Brave Writer Spin and Spiral

Maybe you’ve heard the educationese term “scope and sequence”? Here’s our version: the Brave Writer Spin and Spiral—terms and skills to visit and revisit.

In this issue of the Arrow:

» We’ll be drawn into another world by a question (a classic opening hook);
» We’ll have our interest piqued with the art of antithesis;
» We’ll pause over the practical purposes of commas;
» We’ll look at the tricky spelling of words with “ain;”
» We’ll let dialogue guide us down memory lane as we notice nostalgia;
» We’ll take a little stroll with /gh/;
» We’ll clarify meaning with the Oxford comma;
» We’ll practice including an emphatic fragment;
» We’ll divide the practical and emotional with a semicolon; and
» We’ll bring fiction to life as we craft dialogue.
Week One

“What are you doing, Cusi?” An old Indian stood looking down at a boy who lay on an overhanging rock, gazing into the valley below. The old Indian’s slow, deep voice broke the stillness of the mountain world.

(Chapter 1)
Week One

Opening Lines

“What are you doing, Cusi?” An old Indian stood looking down at a boy who lay on an overhanging rock, gazing into the valley below. The old Indian’s slow, deep voice broke the stillness of the mountain world.

(Chapter 1)

Why this passage

Nolan Clark offers us a classic use of the opening hook by asking a question. An opening hook is the literary device that is designed to grab a reader’s interest from the first sentence. Many types of hooks work, but the time-honored “question” is certainly the most obvious and often quite effective. In this passage, Cusi, the protagonist (main character) of the story lives in a world removed from most readers’ experiences. This hook draws the reader forward to understand more of that world.
What to note

Contrasts: There are a couple of lovely contrasts. Begin by explaining the term “contrast” to your children. One easy way to talk about contrasts is to stack up opposites:

» good-bad
» left-right
» up-down
» pretty-ugly

A contrast takes the concept of opposites and applies it to two items that are juxtaposed.

» a good mood, a bad mood
» a left turn, a right turn
» up on the top shelf, down on the bottom shelf
» a pretty dress, an ugly dress

In writing and acting, the practice of highlighting contrasts is called the art of “antithesis.” (A freebie for you, home educator.) Antithesis creates tension in the writing so that the reader must continue to read to come to satisfying resolution. Not only that, the writer provides the reader with stimulating images that clash in the imagination when making use of antithesis. Notice the “old Indian” and the “boy”; “stood looking down” at a “boy who lay”; “deep voice” and “broke the stillness.”

The contrasts serve to draw readers into the writing, to enhance our curiosity, and to pique our interest. They also create strong mental images.
**Dialogue:** The opening question is in dialogue quotes. It includes the comma and the question mark as well. We don’t know who says those words until we read the following sentences. Part of the suspense of the opening sentence is that it does not include what is called an “attributive tag.” There is no “he said, she said” that follows it. The reader must keep reading to determine who is speaking and who is Cusi. The literary element of this month is dialogue, so skip ahead if you want to discuss it in more depth.

**Commas:** There are three commas in this passage. The first one comes before Cusi’s name. One comma convention is to include one when you reference someone’s name after you’ve already addressed the person in the sentence. The “you” in the sentence is followed by Cusi’s name, and so a comma precedes his name.

The second comma comes between the words “rock” and “gazing.” This comma comes between two clauses. The first part of the sentence describes what the Indian is observing, and the second part of the sentence is describing what Cusi is doing.

The third comma puts a pause between two descriptive words to describe the Indian’s voice (slow, deep).

**Proper nouns:** All proper nouns are capitalized. Cusi is the name of the boy, and “Indian” is the descriptive term that is intended
to identify the ethnic group of this old man’s origin. “Indian” is a designation that was erroneously applied to the indigenous people of the Americas. It originated when Columbus mistakenly thought he had arrived in the Indies and called the people he encountered “Indians.” However, while the Inca were traditionally considered the “ruling class” of the Inca empire, in most historical documents from early colonial South American history all people living within the Inca empire were called Inca (or Andean—a reference to the Andes mountain region they inhabited). Over time, the Inca were also linked with other ethnic groups through their shared language and called Quechuas.

Nolan Clark, the author, traveled extensively in South America and was familiar with the people and cultures.

How to teach the passage

There are three sentences in this passage. They can be copied one at a time or all at once.

**Monday**

Discuss the notes: Remember that you don’t have to introduce every concept to your student at once. The idea is for you to read the notes, consider which features of the passage may resonate with your child, and then in your own words, share them with your child.

**Tuesday**

Have your child handwrite the first sentence, paying special attention to the quotation marks, and the comma. While dialogue is usually indented, it is common for the chapter opening to be
flush left. Look at the first line of each chapter to demonstrate this concept. Note that the paragraphs that follow the opening and dialogue passages are indented.

**Wednesday**

The second sentence is long. It may need to be divided into two sittings for copywork. The comma provides a natural breaking point.

**Thursday**

Have the child copy the final sentence. Note (comment on) the double letters in “stillness.” There’s a tricky spelling to note as well. The word “mountain” uses an “ain” to create the same sound found in the number “ten” (‘en’). Think of other words that end in the same way.

- again
- bargain
- Britain
- captain

- certain
- chaplain
- chieftain
- curtain

- fountain
- mountain
- porcelain
- villain

The “ain” can be used for another sound, as in “train.” Read the list to compare to the previous list.

- attain
- complain
- contain
- detain
- disdain
- domain

- entertain
- explain
- maintain
- obtain
- ordain
- refrain

- remain
- restrain
- sustain
- terrain
Keep in mind that these two sets of words with their slightly different sounds use the identical spelling "ain."

**Friday: French-style dictation**

Only words are omitted in this French-style dictation. The punctuation is already supplied.

» What
» An
» Indian

» down
» an
» gazing

» Indian's
» stillness
» mountain
Week One: French-style Dictation
(Chapter 1)

“____ are you doing, Cusi?” __ old ______ stood looking
____ at a boy who lay on __ overhanging rock, ______
into the valley below. The old ________ slow, deep voice
broke the _________ of the _________ world.
Chuto sighed. “Is your heart going back over the trail your feet have traveled?” he asked tiredly.

Cusi shook his head. “That way,” he said, pointing his lips on the way toward home. Chuto laughed, and his laughter held the precious tones of gladness.

*(Chapter 8)*
Week Two

Dialogue

Chuto sighed. “Is your heart going back over the trail your feet have traveled?” he asked tiredly.

Cusi shook his head. “That way,” he said, pointing his lips on the way toward home. Chuto laughed, and his laughter held the precious tones of gladness.

(Chapter 8)

Why this passage

This little dialogue piece is two paragraphs. Each time a dialogue changes speakers writers indent a new paragraph. Plus, aren’t you still trying to figure out how to get your lips to “point” in any direction, let alone the way home?
What to note

The word “sigh” may be unfamiliar to your kids. Give a physical example of sighing. Deep chest-filling breath, lift your shoulders, and then give a loud exhale. Get them to give their best sighs too. Warning: could become a competition!

Now ask what kind of emotion a sigh expresses. It may be difficult for children to think of the emotion words that go with sighing, so help them out. Three common emotions expressed in a sigh are “sorrow, weariness, and relief” (dictionary.com). Are there different inflections to sighing that let the other person know when you are genuinely sorrowful as opposed to passive-aggressively letting the room know you’re not happy? Discuss.

Notice the nice line “Is your heart going back over the trail your feet have traveled?” It’s a lovely use of language. Think about what the author is expressing. Ask your kids why this is an interesting way to depict nostalgia (romanticized memories). Imagine a trip you’ve all taken together (a family hike or vacation by train or car). While you remember it, do feelings surface with the memories? This is what Clark means when she talks about one’s heart traveling a trail previously taken. The emotions and the memories are retraced together.

Cusi responds with a shake of the head, and then uses his lips to point the way home. How does one do that? Try it!

Lastly, the final sentence contains this phrase: “precious tones of gladness.” The author is conveying the inflection of the laughter—gladness. Sometimes laughter can be mocking or embarrassed. In this case, the laughter is pure and happy.
How to teach the passage

This passage is another instance of dialogue that uses a question inside the dialogue quotation marks. The attributive tag is at the end of the question, which is a little different than last week. Can you see how the “he asked tiredly” is lower case? That is because the sentence is not yet finished until the quote has been associated with the speaker.

The second dialogue quote goes with a gesture. As a result, Cusi not only says, “That way” with words, but continues the same thought with pointing his lips. Effective writing shows more than it tells. This bit of writing does both.

There are four sentences in this passage. The first and third are relatively short. The second and fourth that contain the dialogue quotes are much longer. Divide these over four days of copywork.

Friday French-style dictation

The following terms are for this dictation practice.

» sighed
» your
» heart
» trail
» your
» asked

» head
» pointing
» home
» laughed
» laughter
» gladness
Spelling notes

The following discussion is playful. Though more serious discussions of digraphs can be found, with first and second graders, your goal is to create hooks in the imagination that enable them to remember (retain) spelling idiosyncrasies.

A little stroll with /gh/

Ah the ghostly “gh” that skips the “h” as in ghetto, and is often silent, like a sigh, and at other times, offering just enough of a sound (like the ending /f/ in rough).

Sigh is similar to light, night, and though. These letters may as well sleep in—that’s how little work they’re doing to announce the words they inhabit.

There are two other terms (derived from the same root) in this list that also use the “gh” yet they make a sound: laughed and laughter. Now the “gh” is having a good chuckle at our expense. Where once it took its right to remain silent seriously, now the pair is frolicking with the “f” sound. Words like “enough,” “rough,” and “cough” also use the “gh” as “f” sound. What do you know?

But the boldest, loudest of the three uses is reserved for the Front Row “gh.” When “gh” pushes her way to the front of the word, she erupts in the hard /g/ sound, as in: “ghost,” “ghastly,” and “ghee.” The “h” slips out the backdoor, leaving no sonic trace, but the “g” goes hard!
Week Two: French-style Dictation
(Chapter 8)

Chuto ______. “Is ____ _____ going back over the
_____ _____ feet have traveled?” he _____ tiredly.

Cusi shook his ____. “That way,” he said, __________
his lips on the way toward ____. Chuto ______, and his
________ held the precious tones of ________.
Week Three

Cusi’s bright blue poncho swung backward as he stepped along at the head of the llama line. His coca bag tied at one side of his sash and the bag of parched corn at the other swished gaily against his knees.

(Chapter 12)
Week Three

Description

Cusi’s bright blue poncho swung backward as he stepped along at the head of the llama line. His coca bag tied at one side of his sash and the bag of parched corn at the other swished gaily against his knees.

(Chapter 12)
Why this passage

Isn’t the description vivid in this passage? Ask your kids to draw a sketch of the various items tied to Cusi (the paragraph continues with more detailed information that could contribute to the illustration). No need for artistic talent, just a quick sketch that shows where the medicine bag is, the bag of parched corn, the coca bag, and so on. Then you can label the contents.

What to note

The writing features some great alliteration: “b” —bright blue, and backward; “l” —llama line; “s” —side of his sash, and later, swished. The repeated “sh” sound is also present. When consonant sounds repeat inside the word, we call that action: consonance. “Sash” and “swish” include the “sh” sounds.

Clark makes use of vivid verbs in this passage as well. The verb is the word that expresses the activity of the passage.

» swung
» stepped
» tied
» swished

The verbs communicate the action. They help us to see what Cusi is doing, not just what he is wearing.

There is one use of an apostrophe (‘) to indicate the “possessive” (ownership of the bright blue poncho).
How to teach the passage

The punctuation is simple. Capital letters start the two sentences and periods end them.

**Friday: French-style dictation**

This week’s passage features the following spelling words.

- blue
- stepped
- head
- bag
- side
- sash
- bag
- corn
- swished
- knees
Week Three: French-style Dictation

(Chapter 12)

Cusi’s bright ____ poncho swung backward as he ______ along at the ____ of the llama line. His coca ___ tied at one ____ of his ____ and the ___ of parched ____ at the other _______ gaily against his _____.

Name: ___________________     Date: ___________________
Week Four

That was his mother, and now she was gone. But no. She was not gone. He carried her safely in his memory. He carried her little golden sandals close to his heart; vividly, safely, and forever he would remember.

(Chapter 17)
Week Four

Because mothers

That was his mother, and now she was gone. But no. She was not gone. He carried her safely in his memory. He carried her little golden sandals close to his heart; vividly, safely, and forever he would remember.

(Chapter 17)

Why this passage

The little golden sandals. Sob.

What to note

Commas: When you write a sentence that has a series of three items, including the conjunction “and,” there must be a comma after each item including the one preceding the “and.” This “last comma before and” is commonly known as the “Oxford comma” or the “serial comma” and is likely to incite spirited debates on the Internet. For our purposes, know this. There is no special unit of the police sent
to charge you or your child with a fine if you don’t use the comma before *and* in a series of three or more items. Clarity of intention is what matters.

**In favor of the serial comma**

- **Unclear:** She thanked her parents, Aunt Rita and Cousin Joe.  
  (Are her aunt and cousin her parents?)
- **Clear:** She thanked her parents, Aunt Rita, and Cousin Joe.  
  (Three distinct people.)

**When the serial comma is unnecessary**

- **Mistaken meaning:** The delicious dinner consisted of fruit salad, sliced ham, and macaroni, and cheese.  
  (Did the macaroni sit side-by-side slices of cheese?)
- **Correct meaning:** The delicious dinner consisted of fruit salad, sliced ham, and macaroni and cheese.  
  (Ah! Mac and cheese—together!)

The idea is to consider what is implied if the comma is not there. Play with it. Look at the sentence both ways and consider the meaning before considering the comma.

**Notice the fragment:** “But no.” This two word sentence is a fragment but it provides a wonderful counterpoint to the lengthy sentences all around it. The whole paragraph clusters around that profound realization: But no. Cusi reconciles his grief with an emphatic “But no.” The memory of his mother will go with him and he will carry her with him for the rest of his life.

The semicolon makes an appearance here. It divides the last sentence into two halves—the practical carrying of the sandals (physically transporting them), and the emotional carrying (his memories of his mother, close to his heart).
How to teach the passage

Monday

Begin by discussing the passage notes. Practice the serial comma following the examples in the previous section.

Next, practice creating sentences that include an emphatic fragment: “But no.”

» I looked forward to eating the entire candy bar myself. But no. My toddler brother got to it first.

» The first hints of spring were on their way. But no. A final storm piled snow on top of the brand new blooming crocuses.

» I was going to be the star player in the tournament. But no. I busted my leg skiing and now I have to watch the game from the sidelines on crutches.

Lastly, create a sentence that uses the semicolon to combine both a physical act and an emotional one.

» Christy ripped open the gift the second she got it; tears filled her eyes.

» I wolfed down my lunch; a sudden wave of nausea came over me.

» We walked into the corn maze determined to get through it together; confidently, in solidarity, we found our way out.

Do these in dialogue. Build the sentences together. The goal is to explore language, not to write. The creation from scratch of sentences is challenging. Discuss ideas first and then build from there. You might ask leading questions like, “What kind of feeling do you get when you blow out candles on a birthday cake? You
feel hopeful, wishful for the thing you really want? How does this sound?” Then create a sentence.

» I wished really hard as I blew out the candles; visions of my brand new four-wheeler filled my head.

**Tuesday**

Have your child copy the first sentence, remembering to indent and to include the comma.

That was his mother, and now she was gone.

**Wednesday**

Copy these three short sentences (no indentation). Talk about the periods and capitals that follow for each complete sentence. This is a good chance to reinforce capitalization following an end mark.

But no. She was not gone. He carried her safely in his memory.

**Thursday**

This last sentence is long. It may take both Thursday and Friday to complete. Use the semicolon as the divider.

He carried her little golden sandals close to his heart; vividly, safely, and forever he would remember.
Friday French-style dictation

The following words are selected as the omitted terms from the French-style dictation.

- mother
- she
- But
- no
- She
- safely
- little
- heart
- safely
- remember

There are two opportunities to spell “safely” correctly. Be sure to go over the spelling of that word. There is one little run of words (But no. She) that are all back-to-back. Talk about this in advance so that your child has a good idea of how to prepare to write that many words in a row as you read them.
Name: ___________________     Date: ___________________

Week Four: Reverse Dictation
(Chapter 17)

That was his _____, and now ___ was gone. ___ __.
___ was not gone. He carried her ______ in his memory.
He carried her ______ golden sandals close to his ____;
vividly, ______, and forever he would ________.

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Literary Element

Dialogue: He said, she said

Dialogue is a great way to bring fiction to life. Dialogue means people are interacting which means action is around the corner! Lots of ground is covered when people communicate so the plot zips along at a fresh new pace, like a trotting pony.

Good dialogue ought to sound natural, though there are aspects of written dialogue that are not identical to natural speech.

Writing dialogue is enjoyable! It’s like writing your own movie or television script. Kids tend to enjoy creating dialogue because the habits of speech are natural to them.

1. **Good dialogue starts in the middle.**

Writers drop the “Hellos” and “How are you’s?” Even though their goal is to write natural dialogue, readers are only so patient. A long-winded greeting followed by the local news is not what the reader is after. The reader wants to know what happens next in the story, which leads us to the next feature of effective dialogue...

2. **Good dialogue develops a character.**

Sometimes the writer wants to unfold more about the character to the reader but dreads the idea of going on and on about the character’s life and experiences in a bunch of paragraphs. Dialogue gives the character a partner who is interested in those to-doings. By creating a dialogue that allows the character to reveal his or her past, or that unfolds his or her hot temper, or shows a sense of humor, the writer naturally educates the reader about the character.
3. **Good dialogue adds variety.**

Description and storytelling can become tedious for readers. Dialogue changes the pace.
Writing Activity

Before your child tries his or her hand at writing dialogue, identify these features in dialogue in a book you are currently reading. Notice whether or not the dialogue starts in the middle of the conversation (without “hellos” and “goodbyes”). Look to see if it advances the plot, or if it develops a character, or simply adds variety. Sometimes a good dialogue will do all of the above!

Once you've spent some time noticing the elements of dialogue and its literary characteristics, collaborate and write one (or more) with your kids. Role play. Each of you can take one side of the conversation while you, the parent, takes notes.

Try one of these strategies.

**Starts in the middle**

This one is easy. Leave out “hello” and “goodbye.” Jump right into the shocking action or discovery.

**Mom:**  My word! What happened to Goldie?

**Connie:** I gave her a “style.” Only used one tube of gel.

**Mom:** But how, I mean, what... Good heavens! Look at her!

**Connie:** I know! I turned the heat up on the curling iron, gave her a rawhide chew, and went to work. Mousse worked great to make the curls stick up around her ears and gel made the curls stand up back near her tail.

**Mom:** Well, um, put her in the crate, I guess. We’ve got to go.

**Connie:** But she’ll smash her ringlets!
It takes paying close attention to discover that this dialogue is about the hairstyle Connie gave their pet dog!

**Advances the plot**

Try writing a dialogue for a story you and your child know well. For instance, you might write a dialogue from “Star Wars” or “Cinderella.” Your child doesn’t need to remember the dialogue you’ve already heard on screen or read in the book. Rather, create a dialogue using the story you both already know. Put one of the scenes into dialogue where you advance that particular part of the plot.

**Wolf:** Where are you going with such yummy treats in your basket?

**Red Riding Hood:** To my grandmother’s house. She’s sick with fever and I’m bringing her muffins. I must not delay.

**Wolf:** Oh your poor grandmother. You must also pick her some flowers to cheer her up.

**Red Riding Hood:** My mother said not to stray from the path. I must keep going. I beg your pardon.

**Wolf:** Your mother won’t mind if you pick flowers for your sick grandmother. Where does she live? Just over that ridge and beyond the woods?

**Red Riding Hood:** Yes, that’s right. I suppose I could stop just a few moments. What would be the harm in that?

**Wolf:** Good, good. You are a good little girl. Best be on my way!
As you can see in this dialogue, the tension is created through the introduction of the wolf’s suggestion that Red Riding Hood’s mother would not mind if Little Red Riding Hood strayed from the path for a little while since it would be for a “good cause.” This interchange advances the plot.

**Develops a character**

Pick a famous character that has a particular style of speech. You might pick Yoda, or Tigger, the Cowardly Lion from the Wizard of OZ, or Ursula (from “The Little Mermaid”). Or your child can pick a generic character: a surfer, a brainiac, a girl with a French accent, a boy who has a lisp. Write a dialogue where you contrast how that character speaks with how you speak.

**Marie:** Zis is ze hardest zing for me to do.

**Julie:** But of course it is. You’ve never had to be in an American spelling bee before.

**Marie:** ‘Ow do you know when ze zound “aieet” ees spelled “i-g-h-t” or “i-t-e”?

**Julie:** Seems like you just learn ‘em. Like if I close my eyes, I can just see ‘em.

**Marie:** When I close my eyes, I zee noz-zing but zee French words.

**Adds variety**

To write a dialogue that adds variety, create a short paragraph that describes a setting and then move to a dialogue that introduces two characters to that setting.
The bonfire roared and crackled. Its sparks flung little bits of bright red and orange into the sky that flickered and died before anyone could point them out. That didn’t stop Mark trying. “Hey Lisa, look out. Those sparks… Oh no!” He grabbed a towel covered in soot and batted the white shoulder of Lisa’s sweater from behind. Lisa wheeled on him, and smacked him across the jaw without pausing to think.

“What on earth are you doing to me?” she cried, glaring at the black smudges across her arm.

“I was only… I mean, you were on fire… that is, I was, you know, putting you out.”

A wayward spark lighted the space between then for an instant. Then someone called: “Time to make s’mores,” and Mark and Lisa chuckled awkwardly and moved toward the marshmallows together.

**Practical tips**

Your kids are young. The goal is not to write fantastically crafted dialogue. Rather, play with the objectives of each type. Try one or more, and do it over the course of a day. There is no “correct” dialogue result. The point is to explore the ways writers craft dialogue so that you and your children can appreciate their efforts and develop the skills.

Besides, who knows when one of your kids may want to write a novel!
Hello, Book Club Planners!

This book club guide is packed with ideas for a memorable “book club party school.” **Pick and choose** the ideas that work best for you, your location, and the children involved. Believe me when I say: even I won’t use all of the ideas included in this guide, but I wanted to provide you with a lot of choices. Go forth and kick-start a lifetime of literary enjoyment for your kids.

**Secret of the Andes**

*Welcome to the beautiful country of Peru.*

*We have a variety of landscapes here, from the beautiful Andes mountains to the low lying Pampas region.*

*We are glad you joined us for our meeting today. We have much to discuss before you set out for the Holy City, Cuzco.*

*Please make your way to the grassy field.*

*Don’t worry about the llamas. Just be sure to keep to yourself. They have been known to spit at visitors who pay them too much attention.*
Hidden Valley

» Hang photos and display books in the meeting area that show images of Peru and the Inca Empire.
  » Machu Picchu (While this isn’t mentioned specifically in the book, it was an important part of the Incan empire and Cusi’s heritage.)
  » an Inca rope bridge
  » Andes Mountains
  » traditional Inca clothing
  » Inca wool
  » llamas
  » Cuzco, the capital city of the Inca Empire, which is mentioned in the book

» Invite your guests to wear wool hats or scarves.

» Print a map of Peru for each of your guests. Sketch in the location of the Andes Mountains, Cuzco, and Machu Picchu. This is a good time to share information about the images you found online or in books.

» Play pan pipes music, the music of the minstrel, quietly in the background today. Search online for pan pipes music and select a YouTube collection to play.

The Salt Pits

» Potatoes are a traditional food enjoyed in Peru. Bake a potato dish using several different types of potatoes and conduct a taste test. Include russet, sweet, red, white, and purple potatoes.

» Make a potato salad or a traditional Peruvian dish, such as Papas a la Huancaina (potatoes with cheese).
Corn is a staple in the Peruvian diet and was a staple in Cusi’s diet. Locate Peruvian choclo (corn) at a local specialty grocery store and enjoy Peruvian corn on the cob.

Alfajores are a Peruvian cookie. You can make them at home by searching for a simple recipe online, or you can find them at a local Peruvian restaurant.

Drink Inca Kola. Cusi wouldn’t have had access to this soda, but it is the soft drink of choice in Peru. Inca Kola can be purchased at many specialty grocery stores.

Visit a Peruvian restaurant for your book club meeting today or search online for recipes from Peru and find a few your group will enjoy.

Bartering in Cuzco

Teach everyone how to finger knit using yarn and scissors. You can learn to finger knit by watching a video online—there are several available. Search for finger knitting kids, and you will find videos and blog posts with detailed instructions. (While finger knitting is simple, you may want to practice before attempting to teach the kids.)

Once you have mastered the basics, search for finger knitting projects kids and find a few projects to try.

Weave using simple cardboard loom. Kids can create a simple weaving project by using a circular piece of cardboard, scissors, and yarn. First, you will need to create the loom, and then you can weave the yarn.

Cut out circles from scrap cardboard boxes. Draw spokes on your wheel using a pencil and a ruler so that it looks like the spokes of a bike wheel. Cut small notches at the end of each spoke. Tape a piece of yarn to the back of the circle and then
run it across the front of the circle through two notches directly across from each other. Move to the next notch and run the yard across the circle again. Repeat this until you have covered all of the spokes drawn on your circle. Cut the yard and tape it onto the back of the circle.

Select a piece of yarn to weave around the circle and tie the end around the center of the loom. Begin weaving it under and over the loom strings as you go around the circle. If you want to change colors, cut the string, tie on a new color, and continue weaving. When you are finished, cut the string and tape the end to the back of the cardboard circle.

Optional: Add beads to your project as you weave.

For more specific images and directions, search online for kids cardboard loom weaving.

Sprout a potato at home in a jar. Potatoes are a staple food source in the traditional Peruvian diet. To sprout a potato, you will need a glass cup or jar, toothpicks, and a potato.

Select a potato that has lots of eyes, because the eyes are needed to sprout roots. Insert four to six toothpicks around the center of the potato, so they are equal distance apart. Push them about 1/4 – 1/2 inch into the potato until they are secure.

Fill the glass jar or cup about halfway with water and then submerge one end of the potato into the water allowing the toothpicks to rest on top of the glass. Add more water if necessary to cover the end of the potato that is in the jar.

Send the potato home with the kids and have them keep it in front of a sunny window. (Drain the water for transport and have the kids refill their jar at home.) In approximately three weeks, roots should begin to appear.
» Make a **bookmark with a tinkling bell**. Cut bookmark size rectangles from **cardstock** and let the kids decorate them with **crayons or markers**. Draw a scene from the book, a llama, or something inspired by the images of Peru in the meeting area. In addition to a picture, be sure the children write the title of the book and the date. Punch a hole in the top of each bookmark. Cut **three pieces of yarn** and knot them to the cardstock through the hole. Teach the children how to braid the yarn. It’s true that Cusi braided grass, but yarn will work just as well for us.

Part way down the braid, slide a **small craft bell** onto one piece of yarn and continue to braid. Finish off the braid with a knot and trim the remaining yarn.

» Take a trip to a **llama farm** if there is one in your local area. Search online for **llama farm [name of your city]**.

*Enjoy your journey, my young friends, and remember, “grieve not if you are searching in circles.”*