A WONDERING HEART™

ATLAS OF HOLIDAYS

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Classroom Companion

By Sheryl Dotson • Magsico Press • Ages 5–8 • Grades K–2



Designed to accompany ***Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?*** by Sheryl Dotson. Access to the book is required for the complete lessons.

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TEACHER GUIDE | BOOK + COMPANION

Start Here

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Designed to accompany *Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?* by Sheryl Dotson.
Access to the book is required for the complete lessons.
36-page paperback • ISBN 979-8-9823392-2-5. Story: pp. 4–27 (Spreads 1–12). Learning pages: pp. 28–36.

Audience: Ages 5–8, Grades K–2. Grade 3 work is labeled optional.
Essential question: Is there really gold at the end of a rainbow?

Learning goals

Retell six story events in order; distinguish checkable facts from legends and folktales; explain how sharing and friendship become the friends' "real gold." Optional work adds map reading or a rhythmic retelling.

Materials & preparation

Gather the book, pencils or crayons, and the student pages below. For sorting, provide scissors and glue, precut cards, or let children write card letters in the bins. Preview the story and the answer guidance on page 13. Mark the few read-aloud stops on page 4.

Exact print plan

One 45-minute lesson	Page 10 only
Three core sessions	Pages 9, 10 and 11
Optional map/count extension	Add page 12
Teacher reference only	Pages 2–8 and 13–14

Print selected pages on **US Letter, single-sided, at 100% / actual size**. The activities do not depend on color. No-print choices appear in each session. The separate Coloring and Fun Pack is optional and is not needed for these lessons.

TEACHER GUIDE | FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS

Choose Your Time

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Complete lesson • about 45 minutes

18 min — Read: Read the full story, pp. 4–27, with two brief stops: facts and tales (pp. 10–13), then the picnic ending (pp. 24–27).
22 min — Explore: Explain and model the two-bin sort, then use page 10 with partner talk (Session 2 guidance).
5 min — Reflect: Ask, "What was one kind of real gold the friends found?" Children say, draw, or point to evidence.

Print: page 10 for each learner. Expanded sessions are optional.
Precut the cards or use letter codes as needed. Reading and discussion time will vary by class.

Three sessions • optional expanded route

1. Read and Wonder — 30 min: First full read-aloud and sequencing. Student page 9; teacher page 5.
2. Explore and Discover — 25 min: Reread selected pages and sort facts / tales. Student page 10; teacher page 6.
3. Connect and Create — 25 min: Reread the picnic ending and explain "real gold." Student page 11; teacher page 7.

Extend to five sessions only if useful

Add either or both **20-minute** extensions on page 8: a holiday map (or a clover-count alternative), and a rhythmic retelling. Three core sessions give a complete experience; five days is an option, not a requirement.

Keep the book at the center

Return to the illustrations and Ms. Hazel's explanations. The companion supports discussion and practice; it does not reproduce or replace the picture book. Coloring and pure puzzles remain in the separate standalone Fun Pack.

All times are planning estimates, not classroom-tested completion promises.

TEACHER GUIDE | DISCUSSION

Read Aloud Guide

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Before reading

Show the cover. Ask, “What do you notice? What do you wonder?” Introduce the question in the title. Explain that a story can include real-world information, traditional tales, and an invented animal adventure.

A few purposeful stops

Spread 1 • pp. 4–5: Where was Patrick born? Where did he later live? What does the book say people remember and celebrate?
Spreads 4–5 • pp. 10–13: Ms. Hazel calls the snake story a legend and the leprechaun story a folktale. What clues tell us these are traditional stories?
Spreads 9–10 • pp. 20–23: Does finding a clover make gold appear? How does Ms. Hazel explain a rainbow?
Spreads 11–12 • pp. 24–27: What did the friends share? Why might these things feel like treasure?

After reading

Retell: package, rainbow, ribbon, woodpecker, clover, picnic. Ask, “How did the friends’ idea of treasure change?” Accept a spoken answer, drawing, gesture, or pointing to a picture.

Words to discover

Legend: a traditional story often linked to a person or place.
Folktale: a story passed from person to person over time.
Folklore: a broad name for shared stories, customs, and beliefs.
Tradition: a practice passed down and repeated.
Shamrock: a three-leaflet clover used as a symbol of Ireland.

Describe Christian beliefs respectfully; children do not need to affirm or practice them. Family sharing is optional, including saying, “We do not celebrate this holiday.” Never require a personal religious response.

SESSION 1 | CORE | 30 MINUTES

Read and Wonder

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Goal & question

Observable goal: Put the six picture cards in story order and describe at least one event.
Question: What happened during the friends' rainbow adventure?

Prepare

Use the full story, pp. 4–27, and student page 9. This is the **first reading**; no prior reading is assumed. Children number the cards; cutting is optional.

Teach • 3 + 15 + 8 + 4 = 30 minutes

3 min — Notice: Show the cover and invite a prediction.
15 min — Read: Read all story pages aloud. Use only brief pauses so children can follow the adventure.
8 min — Sequence: Model with the package card: "The package arrives before the rainbow chase, so this is event 1." Learners number the other cards, then compare with a partner.
4 min — Reflect: Ask partners to retell the beginning, one middle event, and the ending.

Support, stretch & no-print choice

Support: Read captions aloud; use three anchor events first: package, clover, picnic. Add the other events together.
Stretch: Explain why one event must come before another.
No print: Point to the six spreads in the book; children orally retell or sketch the sequence on scrap paper.

Check understanding

Look for the correct six-card order after discussion and a spoken, drawn, or pointed account of an event. If a child reverses two cards, revisit those spreads together. Answers and exact references: page 13.

SESSION 2 | CORE | 25 MINUTES

Explore and Discover

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Goal & question

Observable goal: Sort at least five of six cards after discussion and explain one choice.
Question: Which statements describe facts we can check, and which belong to legends or folktales?

Prepare

Use student page 10 and the answers on page 13. Reread selected lines on pp. 4–5, 10–13 and 22–23. Precut cards if needed, or use A–F letter codes in the bins.

Teach • 3 + 5 + 12 + 5 = 25 minutes

3 min — Recall: Ask what Ms. Hazel meant by "legend" and "folktale."
5 min — Read and model: Reread the selected explanations. Model card A: "Patrick lived in Ireland. We can check historical sources, so I place A in Facts we can check."
12 min — Sort: Read all six cards aloud. Partners place the cards or write their letters; each explains one choice.
5 min — Check and discuss: Review the bins. Separately discuss: "Some people call four-leaf clovers lucky. Does that promise gold will appear?"

Support, stretch & no-print choice

Support: Work with one fact and one tale first; read and sort together.
Stretch: Identify a source or a line in Ms. Hazel's explanation that supports a choice.
No print: Read the cards from your copy; children point to two labeled areas or say "fact" or "tale."

Check understanding

Listen for a reason, not just a label. Keep folklore as an umbrella term: legends, customs, and beliefs can all be folklore. Luck beliefs and holiday traditions are discussed separately from this two-bin activity.

SESSION 3 | CORE | 25 MINUTES

Connect and Create

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Goal & question

Observable goal: Name or draw one kind of "real gold" and link it to an event in the picnic ending.
Question: What made the friends' day valuable?

Prepare

Use student page 11 and the book's picnic ending, pp. 24–27 (Spreads 11–12). Provide pencils or crayons. No food, costumes, or religious participation are needed.

Teach • 3 + 5 + 12 + 5 = 25 minutes

3 min — Recall: Ask, "Did the friends find a pot of gold? What did they find instead?"
5 min — Reread and model: Revisit the picnic. Model: "Sharing can feel like treasure. I see the friends sharing food with their neighbors."
12 min — Create: Children draw or write what "real gold" means in this story. Offer: "The friends' real gold was ___ because ___."
5 min — Share: Invite partners to explain their pictures and point to matching evidence in the book.

Support, stretch & no-print choice

Support: Offer choices: friendship, music, sharing food, or sharing stories. An adult may record the child's words.
Stretch: Compare the treasure they expected with the treasure they found.
No print: Point to the ending, tell a partner, or draw on scrap paper.

Check understanding

Accept varied answers that connect to the picnic: neighbors, friendship, sharing, music, or reading together. Ask for a story detail if the answer is only "gold." Personal connections may be offered, never required.

OPTIONAL | TWO 20-MINUTE CHOICES

Optional Extensions

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

A. Map the journey • 20 minutes

Goal: Locate Ireland and Pennsylvania and connect each to the story.
Prepare: Book pp. 6–7 and 33; student page 12; pencil.
3 min: Recall where the package came from and where the friends live.
5 min: Model using the numbered map key: find 4, Pennsylvania.
8 min: Learners star 4 and circle 1, Ireland. Partners explain both places.
4 min — Check: Each child points to one place and names its story role.
Support / no print: Point together to the map on book p. 33.
Grade 3 stretch: Identify Europe and North America; describe the Atlantic Ocean between them.

Counting alternative (same 20 minutes): Use book p. 29 and the bottom of page 12. Goal: count 3 and 4 leaflets. Notice (3), model touching each leaflet once (5), draw and count (8), then explain which has one more (4). Support: trace or use counters; no print: draw on scrap paper. Stretch: total both groups (7). Choose this or the map goal.

B. Tap and retell • 20 minutes

Goal: Retell four anchor events in order using a quiet rhythm.
Prepare: Book pp. 6–7, 12–13, 20–21 and 26–27; optional empty bucket.
3 min: Recall how Ralph uses his bucket at the picnic.
5 min: Model four gentle taps: package, rainbow, clover, picnic.
8 min: Partners tap on knees or act each event, then tell what happened.
4 min — Check: Listen for all four events in order and one ending detail.
Support: Point to the four pictures. Offer silent gestures for sound sensitivity.
No print: The whole activity uses the book and voices or gestures.
Grade 3 stretch: Add the ribbon and woodpecker events with transitions.

STUDENT PAGE | SESSION 1

Story Sequencing

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Name: _____ Date: _____

What happened first? Write 1 to 6 in the circles.



◯ A rainbow shines outside.



◯ A package arrives from Ireland.



◯ Ralph finds a four-leaf clover.



◯ Sam ties a ribbon on the bucket.



◯ Neighbors join the picnic.



◯ They meet a woodpecker.

STUDENT PAGE | SESSION 2

Facts or Tales?

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Cut and glue each card in a bin. Or write its letter.
An adult can read the cards with you.

Facts we can check	Legends and folktales

CUT ON THE DASHED LINES

A Patrick lived in Ireland.

B Patrick chased snakes out of Ireland.

C Sunlight and raindrops make rainbow colors.

D Leprechauns are tiny shoemakers.

E A shamrock is a symbol of Ireland.

F A pot of gold is hidden at a rainbow's end.

STUDENT PAGE | SESSION 3

Our Real Gold

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The friends did not find a pot of gold. Draw what felt like “real gold” at their picnic.

Draw the picnic, neighbors, music, stories, or friendship.

The friends’ real gold was

You may tell a partner or point to a picture in the book.

STUDENT PAGE | OPTIONAL EXTENSION A

Ireland Map & Clover Count

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Choose one activity with your teacher.

MAP: Star 4, Pennsylvania. Circle 1, Ireland.



1 Ireland • 2 Britain • 3 Chicago • 4 Pennsylvania

Where did the package come from? Tell a partner.

COUNT: Draw and count the leaflets.

Shamrock: 3 leaflets

Four-leaf clover: 4 leaflets

TEACHER SUPPORT | ANSWERS & CHECKS

Answer Guidance

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Page 9 • Story Sequencing

Number the cards left to right, top to bottom: **2, 1, 5, 3, 6, 4.**
Story order: 1 package (Spread 2, pp. 6–7); 2 rainbow appears (Spread 5, pp. 12–13); 3 ribbon tied to bucket (Spread 7, pp. 16–17); 4 woodpecker (Spread 8, pp. 18–19); 5 four-leaf clover (Spread 9, pp. 20–21); 6 picnic with neighbors (Spread 12, pp. 26–27).

Page 10 • Facts or Tales?

Facts we can check: A, C, E. Patrick lived in Ireland; sunlight and raindrops make rainbow colors; a shamrock is a symbol of Ireland.
Legends and folktales: B, D, F. Patrick driving out snakes is a legend; tiny leprechaun shoemakers and a pot of gold at a rainbow's end belong to traditional tales. B is not established history, and D/F are not scientific claims.
For the separate discussion: some people consider four-leaf clovers lucky. This is a belief; it does not make gold appear (book pp. 20–23, 29).

Page 11 • Our Real Gold

Open response. Accept friendship, neighbors, food shared, music, or reading stories together. Ask the child to connect the response to pp. 24–27. A drawing plus an oral explanation is sufficient.

Page 12 • Map or Count

Map: star 4 (Pennsylvania, the friends' home) and circle 1 (Ireland, the package's origin). Grade 3: Pennsylvania is in North America; Ireland is in Europe. The Atlantic Ocean lies between.
Count: shamrock 3 leaflets; four-leaf clover 4 leaflets; 4 is one more than 3. Optional total: 7. "Lucky" describes a belief, not a guaranteed outcome.

Listen for these distinctions

Patrick was a real person; the woodland animal adventure is fiction. Legends and folktales are types of traditional story within folklore. A rainbow is an optical effect: it has no reachable treasure-filled endpoint. Families may celebrate differently or not at all.

TEACHER SUPPORT | REFERENCE

Background, Sources & Use

Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow?

Teach with care

Patrick was born in Britain and later lived in Ireland, where he shared his Christian faith. The book uses the 400s; exact dates are debated. The snake-driving and shamrock-teaching stories are legends. Wearing green and dyeing the Chicago River are traditions. Folklore includes shared stories, customs, and beliefs; it is not a third category separate from all legends and traditions.

Skills practiced

Comprehension, retelling, oral explanation, vocabulary, and distinguishing facts from traditional tales; respectful discussion of customs and faith; sharing and friendship. Optional: counting and map reading. These are descriptive connections, not a claim of formal standards alignment.

Sources & edition

Book: Sheryl Dotson, Is There Really Gold at the End of a Rainbow? 36-page paperback • ISBN 979-8-9823392-2-5. References in this pack match its numbered 36-page PDF; book p. 36 lists historical, science, and folklore sources.
Folklore terms: Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Glossary of Key Terms.
Rainbow science: UK Met Office, Rainbows.
River tradition: Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade official website.
Map: Natural Earth public-domain land data; reused from book p. 33. Links checked October 28, 2026. No endorsement is implied.

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