

Twister on Tuesday

 [scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/twister-tuesday-lesson-plan](https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/twister-tuesday-lesson-plan)

Subject Area: Social Studies, Language Arts

Reading Level: 2.4

Book Summary

Kids know just what to expect from each new book in this beloved series, and *Twister on Tuesday* will not disappoint! Jack and Annie's latest adventure takes them back to the Kansas prairie in the 1870s. At a one-room schoolhouse there, they meet a teenaged teacher, some fun kids, and a big, scary bully. But the biggest and scariest thing is yet to come! The book concludes with several pages of factual information: about twisters, pioneer life on the prairie, and pioneer schoolbooks.

Objective

Students will be introduced to a fascinating slice of American history - the Westward Expansion movement. They will also learn new vocabulary words and terms as well as basic natural disaster safety procedures. *Standard: Students will understand the challenges and difficulties encountered by people in pioneer farming communities.*

Before Reading the Book

Map It!

Jack and Annie find themselves on the Kansas prairie in the 1870s. How far is that from **your** school?

1. Help your students understand what an enormous undertaking the Westward Expansion movement was by tracing a route on a large wall map from your state/town to a town on the Kansas prairie.
2. Ask your class to imagine what it would be like to travel across the country. What supplies might they need? What would they miss most about their homes? Talk about how long such a trip might take via covered wagon versus traveling by car, train, and/or plane.
3. If your school is located near what used to be the Kansas prairie or if any of your students have traveled there, ask him or her to describe what the area looks like now. Compare and contrast that with what Jack and Annie encounter.

Teaching Plan

Activities

What It Means

In the book, Jack writes down unfamiliar words or terms along with their meaning. "Prairie schooner" and "sod" are examples of terms that Jack records.

1. Ask your students to keep a "word list" for a day or for a week.
2. Have them write down any unfamiliar word(s) they come across during that time period. Ask them to provide a definition, if possible.
3. At the end of the allotted time, ask your students to share their lists with the class. Provide any necessary definitions.
4. Post especially interesting and vivid words and definitions on your blackboard or bulletin board.
5. If appropriate, have students illustrate specific words or terms and post their artwork as well.

Build Your Own Sod House

Materials

- Pen/pencil
- Paper
- Wooden or cardboard blocks
- Green felt
- School map or diagram

A sod house is something Jack and Annie have never seen before. Your students can create their own miniature sod houses.

1. Provide enough small wooden or cardboard blocks so that each student can build a small hut.
2. Using the sod house pictured in the book as an example, help your students lay the blocks together to create a simple hut.
3. Create a "roof" by placing a piece of green felt over the top of the house.
4. Talk about how the pioneers adapted to their environment by using materials at hand (dirt) to create housing. In the Northeast, because trees were plentiful, settlers built their houses from wood. Ask students to list other examples of home building materials. What are the benefits and drawbacks to each type?

Play It Safe

Materials

- Pen/pencil
- Paper
- School map or diagram

Because of their reading, Jack and Annie knew what to do when the twister struck (*seek shelter in the storm cellar*). Would you and your students know what to do if a natural disaster struck while you were at school?

- Take this opportunity to talk about safety procedures at your school.
- If possible, take a quick tour of the building and point out fire exits and storm shelters; anything related to school safety.
- Ask students to draw a map of the quickest way from your classroom to the schoolyard.
- Reinforce school-safety lessons.

Other Books Involving History and Travel

Magic Treehouse books #1–22

By Mary Pope Osborne

Jack and Annie travel to various points in history, having grand adventures every step of the way!

The Time Warp Trio series

By Jon Scieszka, Lane Smith (Illustrator)

Best friends Fred, Sam, and Joe have wacky encounters as they bounce through various historical periods.

The Little House on the Prairie books

By Laura Ingalls Wilder, Garth Williams (Illustrator)

The best-loved series follows the adventures of Laura Ingalls, her two sisters, and her Ma and Pa as they make a pioneer life together.

Other Books by Mary Pope Osborne

Magic Treehouse books #1–22

American Tall Tales

Favorite Greek Myths

The Spider Kane mystery series

Teaching plan written by Rebecca Gómez.

- Part of Collection:

[Mary Pope Osborne Author Study](#)

- Subjects:

Architecture, Plot, Character, Setting, Literature Appreciation, Vocabulary, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Geography and Map Skills, Pioneers, Homes and Housing, United States, Maps and Globes, Social Studies through Literature, Honor, Siblings

- Skills:

Vocabulary