

Branch Out World



Picture Book Explorers
Series 1 – The British Isles
Blog Reader's Choice
Cedric's Day At The Castle

The **Picture Book Explorers** series is written primarily for use by Home Educating families but it will be useful for any parent who wishes to support their child's learning whether they attend school or not. The intended age range is approximately 5 to 9 years but can easily be adapted for older or younger siblings accordingly. This helps to keep Home Education a truly family experience.

This PDF file refers to a single male child throughout. I use this convention because it is just a shorter and easier way to write this material. It by no means is meant to imply that this material is aimed at boys only, or at one child families. It's not. It's equally as relevant to girls as to boys and can be used in family groups of siblings of mixed ages and abilities with differing interests.

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This material is not endorsed either by the author or the publisher of the picture book being explored. This unit is put together in the hope that other families will enjoy the learning journey that the picture book inspires.

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Branch Out World's 'Picture Book Explorers' are designed to encourage the love of learning in children by making use of one of the most treasured family times - sharing a book. Reading aloud to children brings a closeness between parent and child that helps to enhance the learning experience, making children more receptive and eager to learn. Learning then becomes something to look forward to and enjoy - hopefully, making beautiful memories for the future.

The premise is a simple one. A particular picture book is read every day for five days and then followed up by activities chosen from a suggested selection. There are five different sections of activities, one for each day you read the book. Preferably, this will take place on five consecutive days, but, if this is not possible, your child will still remain familiar with the story and get to know it in more depth because you read the book every time you sit down to explore together. You may find you have to extend the time frame for some reason, perhaps because of family commitments, or perhaps because your child has shown a particular interest in one, or more, aspects of the exploration. If this is the case, you may want to take a break from the book for a day or two while you look at certain topics in more detail, or, alternatively, you can make a note of your child's interests so that when you have finished the five sections, you and your child can **Branch Out** into further explorations of your own.

For a young child, one activity in each section may be enough, or if you have more than one child, they may each want to complete a different activity. An older child may want to do all the suggested activities in a section. Follow your child's lead in this, don't try to force him to do everything in each section if he doesn't want to. Remember, the aim is to maintain a love of learning.

Don't worry if you don't do all the activities in your five days of reading the book, you can explore each book again and again, as long as you make sure you keep a copy of this file.

A word of warning - from personal experience, keep up the momentum as best as you can. Too long a break during an exploration can result in your child's loss of interest in that particular book. If this happens, it may be best to leave it for a few weeks then come back to it, starting by reviewing briefly any of the completed sections again.

Before you start Series 1

- Get a library ticket
- Buy/print a map of the British Isles
- Collect magazine/newspaper photos of places of interest in the UK (travel brochures are good for this)
- Decide how you want to preserve a record of your child's written/art work and buy the appropriate stationery (see below)
- Start collecting modelling & art materials, glue, paint etc

How to record your child's work

You may want to keep a record of your child's learning journey with **Picture Book Explorers**. This can be done in a number of different ways, depending on how you use the Series.

- If your explorations are mainly discussion-based, you can keep a diary/blog of the topics you've discussed and the activities you've done together
- If you are only going to use **Picture Book Explorers** as a one-off, or very occasionally, a lapbook may be a fun way for your child to keep a log of individual exploration journeys.
- Poster-making is another effective way of recording explorations. You can add to this as part of your daily activities, or assemble the poster at the end of the exploration.
- If you are going to work your way through a complete series, it may be worth keeping a logbook of your explorations in a scrapbook or
 - on A4 paper kept in a ring-binder, either with 5 subject dividers (one for each day), or with dividers for each book you explore rather than for the daily sections. You will also need page protectors, hole re-enforcers and card-stock.
 - An older child may like a spiral-bound notebook to use as a logbook, with five colour-coded subject sections, again, one for each day. (I've bought these in pound-shops and at Lidl).
- Take PLENTY of photos, these can be added to any of the above logbooks
- Be your child's scribe when necessary. If the activities call for written work, let your child dictate his answers to you, ensuring that you insert punctuation as necessary. For younger children, or those not yet writing independently, this can be put straight into his logbook. Your older child may want to copy it out again for himself, either by hand or using a computer before putting it in his logbook. If older children are doing their own writing, encourage them to write their answers out in rough first so that they can concentrate more on the content first, spelling and punctuation later. Again, they can also use a computer or handwrite their final copy.

Before you start exploring

- Read through the weeks suggested activities
- Decide which activities you want to do with your child and gather all the necessary materials
- Collect together any go-along books/CDs/DVDs
- Gather together any toys/games/go-alongs which may be relevant to the story and put them in a container that is kept just for explorations.

The Daily Sections

Each exploration is divided into five sections, each section covering different subject areas.

- **Day 1 - *Exploring the Setting*** - when and where

This section focuses on history and geography, as well as looking at the themes presented in the book.

- **Day 2 - *Exploring the Words***

This section looks at literary devices and sometimes grammar, as well as providing opportunities for creative writing.

- **Day 3 - *Exploring the Pictures***

This section looks at the illustrations in more detail and suggests ways for your child to create their own artwork.

- **Day 4 - *Exploring Science***

This section looks at scientific topics that come up in the book - from animal studies to hands-on experiments.

- **Day 5 - *Exploring Maths, Crafts and More***

Finally, in this section, your child will lightly touch on maths activities in a way that relates to the story, when applicable. Maths will also often come into the suggested craft activities and recipes intended to bring a fun ending to your exploration journey.

the story. Let him gather and use any props that he wants.

Another method of narration is for him to draw what has happened in the story, either as a single picture or a series of pictures. He may use these to give a longer, verbal retelling of the story.

Don't worry if he misses out parts of the story. It is important not to prompt, correct or interrupt his retelling. Narration practise is intended to build confidence and help develop skills needed for composition writing.

Maritime Flags

Polly sends a message to Cedric using clothes on a washing line. In reality, ships use flags to send messages to each other. The flags used in the International Code of Signals have the same meaning to all mariners. Each flag represents a letter or number, and some have a more extensive meaning if flown alone or with one or two other flag. The radiographer on every ship has a copy of the code book to refer to so that the messages are understood correctly. The book is translated into nine languages - English, French, Italian, German, Japanese, Spanish, Norwegian, Russian and Greek.

In the appendix there are two sheets associated with this activity. The first sheet on [p. 34](#) illustrates the flags, the letters and numbers they represent along with the extra substitute flags. The substitute flags replace letters if the same letter is used more than once in a message. The longer meanings of some of the individual flags are given too.

The second sheet on p. 35 gives the individual flags. Print out as many sets as you need. They can be used to play pairs with younger children. Lay the cards out, face down. The first player turns two cards over to see if they match. All the other players have to see the cards and try and remember where they are. If they match, the player keeps them and has another go. If they don't match, they get turned back over and the next player has a go. Play continues until all the cards are matched to their partners.

Use the flags to create messages for your child to decode. Invent meanings for your family for single flags or combinations of 2 or 3 flags. He can write these messages in his Logbook just like a real ship's radiographer would have to do. Stick a small envelope in the Logbook to store the flags so that they can be reused.

Fonts and Handwriting

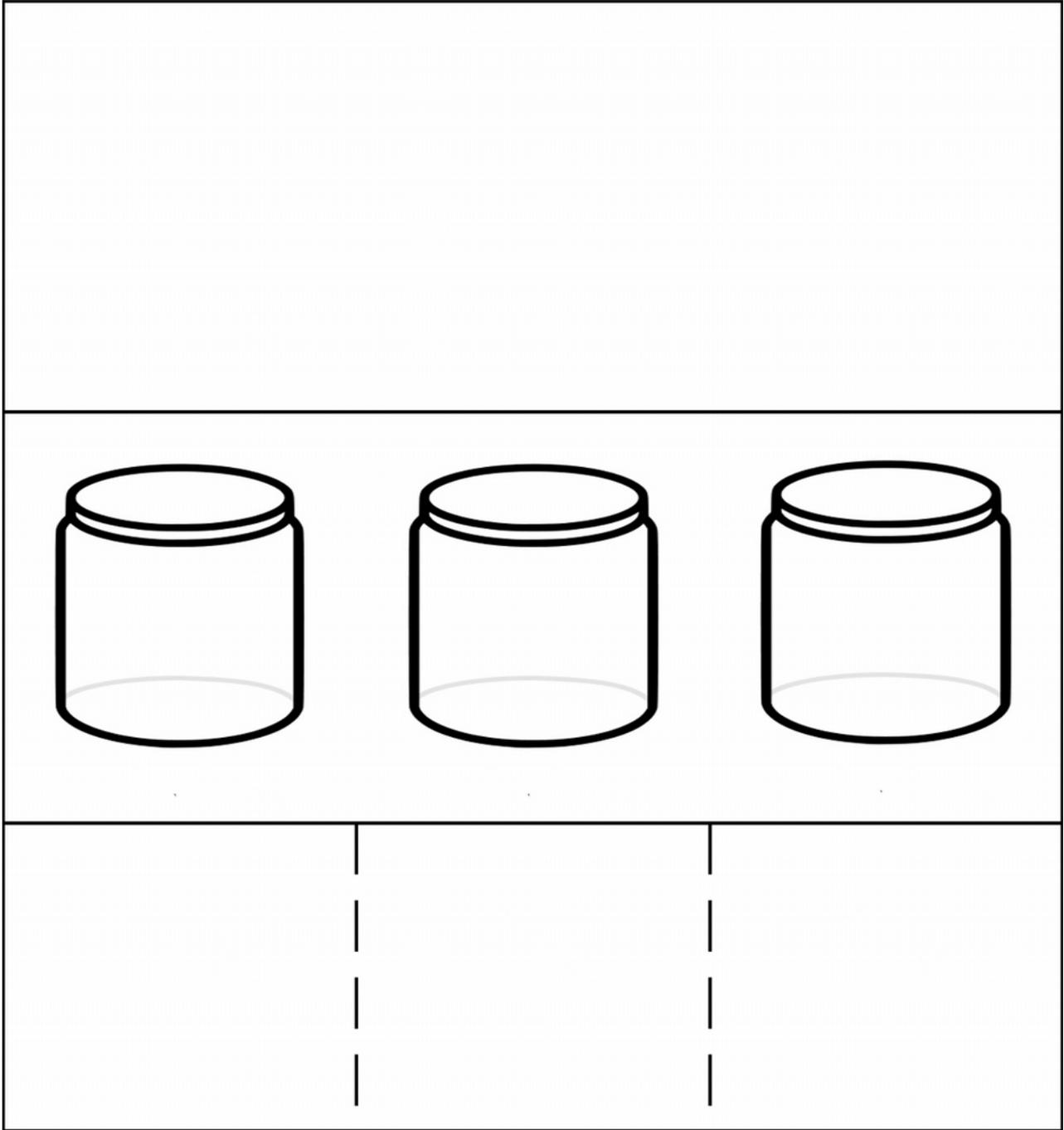
The book uses a special font called Open Dyslexic. This makes it easier to read for people who have dyslexia. Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty that mainly affects the way people read and spell words. It is a spectrum disorder which means different people will have different levels of severity. Quite often dyslexics have problems reading words because they appear to move around. This can be helped with coloured overlays and special fonts.

Even if people are not dyslexic, some fonts are harder to read than others.

Acid or Alkali Minibook

Cut out minibook in one piece, cut out label separately. Cut along dotted lines to create 3 flaps at bottom of minibook.

Stick label to front of top flap. Label outside of bottom flaps with what was added to each jar and inside with result, acid, neutral, alkali.



Acid or Alkali?

Thank you for purchasing this
Picture Book Explorers unit by **Branch Out World**
I hope you and your child have enjoyed your exploration
and learnt a few things along the way.

I am always looking to improve my products to give
customers more of what they want. Your feedback is
always welcome. My aim is to help you facilitate your
child's learning journey in a fun and positive way whilst
creating happy memories together.

If you have any questions, or suggestions for future
units, please don't hesitate to contact me by email at
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