

Getting started with WriteShop I or II

The following resources will help acquaint you with the WriteShop program, as well as provide you with avenues of assistance. We want you and your student to be successful. Please don't let this program sit on your shelf gathering dust because you didn't know where to go for help or encouragement.

1. **Teacher's Manual.** Start on page 9 to acquaint yourself with the program.
2. **The WriteShop Rhythm.** This handout will help you use the schedule and coordinate the Teacher's Manual with the Student Workbook.
3. **Schedule Options.** Decide whether you want to finish each workbook level in one semester, one year, or two years. Your child's age and level of reluctance are important factors to consider. You can also download our [Schedule Options PDF](#).
4. **WriteShop Website.** Explore the WriteShop website, where you'll find all sorts of resources. In particular, [Help for Beginners](#) offers specific tips for first-time WriteShop I users. [FAQ | WriteShop I & II](#) might also be useful.
5. **Personal Support.** If you need specific help, you may always contact WriteShop directly.
 - **Email.** Contact help@writeshop.com. One of the authors, either Kim or Debbie, will reply.
 - **Phone.** Speak with Kim or Debbie to get personalized help. (909) 989-5576.
6. **Facebook.** Visit WriteShop's [Facebook page](#) to ask questions or find helpful tips.

We love to hear from our customers. Please let us know how you and your student are doing. Blessings as you teach your children to become excellent communicators.

Happy writing,

Kim Kautzer and Debbie Oldar

The WriteShop Rhythm

How to Schedule and Use WriteShop I and II

Making the WriteShop Schedule Work for You

For most families, it takes a couple of WriteShop lessons to get into the rhythm. If you are a linear thinker, you've probably noticed that the student lessons are not laid out in strictly chronological order. Once you understand how the program is laid out, lessons will proceed at a predictable pace and your teaching schedule will fall into a clear pattern.

Understanding the Layout of the Student Workbook

While it may not be "chronological" or intuitive at first glance, each student lesson is laid out in a predictable way. You will find a logical internal structure:

- *The lesson intro and lesson instructions always come first.*
- *Brainstorming worksheet(s) follow the lesson instructions.*
- *Skill Builder exercises appear next.*
- *The three rubrics for each lesson always appear last.*

► Make sure you're not looking to the Student Workbook to drive the program or the schedule. Instead, *let the Teacher Lesson Plans steer the course*. WriteShop is designed as a parent-child partnership, so you won't be able to simply hand your student his workbook and assign a page. Remember to be flexible; some lessons may be harder for your student to understand, while others will be learned quickly and easily.

Coordinating the Teacher's Manual and Student Workbook

1. **The schedule chart (TM p. 18)** lays out a plan to complete one lesson in two weeks. Notice that your child will always do "Skill Builders" on Days 1, 2, and 3 (before most of the writing takes place), "Pre-Writing" on Day 1, and her "Sloppy Copy" on Day 4.

It is suggested that you make a photocopy of the schedule chart and keep it visible. Remember, the schedule DOES NOT correspond to the student workbook pages.

The scheduled items for each day (such as "Pre-Writing Activities") correspond with the sub-headings in the Lesson Plans.

2. **The Lesson Plans** (beginning on TM p. 20) give specific directions for teaching or facilitating daily activities. Here, you will learn which student pages (apart from Skill Builders) you need to assign. Please note: Lesson 1a is the only lesson that *does not* follow the schedule chart; see TM p. 20 for explanation and instructions.
3. **The Student Workbook** pages have titles. If the Lesson Plan does not assign a page number, it will always indicate the title of the student page you need to assign.

The Two-Week Schedule Overview

This is the schedule to use if you plan to complete WriteShop I or II in one school year. You will need to make adjustments if using a different schedule.

Week 1

- **Day 1:** Allow 5 to 30 minutes. Your *Schedule* tells you to do “Pre-Writing Activities,” so go to the appropriate *Lesson Plan* and find the Pre-Writing Activities. You may be directed to teach a new concept, or to assign and oversee a student workbook activity.
*Allow another 10-20 minutes to assign the Day 1 Skill Builder. (Your student will quickly learn to find Skill Builder sheets in his workbook.)
- **Day 2:** Allow about 30 minutes. Your *Schedule* tells you to do a “Practice Paragraph.” You won’t always need to do one—perhaps only when you introduce a new kind of writing. The purpose is to model the lesson, so don’t feel pressured to finish the whole paragraph. Find general instructions for practice paragraphs on TM p. 16. You may find specific instructions under the subheading “Practice Paragraph” in your *Lesson Plan*.
*Allow another 10-20 minutes for the Day 2 Skill Builder.
- **Day 3:** Allow 10-20 minutes. Your *Schedule* tells you that today your student must pick a new topic of his own and “brainstorm.”
*Allow another 10-20 minutes for the final Day 3 Skill Builder.
*Allow 5-10 minutes for the copying exercise.
- **Day 4:** Allow 30-60 minutes. Your *Schedule* tells you that today is rough draft / “Sloppy Copy” day. If a student spends too much time or gets frustrated, let him finish on Day 5.
- **Day 5:** No assigned writing; catch-up if needed.
*Allow 5-10 minutes for dictation.

Week 2

- **Day 6:** Allow 45-60 minutes. “First Revision” means that the student will self-edit his rough draft using the Student Checklist, and then write a first revision.
- **Day 7:** Allow 30-60 minutes. “Edit student’s first revision” means that you will use your Teacher Writing Skills Checklist (found in the Student Workbook) and the suggestions on TM p. 111 to edit your student’s writing from Day 6.
*Allow 5-10 minutes for the copying exercise.
- **Day 8:** Allow 30-45 minutes. “Final Draft” means that the student will incorporate your corrections and revision suggestions into a neat, final draft.
- **Day 9:** Allow 15-30 minutes. “Grade student’s final draft” means that you will fill out a Composition Evaluation (found in the Student Workbook).
*Allow 5-10 minutes for dictation.
- **Day 10:** No assigned writing; catch-up if needed.

Using *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation*

with WriteShop Lessons

While WriteShop lessons do not directly refer to *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation*, you'll find this gem of a book especially helpful when **editing your student's composition**. (Skip this page if you are not using *The Blue Book*.)

1. In WriteShop, students self-edit their own rough draft, or "sloppy copy." Once they have revised their paper, they turn in the First Revision for parent or teacher editing. As you edit the composition, it's tempting to fix grammatical errors yourself. But with the *Blue Book* as a reference, you can help students begin to take more responsibility for identifying and correcting their own errors.
2. With this in mind, instead of making the grammar correction for your student, consider the following:
 - Place an asterisk directly above the mistake on the composition itself.
 - Then in the margin, put an asterisk and write the corresponding rule, such as "p. 29, rule 1," so the student can look up the rule himself in his Blue Book, identify what he did wrong, and correct it for the Final Draft.
 - When a student continues making the same mistake repeatedly, take time to review that rule and assign the related exercises for practice.
 - If students are on the younger side (6th or 7th grade), you might just start with one or two such corrections at a time so as not to overwhelm them. If they made more than two errors in grammar or punctuation, simply show them how to fix the rest. Over time, increase the number of errors they must look up themselves.

Other Ways to Use *The Blue Book of Grammar*

You'll find a number of other ways to incorporate the *Blue Book* into your schooling.

Use *The Blue Book of Grammar*

1. **As a reference book** to look up a rule or make sure the student is using a part of speech or punctuation mark correctly. The rules are easy to find in the *Blue Book's* table of contents, and you'll appreciate the simplicity of the examples.
2. **To troubleshoot problems.** If you notice that your student is having repeated trouble with a particular grammar issue, you can review the rule(s) together and offer the practice exercises found in the middle section of the *Blue Book*. There are two sets of exercises (called Quizzes) per major rule group.
3. **To teach a mini lesson.** If you want your student to understand how to hyphenate between adjectives, for example, or use quotation marks correctly, you can teach the rules that apply and offer the exercises for practice.