter following the form.

Copy the envelope

The return address is on the upper left hand corner.

“N” stands for north.

Postage is placed on the envelope top right corner.

Georgia is abbreviated as GA.

**Lesson 50**

Student writes the return letter.

**Lesson 51**

Address the envelopes

**Lesson 52**

Have a conversation about winter using the questions provided.

**Lesson 53**

Study the painting and discuss it using the questions provided. Student writes the story.

**Lesson 54**

Dictate the story.

**Lesson 55**

Finish dictating the story.

**Lesson 56**

Answers will vary. Here are some samples:

1. of the snow
2. she didn't study
3. they had saved them
4. he never watered it
5. of the black clouds
6. they are peaceful
7. she was sick
8. he is a good sport
9. he is angry when he loses

**Lesson 57**

Discuss the poem and decide how much should be memorized.

**Lesson 58**

“And” is used 3 times in the first sentence.

“And” is used one time in the second sentence.

Commas are used after the first 3 verbs.

Sentence answers will vary.

**Lesson 59**

Have a conversation using the questions.

**Lesson 60**

Read the story with your student and discuss it. Use the questions. Student writes story in his own words.

**Lesson 61**

Copy and then answer questions. Answers will vary.

**Lesson 62**

1. wood
2. steel
3. pigskins
4. rubber
5. iron
6. bricks, wood
7. wood
8. paper, metal
9. metal
10. trees
11. plastic
12. sand
13. cotton
14. iron
15. iron

**Lesson 63**

Ralph W. Emerson  
John G. Whittier  
Edwin H. Landseer  
William M. Thackeray

T. Roosevelt  
C. Dickens  
W. Scott  
D. Webster

E.A. Poe  
J. W. Howe  
H. W. Beecher  
U. S. Grant

**Lesson 64**

Read and discuss the poem.

Draw the pictures.

**Lesson 65**

1. green
2. yellow
3. white
4. blue
5. black
6. yellow
7. pink



8. red
9. red, yellow
10. green, red
11. brown (or red)
12. white, yellow
13. purple, green

**Lesson 66**

Copy the letter

**Lesson 67**

Write the letter

**Lesson 68**

Read the poem and discuss it. Decide how much to memorize.

**Lesson 69**

Read the story and retell it orally. Then use the first paragraph for dictation.

**Lesson 70**

Answers will vary. Use the list for dictation.

**Lesson 71**

Discuss the picture using the questions. Have the child tell a story if you like.

**Lesson 72**

Use the text for dictation

**Lesson 73**

Write the story

**Lesson 74**

Write one story for each group of words.

**Lesson 75**

Use the dates for dictation.

Bonus:

Here is the significance of each date

January 24, 1908 – beginning of Boy Scouts

December 7, 1941 – bombing of Pearl Harbor

August 7, 1945 – nuclear bomb dropped in Japan

November 11, 1620 – Mayflower Compact approved

July 4, 1776 – Independence Day

September 4, 476 – fall of the Roman Empire, last emperor deposed

April 30, 1803 – Louisiana Purchase (typo in first edition says February 14, 1803)

October 7, 1571 – Battle of Lepanto

April 18, 1906 – San Francisco Earthquake

June 15, 1215 – Signing of the Magna Carta

**Lesson 76**

Have a conversation about the items listed. Use complete sentences orally.

**Lesson 77**

“Have” is used in the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence.

“Has” is used in the fourth sentence

“Had” is used in the fifth sentence

1. eat
2. ate
3. eaten
4. eat
5. ate
6. eaten
7. ate
8. eat

9. ate
10. eaten
11. eat
12. eaten

**Lesson 78**

Read and discuss the poem. Decide how much should be memorized.

**Lesson 79**

Use the sentences for dictation

**Lesson 80**

- |              |         |         |          |
|--------------|---------|---------|----------|
| 1. apples    | lions   | boys    | dolls    |
| 2. girls     | clocks  | rabbits | hats     |
| 3. squirrels | cars    | books   | baskets  |
| 4. chairs    | pencils | cows    | birds    |
| 5. flowers   | trees   | sisters | brothers |

**Lesson 81**

Have the student read the story; then retell it. Draw the picture.

**Lesson 82**

- |            |          |         |         |         |
|------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. foxes   | churches | matches | peaches | dishes  |
| 2. dresses | brushes  | benches | bushes  | watches |

**Lesson 83**

Read the passage and study the picture. Ask the student to retell the selection using the provided illustration.

**Lesson 84**

Copy the letter or have the student create his own thank you note.

**Lesson 85**

**One      More than one**

foot	ladies
donkey	mice
pony	berries
mouse	feet
Lady	knives
fly	men
cherry	teeth
goose	turkeys
piano	oxen
child	women
knife	lilies
ox	geese
man	ponies
woman	children

**Lesson 86**

Have the student respond to each question.

**Lesson 87**

Answers may vary – some samples are listed below.

1. on
2. under
3. by
4. at
5. to
6. into
7. across
8. above
9. around

**Lesson 88**

There is no difference in the meaning of the first two sentences.

The “s” shows that the desk belongs to the teacher.

There is no difference in the meaning of the last two sentences.

The “s” shows the nest belongs to the bird.

Do the dictation.

**Lesson 89**

Answers will vary. Here are some samples:

1. child’s
2. beggar’s
3. Jim’s
4. rattler’s
5. Beth’s
6. Lantern’s
7. boy’s
8. Meg’s
9. singer’s
10. crow’s
11. goat’s
12. cat’s
13. dog’s

**Lesson 90**

Use each word in its own sentence.

**Lesson 91**

Read the poem and discuss it. Decide what is to be memorized. Study the picture and discuss it. Set it aside and ask the child to describe it, remembering as much of the detail as possible.

**Lesson 92**

“Has” is used before “gone” in the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence

“Have” is used in the 4<sup>th</sup> sentence

“Had” is used in the 5<sup>th</sup> sentence

“Have” is used in the 6<sup>th</sup> sentence

Discuss the reason for each usage.

1. go
2. went
3. gone
4. go
5. gone
6. went

7. gone
8. went
9. gone
10. gone
11. went
12. gone

### **Lesson 93**

Read the story together. The student retells the story.

### **Lesson 94**

Answers will vary. Here is a sample:

I am sorry

No! please don't!

I'm just a mouthful for you!

### **Lesson 95**

Have a conversation with the student.

### **Lesson 96**

does not	they will
I am	have not
are not	can not
is not	of the clock
were not	did not
could not	should not
would not	do not
we will	they are
has not	it is

### **Lesson 97**

black – white  
hot – cold  
slow – fast  
hard – soft  
sour – sweet  
narrow – wide  
short – long  
dark – light  
late – early  
straight – crooked  
wet – dry  
beautiful – ugly  
high – low  
good – bad  
smooth – rough  
well – sick  
little – big  
new – old  
rich – poor  
easy – difficult  
quiet – loud  
thick – thin  
short – tall

**Lesson 98**

There is a typo in the first edition of this book. It should say in “in Lesson 96,” not “on page 96.” Use each of the first ten contractions in its own sentence.

**Lesson 99**

Write out the answers.

**Lesson 100**

Read this conversation and then have the child retell it. Then discuss how a caterpillar changes.

**Lesson 101**

Write the conversation

**Lesson 102**

Discuss the picture. Then the student writes the story.

**Lesson 103**

Discuss the questions. You may extend it to other professions that use tools.

**Lesson 104**

Read and discuss the poem using the questions. Decide what is to be memorized.

**Lesson 105**

Some of the answers may vary. Here are some samples:

1. sing
2. sang
3. rang
4. grew
5. sung
6. ring
7. rung
8. grown
9. knew
10. know
11. known

**Lesson 106**

Read the story. Write it from memory. Draw the picture

**Lesson 107**

In sentence sentences 1 and 4 “nearly” can be used in place of the underlined word.

1. almost ( In the first edition of the book, this sentence has a typo and the blank underline was left out. You can ask the student to say what word is missing from the sentence.)
2. most
3. almost
4. almost
5. most
6. almost
7. most

**Lesson 108**

Have a conversation using the questions.

**Lesson 109**

Use the passage for dictation

**Lesson 110**

Read the story together and discuss it using the questions. Then do the dictation.

**Lesson 111**

Discuss the painting. Student writes a story about it.

**Lesson 112**

The student can answer the questions orally or in writing if you prefer. Be sure that all answers are complete sentences.

**Lesson 113**

Read the passage together and discuss it. The student writes what he learned about ostriches from the passage.

**Lesson 114**

Read the poem and memorize it.

**Lesson 115**

Read the story and discuss it. Then the student writes it from memory keeping the same number of paragraphs.

**Lesson 116**

Write the letter using proper form

**Lesson 117**

Write the letter using proper form

**Lesson 118**

Discuss the exclamation point. There is a typo in the first edition of the book. The direction should say: Copy the words or sentences that these points follow.

**Lesson 119**

Read and discuss the poem. Decide what will be memorized.

**Lesson 120**

Student writes the story.

**Lesson 121**

Go over the sentences and discuss the questions about them. Go over the rule for using quotation marks given in the text.

Use the sentences for dictation.

**Lesson 122**

Do the dictation

**Lesson 123**

Do the dictation

**Lesson 124**

Read the story together and study the picture. Ask the student to retell the story.

**Lesson 125**

Read the poem and discuss it using the questions

Write the main idea.

**Lesson 126**

Study the picture using the questions and then the student writes a story.

**Lesson 127**

Read the passage together and discuss it. See how many of the animals listed the student knows. Describe their differences. Then write something about the cat family.

**Lesson 128**

Write the invitation.

**Lesson 129**

Have the student write the lesson and they share it with you.

**Lesson 130**

Read the story together. The student retells it.

**Lesson 131**

Read the poem and discuss it. Then the student writes about spring. Memorize the poem if you like.

**Lesson 132**

Go over the sentences at the beginning.

Each sentence begins with a capital letter.

Sentences 2, 3, and 5 tell something.

A period is using after a telling sentence.

Sentences 1 and 4 ask something.

A question mark is used after a question.

Student writes the sentences as directed.

**Lesson 133**

Write the story.

**Lesson 134**

Read the story together. The student retells it orally and then writes it.

**Lesson 135**

Discuss the library using the questions provided. Student writes the description.

**Lesson 136**

1. This, that
2. these those
3. these
4. those
5. that
6. this
7. those
8. this
9. those
10. this, that

one  
more than one

this, these  
that, those

**Lesson 137**

Use each homophone in a sentence. It may be done orally.

**Lesson 138**

Discuss the information about the cat family and add to what was written at Lesson 127.

**Lesson 139**

Read the poem and discuss. Use the questions provided. Use for memorization if desired.

**Lesson 140**

Discuss the painting using the questions provided.

Write a story.

**Lesson 141**

Read the story and then ask the student to retell it. Then he should write the story in his own words.

**Lesson 142**

1. author
2. artist
3. architect
4. soldier
5. musician
6. shepherd
7. poet
8. sailors
9. student
10. carpenter

**Lesson 143**

Have a conversation using food as the topic.

**Lesson 144**

Read the description together and discuss the questions. Think of other descriptive language or look in picture books for descriptive language.

Action words: purrs, flicks, likes, pounce, jump, stretch, bat, sit, dozing, tense, flash, moves, interests, plays, wait,

Describing words: soft, long, gray, darker, gently, lazily, loyal, aloof and distant, playful

**Lesson 145**

Student writes a description.

**Lesson 146**

Use the questions to have a conversation. Draw the diagram.

**Lesson 147**

Read and discuss the poem.

**Lesson 148**

Read the information and add to the writing from Lesson 138

**Lesson 149**

Write a sentence for each homophone.

**Lesson 150**

Read the story together and then ask the student to retell it. Then the student should write the story in his own words.

**Lesson 151**

Study the picture and discuss using the question. Student writes a story.

**Lesson 152**

Write a sentence for each homophone. If it seems like too much writing, you assign only a few for the student to use.

**Lesson 153**

Have a conversation about animals using the questions.

**Lesson 154**

Study the painting and discuss what is happening. Write the letter.

**Lesson 155**

Have a conversation about the quote.

**Lesson 156**

Read the story together. The student retells it and then writes it in his own words.

**Lesson 157**

Read the poem together and begin to memorize.

**Lesson 158**

1. hasn't
2. haven't
3. hasn't
4. haven't
5. hasn't
6. hasn't
7. haven't
8. haven't
9. hasn't
10. haven't
11. haven't
12. hasn't

**Lesson 159**

Student writes the story or one like it in his own words.



**Lesson 160**

Discuss each proverb and what it means. Think of experiences that demonstrate the proverb. Use the proverbs for copywork.

**Lesson 161**

Write a story.

**Lesson 162**

Discuss the passage. Write a description.

**Lesson 163**

Study and discuss the painting. Write a story.

**Lesson 164**

Read and discuss the poem. Decide how much to memorize.