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Table of Contents

Purpose and Overview	
Who is this unit for?	5
What do students learn?	6
How are students organized?.....	8
How much time is required?.....	8
How is learning assessed?.....	9
Why use <i>Book Mountain Expeditions</i> ?	10
Components	12
Getting Started	
Decisions to Make	16
Additional Materials Required	17
Preparation and Set Up	17
Lesson Plan	
Day One	19
Week One	20
Ongoing Review and Final Evaluation.....	22
Dossier Cover	23
Student Map	24
Bookmarks	25
Map Markers	26
Rubrics	27
Activity Card Form	30
Fantasy	
Introductory Essay	33
Travel Agreement.....	34
Recommended Reading List.....	35
Vocabulary List	39
Vocabulary List Dictionary Definitions	40
Vocabulary Activity Cards	44
Comprehension Activity Cards	47
Writing Activity Cards	51
Challenge Activity Cards	55
Master Worksheets.....	59



General Nonfiction

Introductory Essay	65
Travel Agreement	66
Recommended Reading List	67
Vocabulary List	73
Vocabulary List Dictionary Definitions	74
Vocabulary Activity Cards	78
Comprehension Activity Cards	80
Writing Activity Cards	84
Challenge Activity Cards	88
Master Worksheets	92

Poetry

Introductory Essay	103
Travel Agreement	105
Recommended Reading List	106
Vocabulary List	112
Vocabulary List Dictionary Definitions	113
Vocabulary Activity Cards	117
Comprehension Activity Cards	119
Writing Activity Cards	123
Challenge Activity Cards	127
Master Worksheets	131

Sports Fiction

Introductory Essay	141
Travel Agreement	143
Recommended Reading List	144
Vocabulary List	151
Vocabulary List Dictionary Definitions	152
Vocabulary Activity Cards	156
Comprehension Activity Cards	159
Writing Activity Cards	163
Challenge Activity Cards	167
Master Worksheets	171

Standards	180
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Teacher Feedback Form	184
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Purpose and Overview

Who is this unit for?

Book Mountain Expeditions is an independent reading program for fourth and fifth grade students that develops language arts skills, an understanding of literary genres and other curricular skills. Designed as a contract approach, this unit reaches all kinds of learners with its broad range of activities and variety of reading options. It provides a consistent approach that can be used to create a customized language arts program for one or more students. Reading level, activity selection and even effort required can be adapted to best fit the needs of each student. Use the unit with one student or your entire class. Incorporate it into your regularly scheduled language arts time or use it as an independent study alternative.

Acting as their “Travel Agent,” you guide student travelers as they select a journey into fantasy, general nonfiction, poetry or sports fiction. Use the Navigator, Adventurer or Explorer Recommended Reading List to find a book at, above or below the grade level that best fits each student’s interest and ability. Then select a variety of Vocabulary, Writing, Comprehension and Challenge activities from more than 50 choices provided in each genre.

Each student begins their personalized journey by reading the chosen book and completing the individually selected activities. Travel points are earned each time a student successfully completes an activity or presentation. These points move the student along the path of the Expedition Map toward the final destination—the top of Book Mountain.

To reinforce the verbal communication skills of speaking and listening, each student selects at least one activity that can be shared with the class. Or you might ask each student to present a summary of his or her journey to the class and then conduct a brief awards ceremony. This is a way to recognize individual achievements and creativity while students practice presentation and listening skills. Verbal sharing allows students to learn from and motivate each other. Hearing about a fun project might get other students excited about pursuing their own Book Mountain Expedition.

The journey comes to an end when the student earns enough travel points to reach the top of Book Mountain and earn a Genre Sticker to commemorate his or her experience. The student is then ready to embark on another expedition using another of the four literary genres to create a new personal reading adventure. The combinations of books and activities are endless!

Word Roots, Beginnings and Endings

General Nonfiction

Traveler name(s): _____

Root words stand alone, with no added beginnings or endings to change their meaning. For example, “fact” is the root word of “factual.” “Fiction” is the root word of “nonfiction.” Adding beginnings or endings to words can change their meaning or how they are used. Adding “ual” after “fact” changes the word from a noun to an adjective. Adding “non” before “fiction” makes it mean the opposite. Adding “s” after “disaster” makes it plural. Adding “d” after “generalize” makes it past tense. Keep in mind that you sometimes drop letters or double letters when you add an ending, as in “riding” from “ride” or “clubbed” from “club.”

Follow these steps to complete the chart below.

- 1 Choose up to three of your vocabulary words that have a root word and at least one added beginning or ending. Fill in a line of the chart for each word. (See the example in the first row.)
- 2 Choose other words from your list that are root words, without added beginnings or endings. Write them in both the first and second columns of the row. Then add a beginning and/or ending that changes the word and write it in the third column. Complete the fourth column, telling how your addition changes the word. (See the example in the second row.)
- 3 Continue until you have completed all five rows of the chart.

Vocabulary word	Root word	Added ending or beginning	How it changes meaning or use
argumentative	argument	• Ending: ative	• Changes from noun to adjective
possible	possible	• Beginning: im • Ending: drop le, add ility	• Means the opposite • Changes from adjective to noun