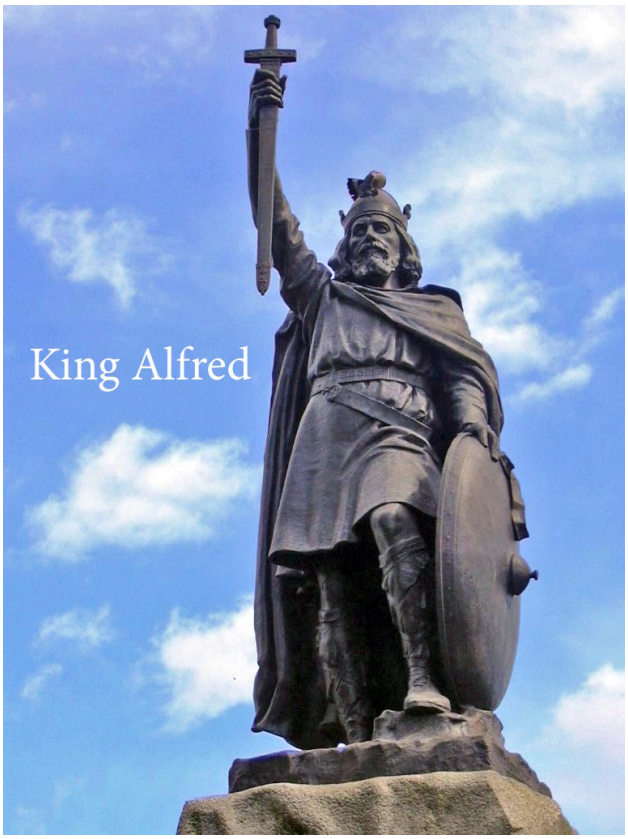
B is for Bear
Assignment 4

- ***reading and phonics.*** Complete Lesson 4 in your B is for Bear textbook, volume 1.
- ***handwriting*.** Complete Lesson 4 of your handwriting book.
- ***poetry.*** Memorize the stanza 4 of Helen Hunt Jackson's poem "September."
    - So much poetry mentions or describes the natural wonder of the world—kinds of birds, kinds of flowers, kinds of trees, etc. In today's world, unfortunately, many children are separated from nature's beauties by remaining indoors and have no idea, to the surprise of many older people, what a ram, a rose bush, or nettle looks like. Because much of the beauty of Helen Hunt Jackson's poem depends on a basic knowledge of plants, much of the poetry lessons might turn to discussions of botany.



    - Stanza 1 of the poem begins a long description of autumn's sensory wonders. Parents may ask students during what season flowers bloom. Perhaps most, if not all, will say in *springtime*. However, gardeners know very well that all flowers do not bloom in spring. The goldenrod is a plant native to North America, where Helen Hunt lived, that is particularly beautiful in September when its flowers blossom in yellow clusters I already showed students a picture of the goldenrod for them to appreciate the poem more.
    - The poem's simple structure and rhyme is very reminiscent of the poetry of Emily Dickinson, who was the author's lifelong friend. Parents should inform students a little about Emily Dickinson and this relatively little known poet, Helen Hunt Jackson. Both Helen Hunt Jackson (1830–1885) and Emily Dickinson were born and raised in Amherst, Massachusetts and attended the women's college there. While Emily Dickinson achieved fame solely for her poetry, Helen Hunt Jackson was also a novelist and a non-fiction writer. In 1881 she published a book titled *A Century of Dishonor* in which she chronicles the federal government's mistreatment of the Native American. She is perhaps most

famously known, however, for her romance novel concerning the plight of American Indian, titled *Romona*.

    - "September" is written primarily in iambs, but with an amphibrachic foot at the end of lines 1 and 3. The first and third lines, however, may be described as being tetrameter catalectic. An *amphibrachic* foot consists of a three syllables, the first and third of which are soft or unstressed, while the middle is stressed. *Catalectic* refers to a line of poetry that ends with an incomplete foot. If the last foot is considered an iamb, it is missing the ending stressed syllable. The meter, then, is either *trimeter*, or alternating *tetrameter catalectic/trimeter*. The students have been instructed in all this very technical language—but such knowledge is obviously just icing on the cake!

- ***dictation.*** Students should write out the two dictation exercises (below). Parents should be writing misspelled words down on the dictation page and going over it. Students should bring their dictation textbooks every week to class for me to review.
- ***outside reading.*** It is important to develop a love and habit of reading. Here is a suggested book for reading: Rebecca Hickox. Will Hillenbrand, illustrator. *The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella.* Holiday House, 1998. The Cinderella tale crosses many cultures and countries, such as Korea and Egypt. Hickox tells a Cinderella-like tale that is known in the Middle East.

DICTATION

EXERCISE A

The rain came down.
Did Sam boil the brown stew?
Is the coin mine or yours?
Use tin foil for the meat.
Did Dean get the mail?

EXERCISE B

I will try not to cry.
His feet were red.
Take the red seat.
I ate red beets.
Did you see the sly fox go by?