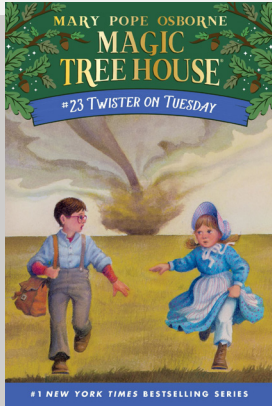


# Book Club for Kids



***Twister on Tuesday***  
by Mary Pope Osborne

**Recommended Ages:**  
6–9



[helenplum.org](http://helenplum.org)

**Summary:** Kids know just what to expect from each new book in the beloved Magic Tree House series, and *Twister on Tuesday* will not disappoint! Jack and Annie’s 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 school books.

**Objective:** Kids 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:** Kids 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 kids understand what an enormous undertaking the Westward Expansion movement was by tracing a route on a large map from your state/town to a town on the Kansas prairie.
2. Imagine what it would be like to travel across the country. What supplies might you need? What would you miss most about your home? Talk about how long such a trip might take via covered wagon versus traveling by car, train, or plane.
3. If you are located near what used to be the Kansas prairie, or if any of the kids have traveled there, ask them to describe what the area looks like now. Compare and contrast that with what Jack and Annie encounter.

### **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 readers 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. Have readers share their lists. Discuss or provide any necessary definitions.
4. Post especially interesting and vivid words and definitions. Have readers 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
- map or diagram

A sod house is something Jack and Annie have never seen before. Create your own miniature sod houses.

1. Provide enough small wooden or cardboard blocks so that each reader can build a small hut.
2. Using the sod house pictured in the book as an example, 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 (i.e., dirt) to create housing. In the Northeast, because trees were plentiful, settlers built their houses from wood. Ask kids to list other examples of home building materials. What are the benefits and drawbacks to each type?

### Play It Safe

Materials:

- pen/pencil
- paper
- 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 know what to do if a natural disaster struck?

- If book club is meeting 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 readers to draw a map of the quickest way from the classroom to the schoolyard.
- Reinforce school-safety lessons.

*Adapted from Scholastic.com.*