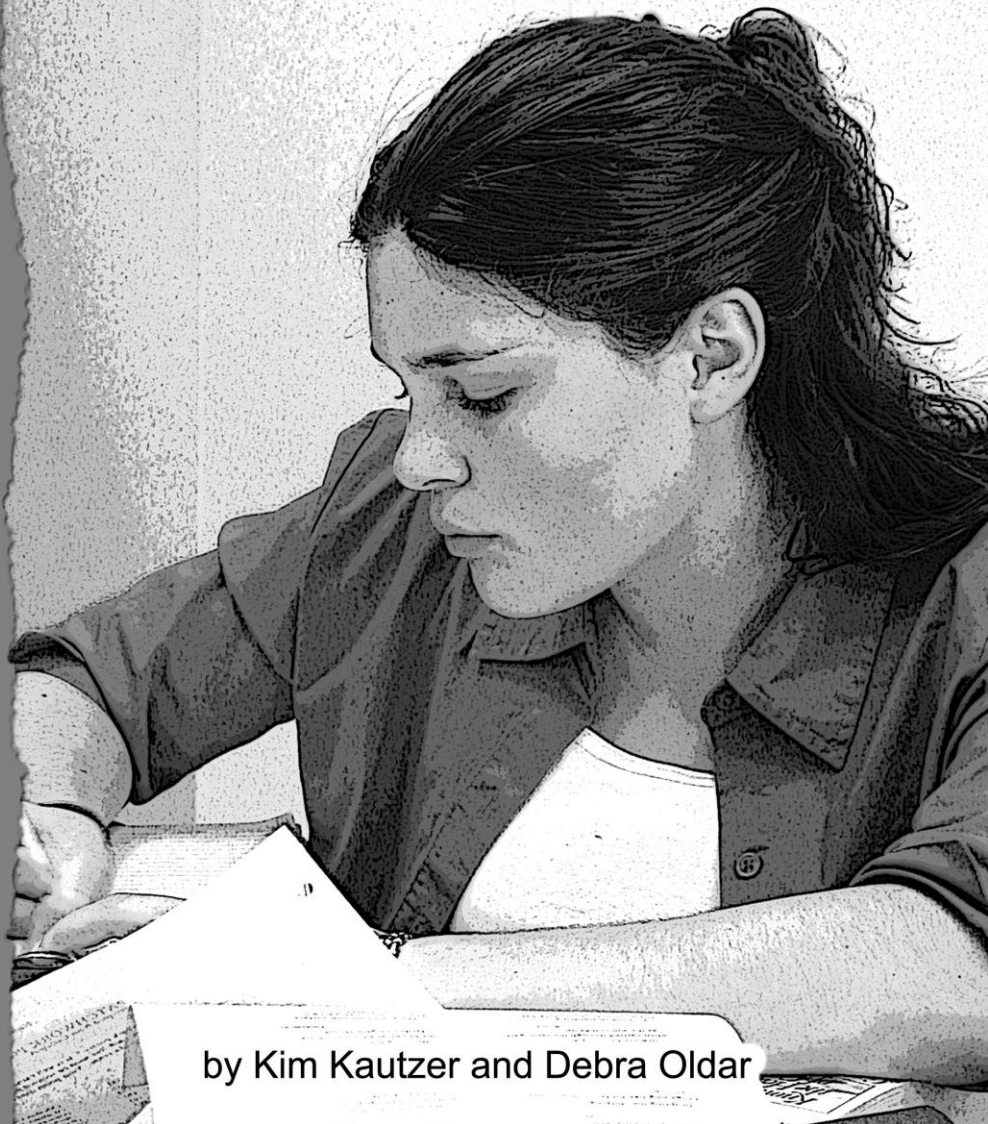


# WriteShop

Copying and Dictation  
Exercises for WriteShop I



by Kim Kautzer and Debra Oldar

**E-Book Format**

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**WriteShop®**

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## Copying and Dictation

### Why Assign Copywork?

Dr. Ruth Beechick, in *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully*, says copying is effective because it requires close attention to detail. Many well-known painters began their careers as apprentices, spending years copying their masters' works. Famous writers such as Benjamin Franklin and Jack London spent long hours copying the great written work of others. This did not teach them plagiarism; it taught them excellence. As they learned to recognize and duplicate high-quality writing on a regular basis, their own excellent style emerged and developed.

Copying also serves another purpose. Some students make careless and unnecessary mistakes when editing and recopying compositions. Words that they spelled correctly in previous drafts are misspelled on the final draft, and punctuation that they used properly before is now omitted. Copying exercises are especially helpful for such students, since it teaches them to become more detail-oriented and conscientious.

This booklet offers one copywork passage for each WriteShop I lesson. As much as possible, the excerpt relates to that lesson's writing assignment. The Lesson Plan Overviews, or schedules, in the WriteShop Teacher's Manual (TM pp. 18 and 19) will tell you when to assign these copying and dictation activities.

If your chosen WriteShop schedule requires two weeks or longer to complete a lesson, you'll need other copywork material for each extra week you spend on an assignment. See page 20 for additional ideas and copywork sources.

### About Copying

Working from this booklet, students copy each passage into a copybook or onto lined paper. When they finish copying, have them compare their piece with the original model, fixing all spelling and punctuation errors and making sure nothing has been omitted. It is wise to double-check their work.

Remember that this exercise is about *paying attention to detail*, so it is *essential* that students indent, capitalize, punctuate, and spell exactly as the model demonstrates.

At first, students who haven't had much copying experience will take longer to complete their exercise. Until they become more practiced, consider assigning just a portion of a selection. Or ask them to stop after ten minutes whether they have finished or not. It will soon become easier and go faster.

**Don't** use this activity as a punishment. If your children enjoy it, collecting meaningful quotes can become a lifelong habit!

**Don't** allow students to become frustrated or to use up all their day's writing time on copying; they can always pick up where they left off the next day.

**About Dictation**

Dictation is a different skill entirely, requiring attention to *auditory* detail. Use the same passage that your students copied earlier in the week. They have practiced copying it; now they will write it on lined paper as you read it aloud. This may seem tedious at first, but you *will* see results over time.

First, read the entire passage as they listen. Then begin to dictate in small chunks, a few words (or a short phrase) at a time. Repeat if necessary. When your students have finished, read the entire passage to them once more as they listen closely for inflections. The tone of your voice and deliberate pauses will help them punctuate more accurately.

With younger, reluctant, or struggling students, you do not have to dictate the whole passage. Stop after ten minutes, even if there's still more. Over time they'll gain speed and be able to finish the entire selection.

After they finish writing, have them compare their results with the original model and make corrections (as with copying).

Do not allow students to skip this last step. Explain that copying or dictation alone will not gain the desired results. Even though they may be tempted, do not let them put their work away without making comparisons and corrections.

# Copying and Dictation Exercises

## Lesson I

**The Velveteen Rabbit**

by Margery Williams

There was once a velveteen rabbit, and in the beginning he was really splendid. He was fat and bunchy, as a rabbit should be; his coat was spotted brown and white, he had real thread whiskers, and his ears were lined with pink sateen. On Christmas morning, when he sat wedged in the top of the Boy's stocking, with a sprig of holly between his paws, the effect was charming.

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# The Jungle Book

He was a mongoose, rather like a little cat in his fur and his tail, but quite like a weasel in his head and his habits. His eyes and the end of his restless nose were pink; he could scratch himself anywhere he pleased, with any leg, front or back, that he chose to use; he could fluff up his tail till it looked like a bottle-brush, and his war-cry, as he scuttled through the long grass, was: "*Rikk-tikk-tikki-tikki-tchk!*"

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# Little Women

Fifteen-year-old Jo was very tall, thin, and brown, and reminded one of a colt; for she never seemed to know what to do with her long limbs, which were very much in her way. She had a decided mouth, a comical nose, and sharp, gray eyes, which appeared to see everything. Her long, thick hair was usually bundled into a net, to be out of her way.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



# The Circus Boys in Dixie Land

Shivers was a shining model of the clown both in method and makeup. His stiffly starched bulging trousers disappeared under the stiff ruffles of a three-quarter waist. A broad turnover collar of the nurse style was set off with a large bow of bright red ribbon, and a baker's cap, perched jauntily on one side of the head, completed his merry makeup.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# Muffins

Bursting with bright, fresh lemon flavor and just a hint of ginger, these [Lemon Ginger] muffins are wonderful with either hot or iced tea on a lazy afternoon. Their special fresh flavor comes from a lemon sugar dip.

Incredibly rich and spicy, filled with chocolate chips and crunchy almonds, these Pumpkin Chocolate Chip muffins are delicious with steaming cups of espresso. Children also love them with cold milk.

[illegible]

## Anne of Green Gables

Spring had come once more to Green Gables, lingering along through April and May in a succession of sweet, fresh, chilly days and pink sunsets. The maples in Lover's Lane were red budded and little curly ferns pushed up around the Dryad's Bubble. Away up in the barrens, the mayflowers blossomed out, pink and white stars of sweetness under their brown leaves.

[illegible]

Lesson 7

## Uncle Tom's Cabin

by Harriet Beecher Stowe

The cabin of Uncle Tom was a small log building. In front it had a neat garden patch where, every summer, strawberries, raspberries, and a variety of vegetables flourished under careful tending. The whole front of it was covered by a large scarlet bignonia and a native rose which, entwisting and interlacing, left scarcely a hint of the rough logs beneath. Here also, marigolds and petunias found an indulgent corner in which to unfold their splendors.

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by H.W. Gibson © 1913

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Lesson 9

## Homes and Habits of Wild Animals

by Karl Schmidt

The habits of the fur seal are remarkable. Their legs are transformed into paddles at the extreme rear of the body, and their arms into flippers, which make them as graceful in the water as they are awkward on land. They spend the winter at sea, migrating southward as far as the coast of California.

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Lesson 10

**Great Americans and Their Noble Deeds**

by Milton Hadley

Thomas Edison was a clever, enterprising little fellow even then, and although he had scarcely eight weeks of schooling altogether, he had a great thirst for knowledge. He read books on chemistry, science, and in fact took out almost all the important volumes in the Detroit public library before he was fifteen years old.

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Lesson 11

## President Lincoln Shot by an Assassin

from *The New York Times*\*

This evening at about 9:30 P.M., at Ford's Theatre, the President, while sitting in his private box with Mrs. Lincoln, Mrs. Harris, and Major Rathburn, was shot by an assassin, who suddenly entered the box and approached behind the President.

The Assassin then leaped upon the stage, brandishing a large dagger or knife, and made his escape in the rear of the theatre.

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\*Saturday, April 15, 1865. Vol. XIV, No. 4230.



by Robert Louis Stevenson

[illegible]

## by J. M. Barrie

[illegible]

Hans Christian Anderson

[illegible]

Johann David Wyss

[illegible]

by Kenneth Grahame

[illegible]

## Additional Copywork Suggestions

If you want to assign copying and dictation more often than WriteShop recommends, or if your chosen WriteShop schedule requires two weeks or longer to go through a lesson, it's a good idea to have some extra copywork materials on hand.

Keep sticky notes nearby, whether you're reading aloud to your children or on your own. If you spot an inspirational quote, brilliant description, or thrilling narrative passage, mark it for future use.

When choosing copywork, aim for selections with slightly challenging vocabulary. You want attentive students, and excerpts that are too easy may cause them to become lax.

### Internet Sources

- The hymns of Charles Wesley <http://gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/hymns>
- Classic poetry collection <http://www.pddoc.com/poems>
- Project Gutenberg (thousands of e-books in the public domain) <http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog>

### Collections of Works from home, library, or used book stores

- Literature anthologies and textbooks (children's literature as well as American, British, and world literature)
- Poetry anthologies, both classic and contemporary
- The Bible (consider various translations)
- Hymnals
- *The Book of Virtues* by William Bennett
- *The Harp and the Laurel Wreath* by Laura M. Berquist
- *Aesop's Fables*
- Fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen or the Brothers Grimm
- The works of Shakespeare
- Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*