

I/II

writeShop®

Teacher's Manual for WriteShop I and II

5th
Edition



an incremental writing program
Kim Kautzer and Debra Oldar

Writeshop

an Incremental Writing Program

Teacher's Manual

by Kim Kautzer and Debra Oldar

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Teacher's Manual for WriteShop I & II (digital E-book)

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Fifth Edition

March 2020

This book is dedicated to our husbands
Jim and Eric
and to our children
Karah, Janel, Ben, Laura and Brian.

Special thanks to former WriteShop student Andrea Mosley
for the illustrations in Lessons 7 and 12. You're a gifted
young woman, beautiful inside and out.

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Introduction

Understanding the Purpose of WriteShop I and II

WriteShop is an incremental writing program for middle and high school students that

- Emphasizes clarity, conciseness, colorful vocabulary, and interesting sentences;
- Focuses on developing a strong paragraph;
- Offers a wide variety of writing activities;
- Teaches the writing process and how to edit;
- Helps students know exactly what to look for when refining their own work; and
- Helps parents know how to objectively evaluate their teens' writing.

Materials and Supplies for WriteShop I & II

Student Workbooks Include

- Step-by-step instructions for each lesson with brainstorming worksheets
- Skill Builders to teach and reinforce new concepts
- Student and Teacher Writing Skills Checklists specific to each lesson
- Composition and Essay Evaluation Forms
- 17 comprehensive word banks

Teacher's Manual Includes

- Step-by-step instructions for preparing and teaching each lesson in WriteShop I and WriteShop II
- Tips for editing and evaluating student compositions (with student examples)
- Suggestions for addressing problem areas
- Instructions for using student and teacher checklists
- Answer keys to Skill Builders and pre-writing activities
- Supplemental writing activities (Appendix B)

Other Materials and Supplies You Will Need

- A quality **thesaurus**. We highly recommend *The Synonym Finder* by J. I. Rodale.
- A writing or **English handbook** for in-depth help when grammar questions arise
- A **dictionary**, both for looking up unfamiliar synonyms (to be sure they fit the context of the sentence) and for double-checking spelling
- A **dry-erase whiteboard** and markers for writing practice paragraphs. It saves time (students can dictate while you write) and is both convenient and easy to see, especially when teaching more than one student.

- **Personal Supplies**

A clear-view 3-ring binder to store Student Workbook pages

- Remove the pages of the student workbook and insert in binder.
- Cut apart front and back covers of the workbook and slip them into the binder's clear cover.

A one-inch 3-ring binder and four dividers. Label the notebook dividers as follows:

- *Work in Progress* (for keeping all drafts of their current compositions)
- *Old Drafts* (or throw them away, but only after final draft is complete)
- *Final Drafts* (for storing compositions that have received a grade)
- *Copying & Dictation*

Lined loose-leaf paper

Pens, pencils, and colored pencils

Regarding Page References

1. When you come across a page reference:

- **TM p.____** refers to material found in the Teacher's Manual.
- **p.____** refers to material found in the Student Workbook. Student pages are numbered by lesson and page. In Lesson 2, for example, pages are numbered 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, etc.

2. In the Teacher's Manual, lesson plans refer you to certain pages in the student workbook, where everything needed for that lesson is organized together.

Choosing a Schedule

Depending on your student's ability and interest, you can go through the program in either one or two years. Before beginning WriteShop, choose a track to help you plan. Flexibility is an important element of teaching, so use these schedules as suggestions. Don't let the Teacher's Manual control you. As long as students write and revise on a regular basis, their skills will improve. *This is by far a higher goal than finishing the book.*

Two-Week Lesson Plan (Standard)

Recommended for most students, this track takes them through one book in one year.

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
Student Focus	Pre-writing Activities Day One Skill Builder	With teacher, brainstorm & write Practice Paragraph Day Two Skill Builder	Brainstorm for the Sloppy Copy Day Three Skill Builder	Write Sloppy Copy	Off
Teacher/ Parent Focus	Intro new concepts and terms	Guide the Practice Paragraph session			
Copying/ Dictation	Copying		Dictation		

	Day Six	Day Seven	Day Eight	Day Nine	Day Ten
Student Focus	Edit Sloppy Copy Write First Revision		Polish Final Draft Turn in for evaluation		Off
Teacher/ Parent Focus		Edit student's First Revision		Grade student's Final Draft	
Copying & Dictation	Copying		Dictation		

The Two-Week Plan is the most popular way to use WriteShop I or II. With this schedule, students write **one composition over a two-week period**, revising it twice. Meanwhile, they continue using previously learned material in their writing, so **don't skip around or jump ahead** to what you may perceive as "more advanced" lessons.

Recommended for:

- *most* 7th-9th graders
- the *bright and motivated* 6th grader who possesses basic writing skills
- the 10th/11th grader who needs to master the concepts of writing a paragraph and/or learn to write descriptive, informative, narrative, and persuasive compositions at a beginning to intermediate level

One-Week Lesson Plan (Accelerated)

The fast track covers both levels—WriteShop I and II—in one academic year.

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
Student Focus	Pre-Writing Activities With teacher, brainstorm & write Practice Paragraph Day One Skill Builder	Brainstorm for and write Sloppy Copy Day Two Skill Builder	Edit Sloppy Copy and write First Revision Day Three Skill Builder		Polish Final Draft Turn in for evaluation
Teacher/ Parent Focus	Introduce new concepts Guide the Practice Paragraph session			Edit student's First Revision	Grade student's Final Draft
Copying & Dictation	Copying		Dictation		

Bright and motivated older students can tackle both WriteShop I and II in the same year, writing and revising **one composition or essay each week** (30 altogether). With the above schedule, teens spend five hours per week (or more) on their writing assignments, so plan to make writing a *priority*.

Recommended for:

- *Motivated* older students (9th grade and up) who like a challenge, especially those who love to write but need to sharpen existing skills while developing new ones.
- *Struggling* high schoolers who need to come up to speed in basic writing skills (and have the commitment and determination to persevere).

Make sure not to burn your students (or yourself) out. Take a week off now and then. Establishing a long-term goal of helping them become better writers should take priority over the immediate goal of finishing the entire WriteShop program in one year.

Individualized Plans

WriteShop is flexible! So if your middle or high school student has trouble grasping new concepts, it's perfectly fine to customize your schedule. It's more important to work for understanding and eventual mastery of WriteShop concepts, even if it takes two or three years. Go ahead and stretch lessons out—as long as your kids are writing a few times a week.

Recommended for:

- *Younger students* (6th-7th grade) who need to develop strong, consistent writing habits before high school
- *Older students* who learn with difficulty or who need remediation to establish a strong writing foundation.
- *Any students* who benefit from regularly scheduled writing activities that build incrementally, but over a longer time.
- *Any students* who simply need more time to complete writing assignments.

CAN WE SKIP AN EXERCISE OR ACTIVITY?

New concepts, ingrained through frequent practice, eventually become intuitive, so plan to complete *every exercise*. Except for copying and dictation, each activity directly relates to the goal of writing the assigned composition.

Teaching the Lessons

Understand the Layout of the Student Workbooks

In the WriteShop I and II Student Workbooks, each lesson is laid out in a predictable way:

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

Understand the Parts of Each Lesson

Each WriteShop lesson is divided into sections, as listed on the schedule. Your chosen schedule tells you what to do each day. The **Lesson Plans** in this Teacher’s Manual give lesson-specific directions for teaching or facilitating daily activities. Here, you learn which student pages (apart from Skill Builders and Copying & Dictation) to assign.

For planning purposes, we suggest an approximate amount of time to complete each lesson exercise. Be flexible as you get into the WriteShop rhythm and make the lessons work for your family. Rather than look to the Student Workbook to drive the program, *let the schedule grid and Teacher Lesson Plans steer the course.*

- **Skill Builders – 10 to 20 minutes per day for the first three days**

The Teacher’s Manual Lesson Plans don’t usually mention Skill Builders because they are self-explanatory. Refer to the schedules on TM pp. 3-5.

Skill Builders play an important role in WriteShop: they introduce new writing and grammar concepts. More importantly, they give students a chance to practice with these skills *before* applying them to their compositions. Always assign Skill Builders on the first three days of every lesson. Students need to become familiar with these new skills prior to writing a rough draft.

- **Pre-Writing Activities – 5 to 30 minutes**

There are two parts to pre-writing: (1) warm-up exercises and (2) teaching time.

Pre-writing warm-up games and exercises

1. Stimulate thinking and loosen up writing “muscles”
2. Help students overcome writer’s block
3. Help students put aside distractions and focus on writing
4. Improve writing vocabulary

Pre-writing teaching time

On the first day of each lesson cycle, introduce new writing terms and concepts. Even if teens are working independently, you should still demonstrate new skills and methods.

Instructions are always found in the Pre-writing section of each lesson plan.

- **Practice Paragraph – 30 minutes**

The Practice Paragraph, which familiarizes students with the lesson’s expectations, is an important time for *modeling the thinking process*. During this exercise, help your student practice playing with ideas and coming up with sentences. Don’t stress about or overthink the activity! You’re teaching the writing process, not aiming for perfection.

Do you have to write a Practice Paragraph for every lesson? *Not necessarily*. Try it out for several lessons. If students seem to quickly get the hang of each assignment and follow directions well, it’s okay to write a Practice Paragraph only when a new kind of writing is introduced. But if they need more guidance or have trouble grasping lesson concepts, don’t skip it.

HOW TO WRITE A PRACTICE PARAGRAPH

Start by reading the instructions for the lesson’s writing assignment in the WriteShop I or II Student Workbook. Spend about 30 minutes on the Practice Paragraph—it’s okay if you don’t have time to finish.

Brainstorm First

1. Pick a topic and brainstorm together to gather ideas for the Practice Paragraph, using the brainstorming worksheet as a guide.

Your child needs a fresh worksheet for the actual writing assignment, so use **blank paper** today. Alternatively, print or photocopy an extra worksheet. If the worksheet suggests using certain Word Lists (at the back of the student workbook), do so.

2. Later in the week, when students prepare to write their own paragraph, they’ll brainstorm again, **choosing a different topic** for the new composition.

Write the Practice Paragraph on the Whiteboard

1. **This is a partnership activity** between teacher and student, so don’t shy away from contributing ideas to the Practice Paragraph.
2. Follow instructions in the student workbook. Guide the session by inviting students to throw out ideas and sentences based on information gathered during brainstorming. Prompt with related questions: *What might you see as you walk through a forest? What sounds do streams make? What’s a more specific word for that?*

3. Always include the **newest Skill Builder concepts**. For example, suggest: *This might be a good place to begin a sentence with paired adjectives.*

Review the Practice Paragraph Together

1. Don't take time for extensive editing of the Practice Paragraph. Instead, ask your teen: *Did we include **most** of the required elements of content and style?*
2. If needed, make simple adjustments together. Since you're writing as they dictate, don't worry too much about grammar, spelling, or punctuation.

Once you've gone through this exercise, students are ready to choose a brand-new topic and begin the process of writing their own.

- **Copying and Dictation**

Copying and dictation assignments appear on the schedule grids but NOT in the detailed lesson plans.

Copying – 5 to 10 minutes

Copywork helps students recognize and duplicate high-quality writing. It also teaches them to become more conscientious and detail-oriented in their own writing.

1. Working from Copying and Dictation Exercises for WriteShop I (or a classic piece of literature), students copy that day's passage on lined paper. When finished, have them carefully compare their piece with the original model, fixing all spelling and punctuation errors and making sure they haven't left out any words. Double-check their work.
2. Remember: This exercise is about *paying attention to detail*, so it's *essential* that they indent, capitalize, punctuate, and spell **exactly as the model demonstrates**.

Dictation – 5 to 10 minutes

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

1. First, read the entire passage as they listen.
2. Then begin to dictate in small chunks, a few words (or a short phrase) at a time. Repeat the phrase as needed.

3. When your student is finished, reread the entire passage once more as he listens closely for inflections and makes any corrections. The tone of your voice and deliberate pauses will help him punctuate more accurately.
4. With younger or struggling writers, don't dictate the whole passage. Stop after 10 minutes, even if there's still more. Over time, most students will gain speed and be able to finish the entire selection, but it's okay to start small.
5. Copywork and dictation can be subjective, so always have students compare their results and fix errors. **Don't let them be tempted to put away their work** without doing this important step.

- **Brainstorming – 10 to 20 minutes**

On this day, students brainstorm independently to prepare for the lesson's assignment. Brainstorming helps **jumpstart the writing**, making it a key step in the writing process. Do your kids freeze at the sight of the blank page? Thorough brainstorming sets them up for writing success as they think through and organize ideas *before* putting pen to paper.

The WriteShop program includes a unique brainstorming worksheet for each writing assignment. Teach your student to jot down lists of words and short phrases—not full sentences—on the brainstorming pages.

- **Sloppy Copy – 30 to 60 minutes**

This is the time for students to jump in and get something on the page! The sloppy copy is the **rough draft**. It's called a "sloppy" copy because it's not supposed to be perfect—it's meant to be edited and revised.

Students can either write or type the rough draft using ideas they gathered during brainstorming. (The Introduction section of WriteShop I and II workbooks includes a guide for formatting papers.)

If they aren't able to finish the sloppy copy in the allotted time (or they're having a meltdown), set the sloppy copy aside and return to it the next day when they're rested and refreshed.

- **Self-Editing and Revising – 45 to 60 minutes**

Most writing programs leap from rough draft to teacher editing. Unfortunately, this skips an important step—student self-editing—which gives kids a chance to tweak their papers and write a revision **BEFORE** you pull out the red pen.

1. **Don't let students write and edit in the same sitting.** Instead, let the composition rest for a couple of days. When they come back to it, they'll see it with fresh eyes and be more willing to make changes.
2. Photocopy or print out their sloppy copy. *They must do their self-editing on paper* (not on the computer) before making changes to the composition and writing the first revision.
3. Have them proofread and edit according to the lesson's Student Writing Skills Checklist, marking the paper as directed with **colored pencils**. In addition, provide them with a Common Proofreading Symbols chart (p. xv in the Student Workbook).
4. Students should always **type their first revision** on the computer, incorporating all the corrections they made during self-editing. (If they typed their sloppy copy, they don't have to type it again—they just need to tweak it.)

There is no such thing as a perfect sloppy copy. *There is always room for improvement, so the first revision **must reflect changes**.*

- **Parent Editing and Feedback – 30 to 60 minutes**

When students finish their first revision, print it once again. This time, you'll proofread and edit the composition or essay using the Teacher Writing Skills Checklists found in each lesson of the student workbook. You'll also want to use the Common Proofreading Symbols (TM p. 135). Refer to the tabbed section, "Addressing Errors Lesson by Lesson," for help spotting mistakes students frequently make in each different lesson.

- **Final Draft – 30 to 45 minutes**

Your child now incorporates your corrections and revision suggestions into a polished—and preferably typed—final draft.

- **Evaluation – 15 to 30 minutes**

Now it's time to grade the best-effort final paper. To keep grading objective, WriteShop includes a Composition or Essay Evaluation Checklist at the last page of each lesson in the student workbook.

- **Lesson Expansion and Additional Writing Activities**

To offer additional writing exercises, challenge more advanced students, or incorporate other subjects you're studying into the writing lessons, you'll find many ideas for variety, expansion, and enrichment in **Appendix B** of this Teacher's Manual.

WriteShop I Scope and Sequence

<i>Lesson #</i>	<i>Lesson Title</i>	<i>Lesson Focus</i>	<i>Skill Builder Focus</i>
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Unit 1: Descriptive Writing

1	Describing an Object	Concrete Writing	Concrete Writing
2	Describing a Pet	Conciseness	Using a Thesaurus
3	Describing a Person	Learning to Edit	Paired Adjectives
4	Describing a Circus Performer	Concrete Writing	Topic Sentences
5	Describing a Food	Sensory Description	Choosing Appropriate Titles Its vs. It's
6	Describing a Season	Limiting Narration	Choosing Concrete Season Words; Using Similes
7	Describing a Place	Limiting Narration	Present Participles

Unit 2: Informative Writing

8	Explaining a Process	Informative Writing	Arranging in Time-Sequence Order
9	Writing a Factual Paragraph	Informative Report Avoiding Plagiarism	Introductory Participial Phrases Participles as Similes
10	Writing a Concise Biography	Conciseness	Appositives; "-ly" Adverbs
11	Introducing Journalism	News Article	Five Ws; Writing a Lead Paragraph

Unit 3: Narrative Writing

12	Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event	Narratives	Prepositional Phrases
13	Writing a Narrative of Another Person's Experience	Conducting an Interview	
14	First-Person Point of View	Point of View Personification	Using Personification
15	First-Person Point of View	Limited Omniscience	Tense Agreement
16	Third-Person Point of View	Omniscience	Past Participles

WriteShop II Scope and Sequence

<i>Lesson #</i>	<i>Lesson Title</i>	<i>Lesson Focus</i>	<i>Skill Builder Focus</i>
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Unit 4: Review of WriteShop I

17	Describing an Object	Reviewing Concreteness	Reviewing Paired Adjectives, Similes, Present Participles
18	Describing a Place	Reviewing Sensory Description	Reviewing Prepositional Phrases, Adverbs, Appositives
19	Writing a Short Report	Outlining	Reviewing Personification; Using Past Participles as Adjectives

Unit 5: Advanced Descriptive Narration

20	Exaggeration	Descriptive/Informative Descriptive/Persuasive	Communicating Clearly; Incorrect Word Usage; Overly Descriptive Writing
21	First-Person Point of View, Part 1	Limited Omniscience; Descriptive Narration	Writing Descriptive Narration
22	First-Person Point of View, Part 2	Limited Omniscience; Changing Points of View	Descriptive Narration
23	Narrative Voice	First and Third Person Narration	

Unit 6: Persuasive Writing and Essays

24	Writing an Ad	Persuasive Writing	
25	Opinion Essay	Developing Points through Outlining	Using Parallelism
26	Letter to the Editor	Developing Points through Outlining	
27	Compare or Contrast Essay	Organizing Information	
28	Compare or Contrast Essay	Organizing Information	
29	Essays That Describe or Define	Developing Points through Outlining	
30	Timed Essays	Writing within a Time Limit	

Lesson 1a: Introducing WriteShop

Lesson Focus: Concrete Writing/Using a Thesaurus

Materials

- Copies of “How Well Do You Follow Directions?” (one per student) and colored pencils; don’t let them see ahead of time! (TM p. A-11)

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: This first lesson (1a) should only take **one week or less**, *regardless of the track you choose*. Lesson 1 introduces a lot of new material, so it is broken into two separate lessons. Lesson 1a covers pre-writing activities. Lesson 1b teaches the writing process and assigns the first composition. Note that Skill Builder 1a should be completed this week. *There is no Skill Builder for Lesson 1b.*

Pre-writing Activities

- Game “How Well Do You Follow Directions?”
 1. Distribute a copy of the game to each student (face down) along with colored pencils.
 2. Say, “*Read the directions and follow them carefully.*”
 3. When student is finished ask, “*What did you learn from this game?*”
 4. Discuss the importance of following directions. Say, “*Each WriteShop assignment has a specific purpose, which is why it is necessary that you always follow instructions carefully.*”
- Purpose for writing

Ask, “*Why is it important that we learn to write?*” (Possible answers include communicating thoughts and ideas, correspondence, personal expression, persuasion, etc.)
- Uplifting and encouraging others

Writing that is overtly unpleasant, gory, blasphemous, rude, or negative does not belong in your student’s writing. Discourage words like “dumb” or “stupid.” Keep an eye out for more subtle negative attitudes.
- Definition of a sentence
 1. Ask, “*What makes a complete sentence?*” (It must have a subject and a verb, it must express a complete thought, and it must begin with a capital letter and end with a period, question mark, or exclamation point.)
 2. NOTE: If students have trouble with writing complete sentences, you may want to

spend some time developing this skill before continuing with WriteShop.

□ Definition of a paragraph

With your student, read “Ingredients for a Tasty Paragraph,” p. iv (TM p. A-10).

□ Writing topic and closing sentences

Review with your student. (p. v)

□ Using a thesaurus

1. Say, “*Thumb through your thesaurus. What do you discover? What kind of book is this? How is it different from a dictionary? How will it be helpful to your writing?*”
2. Help students choose correct synonyms by identifying a word’s *accurate* meaning, part of speech, and usage (slang, informal, and archaic terms should be avoided in WriteShop assignments). For example, look up *party*. It can be a noun meaning a social gathering, congregation, special interest group, political partisanship, or individual; an adjective meaning partisan; or an informal/slang verb (*to party*). A dictionary will help determine the correct use of a synonym.
3. Explain that you expect them to use the thesaurus for every assignment.

□ Introducing Word lists

1. WriteShop will refer to the student’s Word Lists frequently. They act as a mini-thesaurus. Encourage their use!
2. Words are categorized according to topics students will use throughout the year.

□ Concrete writing

1. Say, “*Concrete writing uses colorful, descriptive, vivid, precise words to communicate a clear picture to your reader. Concrete writing strongly appeals to the five senses. What are the five senses?*” (Sight, sound, smell, taste, touch.)
2. Say, “*Concrete words also have a strong emotional appeal.*” Offer examples.

□ Concrete Writing Worksheet

1. Explain directions for the “Concrete Writing Worksheet” (see Student Workbook, Lesson 1a). Be sure to go over the example together. Look for possible responses in the answer key (see Pre-writing Activity Keys).
2. Practice with Sentence 1 together. First, brainstorm and use the thesaurus to choose three to five concrete words for each underlined one.
3. Then rewrite the sentence on the dry erase board, picking words from the brainstorming list. Assign as many or as few sentences as you think necessary to grasp the concept of concreteness.

Lesson 1b: Describing an Object

Lesson Focus: Concrete Writing/The Writing Process

Pre-writing Activity

- Turn to “Describing an Object” (p. 1-7).
 1. Read “A Piece of Granite.” Ask students to identify concrete or descriptive adjectives (*small, granite, white, black, bumpy, flat, shiny, gold, bright*).
 2. Next, have them look for other concrete words that help make the paragraph vivid (*speckles, flecks, sparkling*).
 3. The “Raggedy Ann” paragraph is even more descriptive. Have students use a pencil to lightly cross out all adjectives and then read the paragraph aloud. It should sound something like this:

My Raggedy Ann greets me every morning from a cradle. Her eyes shine up at me from her face. Her hair shows how much she has been loved over the years. A pinafore covers her dress. A pair of legs hanging from her body makes me laugh. My doll is special to me because we've been together for so long.

- 4. Compare the two “Raggedy Ann” paragraphs. It will be obvious to students how important it is to use interesting, colorful adjectives to modify each noun, thereby bringing the paragraph to life!
- Discuss “The Writing Process: Easy as 1-2-3-4-5,” p. i (TM p. A-1).
 1. Remind students again how important it is to follow directions. Require them to (1) stick to the five steps outlined on this sheet, and (2) always follow each assignment’s *specific* instructions.
 2. These five steps will not only help students become more organized, they will make your job easier, too. When you edit their work, you will be able to tell at a glance if they followed directions, brainstormed, used their checklists, or made suggested corrections because they will keep all drafts of the paper together.

Practice Paragraph *This activity precedes the brainstorming and “sloppy copy” that students will do in the process of writing their own paragraphs later on.*

- Write a practice paragraph. *Carefully read TM p. 16 to prepare for this activity.*
 1. Read the student directions for “Describing an Object” (p. 1-8).
 2. Stress the importance of examining a single object for little, often-missed details.
 3. On blank paper, brainstorm together for the practice paragraph using p. 1-9, “Observing an Object Worksheet.” Here’s an illustration to help explain the

necessity of brainstorming: *Imagine trying to serve yourself from a punch bowl that's almost empty. You want to quench your thirst, but the ladle can't collect any juice. It's the same with writing—you must have a brainstorming sheet (punch bowl) filled to the brim with possible ideas. You can dip into it deeply and then fill the page with words! Now, just as you would not drink all the punch, you won't use every word. But you'll be much more successful if you brainstorm thoroughly before writing.*

4. Write the practice paragraph, following the student directions on p. 1-8.

Brainstorming

- Today, students begin the process of writing their own paragraphs. Before they begin, have them choose a topic that's *different* from the practice paragraph topic.
- Brainstorm for Lesson 1b paragraph using the "Observing an Object" worksheet.
- Refer again to p. i (TM p. A-1). Today, focus on Step 1 (Brainstorming). Remind students that this is a crucial step in the writing process.

Sloppy Copy

- Define "sloppy copy"
 1. Students will write each composition *at least three times*: a "sloppy copy," a first revision, and one or more final revisions. Don't let them skip any of these steps.
 2. The "sloppy copy" will be their first draft. Using the brainstorming sheet for ideas, they will compose a paragraph without paying excessive attention to mechanics. This is the time for them to focus on a subject and put their thoughts on paper. Don't worry about spelling or punctuation yet. Since this paper will go through at least two revisions, do not expect it to look polished.
 3. Even if you consider your students to be good writers, they can certainly be challenged to improve their skills.
 4. Samples of student writing are included in almost every lesson. Some students rely too heavily on these examples instead of working through the important process of thinking up their own ideas. Therefore, *it is recommended that students put away sample compositions before they begin to write.*
- Review Step 2 of "The Writing Process: Easy as 1-2-3-4-5," p. i (TM p. A-1).
- Write the "sloppy copy"
 1. If students have done adequate brainstorming, they should be able to write their "sloppy copy" on their own. However, in the beginning they may need more assistance from you. If they can't think of ways to describe their object, insist that they brainstorm some more. Five words does not constitute brainstorming!

2. Again, ask questions to stimulate thinking. Remind them to plug in ideas from the “Observing an Object” brainstorming sheet.
3. Refer your students to the Sample Page Model (pp. ii-iii and TM pp. A-7, A-8) to help them use **proper form** when writing. Be sure they always skip lines!
4. Caution students to avoid the word “you” in their writing, saving it for personal letters or informative instruction. Instead, use first person (*I/we*) or third person (*he, she, or they*).

NOT: You can see your reflection in its surface. (second person)

But: I can see my reflection in its surface. (first person)

Or: She can see her reflection in its surface. (third person)

Student Writing Skills Checklist (see TM pp. 90-98 for more detailed instructions).

1. Use Lesson 1 checklist for “Describing an Object.”
2. Students will be required to use their Checklists for content and style. They will be tempted to check boxes aimlessly without thoroughly going over their papers. Discourage this! They should develop the habit NOW of carefully and correctly using this important tool.
3. From experience we have seen that students who take the time to edit properly show greater improvement over those who rush through or skip this crucial step.
4. At least for the first few assignments, you would be wise to do this together with your students. Encourage them to ask each question aloud before scanning the paragraph. They will look at their paragraph again and again as they answer the questions and hunt for trouble spots.
5. **Require** students to use colored pencils to underline or circle as directed on the Checklist. This will help them quickly see where they need to make changes.

First Revision

Review Step 3 of “The Writing Process: Easy as 1-2-3-4-5” (TM p. A-1).

Review Step 4 of “The Writing Process” to explain how work should be organized.

1. This helps you track the student’s progress and keeps all work in one place for easy reference to earlier drafts.
2. If, for example, your student’s paragraph lacks details, you can check his or her brainstorming sheet for ideas that may have been missed.
3. Or, if you find repeated words in the first revision, you can look back at the “sloppy copy” to see if he or she caught and underlined them.

Have students write their first revision of “Describing an Object.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student's first revision.
 1. Use the Teacher's Writing Skills Checklist for Lesson 1, "Describing an Object," (located in *Student Workbook*) and "Addressing Common Errors" (TM p. 107)
 2. This manual contains examples of student work, common problem areas you might encounter, and editing suggestions. (Editing tips begin on TM p. 87.)
- Give immediate feedback.
 1. Do not let your student's paper sit on your desk for days at a time.
 2. You want the material to remain fresh in his or her mind.
 3. Be careful not to let him or her lose momentum or fall behind.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of your student's work.

Final Draft

- Review Step 5 of "The Writing Process: Easy as 1-2-3-4-5," p. i (TM p. A-1).
 1. Go over your comments and suggestions with your students before they write their final draft.
 2. Be sure they understand the changes you are asking them to make. Ask helpful questions such as "Can you tell me why this sentence is incomplete?" "What would be a synonym for this word?" or "What colorful adjective could you add to describe this noun?"

Students write their "Describing an Object" final draft.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

You will find a new evaluation form with each lesson in the student workbook.
- Assign points to the composition.
 1. This takes away some of the subjectivity of grading your own child's work and gives a more accurate method of evaluation.
 2. Feel free to take half-points for less serious errors. Misspelled words and problems of punctuation generally warrant loss of only a half-point.
 3. On the other hand, more critical errors such as misplaced modifiers, failure to use sentence variations, etc., should result in loss of a full point.
- Here are some grading options.
 1. Require the composition to be rewritten if the grade falls below 70%.
 2. Require continued revisions until the student's grade is 90% or higher.
 3. Assign points only (without a letter grade).

Lesson 2: Describing a Pet

Lesson Focus: Conciseness

Materials

- Several paper lunch bags, each containing a common object. Vary the textures and shapes of the objects.
- A family pet, *if you have more than one*. If not, use a stuffed animal, preferably one with many interesting features (clothing, multicolored fur, unusual markings, etc.). A Beanie Baby or Paddington Bear makes a good subject.

Pre-writing Activities

- Game “What’s in the Bag?”
 1. Give your student one of the paper bags and have her put her hand inside it.
 2. Say, “*Feel the object and describe it using adjectives or other phrases to describe its characteristics. **Don’t tell me its function.***”
(If the object is a fork, the student might say, “It’s hard, cold, made of metal, sharp, one end has four prongs, it’s long and thin,” etc. She may NOT say, “You eat with it, you stab food with it, it’s a piece of silverware,” etc.)
 3. Other children may be involved in this game, even if they are not using WriteShop. They will enjoy taking turns guessing and describing.
Discuss the importance of using specific words to say exactly what you mean.
- Writing concisely
 1. WriteShop encourages students to use a thesaurus to find interesting, descriptive words; however, some young writers tend to go overboard. This results in wordy or flowery writing. A lesson in conciseness will especially help these students.
 2. Ask your student to look up the word *concise* in the dictionary. Discuss its meaning as it applies to writing.
 3. Explain that conciseness aims at using the fewest and most concrete words to communicate exactly what the author means. Wordiness and overuse of unfamiliar vocabulary can discourage the reader by making the composition hard to follow or understand.
 4. Here’s an example of a wordy sentence: *Sam’s extremely furry, shaggy mixed-breed dog, alabaster with raven streaks, chased and ran after the very scared and terrified young orange, black, and white cat.* Ask your student to rewrite it using fewer words (for example, *Sam’s shaggy, black and white mutt chased the frightened calico kitten*).

□ Understanding “to be” words

1. WriteShop encourages students to use an active rather than passive voice. Forms of the infinitive “to be” often reveal passive writing. Over time, students learn to limit these “to be” verbs: ***is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been.***
2. The number of “to be” phrases allowed in each paragraph decreases as students learn new sentence variations. Through creative use of these variations, it becomes possible to eliminate “to be” phrases. Require your student to locate and delete or replace unnecessary forms of “to be.” (Caution students that contractions can contain “to be” words: *I’m = I am, she’s = she is, and it’s = it is.*)
3. “To be” words are necessary and important words in the English language. WriteShop does not prohibit them; however, since students tend to overuse “to be” words, they must become aware of them and practice ways to write in active voice. This makes their writing more concrete, clear, and alive.
4. At first, getting rid of “to be” words may seem difficult. Try replacing them with more concrete verbs. Over time, as the program introduces sentence variations, students become used to avoiding or eliminating “to be” words.
 - “Spike’s fur is coarse and thick” becomes “Spike’s fur *feels* coarse and thick.”
 - “Tom’s race car was faster than Mike’s” can become “Tom’s race car sped ahead of Mike’s.” (If needed, change the wording so the sentence makes sense.)
 - “The dog was barking loudly all night” becomes “The dog barked loudly all night.” (“Is wagging,” “was hiking,” “were swimming” can be changed to “wags,” “hiked,” and “swam.”)
 - “My favorite snack is an apple because it is juicy and crisp” becomes “Juicy and crisp, a delicious apple makes a terrific snack.” (Again, change the wording so the sentence makes sense.)

□ Avoiding weak words

1. This week’s Skill Builder practices with replacing weak, vague, or overused words. Words like *fine, good, and go* tend to appear frequently in students’ paragraphs. Encourage them to use stronger, more specific words.
2. Your student should refer often to the Weak Words list (see p. 17 in the very back of the WriteShop I and II workbooks) and avoid using weak words in compositions and essays. **Today, introduce the Weak Words list to your teen.**
3. As you edit a composition (in this and future lessons), keep your own Weak Words list handy (TM p. A-9). When you spot weak words, mark them and require your student to replace them with more concrete ones.

Practice Paragraph

- Read together “Making a Mind-map.”
- On a blank sheet of paper, mind-map about one of your pets (or about the stuffed animal you have chosen for this exercise) (see **Materials**).
 1. Since you will need the dry erase board for the practice paragraph, use a large piece of drawing paper for mind-mapping, especially when you are working with more than one student.
 2. “Observing a Pet Worksheet” will help the student think of things to observe and describe.
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 1. Drawing ideas from the mind-map and following student instructions, write a practice paragraph.
 2. Review the importance of using appropriate topic and closing sentences (p. v).
 3. When finished, here is what your practice paragraph could look like:

A Furry Friend

My old, musty Paddington bear sits on a shelf watching people stroll by. His beady, coal-black eyes sparkle beneath a wide-brimmed, yellow felt hat. A royal blue sweatshirt covers the teddy bear’s soft mocha-colored coat. Short stubby legs dangle from his plump, fuzzy body. Paddington is my wonderful furry friend.

Brainstorming

- Have student use the “Observing a Pet Worksheet” and “Making a Mind-map” to brainstorm about her animal. She should not describe the same pet used for the practice paragraph.
- Refer to Step 1 (Brainstorming) (TM p. A-1).

Sloppy Copy

- Refer to Step 2 (TM p. A-1).
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 2.

First Revision

- Review Steps 3 and 4 (TM p. A-1).
- Have student write her first revision of “Describing a Pet.”
- Ask student to find an adult to draw a color picture of her pet.

- At first glance this activity may seem trivial or unnecessary; however, it has a definite purpose.
- The “artist” may be tempted to draw his picture based on common sense or memory, but this will not help the student at all! It is very important that he draw *only what he learns about the animal from the student’s paragraph*. This exercise is not designed to test the adult’s artistic abilities, but to help the student see how to make better use of description.
- If someone can draw a picture of the animal complete with fur or feathers, ears or tail, spots or stripes, etc., then the student has done a good job of describing her pet.
- If, on the other hand, the person can only draw a cat or dog or fish with no details about size, appearance, or color, then the student must add such details to her paragraph before turning it in.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s “Describing a Pet” first revision.
 1. Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 2 and suggestions on TM p. 107 (as well as general editing suggestions which begin on TM p. 87).
 2. Refer to the section labeled “Student Writing Samples.”
- Give immediate feedback.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Review Step 5 (TM p. A-1).
 1. Go over your comments and suggestions with your student before she writes her final draft.
 2. Be sure she understands the changes you are asking her to make. Ask helpful questions: “Can you tell me why this sentence is incomplete?” “What would be a synonym for this word?” “What colorful adjective could you add to describe this noun?”
- Student writes her “Describing a Pet” final draft.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form found in the student workbook.

Lesson 3: Describing a Person

Lesson Focus: Paired Adjectives/Editing
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Materials

- Print out (or cut from magazines) several photos of human faces that show a variety of expressions, emotions, and ages. You will need these for Skill Builder Day 3.

Pre-writing Activities

- Why edit?
 1. Students need to realize that editing is not a punishment imposed on them by mean parents and writing teachers. It is a necessary process designed to refine and polish their work. All authors go through the revising process numerous times before arriving at a finished piece.
 2. Students who take the time to edit carefully and properly (using their Writing Skills Checklists) make greater progress than those who make little effort to improve each composition.
 3. Students should aim for excellence, and editing is a vital part of becoming an excellent writer.
- Pre-writing activity.
 - **Note:** Review and assign Skill Builder Day 1 before doing the pre-writing activity.
 - Assign “Elements of a Character Sketch, Part 1.”
 - Read “Elements of a Character Sketch, Part 2” and assign the activity.

Practice Paragraph

- Read the student instructions for “Describing a Person” (pp. 3-1 to 3-3).
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 - Brainstorm for practice paragraph using “Observing a Person Worksheet” (p. 3-9).
 - Stress the importance of describing the person, not the activity.
 - Make use of the “Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors” and “Emotions” word lists (see Word Lists, pp. 3-7 and p. 9).
 - Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions.
 - Since the lesson introduces the first of many sentence variations (paired adjectives), explain to your student how to avoid misplaced or dangling modifiers. (See “Misplaced Modifiers” TM p. 130.)

Brainstorming

- Have student use the “Observing a Person Worksheet” to brainstorm.
 - Some students erroneously fill in the “Synonyms for My Subject” blanks with adjectives, adverbs, or even synonyms for the word “synonym”!
 - Make sure your student knows the definition of *synonym*. He should come up with four ways to rename the *subject*.
- Refer to Step 1 (Brainstorming) (TM p. A-1).

Sloppy Copy

- Refer to Step 2 (TM p. A-1).
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 3.

First Revision

- Review Steps 3 and 4 (TM p. A-1).
- Have student write his first revision of “Describing a Person.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 1. Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 3 and suggestions on TM pp. 108-109.
 2. Refer to TM p. 87 and following for common problem areas you might encounter, as well as suggestions for editing.
- Give immediate feedback.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Review Step 5 (TM p. A-1).
 1. Go over your comments and suggestions with the student before he writes his final draft.
 2. Be sure he understands the changes you are asking him to make.
- Student writes his “Describing a Person” final draft.

Grade the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 4: Describing a Circus Performer

Lesson Focus: Continued Practice with Concrete Writing/
Writing Topic Sentences

Materials

- If your student is a visual learner, a picture of a clown, ringmaster, or other flamboyant circus performer may be helpful, but it is not required.

Pre-writing Activities

- Game: “Categories”
 1. Students will need a sheet of notebook paper.
 2. Say, *“I’m going to name a category. You will have one minute to list as many things as possible that relate to the category. The items on your list may be as broad or as narrow as you wish. As you write, each word will remind you of another. You’ll be amazed at how many you jot down.”*
 3. Say, *“The category is CIRCUS.”* Time the student for one minute.
 4. After playing once using this broad category, play as many games as you wish, using circus performers as the categories. (Ideas include ringmaster, trapeze artist, tightrope walker, lion tamer, bareback rider, clown, etc.)
 5. The purpose of this game is to stimulate ideas. This is a form of brainstorming that students perceive as an enjoyable game.
 6. When playing with multiple students, it can be fun for each one to read his or her list aloud. Everyone crosses duplicate words off her own list. The “winner” is the one with the most words left. (This kind of competition encourages students to think of more unusual items to add to their lists.)

Practice Paragraph

- Read the student instruction sheet “Describing a Circus Performer” (pp. 4-1 and 4-2).
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 - Brainstorm using “Observing a Circus Performer Worksheet.”
 - Stress the importance of describing the person, not the activity.
 - Make use of the “Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors” and “Emotions” word lists.
 - Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions.

Brainstorming

- Have student use “Observing a Circus Performer Worksheet” to brainstorm.

Sloppy Copy

- Have student write her “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 4.

First Revision

- Have student write her first revision of “Describing a Circus Performer.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision. Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 4 and the tips on TM p. 110.
- As you look over the paragraph, list everything you learn about the circus performer, including (1) actual descriptions of the character’s face, hair, costume, and behavior, and (2) any other information. Your list could look something like this:

Description

Oversized red shoes
 Large white hand; loose blue jumpsuit
 Water-squirting flower
 Huge blue wig
 Round red nose; rosy cheeks

Other Information

Stumbles clumsily
 Stands up, waves his plastic gloves
 Sprays audience; bounces around
 (You enjoyed your day at the circus)

- Offer suggestions for improvement. *Can we think of other aspects to describe? What else can you say about the clown’s clothing? Could you add sequins or textured fabric? How about a silly hat that he removes during his act? Tell me more about the wig. Or, Your closing sentence turns the focus onto you. Draw the reader to the close of the act instead, maybe like this: “With a final _____, this (adj.) (synonym for “clown”) (does what?) and exits the (arena, ring, etc).”*
- Paper clip your checklist to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes her “Describing a Circus Performer” final draft.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 5: Describing a Food

Lesson Focus: Sensory Description

Materials

Freshly popped, buttered and salted popcorn or kettle corn.

- Prepare during this lesson’s practice paragraph brainstorming activity.
- Butter-flavored microwave popcorn is easy to prepare with minimal mess.

Pre-writing Activities

- None.

Practice Paragraph

- Read the student instruction sheet “Describing a Food.”
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).

1. Prepare fresh, hot buttered popcorn. This food offers the student an excellent opportunity to use his five senses when describing its properties.
2. Brainstorm for the practice paragraph by making a mind-map on your dry erase board or large sheet of paper.
 - Begin by discussing possible *synonyms* for popcorn. Look for words like *kernels*, *snack*, or *treat*. Ask what an individual piece of food is called: *morsel*, *tidbit*, or *bite*. Write these synonyms in the main bubble of the mind-map.
 - After starting the microwave, ask students what they notice first. *They hear the popcorn begin to pop*. Direct them to their “Sound Words” list. Have them look for words to describe the sounds they hear. Add them to the mind-map.
 - What do they notice next? *They begin to smell the popcorn*. Brainstorm for smell-related words at this time and add them to the board.
 - Pour some popcorn in a bowl. Let them observe its *appearance/color* and feel its *texture*. The “Textures” word list is especially helpful. Ask questions to guide them: “What does the popcorn remind you of?” *Clouds, pillows, etc.*
 - Finally, let them *taste it* as you finish the brainstorming activity. In addition to writing flavor words, you will probably add more sound words to the board at this time, since the “popping” sounds are different from “chewing” sounds.
3. Write the practice paragraph. After deciding on a topic sentence, ask students how they would choose which aspect of the popcorn to describe first. Guide them toward recognizing the logic of following the order in which their senses were awakened (in other words, the order in which they brainstormed).

Brainstorming

- First, help the student choose an appropriate food. The foods listed in the box on p. 5-1 of the student workbook have been selected because they offer lots of opportunity for interesting description. If a food is not on the list, you must OK it first, making sure they choose one that offers contrasts in texture, temperature, color, flavor, etc. As a rule, a “composite” food is better than a “single” food (like a fruit).
 - Spaghetti has long, thin, stringy noodles; a rich, red, thick, zesty tomato sauce; firm, spicy meatballs; and a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese.
 - A strawberry popsicle is frosty and fruity; when it melts, pink juice runs down its smooth, slick sides; if I take a bite, it crunches icily and squeaks between my teeth.
 - Lemon meringue pie can be described by its flaky brown crust; cool, smooth, tart, and tangy golden filling; and fluffy, cloud-like topping.
 - Chocolate chip cookies, though not on the list, can be golden-brown, crisp or chewy, studded with nuts, filled with melted pockets of rich dark chocolate, etc.
- Have the student brainstorm for his own paragraph by making a mind-map.
- Use the “Observing a Food Worksheet” to trigger ideas for the mind-map.

Sloppy Copy

- Have student write his “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 5.

First Revision

- Have student write his first revision of “Describing a Food.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Make sure the food is described both in detail and in a logical sequence. Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 5 and suggestions on TM pp. 110-112.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes his “Describing a Food” final draft.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 6: Describing a Season

Lesson Focus: Similes/Limiting Narration

Materials

- No special preparation.
 - However, if your child has trouble choosing concrete characteristics, you may want to provide a magazine picture of a seasonal (outdoor) scene.

Pre-writing Activities

- Define and discuss similes.
 - See TM Appendix p. A-6 for a definition. This lesson’s Skill Builders will also help teach and reinforce the use of similes.
- Complete “Choosing Concrete Season Words” chart (see this lesson’s Skill Builder).
 1. Have the student brainstorm and fill in the blanks with words describing each season.
 2. Draw her attention to the fact that some of her words seem vague. Have her circle words that are not specific or concrete.
- Together, discuss “Limiting Narration in a Descriptive Paragraph.”

Practice Paragraph

- Read the student instruction sheet “Describing a Season.”
- Be aware that this particular lesson seems to be more difficult for beginning writers. They have a hard time discerning between *narration* (the telling of a story or a series of events) and *description* (the use of sensory words to vividly describe what they observe and experience). Therefore, it is **crucial** that you and your student *together* read and discuss the instructional material before she begins to write.
 - Talk about making this a descriptive paragraph about the season, not a story about her experience.
 - Discuss the concepts of “contrast” and “season confusion” found on p. 6-3 of the student text.
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 - Brainstorm for the practice paragraph by making a mind-map.
 - Make use of the “Taste/Smell Words,” “Sound Words,” “Visual Words,” “Color Words,” and “Texture Words” word lists.

- Be sure to include a simile when you write the practice paragraph.
- Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions. When the student writes her own paragraph later on, she should write about a different season.
- Remember to avoid using “I” or “we” as the subject of a sentence.

Instead of: *While looking around at the busy bees, I notice a nest of baby robins in an apple tree,*

Suggest: *Busy bees drone and buzz as they gather pollen from a bed of alyssum. Nearby, baby robins hungrily chirp from their nest in an apple tree.*

Dividing the one vague sentence into two detailed ones accomplishes two purposes: 1) to make it more about the season than about the narrator, and 2) to add more vivid description.

Brainstorming

- Have student brainstorm by making a mind-map.
- Use the “Skill Builder Day One” sheet to trigger ideas for the mind-map.

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 6.

First Revision

- Have student write her first revision of “Describing a Season.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 6 and suggestions on TM pp. 112-14
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes her “Describing a Season” final draft.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 7: Describing a Place

Lesson Focus: Present Participles

Materials

- No special preparation.
 - Again, if your student needs a visual aid, you may want to provide a magazine picture of an outdoor scene (see suggested paragraph starters on Lesson 7 instruction sheet).

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Assign Skill Builder Day 1 *before* completing the pre-writing activity. This Skill Builder introduces present participles, which the students will need to identify in the pre-writing activity.

Pre-writing Activities

- Have student complete “Identifying Elements of a Descriptive Paragraph.”

Practice Paragraph

- Read the student instruction sheet “Describing a Place.”
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 1. Brainstorm on a separate sheet of paper using “Sensory Worksheet” as a guide.
 2. Make use of the “Taste/Smell Words,” “Sound Words,” “Visual Words,” “Color Words,” and “Texture Words” word lists.
 3. Remind students to name their place somewhere in the composition. Most of the sentence starters already give this information. However, if a student chooses a more generic sentence opener, the reader will not be able to discern whether the place is, for example, a park, a backyard, or a field.
 4. Sometimes a “Describing a Place” paragraph can turn into a string of descriptive yet unconnected sentences. To help make the paragraph more cohesive, it needs to flow better. The “Transitions and Conjunctions” list in the student workbook may offer ideas. Here’s an example from a student paragraph:

“Fluffy white clouds sail across the pale sky. Two chirping robins perch on a fallen branch. Graceful and free, a delicate monarch butterfly lands on a daisy.”

The reader is left to wonder what one thing has to do with the next. This is where transition words can help:

“Fluffy white clouds sail across the pale sky. Two chirping robins perch on a fallen branch nearby. Graceful and free, a delicate monarch butterfly flits across my path and lands on a daisy.”

5. Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions. When the student writes his own paragraph later on, he should choose a different sentence starter.
6. It may be easier for him to describe a place in nature rather than a site like a baseball stadium—“Sitting on a cold aluminum bench, I . . .” (see p. 7-3 sentence starters). This prevents him from being tempted to write a narrative about an *event*, like a baseball game, instead of a description of the site.

Brainstorming

- Have student brainstorm by using the “Sensory Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes his “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 7.

First Revision

- Have student write his first revision of “Describing a Place.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 7 and suggestions on TM p. 114.
 - Refer to the sample paragraph in the student workbook (p. 7-2) as you edit to be sure your student’s work does not “borrow” too heavily from the example. Encourage creativity and original thinking.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes his “Describing a Place” final draft.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 8: Explaining a Process

Lesson Focus: Informative Writing/Sequencing

Materials

- Teaching day*: Toothpicks and/or Cuisenaire™ rods.
- Practice paragraph day*: All the fixings for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
- Brainstorming day*: Camera and film.

Pre-writing Activities

- Game: “Duplicating a Design.”
 1. Student sits back to back with you (or a sibling).
 2. One will create a simple design using toothpicks or Cuisenaire rods.
 3. As she lays down each toothpick or rod, she verbally explains how she positions it, directing you to do the same. For example, “Set down the toothpick so it lies horizontally on the table.” “Place a toothpick vertically below the first toothpick so it touches it and forms a ‘T.’”
 4. You attempt to duplicate the design as she continues building, following her directions (one step at a time).
 5. The student should make a design using a minimum of 6 steps.
 6. Partners may switch roles and play the game several times.
 7. Students learn the value of giving careful, specific instructions.
- Define informative writing.

Say: “*Up to this point, you’ve been writing descriptive compositions. Today we begin to learn about informative writing. What do you think might be a definition of informative writing?*”

(Answer: Writing that provides the reader with information that is educational, inspirational, or useful.)
- Game: “Scavenger Hunt.”
 1. Have the student look both around the house and online for reading material that fits the definition of informative writing.
 2. Ask her to write a list of five to ten types of literature she finds. (*Possible types include textbooks, recipe books, instruction manuals, craft books, biographies, history or science books, documentaries, newspapers, magazines, instructions on packages, encyclopedias, emails, blogs, self-help books, scientific writings, brochures, and business letters.*)

Define transition words.

1. Refer to the glossary on p. A-6 (student manual p. x) for a definition of transition words.
2. Refer students to their “Transitions and Conjunctions” word list (Word List pp. 14-15).
3. Explain that transition words act as traffic signs to the reader by telling him where the paragraph will take him next.

Practice Paragraph Have the student write a step-by-step paragraph explaining how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

1. Just assign the activity. DO NOT help her or make suggestions. (For fun, if you have other children, let them get involved in this activity. Very small children may dictate their steps to you.)
2. Next, prepare a sandwich following one of the students’ instructions. (Choose one that omits important steps.)
3. As one of the children reads the paragraph aloud, follow the directions exactly. If she wrote, “Get out two pieces of bread and a plate. Put peanut butter on one side and jelly on the other. . . ,” then you should put peanut butter on the top of the plate and jelly on the bottom! Even if she wrote, “Spread peanut butter on the bread,” you might try spreading it with your hand because no knife was mentioned.

This humorous exercise is designed to make a point about the importance of giving clear directions. However, when it’s time to write their actual paragraph, some students will take it to the extreme by detailing insignificant or unnecessary details or steps. (For example, readers should understand that the use of a knife is implied, even though it is not necessarily mentioned specifically.)

 Read the student instruction sheet “Explaining a Process” (p. 8-1). Review the “Process Planning Worksheet” (p. 8-5).

- For practice, pick a process (baking brownies, washing the dog, etc.)
- Use the Planning Worksheet as a guide and follow the brainstorming/outlining instructions in the student workbook (p. 8-2).

 If time permits, use the information you have gathered to write a practice paragraph.

- Follow the instructions for writing the “sloppy copy” (p. 8-3).

Brainstorming

- With your student, review the “Explaining a Process” instruction sheet.
- Take photos of the student performing the steps of her process.
- Then have her make her outline using the “Process Planning Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her “sloppy copy.”
 - Because students are giving instructions directly to the reader, they will, of course, write in second person. However, caution them to avoid using the actual word “you.” Instead, teach them to *imply* it.

Example: Instead of “Next, *you* apply a thin coat of paint to the sanded wood,” suggest “Next, apply a thin coat of paint . . . “ (*you* is implied here).
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 8.

First Revision

- Have student write her first revision of “Explaining a Process.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 8 and suggestions on TM pp. 114-15.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes her “Explaining a Process” final draft as a decorative “Instruction Manual.”

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 9: Writing a Factual Paragraph

Lesson Focus: Informative Reports/Avoiding Plagiarism

Materials

- Photocopies:* Make a photocopy of an encyclopedia article for a pre-writing activity.
 - Choose an article about a land mammal (leopard, kangaroo, etc.).
 - The article you copy should be between one-third and one-half page long.
- Reference material:* Have available for each student a *Wildlife Fact File*TM card, short book, chapter, or encyclopedia/magazine article about one particular animal. Make sure this resource provides him with the following information:
 - size, color, special body features
 - habitat (home)
 - living habits (eating, sleeping, moving, parenting, etc.)

Pre-writing Activities

- Game: “Categories” (see Lesson 4 Pre-writing Activities, TM p. 27).
 - Category ideas include wild animals, domestic animals, mammals, reptiles, birds, fish, desert animals, animals of the jungle or forest, etc.
 - For another interesting category, try listing *present participles* that apply to an animal’s movement (springing, slithering, crawling, leaping, etc.).

Practice Paragraph

- Read the student instruction sheet “Writing a Factual Paragraph.”
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 1. Give your student a copy of the mammal encyclopedia article. He will use a different colored pencil to underline key facts in the article according to the “Fact-Gathering Worksheet.” Suggest using red for physical features, green for habitat, blue for habits, and yellow for most interesting fact(s).
 2. Mind-map this information on a separate sheet of paper.
 3. Make use of any word lists that may apply.
 4. Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions. When the student writes his own paragraph later on, he will write about a different animal.

Brainstorming

- Have student brainstorm by using the “Fact-Gathering Worksheet.”
- The student may wish to make a list of participles, paired adjectives, and similes appropriate to his animal.

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes his “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 9.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of his factual paragraph.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 9 and suggestions on TM pp. 115-16.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his factual paragraph.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 10: Writing a Concise Biography

Lesson Focus: Conciseness/Appositives/Adverb Phrases

Materials

- *Photocopies:* Make a photocopy of an Internet or encyclopedia article for a practice paragraph activity.
 - Choose a short biography.
 - The article itself should be between one-half and three-fourths of a page long (not including any photographs).
 - Suggested biographical articles include Jane Addams, Winston Churchill, Davy Crockett, Rosa Parks, and Noah Webster.

Pre-writing Activities

- Assign “A Five-Sentence Biography.”
- Students will begin using two new sentence variations this week, “-ly” adverbs and appositives. See the glossary on TM p. A-4 (student book p. viii).
 - Even though their Skill Builders will teach and reinforce these sentence variations, you may want to briefly introduce them via the Skill Builders so students can begin using them in the practice paragraph as well as in their own compositions.
- Teach students to use “items in a series.”
 - Because there is so much to include in a biography, and this particular lesson limits them to a five-sentence paragraph, using **items in a series** will help them include more information. Here are a few examples from student compositions:

Davy Crockett, an American frontiersman, was an expert marksman, a colonel in the militia, and a United States congressman.

Although he created over 1100 devices including the typewriter, phonograph, and motion picture machine, Edison’s greatest contribution was the light bulb.

Bright and diligent, this exceptional leader learned to read at age four, survived a few strict and discouraging teachers, and eventually graduated from college.

Practice Paragraph

- Read the student instruction sheet “Writing a Concise Biography.”
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).

1. Give student a copy of the biographical encyclopedia article. She will use a different colored pencil to underline key facts in the article according to the “Biography Worksheet.” For example, use *red* to underline synonyms for this person.
2. Make use of “Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors” and “Emotions” word lists as well as the “-ly” Adverb word list.
3. Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions. When the student writes her own paragraph later on, she will write a biography of a different person.

Brainstorming

- Have student brainstorm by using the “Biography Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 10.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of her biography.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 10 and suggestions on TM p. 116.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of her biography.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 11: Introducing Journalism

Lesson Focus: Writing a News Article

Note: Student should complete the *pre-writing activities* before attempting Skill Builder Day One.

Materials

- Several front pages from a daily newspaper
- Assorted magazine photos of an activity or event (swim meet, car accident, war scene, etc.)

Pre-writing Activities

- Together, read the student instruction sheet “Introducing Journalism.”
 - Do *not* move on to the “Examining a Lead Paragraph” activity yet.
- Discuss headlines.
 - Give your student the front page of the newspaper. Discuss the following questions together.
 1. *When you look at a newspaper, what do you notice first?* (headlines)
 2. *Why would you say the headline is like a book title?* (draws the reader’s attention; sparks interest; tells what the article is about)
 3. *Why do newspaper articles have headlines?* (to tell what the article is about; so readers can choose what they want to read; to help keep articles separate)
 4. *How is a headline different from an ordinary sentence?* (rarely, if ever, uses articles *the, a, an*; no period; rarely uses helping or “to be” verbs)
 5. *How would you describe a good headline?* (it’s short; it tells what the story is about in a catchy way)
 6. *What tense is used in a headline?* (present)
 7. *How are capital letters used in a headline?* (always capitalizes first word, proper nouns; some papers also capitalize nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs)
 - Ask student to circle in red two to three headlines that grab his attention. Discuss the following as you look over each headline (some answers may vary):
 1. *Does this headline give you an idea of the content of the article?*
 2. *Will this be a news article or a feature/human interest story?*
 3. *Is it local, state, national, or world news? How can you tell?*

4. *Does the headline make you want to read on? Why or why not?*
5. *In what tense is the headline written? (should be present tense)*
6. *Is any punctuation used? Which ones? Why are they necessary?*
7. *What kinds of unnecessary words have been left out?*
8. *Which words are capitalized or not capitalized?*

NOTE: If the student has trouble identifying the information requested in questions 5, 6, and 7, have him choose a headline or two to rewrite as a complete sentence to figure out what's missing.

- **Example:** *“Man, dog rescued from Cucamonga Canyon”* can be written as a sentence: *“A man and his dog are rescued from Cucamonga Canyon.”*
- Notice that in order to turn this headline into a complete sentence, an article, a pronoun, and a “to be” word need to be inserted, along with a period.

- Discuss sentence and paragraph length.
 - Ask student to look at a few articles and count the number of paragraphs in each.
 - Ask, *“How many sentences make up a paragraph?”* (answers will vary)
 - Have the student figure out the *average* number of sentences in a paragraph (per article). If it's a really long article, he can figure the average based on eight paragraphs. This will require a little math.
- Examine a lead paragraph.
 - Assign “Examining a Lead Paragraph.”
- Assign the observation activity.
 - Ask the student to look at two to three magazine photos and determine the “five Ws” and a headline for each one, based on what he observes. (In order to satisfy all the five Ws, he will need to invent more information than he can discover from observation alone.)
 - Then have him choose one of the photos and
 1. write a headline,
 2. write a lead paragraph of one or two sentences.

Practice Paragraph

- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 - The student has already written a headline and a lead paragraph for one of his photographs. Use this information as the foundation for writing your practice news article.

- His next step will be to brainstorm, adding more details to the five Ws. He will need to supply “facts” not available to him from the photo.
- Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions, “Writing a News Article.”

Brainstorming

- Have student brainstorm by using “News Article Planning Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes his “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 11.”

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of his article.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 11 and suggestions on TM pp. 116-18. Paper-clip your checklist to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his article.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 12: Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event

Lesson Focus: Narratives/Prepositions
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Materials

- No special preparation.

Pre-writing Activities

(Note: the instructions are detailed but the activities will not take a lot of time.)

- Introduce prepositions.
 1. Explain to your student, “A *preposition* is a relational word usually telling *where* or *when* (see Preposition Word List). *By itself*, a preposition is useless in a sentence. To be a true preposition, and to make sense in a sentence, a preposition must be used in a prepositional phrase. A **prepositional phrase** always begins with a preposition and always ends with a noun or a pronoun. Because a preposition is a relational word, it must relate to, or meet, an object.” (See Skill Builder Day One for examples and exercises.)
 2. Have him remove his copy of “Preposition Island” from the Student Workbook.
 3. Say, “Notice the boat. You might say it is floating **in the water**, sailing **through the water**, heading **toward the island**, circling **around the island**, or anchored **beyond the island**. These phrases explain the relationship of the boat to its surroundings. Each of these examples is called a prepositional phrase.”
 4. Give directions for the exercise: Say, “Use the word list as a guide. Mark the paper by writing appropriate prepositions. You will see the word **toward** already completed for you. It shows the relationship of the boat to the island. What prepositions could you write near the rocks? The sun? The dolphin? Consider the relationship of the sun to the horizon, the cave to the tree, etc.”
 5. On the lines below, have the student write ten prepositional phrases using words she marked on the preposition picture. The first one has been done for her.
 6. Possible answers include *aboard* the boat, *above* the trees (island, boat, water), *across* the ocean, *against* the shore, *along* the shore (horizon), *amid* the waves, *among* the rocks, *around* the island (mountain, tree), *atop* the mountain (tree), *behind* the mountain, *below* the horizon (surface), *beneath* the waves (water, boat, island), *beside* the tree (boat), *between* the trees, *beyond* the horizon (rainbow, island), *by* the tree (dolphins, boat), *down* the mountain, *from* the boat (tree), *in* the boat (water), *into* the cave, *near* the shore (fish, boat), *off* the boat,

on the island (mountain, island), onto the ground, over the mountain (island, boat, fish), past the trees (island), through the water (tunnel), to the shore (island), toward the (island, fish, horizon), under the boat (water, trees, rainbow), underneath the boat (island, trees), up the hill (mountain), upon the mountain.

7. Encourage students to memorize the prepositions during the next few weeks.

Discuss and assign “Details of a Narrative Event.”

- Together read the introductory comments and follow the instructions for the exercise.

Practice Paragraph

Read the student instruction sheet “Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event.”

Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).

1. Make use of “Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors” and “Emotions” word lists as well as the “-ly’ Adverb” and “Prepositions” word lists. Other sensory word lists may be helpful as well.
2. Brainstorm for the practice paragraph using the “Narrative Planning Worksheet” as a guide. Be sure you help your student narrow her topic.
3. Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions. When the student writes her own paragraph later on, she will write a narrative of a different event.

Brainstorming

Have student brainstorm by using “Narrative Planning Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

Student writes her “sloppy copy.”

Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 12.

First Revision

Have student write the first revision of her personal narrative.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

Edit your student’s first revision.

- Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 12 and suggestions on TM pp. 118-19.

Paper-clip your checklist to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of her personal narrative.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 13: Writing a Narrative of Another Person's Experience

<p>Lesson Focus: Conducting an Interview</p>

NOTE: *There is no Skill Builder assignment for Lesson 13.*

Materials

- *Student preparation:* For brainstorming day, student will need to interview with an older person (parent, grandparent, adult friend, or neighbor). Encourage him to make his appointment right away so he doesn't fall behind with the lesson. He should ask this person to be thinking about an emotionally-charged experience that he or she can share during the interview.

Pre-writing Activities

- Game: "Categories"
 - Referring to TM p. 27 for instructions, play "Categories" with your students.
 - First, give them the category "Emotions." They may only count one form of a word (*angry* or *anger*, but not both).
 - If time permits, narrow the categories (synonyms for *happy*, *sad*, *brave*, etc.)
- Sentence variations
 - If you feel your student needs more practice recognizing sentence variations, concrete words, etc., you may have him search the sample student paragraph titled "An Exciting Rafting Adventure" (p. 13-3).
 - Refer to the list under "Vary Your Sentence Structure" (p. 13-2) for an idea of what to have him look for.

Practice Paragraph

- Practice with interview skills.
 - First, read the student instruction sheet "Writing a Narrative of Another Person's Experience."
 - Using the "Interview Worksheet" (pp. 13-5 to 13-7) as a guide, have your student interview you about an experience with emotional impact—a scary close call, an embarrassing moment, a thrilling adventure (surfing, skiing, boating . . .), or a memorable vacation snapshot, for example.
 - Encourage him to:
 1. Ask questions to clarify vague responses and to gather more details.

2. Ask about the specific emotions and physical reactions you felt at various points during the experience.
 3. Ask if there are any additional details about the circumstances or the setting that would help make the narrative more interesting. Remind him that description is still a necessary aspect of his writing.
- Once he has interviewed you, ask him if he believes he has enough information to write a seven- to ten-sentence descriptive narrative. Stress the importance of being thorough when interviewing. The person he ends up interviewing for this week's assignment may not be available for further questions.
- Write a practice paragraph.
- Make use of “Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors” and “Emotions” word lists as well as the “-ly’ Adverb” and “Prepositions” word lists. Other sensory word lists may be helpful as well.
 - Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions. When the student writes his own paragraph later on, he must interview a different person.

Brainstorming

- Have student brainstorm by using “Interview Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes his “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 13.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of his narrative.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student's first revision.
- Use the Teacher's Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 13 and suggestions on TM p. 119.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his narrative.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 14: First-Person Point of View

Lesson Focus: Point of View/Personification
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Materials

- No special preparation.

Pre-writing Activities

(*Note: the instructions are detailed but the activities will not take a lot of time.*)

- Discuss point of view.
 1. Read aloud to your student “The Blind Men and the Elephant” (see Lesson 14).
 2. Ask her to identify the similes in the story (side of elephant is like a wall, tail is like a rope, leg is like a tree trunk, trunk is like a snake, ear is like a fan, tusk is like a spear).
- Read and discuss “Defining Point of View.”
 1. Remind her that everything she writes or reads has a point of view; it’s not something she *chooses* to include or not include.
 2. Suggest this scenario to your student: Say, “*A shopping mall is being built in a vacant lot. Members of the community have a different point of view regarding this new structure. How do you think each of the following would react?*”
 - City council (eager to have continued growth, added revenue)
 - Local teenagers (a new place to hang out and shop, new job prospects)
 - Senior citizen complex next door (negative: noise and traffic/positive: pleased to be able to walk to a nearby shopping facility)
 - Environmentalists (destroys habitats of small animals, birds, insects; added smog)
- Discuss personification.
 - Explain how personification is different from a simile. (With a simile, two things are compared using the words “like” or “as.” Personification gives human behaviors and characteristics to an object or animal.)
 - When using personification, the writer does not say, “This is *like* this,” but, “This *behaves* like a person.”
- Talk about how point of view and personification often intertwine (following are examples of movies and TV shows that use personification, where inanimate objects are given life or animals are given human qualities).
 1. Often, the action is either centered on the object/animal, *or*

2. The action is viewed from the *point of view* of the object/animal.

□ Discuss books/movies/TV shows that use personification/point of view (see if your student can think of examples on her own before you talk about these):

1. *Mr. Ed* (talking horse)
2. *Babe* (talking pig, other animals, animals have feelings and human behaviors)
3. *Stuart Little* (talking mouse, adopted into a family, takes on role of a son)
4. *Charlotte's Web* (talking animals that plot and think like humans, emotional)
5. *Bambi* (talking animals, human emotions and feelings)
6. *The Little Engine That Could* (toys, trains have human emotions, inanimate objects have faces)
7. *The Nutcracker* (toy soldiers march like real men, mice have sword fights, nutcracker takes on human traits, inanimate objects/animals interact with humans)
8. *Beauty and the Beast* (teapot, candlestick, clock, broom, other household objects have faces, arms, legs, act like people, talk, think, feel)
9. *Toy Story* (toys move as if alive, have human thoughts and emotions)

□ Consider a teenager's messy bedroom.

1. Say, "The room has been messy for several days and the bedroom's occupants are tired of it. What do you think the closet would say?" ("I'm so full! I can't eat another bite! If she throws one more dirty sock down my throat, I think I'll . . .") Say, "How about the lamp?" ("I can't wait till nighttime so I can finally turn off. I can't stand looking at this mess any longer!") Say, "What would the bed say?" ("I shiver from the cold all day. Why won't she dress me in the morning?")
2. This example shows how different objects view the same situation from their point of view. They are each affected in a slightly different way.
3. **Optional activity:** Give your student one of the following scenarios. Ask her to put herself in the place of one of the objects and talk about her perspective. Be sure she includes personification, as in the bedroom example in #1.

Family dinner (*plate, chair, table, centerpiece, fork, oven, serving bowl*)

Birthday party (*piñata, a piece of candy in the piñata, a candle on the cake, camera, wrapped gift, or a child's shirt*)

Practice Paragraph

- Together, finish reading “First Person Point of View (Personification).”
- Read the student instruction sheet “Writing a First Person Narrative Using Personification.”
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 1. Make use of “Personification,” “Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors,” and “Emotions” word lists as well as the “-ly’ Adverb” and “Prepositions” word lists. Other sensory word lists may be helpful as well.
 2. Brainstorm for the practice paragraph using the “Personification Worksheet” as a guide.
 3. Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions. When the student writes her own paragraph later on, she must choose a different object.

Brainstorming

- Have student brainstorm by using “Personification Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 14.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of her narrative.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 14 and suggestions on TM pp. 119-20.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of her narrative.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 15: First-Person Point of View

<p>Lesson Focus: Limited Omniscience/Tenses</p>
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Materials

- (Optional) Small toy cars and stop signs; a large piece of cardboard or poster board with a four-way intersection drawn on it (two-way traffic for the toy cars).

Pre-writing Activities

- Stage a mock car accident at the intersection of your cardboard “road” using Matchbox cars, small stop sign, trees, etc. Then interview your student (and other children, if possible) as witnesses. This will demonstrate how their perception of the situation will color their point of view. Discuss how their point of view was affected by where they were standing, how carefully they paid attention, etc.

Practice Paragraph

Discuss limited omniscience.

- For this lesson your student writes a first-person narrative about Androcles and the Lion. Tell him to choose a character from the story and write his narrative from that person’s point of view.
 - Explain that this character has **limited omniscience**. This means he cannot know what anyone else is thinking or doing. He can only write about what he sees or experiences. The student must ask himself, “How would I know this?” If his character didn’t observe the action, he can’t write about it in a firsthand manner.
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 1. Read aloud *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (see Lesson 15).
 2. Have your student choose whether to write a narrative from the point of view of Peter or Mr. McGregor. (If you are teaching a group of students, you might like to divide the group with each half taking a different point of view.)
 3. Brainstorm by listing the sequence of events (keeping in mind the chosen point of view). The story is too long to include every detail. Practice the concept of limited omniscience, including only what the character experiences firsthand. *Mr. McGregor cannot know what happened at Peter’s house. Likewise, Peter cannot know that Mr. McGregor made a scarecrow out of his clothes.*
 4. You *can* write the entire story in your practice paragraphs, but in the interest of time, you might consider writing these practice paragraphs with 8 to 11 sentences in order to give your students a taste of writing with the limited omniscient point of view.

5. As always, include all sentence variations when writing a practice paragraph.

Brainstorming

- Together, read the student instruction sheet “First-Person Point of View Limited Omniscience.”
- Have student brainstorm by using the “Androcles and the Lion Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes the “sloppy copy.”
- Remind students that they will now begin including a short sentence in each composition. This sentence must be six words or fewer. It is another way to add variety to their writing.
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 15.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of his narrative.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 15 and suggestions on TM p. 120.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his narrative.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 16: Third Person Point of View

Lesson Focus: Omniscience/Past Participles

Materials

- No special preparation

Pre-writing Activities

- Assign the student “Elements of a Narrative” and have her complete the activities.

Practice Paragraph

- Writing a practice paragraph is optional. Because the composition will be longer than usual, you won’t have enough room on the dry erase board to fit the entire story.

Brainstorming

- Together, read the instruction sheet “Third Person Point of View (Omniscience).”
- Have student brainstorm by using the “Pet Narrative Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 16

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of her narrative.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 16 and suggestions on TM pp. 124-25.
 - Paper-clip your checklist to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of her narrative.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 17: Describing an Object

Lesson Focus: Reviewing Concreteness and Sentence Variations

Materials

- Objects to describe for practice paragraph and for student composition.
 - Look at items that have several interesting aspects, such as a piece of jewelry, a costume or article of clothing, a vase of flowers, a car or bike, a plant in your yard or house, or a piece of furniture.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN WRITESHOP II

If students are continuing from WriteShop I but have taken some time off between courses, begin with Lesson 17. However, if they successfully completed WriteShop I within the past month, you may choose to skip the review lessons in Unit 4 and go directly to Unit 5.

If they have NOT used WriteShop I, familiarize them with both the Introduction and Word Lists sections of their workbooks. In particular, have them read “Introducing WriteShop II” and “Getting Started” from the Introduction. Then, begin with Lesson 17, allowing an extra week to introduce new concepts as suggested in “Before You Begin” (TM p. 15).

Pre-writing Activities

- If you are new to WriteShop*, review the Pre-writing Activities found in Lesson 1 (TM pp. 15-16 before you begin Lesson 17). **Note:** Unless you have a WriteShop I student workbook, you will not be able to assign the Concrete Writing Activity at the bottom of TM p.16.
- Read the Lesson 17 student instruction sheet “Describing an Object.”
- Look at the sample paragraph “The Wedding Gown.”
 1. Ask your student to identify concrete or descriptive adjectives (*sheer, filmy, white, satin, soft, fresh, delicate, V-necked, long, beautiful, lovely*).
 2. Next, have him look for other concrete words that help make the paragraph vivid (*organza, mist, appliqué, adorns, draping, roses, bustle*).

Practice Paragraph

- Write a practice paragraph (see TM pp. 8-9).
 - Brainstorm for the practice paragraph using “Observing an Object.”

- Stress the importance of examining a single object for little, often-missed details.
- Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions.

Brainstorming

- Have your students choose a topic that is different from the practice paragraph.
- Together, read the student instruction sheet “Describing an Object.”
- Have student brainstorm by using the “Observing an Object Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- If you are new to WriteShop*, review Lesson 1 “Sloppy Copy” (see TM pp. 18-19).
- Student writes his “sloppy copy.”
 - *If he is new to WriteShop* or has no experience with sentence variations, limit required sentence variations to the ones taught in Skill Builder 17 (paired adjectives, simile, and present participial phrase).
- Student uses Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 17.

First Revision

- If you are new to WriteShop*, review Lesson 1 “First Revision” (see TM p. 19).
- Have student write the first revision of “Describing an Object.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- If you are new to WriteShop*, review Lesson 1 “Teacher/Parent Editing Day” (see TM p. 20).
- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 17 and suggestions on

TM p. 121.

- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- If you are new to WriteShop*, review Lesson 1 “Final Draft” (see TM p. 20).
- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his paragraph.

Grading the Composition

- If you are new to WriteShop*, review Lesson 1 “Grading the Composition” (see TM p. 20).
- Use the Composition Evaluation form located in the student workbook (p. 17-15).

Lesson 18: Describing a Place

Lesson Focus: Reviewing Sensory Description and Sentence Variations

Materials

- No special preparation.

Pre-writing Activities

- Practice sentence building.
 - Student takes a short, vague sentence and expands it until it is concrete and descriptive. This is a fun way to review concreteness and sentence variation.
 - Starter sentence ideas: *It moves. He goes. It flies. She sits. It plays. It broke. She talked. It laughed.*
 - Here is one example of how you can encourage your student to build a sentence. When you are done with this one, try your hand at others, or do one or two each week.
 1. Have student write “It moves” on a sheet of paper, placing a period at the end.
 2. Say: *Change the pronoun to a concrete noun (add an article if necessary). Underline the concrete noun in red.* (“The cat moves.”)
 3. Say: *Change the verb to past tense. Underline the new verb form in green.* (“The cat moved.”)
 4. Say: *Add an “-ly” adverb that tells “how.” Circle the adverb in yellow.* (“The cat moved quickly.”)
 5. Say: *Add an adjective. Circle the adjective in pink.* (“The sneaky cat moved quickly.”)
 6. Say: *Start the sentence with a preposition that tells “where.” Underline the preposition in orange.* (“Across the floor, the sneaky cat moved quickly.”)
 7. Say: *Add another adjective. Circle the adjective in pink.* (“Across the tile floor, the sneaky cat moved quickly.”)
 8. Say: *Make all your nouns more concrete. Circle concrete nouns in blue.* (“Across the tile entryway, the sneaky tabby moved quickly.”)
 9. Say: *Make the verb more concrete. Underline the verb in purple.* (“Across the tile entryway, the sneaky tabby scurried quickly.”)
 10. Say: *Use the thesaurus to find a concrete word for a vague word. Circle your new concrete word in yellow.* (“Across the tile entryway, the sneaky tabby scurried hastily.”)

11. Say: *Change your sentence structure to begin with a participle (add necessary words/phrases so it makes sense.) Circle the participle in brown.* (“Scurrying hastily across the tile entryway, the sneaky tabby chased the mouse.”)

- Read the student instruction sheet “Describing a Place.”
 - This lesson is similar to Lesson 7 “Describing a Place”; however, it will be an expanded composition with added detail and description.
 - Familiarize yourself and your student with the lesson. Read the sample composition “A Walk in the Woods” on p. 18-1. If possible, compare it with the WriteShop I paragraph on p. 7-2. Ask, “*How do these differ?*” (One is longer and more descriptive.)
 - Explain that even though the composition is a descriptive writing assignment, some narration is acceptable. Caution against writing a “story.” The emphasis should still remain on the details that describe the environment. It may help to suggest, “*This is not about your walk in the woods; it’s about the things you see, hear, smell, or touch as you explore your environment.*”

Practice Paragraph

- Read the directions for “Practicing with Two Paragraphs.”
 - Have the student write a strong closing sentence to end the first paragraph.
- Write a practice paragraph. (TM pp. 8-9).
 1. Brainstorm on paper before writing the second paragraph on the dry erase board. Follow the student instructions.
 2. Be sure to begin the paragraph with a transition word.
 3. After editing and making desired changes together on the dry erase board, have the student copy the composition onto the blank lines on the page titled “Practicing with Two Paragraphs.”

Brainstorming

- Review the instructions for “Describing a Place.”
- Have the student brainstorm.

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 18.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of “Describing a Place.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 18 and suggestions on TM p. 121.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of her paragraph.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 19: Writing a Short Report

Lesson Focus: Outlining

Materials

- Reference material.* Have the following sources available for each student: a short book, chapter, or encyclopedia/magazine article. The student will need:
 - two resources about an animal
 - two sources about a famous person

Pre-writing Activities

- Gather materials about chosen subject
 - Student should skim through resources for an overview of his subject.

Practice Paragraph

- Together, read the student instruction sheet “Writing a Short Report.”
- Write a practice outline.
 1. The student will choose which topic he wants for his report (animal or biography).
 2. Once he has made that decision, plan to work with the *other* topic during this practice exercise.
 3. This exercise is designed to introduce and give practice in outlining. There will be no practice paragraph this week.
 4. Have student fill in the appropriate “Fact-Gathering Worksheet.”
 5. When he is finished, work together at the dry erase board to form an outline from his information. Follow the outlining format suggested in the lesson.
 6. **IMPORTANT!** When students first learn to make an outline, they often fail to correctly line up numbers, letters, and text. Review proper outline format in your English handbook so you are well-prepared to help your teen.

Brainstorming

- Have student brainstorm on the unused “Fact-Gathering Worksheet.” If his practice outline was a biography, his short report should be an animal report, and vice versa.

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes his “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 19.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of his factual short report.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student's first revision.
 - Use the Teacher's Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 19 and suggestions on TM pp. 121-21.
 - Do not penalize him for including some narration in this composition. It will help prevent the composition from sounding like a dry encyclopedia article.
 - Skim his sources, watching for obvious signs of plagiarism.
- Paper-clip your checklist to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his factual short report.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 20: Exaggeration

Lesson Focus: Descriptive/Informative and Descriptive/Persuasive

Materials

- Gather a few of the following materials from a travel agency, library, or your own bookshelves:
 - travel magazines or Auto Club publications
 - bridal magazines (honeymoon section)
 - Sunday travel section of the newspaper
 - National Geographic
 - tour guides

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Lesson 20 asks students to write two different paragraphs as part of a single assignment. If you prefer, treat each paragraph as a separate lesson, spreading the work out over a longer period of time.

Pre-writing Activities

- Talk about influential advertising.
 1. Follow the instructions at the top of “Lesson 20: Exaggeration” (pp. 20-1). Have the student brainstorm about advertising materials. You might use the dry erase board for this simple assignment.
 2. Together, read the “Exaggeration” lesson (pp. 20-1 to -3). Using the items listed under “Materials” above, the student should complete the activity titled “Read for ideas.” Again, consider using the dry erase board to record the information.

Practice Paragraph

- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 1. Read the student instructions under “Write your composition.”
 2. Read the student instructions for “Practicing with Exaggeration” (p. 20-5).
 3. Brainstorm using “Exaggeration Worksheet (Practice Paragraph)” on p. 20-7.
 - Ask the student to read “Paradise Palms Resort,” writing down in the first column what she discovers about the facilities, scenic environment, and activities available at Paradise Palms Resort.
 - Next, have her fill in the second column by exaggerating those same features (as if they were in ideal condition).

- The answer key (see Pre-writing Activity Keys) will help you further understand the assignment as you guide your student to write a successful paragraph. Her practice paragraph will be different from the example, which merely serves as a model to help you know what to expect from the assignment.

4. Write the practice paragraph, exaggerating the claims of Paradise Palms Resort.

Brainstorming

- Review the student instructions for “Exaggeration.”
- Have the student brainstorm using the “Exaggeration Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her two-paragraph “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 20.
 - The student will edit both paragraphs using the same checklist; there is a column to check for EACH of the two paragraphs.
 - You, on the other hand, will have a Teacher Checklist for EACH paragraph.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of “Exaggeration.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 20 and suggestions, TM p. 122.
 - Note that this lesson gives you TWO checklists, one for EACH paragraph.
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of her paragraphs.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.
 - The Student Workbook contains two forms. Decide whether you prefer to grade each “Exaggeration” paragraph separately or whether you would rather give one composition grade for the entire assignment (both paragraphs together).

Lesson 21: First-Person Point of View, Part 1

Lesson Focus: Descriptive/Narrative

Materials

- No special preparation.

Pre-writing Activities

- “Identifying Descriptive Narration.”
 - Assign the pre-writing activity titled “Identifying Descriptive Narration.”
 - Especially help the student search for descriptive phrases.

Practice Paragraph

- No practice paragraph this week.
 - Beginning with Lesson 21, *practice paragraphs have generally been omitted*. Judging your own student’s abilities and comprehension of concepts, decide whether he needs ongoing practice in this area.

Brainstorming

- Review the instructions for “First-Person Point of View, Part 1.”
- Have the student brainstorm using a mind-map or columns.
 - If he chooses columns, he should head the columns *Sights, Sounds, Smells, and Emotions*.
 - If he selects mind-maps, he should label the three main bubbles in the same manner.
 - Encourage him to brainstorm thoroughly so he can draw from a large well of ideas and information (Word Lists will be helpful).

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes his two-paragraph “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 21.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of “First-Person Point of View.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 21 and suggestions on TM pp.122-23.
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his paragraphs.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 22: First-Person Point of View, Part 2

Lesson Focus: Changing Points of View
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Materials

- No special preparation

Pre-writing Activities

- No pre-writing activity this week

Practice Paragraph

- Optional practice paragraph this week

Brainstorming

- Review the instructions for “First-Person Point of View, Part 2.” The student will write about the same scene she wrote about in Lesson 21. However, she will write from a different point of view. For Lesson 21, she wrote the story as if she were the parent observing her child at a picnic. For this lesson, she will choose another character who will observe the same scene. This may be a person (a janitor or a senior citizen) or it may be an animal.
- When she chooses her point of view, be aware that writing from an animal’s perspective may be a little more challenging. There is a tendency for the student to overly personify or exaggerate, which can create a cartoon-like character.
- Have the student brainstorm using a mind-map or columns (see Lesson 21: First-Person Point of View, Part 1 “Brainstorming” to review additional ideas).
 - If she chooses columns, have her head the columns *Sights*, *Sounds*, *Smells*, and *Emotions*.
 - If she prefers mind-maps, she should label the four main bubbles in the same manner.
 - Encourage her to brainstorm thoroughly so she can draw from a large well of ideas and information (Word Lists will be helpful).

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her two-paragraph “sloppy copy.”
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 22.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of “First-Person Point of View, Part 2.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student's first revision.
 - Use the Teacher's Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 22 and suggestions on TM pp. 122-23.
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of her paragraphs.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 23: Narrative Voice

Lesson Focus: First and Third Person Narratives

NOTE: There are no Skill Builders for Lessons 23, 24, 26-30.

Materials

- Resources (choose from the following; see Lesson 23 directions for specifics):
 - Nature magazines (*National Geographic*, *Ranger Rick*, etc.)
 - Books and encyclopedia articles on animals or animal behavior

Pre-writing Activities

- “Backward Brainstorming”
 - **Do this activity on “Teaching Day”:** Using the first sample paragraph, “Mink’s Narrow Escape,” have your student make lists of words and phrases that describe the mink, the owl, the crayfish, and the surroundings.
 - **Do this activity on “Practice Paragraph Day”:** Repeat this exercise with the second paragraph, “Icy Escapade.” The student should list words and phrases that describe the mink, the rodent, and the habitat.
 - (*Possible answers are included in the following charts.*)

“Mink’s Narrow Escape”

Mink	Owl	Crayfish	Surroundings
<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior/ Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepared to pounce • looked up • terrified • felt prick pierce my back • dove to escape • sharp pain soothed • warily emerged • hurried • nursed tender wound • dreamed 	<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (shadow) crossed path • circled above • swift/silent • plunged from its height • predator <input type="checkbox"/> Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gray shadow • enormous • great bird • massive wings outstretched • knife-like talon 	<input type="checkbox"/> Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tempting • tasty/should have been dinner 	<input type="checkbox"/> Season/Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early evening • Habitat • dark stream • cool water • creek • burrow

Practice Paragraph

- No practice paragraph this week.
 - Do second pre-writing activity today instead.
 - When he has completed BOTH charts, ask the student what he discovered.

(Good narration often includes a great deal of description. Point out how the author uses carefully chosen words to give the reader a complete picture of the scene and the activity.)

“Icy Escapade”

Mink	Rodent	Surroundings
<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior/Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • searching • darts gracefully • approaches • startles suddenly • slips through • excellent swimmer • pops up • eyes take in surroundings • glides deftly • watchful animal spies • crafty, swift, cunning • surprises • enjoys <input type="checkbox"/> Appearance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sleek mink • slender mammal • alert black eyes • like small torpedo • webbed feet like paddles 	<input type="checkbox"/> Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wayward • mouse • prey • winter feast <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scurries 	<input type="checkbox"/> Season/Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • winter • bone-chilling afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small brook begins to freeze in shallower places • opposite shore • loud crack shatters silence • broken surface • frigid water • chilly creek • snowy bank • a clearing

Brainstorming

- Review the instructions for “Narrative Voice.”
- Have the student brainstorm.
 - He must prepare TWO columns, one for the animal and one for the setting (see Brainstorming Instructions). The setting may include other creatures that interact with the main character.

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes his two one-paragraph “sloppy copies”
 - Have him make a “Backward Brainstorming Chart” on a sheet of paper.
 - This will help him determine if his narrative contains **plenty of description**.
- Writing Skills Checklists Lesson 23
 - There are two Checklists for this lesson, one per paragraph.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of “Narrative Voice” paragraphs.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use both Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklists Lesson 23 and suggestions on TM p. 123.
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his paragraphs.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.
 - Since your student has written two paragraphs, you may either give her one grade for both paragraphs together or a separate grade for each.
 - Two Composition Evaluation forms are located in the Student Workbook for Lesson 23.

Lesson 24: Persuasive Writing (Writing an Ad)

Lesson Focus: Writing to Convince

Materials

- Magazine or catalog pictures of toys, or an actual toy.
- Examples of written advertisements in magazines (not just toys).

Pre-writing Activities

- Identify elements of a persuasive ad.
 - Together, read “Persuasive Writing.”
 - Have student read the ad about the “Young Explorer’s Hiking Set” and complete the activities that follow.

Practice Paragraph

- Read the student instruction sheet “Writing a Persuasive Advertisement.”
- Write a practice paragraph (TM pp. 8-9).
 - Brainstorm for the practice paragraph.
 - Write the practice paragraph, following the student instructions. When the student writes her own paragraph later on, she must choose a different toy.

Brainstorming

- Review the instructions for “Writing a Persuasive Advertisement.”
- Have the student brainstorm using the worksheet provided.

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her “sloppy copy.”
 - Advertising styles vary. Her ad may be one paragraph long, or it may consist of two or three short, crisp paragraphs.
 - The composition should be six to ten sentences in length. If it is six sentences long, it may be better suited to a single paragraph.
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 24.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of “Writing a Persuasive Ad.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student's first revision.
 - Use the Teacher's Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 24 and suggestions on TM p. 123.
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes her final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of her paragraphs.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

ABOUT UPCOMING ESSAY LESSONS

Starting at Lesson 25, students will begin writing different kinds of essays. Before you launch into this more advanced unit, consider each child's readiness. Essay writing is a bit more abstract and challenging than previous WriteShop assignments. It depends on a student's ability to think more deeply about a subject and to begin learning how to organize ideas logically.

You may find your teens are ready for the challenge. On the other hand, you may decide to wait a while before introducing essays. High school is a good time to begin, although your junior higher could be fully capable as well.

Your student's first attempt at essay writing may prove disastrous! Don't give up. Essay writing is a learned skill that takes a lot of practice. Most WriteShop essays are common types that students will face again and again throughout high school and college. So go ahead and repeat lessons as often as needed, choosing different topics.

Don't move ahead too quickly. Make sure they grasp the concepts introduced in Lesson 25 and are on the road to writing an effective opinion essay before you move on to Lesson 26. If your teens need ideas, TM pp. B-17 to B-18 contain two dozen topics suitable for writing an opinion essay.

Lesson 25: Opinion Essay

Lesson Focus: Developing Points through Outlining/Parallelism

Materials

- No special preparation.

Pre-writing Activities

- Read and discuss the concept of essay writing. See “Opinion Essay.”
- Make sure the students begin tackling the Lesson 25 Skill Builder right away so they can begin understanding the concept of **parallelism**.

Practice Paragraph

- Instead of writing a practice paragraph, students will practice the new skill of outlining.
- Together, read the student instruction sheet “Writing an Opinion Essay.”
- Write a practice outline.
 1. Choose an essay topic from the list in Appendix B-17 to B-18 (“Essays That Persuade”). You may select the topic for him or offer him two or three choices. Be aware that **a number of topics on this list are not appropriate for younger students**, since they require more advanced and/or abstract reasoning skills and/or discuss academic subjects a younger student will not have studied yet.
 2. On the “Opinion Essay Practice Worksheet,” have the student first write his opinion in the form of a thesis statement.
 3. Next, have him brainstorm thoroughly (10-20 ideas) on the blank lines.
 4. Work together to choose his three main points and develop the outline. Follow the student instructions. He will not need to write a practice paragraph for this lesson. Instead, focus on making a clear, orderly outline.
 5. It is not uncommon for a young writer to mix up the construction of an outline. Again, make sure he understands **parallelism**. An example from the lesson follows. Refer to your English handbook for clarification or a more in-depth understanding of the subject. Go over the following information with your student to help him grasp this important concept.

Consider the three main points from the lesson:

 1. Lacks maturity
 2. Yields to peer pressure
 3. They can be easily distracted

Written in a sentence, the above phrases would read like this:

Because teenagers lack maturity, yield to peer pressure, and they can be easily distracted, the driving age should be raised to eighteen.

Can you see how awkward this sentence sounds? All parts of the sentence should parallel each other. Ask students to see if they can discover and fix the mistake in the previous list. (“*They can be easily distracted*” is incorrect.) If not, here are two possible solutions:

Use all adjectives:

1. **Immature** (as in: *They are immature*)
2. **Impressionable** (as in: *They are impressionable*)
3. Easily **distracted** (as in: *They are easily distracted*)

The driving age should be raised to eighteen, since teenagers tend to be immature, impressionable, and easily distracted.

Use all verbs (same tense):

1. **Lack** maturity
2. **Yield** to peer pressure
3. **Can be** easily distracted

Since a typical teenager lacks maturity, tends to yield to peer pressure, and is easily distracted, the driving age should be raised to eighteen.

Brainstorming

- Using a new topic, have student complete “Opinion Essay Worksheet.”
 - Check his outline for parallel construction and appropriately selected main points and subpoints.
 - **Do not** let him progress to the “sloppy copy” until his outline is organized, logical, and sound.
- Assign “Identifying Main Points and Transitions.”
 - Ask your student why these essays seem difficult to follow. Then, have him identify main points and parallelism, insert transition words, and determine the placement of new paragraphs. Help him recognize how these tools add structure and organization to the essays.

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes his “sloppy copy.”
 - Together, review the instructions “Writing the Essay” (p. 25-9).
 - His composition should be 10-20 sentences altogether and 4-5 paragraphs long.

- *A note about repeated words:* Although the student lesson points out the following information, you would be wise to go over it to be sure he understands the fine line between repeating words out of *necessity* and repeating words out of *laziness*.
 - The sample essay contains a number of repeated words. In some cases this cannot be helped. For example, the word *driver* has few synonyms (*motorist* is the only appropriate one). However, words like *young people*, *teenagers*, “*teens*,” *novices*, and *adolescents* can be used interchangeably.
 - Another difficult-to-replace word is *drive* (or *driving*). In this case, the thesaurus did not help! Instead, the author had to think of creative alternatives, choosing words like *recklessness* to replace *reckless driving*, *speeding* to replace *driving too fast*, and *act irresponsibly* to replace *drive irresponsibly*.
 - So then, as long as main words are repeated sparingly, the student may use them in his composition.
- *A note about sentence variations:* As sentence variation choices are left more and more to the student, your job is to see that he still uses an adequate variety. He should use several variations more than once.
 - **Note:** When a sentence begins with a transition, the next word or phrase can count as the sentence variation. For example, “Second, according to recent statistics” would be considered a participle sentence starter.
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 25.

First Revision

Have student write the first revision of “Opinion Essay.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 25 and suggestions on TM pp. 127-29. (If he had trouble with fluency or with using transitions, refer him to the page titled “Reorganizing Your Essay” before he revises.)
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his paragraphs.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 26: Letter to the Editor

Lesson Focus: Developing Points through Outlining

Materials

- *Resources:* Editorials and opinion pages from the newspaper (borrow if needed).

Pre-writing Activities

- Read “Letter to the Editor,” “Writing an Editorial Letter,” and letter from “John Doe.”
- Read and discuss actual letters to the editor.
 - Gather a few editorial/opinion pages from the local newspaper.
 - Have the student read several letters to the editor. For each essay, ask her to identify (1) the subject matter, (2) the thesis statement/opinion, (3) the main points, and (4) supporting reasons, examples, or illustrations.
 - Your student will probably discover a couple of things while reading and dissecting these letters: (1) Many people who write to the editor are eager to state their points of view and may rely on emotions more than facts to back up their opinions. (2) Even when an editorial letter contains arguable points, it may not be well-organized or well-developed. Tell your student that her opinion will earn greater respect when she organizes her information and supports it appropriately.

Practice Paragraph

- Practice outlining.
 - Today, instead of writing a practice paragraph, your student will continue to practice making an outline.
- Together, read the student instruction sheet “Writing an Editorial Letter.”
- Write a practice outline.
 1. Choose an essay topic. A list of ideas may be found in TM pp. B-21 and -22.
 2. On the “Letter to the Editor Practice Worksheet” have the student make note of her subject matter and then write her opinion in the form of a thesis statement.
 3. Have her brainstorm for ideas on the blank lines and choose three main points.
 4. Help her brainstorm for facts, examples, and illustrations which will support the three main topics.
 5. Work together to develop the outline, following the student instructions. She will not need to write a practice paragraph. Instead, focus on making a clear, orderly outline.

6. Continue to stress the importance of **parallelism** in her outline.

Brainstorming

- Using a new topic, have student complete the “Letter to the Editor Worksheet.”
 - Check her outline for parallel construction and appropriately selected main points and subpoints.
 - **Do not** let her progress to the “sloppy copy” until her outline is organized, logical, and sound.

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes her “sloppy copy.”
 - Together, review the instructions for writing the letter.
 - Her composition should be 12-15 sentences and about four paragraphs long.
- A reminder about repeated words:* As with the Opinion Essay, help the student use wisdom in deciding whether a critical word should be repeated or replaced.
- A note about sentence variations:* Again, as sentence variation choices are left more and more to the student, your job is to see that he still uses an adequate variety.

It will not be enough for her to use only one of each type. She may (and in fact, *should*) use several of these variations more than once.
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 26.

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of “Letter to the Editor.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 26 and suggestions on TM p. 125.
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with your student before assigning the final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of her paragraphs.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lessons 27 and 28: Compare or Contrast Essay

Lesson Focus: Venn Diagrams

Note: Students will write two different compare or contrast essays, one for **Lesson 27** and another for **Lesson 28**. The instructions are the same for both. The only differences are that they must write one *compare* essay and one *contrast* essay AND must choose a different method for organizing his paragraphs. The student instruction materials give detailed explanations.

Materials

- *Resources:* Pertinent information about the chosen topics.
 - Books, magazines, encyclopedias, brochures, newspaper articles, Internet articles

Pre-writing Activities

- With the student, read “Compare or Contrast Essay, Part 1.”
- Choose a worthwhile topic.
 - Refer to the Essay Topics beginning on TM p. B-20.
 - Help the students understand the importance of choosing a worthwhile topic. *It must have significance to the reader.* In our experience, essays comparing or contrasting such topics as “dogs vs. cats” or “volleyball vs. basketball” result in trite, dull compositions. Because these comparisons are so evident, they offer little in the way of interesting material. Students end up repeating words, overstating the obvious, and making weak or insignificant comparisons.
- Discuss how to make a **Venn diagram**.
 - Use your dry erase board to make a large Venn diagram (see model in this lesson, p. 27-5). Fill in the spaces as your students brainstorm ideas.
 - Circle A will represent the first topic; Circle B will represent the second. As your students mention differences, list them in the appropriate circle. For example, if Circle A stands for the Union, it might contain such information as “blue uniforms,” “General Ulysses S. Grant,” and “victory at Gettysburg.” Circle B would contain “gray uniforms,” “General Robert E. Lee,” and “victory at Manassas.”
 - If they mention a similarity between the two topics, write it in the space where the two circles overlap.
 - The Venn diagram will show whether there are more points to compare or to contrast. Once students have determined their position, they should transfer the information from the Venn diagram to their Practice Worksheet on p. 27-7.

Brainstorming

- Using a new topic, have students complete the blank Venn diagram.
- Fill in the “Compare/Contrast Worksheet.”
 - See Essay Topics on pp. B-20-21. The suggested topics may give you a writing activity idea that applies to social studies, literature, or science. If your students are studying a certain period of history, for example, you may want them to compare two popular philosophies, leaders, or religious teachings of the day. When you combine a composition assignment with another subject, it is sometimes referred to as “writing across the curriculum.” Conveniently, this can “kill two birds with one stone.”
 - Be sure their topic lends itself to this exercise. If they cannot complete a Venn diagram because they lack sufficient information, they must either broaden their topic or choose a different one.
 - **Do not** let them progress to the “sloppy copy” until their worksheet is complete and you believe they have enough material to write a strong essay.
 - (For Lesson 28, choose a different approach and method of organization.)

Sloppy Copy

- Students write their “sloppy copy.”
 - Together, review the instructions for writing a compare/contrast paper (pp. 27-1 through 27-4).
 - Explain the use of signal words (*comparison* words and *contrast* words), p. 27-1.
 - Review the difference between the “whole-by-whole” and “part-by-part” methods. (The “whole-by-whole” approach presents all arguments for one side or one issue before presenting the arguments for the other side. The “part-by-part” method presents both sides of a *subtopic* before moving on to a new one.) See p. 27-4 for examples.
 - Encourage use of both transition Word Lists (pp. 14-16). Remind students that signal words can sometimes function as transitions.
 - The composition should be two paragraphs long with seven to ten sentences per paragraph.
- *A reminder about repeated words:* As with the Opinion Essay, help students use wisdom in deciding whether a critical word should be repeated or replaced.
- *A note about sentence variations:* Again, as sentence variation choices are left more and more to the students, your job is to see that they still use an adequate variety. It will not be enough for them to use only one of each type. They may (and in fact, *should*) use several of these variations more than once throughout the essay.

- A note about topic and closing sentences:* Be sure students introduce their essays with a strong topic sentence and wrap up their thoughts with a good closer.
- Student Writing Skills Checklists Lesson 27 and 28.

First Revision

- Have students write the first revision of “Compare/Contrast.”

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your students’ first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklists Lesson 27 and Lesson 28 and suggestions on TM p. 125.
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of their work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with students before they write their final drafts.
- Students write the final draft of their paragraphs.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Composition Evaluation form.

Lesson 28

- Read the general instructions for Lesson 28. Then refer back to Lesson 27 for the details.
- Students will find a *new* Venn diagram in this lesson on p. 28-3.
- New worksheets* are included in Lesson 28 (see pp. 28-5 and 28-7).

Lesson 29: Essays That Describe or Define

Lesson Focus: Developing Points through Outlining

Materials

- Resources:* Textbooks, encyclopedias, biographies, Internet sources, etc, if needed for some research.

Pre-writing Activities

- There are no pre-writing or practice activities this week.
 - Student is to take all his previous knowledge about essays and writing style and apply it to this lesson.

Brainstorming

- Student must read “Essays That Describe and Define.”
 - Suggest essay topics from TM pp. B-18 to B-20 and have him fill in the “Essays That Describe and Define Worksheet.”

Sloppy Copy

- Student writes his “sloppy copy.”
 - His composition should be 12-15 sentences and at least two paragraphs long.
- Student Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 29,

First Revision

- Have student write the first revision of his essay.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student’s first revision.
 - Use the Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 29 and suggestions on TM pp. 125-26.
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of his work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before he writes his final draft.
- Student writes the final draft of his paragraphs.

Grading the Composition

- Use the Essay Evaluation form (see Student Lesson 29).

Lesson 30: Timed Essays

Lesson Focus: Writing within a Time Limit

Materials

- Stopwatch or timer.
-

TIPS

Once students get the hang of writing timed essays (1) *without* the use of a Timed Essay Checklist and (2) *without* your help pacing the time, you should continue to give a timed essay *three to four times a month*. This will sharpen their ability to organize their thoughts quickly.

Essay questions should take many forms, some coming from ideas on TM pp. B-17 to B-21 and others coming from their school subjects.

Give both 20- and 30-minute timed essays. It's great practice for college courses where students will likely face in-class essays they'll need to complete in the allotted class time. Two essay questions in a 45- to 50-minute class will probably take about 20 minutes each.

Pre-writing Activities

- Review “Timed Essays and Writing a Timed Essay.”

Practice Paragraph

- Practice with timed essays:
 1. Before your student writes her first timed essay unaided, she may find it helpful to walk through a practice session with you.
 2. Call out times to help her pace herself. Acknowledge that this may make her more nervous. For now, you need to be more concerned with her ability to work within a time boundary.
 3. You may need to practice this type of exercise several times before she seems to be “on track.” At first, for example, she may spend five minutes brainstorming and four minutes outlining, leaving only eight minutes in which to write the essay. If she feels more organized and can still produce a quality paragraph, this may be okay for her. However, if she finds she still needs more time to write, you may have to help her cinch in the brainstorming/outlining time to allow for ample writing time.

Guide your student through a timed exercise.

1. Choose one or two essay topics from the suggestions on TM pp. B-17 to B-21.
2. Have your student sit at a table in a quiet place (away from siblings, TV, meal preparations, and other distractions).
3. Provide the student with plenty of notebook paper and two sharpened pencils. Give her a copy of the “30-Minute Timed Essay Checklist.”
4. Set your timer or stopwatch for 30 minutes. Tell your student, “To help pace you, I will call out the time and tell you which task you should have finished.”
5. Write the essay questions or topics on the dry erase board and start the timer. Say, *“Choose one of these two topics for your essay. You may begin.”*
6. After two minutes say, *“You should now have a thesis statement.”*
7. After five minutes total time say, *“Your brainstorming should be complete.”*
8. After nine minutes total time say, *“Your outline should be complete. You should be ready to write the essay.”*
9. After 17 minutes total time say, *“You should be about halfway through your essay by now.”*
10. After 23 minutes total time say, *“You should be writing a concluding sentence.”*
11. After 25 minutes total time say, *“Your essay should be complete. It’s time to proofread and edit.”*
12. After 30 minutes total time say, *“Please put down your pencil and turn over your paper.”*

Brainstorming

No brainstorming day.

- Brainstorming for a timed essay takes place during the 20- or 30-minute writing period.
- If the student had difficulty with the practice timed essay, you may wish to repeat the activity with another topic.

Sloppy Copy

Student writes the timed essay today.

- Her composition should be 12-15 sentences and two to three paragraphs long.

Student Writing Skills Checklist.

- The student will not self-edit a timed essay since she turns it in as is. She must also turn in her brainstorming and her outline.

First Revision

- Since students do not formally self-edit timed essays (editing is instead part of the essay-writing process), there is no Student Writing Skills Checklist for Lesson 30.

Teacher/Parent Editing Day

- Edit your student's first revision.
 - Use the Teacher's Writing Skills Checklist Lesson 30 and suggestions on TM p.126.
 - Even though the student would not have the opportunity to revise timed essays in the "real world," this remains an important step in the learning process. Be sure to help her see how she could improve organization, the development of the thesis statement, the budgeting of time, etc.
 - It is also important for you to check her mechanics, since errors will count against her in many such tests.
- Paper-clip your checklists to the top of her work.

Final Draft

- Go over your comments and suggestions with student before she writes a final draft.
- Allow a final draft at first—it helps the student see her mistakes and have an opportunity to make changes. At some point the unedited timed essay must receive a grade with no chance for correction. This challenges her to do her best the first time!

Grading the Composition

- Use the Essay Evaluation form.
 - At first you may choose not to grade her timed essays until she has written at least two with success. In the beginning, it would be acceptable to grade the corrected essay as an *untimed* one.
 - Eventually, however, the *unedited* timed essay should receive a grade.

Note on other kinds of timed essays

- When essays are part of science, history, art, music, or literature exams:
 - Students need to be taught to glance over such a test before beginning. First, they must determine exactly what the question is asking. Second, they must learn to pace themselves, budgeting adequate time to answer lengthy essay questions.
 - As a rule, these kinds of essay questions only require students to list the main points in paragraph form for the purpose of answering the question. The points usually do not need to be developed or expanded.

Introduction to Editing

To most parents, this new (and sometimes unfamiliar) process of editing and evaluating your student's compositions seems like an overwhelming, subjective effort. Happily, the process is easier and more objective than you think!

Knowing what to look for and having clear expectations can take the anxiety out of this task. Since beginning writers often make the same kinds of mistakes, we have put together a guide to address these common areas. In the next several sections of the Teacher's Manual you will find:

- a step-by-step guide through the writing and editing process
- instructions for using the Student and Teacher Writing Skills Checklists
- a list of positive comments to encourage your young writer
- ideas dealing with trouble spots specific to each lesson
- a section especially highlighting common problems of mechanics
- edited samples of student paragraphs to serve as models (this section also contains two lessons designed to help you practice and develop confidence in editing)

Don't let the number of tips overwhelm you. Not all suggestions will apply to your student. Learning to edit a composition is a process for both of you. We have found that using the Student and Teacher Writing Skills Checklists takes the intimidation and guesswork out of editing. Because your students know what is expected, they also respond more positively to suggestions for improvement.

The more you edit and revise, the easier it will become. Familiarity produces recognition. You will quickly become adept at spotting repeated words, "to be" words, and misplaced modifiers. At first, however, you must diligently look for them!

Most importantly, asking the following questions of your student's composition will address his or her two biggest stumbling blocks to success:

1. Did they follow the assignment's specific directions? *They will avoid countless problems later on by doing exactly what the lesson requires.*
2. Did they correctly use their Writing Skills Checklist, including using colored pencils on their "sloppy copy" to underline and circle as the checklist directs? *Students who diligently use their checklists to find errors and make changes, and who earnestly look for ways to improve their compositions, will be more successful writers than those who sit back and let you do all the editing for them.*

The Key to Teaching Self-Editing

You will quickly discover that your students do not like to edit their compositions. Unfortunately, by not editing their own papers thoroughly, they place themselves in a "Catch-22" position; that is, they are too lazy to edit their work carefully, yet they fall apart when they see all the changes *you* suggest!

In our "earlier years" we found these errors *for* our students and suggested ways to fix them . . . and then we got smart! We began to realize that we were doing them no favor by spending an hour poring over each paragraph rather than requiring them to make greater editing efforts themselves.

Here's the bottom line: *put the responsibility back on the students to do their part* in this learning process! When they turn in their first revision for editing, give it a cursory glance. If you find too many problems showing evidence of poor self-editing, return it for additional proofreading before editing it yourself.

Specifically, look for **"to be" words, repeated or weak words, paragraph length, failure to use all required sentence variations, too many spelling errors, and failure to follow the assignment's directions for content.** If you find that even one of these areas has been neglected, send it back! You will teach students to improve their own editing abilities, and you will save yourself a great deal of time!

Special Tips for Using the Teacher Checklist

*Note: **Consumable** Teacher Checklists are found with their corresponding lessons in student workbook.*

- Use the Checklist against the *first revision*, not against the *final draft*.
- **Go line by line through the checklist**, *reviewing the paragraph anew* each time.
- Don't be afraid to **mark the "needs improvement" boxes**. Even the most polished first revision can improve. While we want to be gentle with our kids' feelings, we will not benefit their writing to mark everything "OK" when improvement can be made.
- Plan to **spend 20 minutes or more** on the typical paragraph (really!). Read it through completely the first time. Then, read it again to see if anything "jumps out" at you. Each time you re-read it, look for something specific. Count "to be" words; note spelling errors; watch for misplaced modifiers; double-check use of all required sentence variations. **Come back to the paragraph again later**, maybe even the next day, after things have "settled." You may see something you missed before.
- **Write notes as you go**. If you check "needs improvement" for "Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words," list the repeated words right there.
 - Avoid making remarks in red. Buy some pretty colored pens in purple, green, blue, or pink. Make comments in different colors.
 - Another idea is to use a light pencil to write your notes, especially when the student is more sensitive to criticism or balks at a paper that has been marked up.
- **Make comments** and write little notes directly on the first revision.
 - Insert a caret mark (^) where something should be added, and write "adj." etc. above it.
 - Write "sp." above any word whose spelling should be double-checked.
 - Instead of writing too many comments directly on student papers, you may prefer to use sticky notes now and then (also useful if the student strenuously objects to having you mark up his or her paper).
 - Make general comments to your student in the "Comments" section below. Offer a few words of praise and encouragement before making helpful suggestions.
 - Keep a **thesaurus**, **English handbook**, and **dictionary** or spelling checker nearby. If you're the least bit rusty, you'll find them helpful when you're unsure of your young person's use of a word or item of punctuation or when you need to check his or her spelling.

Using the Writing Skills Checklists Step-by-Step

Although the following guidelines address the teacher, they apply to both Student and Teacher Checklists.

Students should use their Writing Skills Checklist to edit their “sloppy copy.” Except for double-spacing or skipping lines, it is not as important to focus on details of mechanics when writing this initial draft.

After they edit their “sloppy copy” and write the first revision, they will again use the Checklist to **make sure their revised composition still meets all the requirements of the lesson**. For example, if the composition limits them to three “to be” words and they find four, they are no longer within the boundaries of the assignment and must fix those “to be” words before turning the paper in to you.

When they give you their first revision, you will edit it using your Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist.

Each category in the Writing Skills Checklist is addressed below. Refer to these suggestions often as you become familiar with the editing process.

CONTENT

Followed instructions for this assignment (*Teacher Checklist only*).

- The number one student error is failing to follow directions. Be sure your student *clearly* understands the assignment before beginning to brainstorm and write, and then does just what is asked.
- Following directions also means doing things like brainstorming thoroughly, counting “to be” words, using all required sentence variations, correcting run-on sentences, misplaced modifiers, and incomplete sentences, observing the required paragraph length, etc.

All sentences support topic/topic sentence (“Carrot in a cookie jar”)

See “Ingredients for a Tasty Paragraph” (TM Appendix A-10).

- Each point should clearly back the student’s topic. For example, if the entire paragraph is about hiking to Yosemite Falls, a sentence about breakfast at the campsite before the hike would not be important to the story nor support the details of the hike itself.

Communicated clearly.

- To recognize unclear sentences, have students read *each one* aloud (or you read it aloud to them.) See if they can identify rambling or awkward writing. Can they catch the misplaced modifier or understand why the sentence fails to make sense?

- Then reread the entire *paragraph* aloud after corrections have been made. Is the composition easy to follow? Does it make sense and flow smoothly? Do words or phrases lack clarity? Did the student keep similar thoughts together?

□ **Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience.**

- Writing that is overtly unpleasant, gory, rude, or negative does not belong in your student's writing. Discourage words like "dumb" or "stupid." Keep an eye out for subtle negative attitudes.
- Some students, lacking confidence in their own writing, may copy the lesson's sample paragraph too closely. If this becomes an ongoing problem, encourage originality by having your students write directly from the notes on their worksheet; do not let them write with the sample paragraph in front of them. If they have adequately brainstormed, they should have plenty of ideas from which to draw.

□ **Title captures the essence of the paragraph.**

- The reader should know what the paragraph will be about based on the title. The title should not be unclear or confusing, causing the reader to wonder where the writer is headed.
- At first, the title does not need to be "exciting," but it should grab the reader's attention. As time progresses, titles should become more interesting and descriptive. Sometimes the simple act of inserting an adjective will add life to a dull title.
- Titles should be written or typed using the same size letters as the body of the paragraph. For some reason, young writers like to write gigantic titles!
- Titles should be underlined. Do not accept quotation marks around the title.
- If confusion arises about which words to capitalize, check an English handbook.

STYLE

□ **Began with a sentence that introduces the composition.**

- The opening sentence should tell you what to expect from the rest of the paragraph (in other words, who or what the paragraph is about).
- It should be clearly written and descriptive to capture the attention of the reader.

□ **Tenses agree.**

- Watch and listen for mixed tense. "Driving slowly, Dad *approached* the bend in the road. Suddenly a deer *steps* in front of the car." The first sentence is in past tense, and the second is in present. They must both be written in the same tense in order to agree.

□ **Varied sentence structure within the paragraph.**

- Make sure *all required sentence variations* are included in the composition.
- Make sure that, as a rule, students do not begin two sentences in a row with the same sentence variation.
- If they make any changes in their composition, they must see that their *new revision meets all criteria*.
 1. If they combine sentences or eliminate a “carrot,” they may need to add a new sentence so their paragraph is still long enough to meet the assignment’s requirement.
 2. If they make any modifications, they must be sure when they are all done that their composition still includes each required sentence variation.
- Beginning with Lesson 12 (when prepositional phrases are introduced), students will start exhibiting confusion between certain prepositions and adverbs.
 1. A word that is a preposition in one sentence may be an adverb in another. It’s not wrong to use adverbs as sentence starters, but students need to be aware of and understand the difference AND must correctly use a prepositional phrase sentence starter when it is required. Refer to your English handbook for further clarification.
 2. Prepositional phrase: “After dinner, the boys played baseball.” (“After” is a preposition whose object is “dinner.”)
 3. Adverbial phrase (subordinate conjunction): “After the boys ate dinner, . . .” (“After” serves as a subordinate conjunction.)

□ **Used concrete words.**

- Nouns, adjectives, and verbs must be colorful, specific, and sensory. Words should paint a “word picture” in the reader’s mind. “He put the toys on the floor” is not nearly as descriptive and interesting as “With a crash, Sam dropped the bucket of Legos on the tile.”
- Descriptive words should fit the context (it isn’t wrong to say *nervous yet confident* to describe a clown, but *animated and bubbly* or *playful and silly* would suit him better).
- To replace vague words:
 1. Students must first find the nouns. They should ask themselves if the nouns are too weak or dull, and if so, change them.
 2. They must then decide if *any* nouns in the paragraph would benefit from an exciting or colorful adjective.
 3. Finally, they should look at their verbs, replacing vague verbs and adding interesting adverbs, if necessary.

- *A word of caution:* Students can go overboard here by choosing too many unfamiliar words or becoming too flowery. Given a choice, simplicity and clarity are still the best bet.

□ **“To be” words (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*).**

- WriteShop encourages students to use the active rather than passive voice. Forms of the infinitive “to be” exemplify passive writing. The number of “to be” words allowed in each paragraph decreases as students learn new sentence variations. Through creative use of these variations, eliminating “to be” words becomes possible. Require your student to locate and eliminate unnecessary forms of “to be.”
- At first it is difficult for both student and parent to spot every “to be” word. *Try reading the paragraph backward*, from the end to the beginning. You will be amazed at how these words (as well as spelling errors) will jump out at you!
- Be aware of contractions containing “to be” words.
 1. *I’m = I am, he’s = he is, it’s = it is*, etc.
 2. WriteShop is teaching students to write more formally. Contractions are informally used in correspondence, dialogue, and some stories. As a rule, do not let your student use contractions.
- Student may not use more than the minimum number of “to be” words in a given composition.
- It will not always be practical for them to eliminate “to be” words in longer compositions, articles, essays, and reports. In the beginning, however, it is important to teach awareness. Eventually, mature students will begin to identify overuse of “to be” in their papers and will seek to include more sentence variations in everyday writing.

□ **Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words.**

- “Repeated words” generally refers to nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives, and does not typically include articles, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- In “real” writing of any length, it is almost impossible to avoid repeating words. However, in paragraphs of five to ten sentences, students must learn to find synonyms. This encourages use of a valuable writing tool, the *thesaurus*.
 1. **Example:** *Laurie had a bath before she had lunch. After that, she had a nap.* (Not only is the word “had” overused, it is also vague. When students underline these repeated words with a blue pencil, they know to replace them.)
 2. **Better:** *Laurie bathed before eating lunch. After that, she lay down for a nap.*

- When learning to use a thesaurus, some students get carried away at first. They may choose a word that (1) doesn't fit the context of the sentence; (2) is too stuffy or pompous; or (3) is slang, foreign, archaic, or too informal. Furthermore, riddling a paragraph with too many difficult or unusual words burdens the average reader.
 - If students come across an unfamiliar word in the thesaurus, *they must look up its meaning in the dictionary before using it*. Using a thesaurus is a great way for students to increase their vocabulary, but they must be sure to use each word correctly. For example, one student used the word "pallid" to describe a white shirt. Although the word "pallid" is indeed a synonym for white, it is usually used in conjunction with describing a person's pale skin.
 - Students must make sure they choose a synonym that is the same part of speech as the word they are replacing.
 - To look up a verb in the thesaurus, use the infinitive form. Do not look up *went*; look up *go* (*infinitive: to go*).
 - Beginning writers often repeat main words.
 1. **Example:** *The dog chased Meggie across the lawn. Bob, noticing the dog, dashed through the bushes to help Meggie. Using a tree branch, Bob chased the dog away.* (By finding synonyms for these repetitions, students will make their paragraphs more interesting.)
 2. **Better:** *The German shepherd chased Meggie across the lawn. Bob, seeing the dog and hearing Meggie's screams, dashed through the bushes to help his friend. Using a tree branch, he drove the animal away."*
 - **Repetition is acceptable when:**
 1. the writer occasionally repeats words or phrases to make a strong point.
 2. the writer uses parallelism (see Lesson 25).
 3. the writer cannot find enough *appropriate* synonyms for a word (for instance how many ways can you say *ball* or *dough* while keeping the original meaning of the word intact?).
 4. too many different synonyms in one composition add confusion or contribute to wordiness (book, tome, volume, opus, work, treatise, publication, edition, etc.).
 - **A good rule of thumb:** *It's better to repeat a wisely chosen word than to use a poorly chosen synonym!*
- **Avoided the use of "weak" words.**
- Students must learn to recognize overused or weak words. They must also avoid

slang. The student workbook contains a list of many such words (see Word Lists). You will find your own list to keep handy when editing student paragraphs (TM Appendix A-9).

- Commonly used weak words include *very, so, really, lots, and said*. Often, weak words may be classified and treated as vague. Especially watch for the often-used vague verbs *get, put, said, have/had, come/came, and go/went*. See the above section, “Used Concrete Words,” for additional help.
- Students may come up with some great words while brainstorming, but then fail to use them in their composition. Refer them to their brainstorming sheet for other words that would work.
- If a paragraph seems short on descriptive details, check the brainstorming sheet to see if student listed enough ideas.
- For suitable alternatives, refer to the thesaurus as well as the word lists in the student workbook.

□ **Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness.**

- Wordiness can result in pompous-sounding or awkward sentences. Learning to choose exact words or phrases teaches the important skill of concise writing. The following examples came from actual student compositions:
- Wordy: *The mademoiselle tightly clutched the long apparatus which helped keep equilibrium as she carried herself across the tightrope.*
- Concise: *The young tightrope walker tightly clutched the long pole which helped keep her balance.*
- Wordy: *Spring brings to people the truest of beauty with its lovely sunny yellow daffodils and green, emerald-colored ivy.*
- Concise: *Fresh and lovely, spring bursts with sunny daffodils and emerald ivy.*
- Wordy: *The winding hiking trail was okay, but it lacked green grass, pretty flowers, and wildlife (except an occasional deer or two)—the things that typically make mountain scenery so great.*
- Concise: *Except for an occasional deer, the winding hiking trail lacked the lush vegetation and wildlife I expected to find in the mountains.*

□ **Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending.**

- The last sentence of the paragraph or composition must not leave the reader “hanging.”
- It must wrap up the writer’s thoughts by coming to a conclusion or by somehow restating the opening sentence or title in a fresh, new way.

MECHANICS

For more specific help, see the section titled “Common Problems of Mechanics.”

☐ **Name and date in the upper right-hand corner.**

- Refer your student to the Sample Page Models (pp. ii-iii or TM Appendix A-7, A-8) for correct placement of name and date.
- Just beneath the date, students should also indicate which draft this is (sloppy copy, first revision, final draft).

☐ **Paragraph is “___” sentences long (5-7, 7-9, etc.—varies by assignment).**

- Make sure the paragraph is the required length.
- Do not be tempted to let the young writer “slide” by writing more than the maximum number of sentences. One of the goals of WriteShop is to teach conciseness.

☐ **First sentence of paragraph is indented; margins left around the paragraph.**

- The Sample Page Models identify correct margin style for both handwritten and typed papers.
- In Lesson 15, the student begins writing two-paragraph compositions. Spacing between paragraphs should be the same as the rest of the composition.

☐ **Remembered to skip lines and used good spacing between words and sentences.**

- Again, see the Sample Page Model for more detail. Skipping lines is essential. Both student and teacher need a place to insert editing marks and make word or phrase changes. A closely spaced copy leaves no room to edit.
- When typing their own compositions, students should double-space. Some students use a font size that is either too small, too large, or too difficult to read. Require a simple, basic font such as Times Roman, Arial, or Calibri in 12 point.

☐ **Double-checked spelling by circling and looking up suspected words.**

- Students should be comfortable using a dictionary. If they prefer to type their paragraphs, have them proofread a hard copy *before* using spell-check. This extra step motivates them to spell more accurately, since more work is involved in proofing. It also teaches them to pay attention to detail when proofreading.
- Sometimes it helps to read the composition backward. Errors tend to jump out more readily.

☐ **Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns.**

- Watch for correct capitalization in titles too.

□ **Avoided improper capitalization.**

- Be sure students avoid “random capitalization”; that is, words capitalized for no apparent reason, such as at the beginning of a line.
- Names like “grandma” or “dad” often create confusion. Help students remember that when such a word is used in place of a person’s name, it must be capitalized (*I called John. I called Dad. I called Dr. Smith.*). Otherwise, it must be written in lower case (*my mom, Nick’s grandpa, the skilled doctor*).

□ **Used appropriate punctuation.**

- Check to see that sentences end with the correct punctuation. Discourage exclamation marks for now. While they have their place, most of the WriteShop assignments will not lend themselves to exclamatory statements.
- Watch for misused or omitted commas and apostrophes.
- Be sure students understand proper placement of quotation marks. Much confusion arises about whether to place quotation marks outside or inside a comma, period, question mark, or other punctuation. Different rules apply to different punctuation marks. Again, *refer to an English handbook when unsure*.

□ **Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, watched for misplaced modifiers.** (See Glossary of Writing Terms for definition of a sentence, TM Appendix A-2.) For more detailed help, see “Common Problems of Mechanics.”

- Incomplete sentence: *Abby our little chocolate brown dog.*
- Run-on sentence: *We went camping in Kings Canyon and we went to a river filled with rocks so you could hop from one rock to another, there were big gaps between rocks, we built dams across the river it was very cool.*
- Misplaced (or dangling) modifier: *Inhaling deeply, the golden buttons on his crimson tuxedo appeared as if they would burst with the ringmaster’s next breath.* (Did the buttons inhale deeply? ☺)

Correctly used this checklist, including using colored pencils to underline or circle as directed. (Also see TM p. 88, “The Key to Teaching Self-Editing.”)

- **Important:** Students who faithfully, diligently, and *correctly* use their checklists make greater progress in their writing abilities than students who rely exclusively on their teacher to tell them what to fix. However, we do encourage you to sit with your students to help them through the editing/revising process.
- For students who can work through the Student Checklist on their own, incorrect use of (or failure to use) the Checklist may be a sign of laziness, evidenced by the following:
 1. Checking “yes” on Student Checklist when errors are still evident.

2. Checking “yes” *but not making the necessary changes*; for example: *yes, used more than three “to be” words* (but then did not eliminate any in the revision).
 3. Not using colored pencils to circle or underline.
- If you find that students are not marking their “sloppy copy” correctly, work alongside them using their Checklists until they understand what is expected.
 - If you do not see a significant number of editing changes between the “sloppy copy and the first revision, your student is not spending enough time with the Checklist and thesaurus. Again, you may need to work with him or her more closely.
 - When preparing to write the final draft, students may be tempted to follow only the suggestions you make on their papers and ignore the comments you write on the Teacher Checklist. Draw their attention to *both*.
 - Students may (and should) take your suggestions, but remind them that they are still responsible for a final draft that meets all the requirements on the checklist.

□ **Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of paragraph, AND Writing Skills Checklist.**

- All copies of the students’ writing **MUST BE DOUBLE-SPACED!** You and they both need room to edit. (Double-spaced means between *lines*, not *paragraphs*.)
- Editing is also much easier when students do not write on the back side of their paper. Have them use a second sheet instead.
- You must have all drafts of your students’ work in front of you when you edit and evaluate their work. This helps keep them organized, and it helps you see their progress at a glance.
- Before you go through the work of editing their compositions, make sure they have done *their* job. If any of the following are lacking, make them correct the problem before you do any further editing.
 1. If the content seems weak, check to see if they brainstormed adequately.
 2. If they did not sufficiently mark and/or revise their “sloppy copy,” give it back. It’s okay for you to sit with them and help them through this process. Ask many questions to guide and help them discover ways to improve their writing. Marking and revising should include finding “to be” words (and replacing any if necessary), checking for sentence variations, identifying and changing repeated or vague words and weak words, etc.

Evaluating Final Compositions and Essays

At this point, your student has written and revised his or her composition or essay a minimum of three times. You have made suggestions and comments with the help of your Teacher's Writing Checklist. Now that your student has completed the final draft, it is time for you to evaluate it.

Use the Composition Evaluation Form, which is simple and forthright. Go step-by-step through the evaluation form. For the most part, it is an objective tool. Feel free to give half-points as needed, especially for minor errors. In mechanics, for example, consider taking off a half point for spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and minor grammatical errors and a full point for misplaced modifiers and incomplete or run-on sentences. In style, take off half a point for one to two vague words but a full point for omitting a required sentence variation.

The final grade should reflect how well the student has incorporated the skills he or she has learned to this point. If you do not believe the final grade accurately reflects his or her efforts, recheck your point assignments to see if perhaps you were too lenient or too strict. You may wish to adjust a half-point here or there. *Do not do this in order to give your student an inflated grade!* Your goal is to evaluate the work as honestly as possible.

- It is important to take into account the progress your students have made since the writing of the “sloppy copy.”
- Don't penalize them twice for the same error. For example, if students use a run-on sentence, do not take off a point for both sentence *structure* (under “Mechanics”) and sentence *fluency* (under “Style”).
- When grading essays, be especially mindful of organization and development of points, parallelism, and fluency. Use the Essay Evaluation Form, which is different from the Composition Evaluation Form.
- Be sure to add a positive comment at the bottom of the form in addition to any helpful suggestions you may wish to add. Let your students know that you notice their progress and not just their mistakes.
- Do not mark up the final drafts unless they need to be revised again. You may prefer to make a few small notations in light pencil.
- You may wish to have your students rewrite the final draft one more time for a higher grade. Mastery is the key here. In this case, *do not* give them a graded Composition Evaluation. Simply return the composition with your comments and suggestions and ask for another revision.

Positive and Encouraging Comments

Everyone needs praise. Your students will work harder for you if you pepper their compositions with positive comments. To help them feel successful, commend their efforts. At the same time, learn to critique their work in an encouraging manner. Don't miss opportunities to reinforce the progress they are making. Make sure *every piece of writing* receives kudos. *Do not let them fear that you only seek to find their mistakes.* At times you will have to dig pretty deep to come up with encouraging words. When it's hard for you to think of positive things to say, you may find a helpful suggestion in this section.

Offer creative, constructive comments instead of negative, critical remarks. Notice that the suggestions that follow offer practical and positive tips and do not focus on the student's mistakes.

General Positive Comments for a Job Well Done

- Words of Praise:* Great, super, splendid, wonderful, lovely, dynamite, fantastic, creative, wow!, excellent, terrific, outstanding, marvelous, tremendous, interesting, superb, descriptive, vivid, stupendous, delightful, magnificent, fabulous, exceptional, superior, complete (Hint: Use these words alone or to modify a specific area, like "marvelous description" or "tremendous effort.")
- Praise Phrases:* Well done, fine job, well-organized, flows well, you're improving, absolutely tremendous, so creative, I'm impressed, very well written, outstanding effort, this is terrific, magnificent job, way to go, I'm so pleased
- I always love reading your compositions.
- You are a delight to teach.
- Keep up the good work!
- I like the way you stick to the task.
- I'm pleased with your effort.
- You organize your thoughts and express them well.
- You've come a long way!
- I know you are trying hard.
- You are very teachable and willing to take suggestions.
- I can tell by your enthusiastic style that you are a promising writer!

- Your lovely writing style impresses me!
- You have a wonderful ability to express yourself on paper.
- You have a tremendous gift.
- I see potential in your writing.
- I see you put a lot of effort into your paragraph.
- You're becoming an expert writer!
- Your progress exhibits diligence (motivation, perseverance, excellence, etc.).
- Steady progress.
- You're continuing to grow in your writing skills.
- What a great effort! I can tell you worked hard.
- You do quality work.
- Your writing improves weekly.
- You're off to a terrific start!
- Great start!
- What an excellent start!
- I'm very proud of you!
- Super mind-map!
- Fantastic (thorough, outstanding) job of brainstorming!

Positive Comments on Content

- Clearly presented.
- You have some terrific ideas.
- Sounds like you had quite an adventure. (narrative)
- You have a lot of good ideas to work with.
- What a delightful story! (narrative)
- Your mom sounds like a wonderful lady! (Your collie sounds like a loyal friend, etc.)
- I can tell you love (winter, your kitty, snowboarding, gardening).
- What an exotic animal!
- Your biography (report, essay) is informative and interesting.
- Exciting narrative!

Positive Comments on Creativity and Style

- You are a very expressive writer.
- What interesting words you used to describe your animal (place, object).
- Once again, you've filled the page with a variety of interesting words!
- You included great ideas in your paragraph.
- What a delicious-sounding paragraph! (describing a food)
- Great simile!
- You listed some terrific emotion words describing _____.
- Because I've seen your past work, I know you can come up with plenty of your own dynamic sentences.
- You have the makings of a vibrant, colorful paragraph.
- I'm excited to see what you can do to add sparkle to this delightful composition.
- You have a terrific grasp of vocabulary.
- You have a unique writing style.
- I'm impressed with the way you vary your sentence styles.
- Terrific job eliminating "to be" words! I see from your "sloppy copy" that you were able to spot and replace them with more interesting words.
- I like the descriptive words you used, like _____, _____, and _____.
- You only used one "to be" word (or, Wow! I didn't find any "to be" words!)
- This page is filled with strong words that paint a lovely picture.
- What a colorful, descriptive paragraph!
- Beautiful picture of _____.
- Very scenic.
- Strong, active verbs!
- I like this sentence (phrase, word choice . . .).
- I like this creative _____ (word choice, idea, sentence, phrase)!
- Colorful yet concise!
- What a lovely description.
- You've painted some wonderful word pictures.
- I love the way you use strong description and synonyms.
- Cleverly written!
- I notice how your vocabulary is expanding as you use your thesaurus.
- Good job crossing out unnecessary detail!

Positive Comments on Mechanics

- Your spelling is improving steadily!
- Penmanship is improving!
- Your handwriting is beautiful!
- Thank you for writing so neatly and legibly.

Transitioning into Helpful Suggestions and Comments (*Write a positive comment before making suggestions.*)

- You did a fine job telling how _____; now let's work on _____.
- As I read through your paragraph, I discovered some colorful, descriptive words like _____, _____, and _____. However, I also noticed an area where you need a little help:
- You have the beginnings of a good essay; work on development of _____ (facts, details, etc.).
- While your paragraph is quite descriptive, it might benefit from a few more concrete words.
- I can tell you did some revising of your "sloppy copy"; however, don't neglect your Student Checklist.
- I can see you used your thesaurus . . . that's great! Choose your words carefully, though. You can sacrifice style at the expense of thought. A few well-chosen words will be more effective than lots of flowery speech.
- You have a basic solid paragraph, but it needs more pizzazz and detail.
- I'm glad to see you are using your thesaurus. Please look up _____ to be sure it means what you intended to say.

Neutral Comments

- Look over your paper to see how you might polish up a few awkward spots (or to see where you might add more colorful adjectives, etc.).
- Use your thesaurus to look up other synonyms (as opposed to "you repeated too many words").
- Tuck in a few more adjectives (adverbs).
- Try not to begin two sentences in a row with . . .
- Try beginning this sentence with (paired adjectives, a subordinate conjunction, etc.), so you don't start two sentences in a row with the same variation.

- You used two similes in a row. Can you reword one?
- Try to be a little more vivid as I know you can.
- Can you come up with a stronger, clearer ending sentence?
- My only major suggestion would be to . . .
- I know you are capable of outstanding writing.
- Please spend more time rewording sentences to eliminate “to be” words.
- For a little more continuity, try _____ instead of _____.
- Take time to read each sentence. Ask yourself if it sounds smooth or awkward. If so, why?
- If you use your sentence variations correctly, you will get rid of those pesky “to be” words!
- Can you find a good place for _____? (paired adjectives, a prepositional phrase sentence starter, etc.)
- Please revise to include all your sentence variations.
- Think of ways to add color and interest.
- What seems to be missing are additional descriptions that add sensory color to the composition. Try a few more adjectives and some specific nouns.
- What seems to be missing is _____. Try adding _____.
- Can you rearrange some of your sentences so the order makes more sense?
- Your ending sentence leaves the reader hanging. Can you try restating your topic sentence?
- It would improve by (or benefit from) a little added detail.
- This sentence needs just a bit more description.
- Try inserting some colorful adjectives to make the paragraph even more descriptive.
- Try to find synonyms for _____ and _____. You’ll be amazed to see your descriptive paragraph come alive!
- Play around with (your second sentence) to make it (more concise, less awkward, etc.). Hint: Begin with _____.
- Try to keep like items together (size, color, etc.). You have sandwiched (your animal’s) weight between two descriptions of its coat.

Positive Comments on Editing Effort

- I noticed you worked hard to edit this paper several times. I appreciate your effort!
- I love seeing your persistent effort and desire to do well.
- I'm glad to see you're using your checklist correctly.
- I'm proud of your efforts to write your composition without help.
- I can see you worked hard on your paragraph and made some significant improvements from your "sloppy copy."
- I appreciate the effort you made editing your paragraph.
- I have confidence you'll end up with a terrific final draft!
- I'm looking forward to your revision!
- You're almost there! The paragraph just needs a little rewording to make it clearer and to get rid of one "to be" word.

Making Comments on the Final Draft

- You made some excellent descriptive changes.
- Your new revision makes more sense.
- Much better! (improved! clearer!)
- Good job eliminating unnecessary detail.
- I like the way you took my suggestions!
- Outstanding final draft!
- You surpassed my expectations!
- You ended up with a _____ piece! (polished, interesting, persuasive, dynamic, etc.)
- Perfect!

Addressing Common Errors Lesson by Lesson

In this section you will find solutions to some of the most common errors that students make in each lesson. Although certain problems may reappear in future lessons as well, they will only be addressed once. **Note that if the solution is obvious, only the problem will be stated.**

Lesson 1: Describing an Object

- PROBLEM: Object is not named in topic sentence; reader is kept guessing.
 - *Solution:* Student should introduce the subject in the opening sentence.
- PROBLEM: Student uses contractions (*I'm, doesn't, it's*, etc.).
 - *Solution A:* Write out fully (*I am, does not*).
 - *Solution B:* In the case of *it's*, review rules on *its* vs. *it's* (TM p. 127).
- PROBLEM: Student uses second person (*you, your*).
 - *Solution:* Write in first or third person; do not use the word *you*.

Lesson 2: Describing a Pet

- PROBLEM: On the mind-map, the student mistakes adjectives for synonyms (*frisky, friendly, shaggy* are not synonyms for *dog*; they are descriptive adjectives).
 - *Solution:* Help students understand that a synonym is a word having the same or nearly the same meaning as *dog*. A synonym is not a description of *dog*. (Examples: *mutt, shepherd, hound, pooch*, etc., are synonyms for the word *dog*.)
- PROBLEM: Topic sentence is too detailed.
 - *Solution:* Take some of the information from the topic sentence and include it in the body of the paragraph.
- PROBLEM: More than three “to be” words.
 - *Solution A:* Replace “to be” words with concrete verbs.
 - *Solution B:* Reword the sentence(s) to eliminate “be” words.
- PROBLEM: Student titles his composition “My _____.”
 - *Solution:* While there is nothing inherently wrong with “My Silly Dog, Rufus”; “My Beautiful Bird”; or “My Cat, Cleo,” you may discover that your student overuses this kind of title. If he used it in Lesson 1 (“My China Tea Cup,” “My Special Rock”), ask him to change the title of his pet paragraph. “Rufus, the Silly Spaniel” or “A Fine-Feathered Friend” sound much more interesting! (Watch for it in Lesson 3 as well.)

Lesson 3: Describing a Person

- PROBLEM: Student writes more of a narrative (tells a story) by focusing on activity rather than description.
 - *Solution A:* Either find ways to insert descriptive adjectives, physical characteristics, or other features, or take out some of the activity.
 - *Solution B:* If he or she painted a clear picture of the subject, some narration may be acceptable (see the “Granny” paragraph in the student workbook).
- PROBLEM: Subject is involved in too many activities (mowing the lawn, raking, bagging leaves, and drinking lemonade).
 - *Solution:* Limit the character to one activity.
- PROBLEM: Describes person without his or her involvement in an activity.
 - *Solution:* Involving the person in an activity makes this assignment easier because it gives the student something on which to “hang” the description.
- PROBLEM: Overuse of pronouns.
 - *Solution:* Use occasional synonyms instead of repeated pronouns to name the subject.
- PROBLEM: Topic sentence does not address the subject: *Mom’s soothing music echoes throughout our house.* (*Music* is the subject of the sentence; *Mom’s* and *soothing* are adjectives that modify the subject.)
 - *Solution:* Change the focus: *Elegant and lovely, my musical mom sits gracefully at the piano.* *Mom* becomes the subject; *elegant* and *lovely* become the adjectives that modify her.
- PROBLEM: Awkwardness: . . . *lit up with happiness by blue oblong eyes* . . .
 - *Solution:* Rewrite the sentence or phrase using clearer wording. *His oval blue eyes twinkled happily as he . . . OR Twinkling and bright, his blue eyes . . .*
- PROBLEM: Carrot: *His musical abilities are reflected by his CD.*
 - *Solution:* Remove the sentence. Although it gives factual information, it has nothing to do with describing his appearance.
- PROBLEM: Not gracious (*dummy, ugly, stupid, wimp, etc.*)
 - *Solution:* Replace such terms with more appropriate ones.
- PROBLEM: Paragraph lacks description.
 - *Solution A:* Help student completely fill in his Observing a Person Worksheet.
 - *Solution B:* To stimulate ideas in your student, you might ask questions like these:
 1. Is she tall? Short? Thin? Petite?
 2. Does she have dimples or freckles?

3. Is her hair long, short, straight, curly? What color is it?
 4. Is she smiling? What does that tell you about her?
 5. What are her expressions as she concentrates on her activity? Does she furrow her brow and frown? Does her tongue stick out to the side? Does she squint?
 6. What is her posture? Is she sitting straight? Slouched? Relaxed? Reclining?
 7. Do her eyes dance? Sparkle? Stare? What color are they?
 8. What is his stature? Is he large? Slim? Strong? Muscular?
 9. Are his hands strong? Small? Smooth?
 10. What is she wearing? Fabrics and colors?
 11. How about voice? Humming? Singing? Whispering?
- **Solution C:** List the words and phrases from the paragraph that describe the subject. Ask students to draw a picture of their subject based SOLELY on this list. If they cannot do it, they need to make some changes. The following list came from the information in a paragraph written by a WriteShop student. You can see that the focus is on Mom's character rather than appearance. He wrote that she is:
 1. Gracious and loving
 2. Pretty and funny
 3. Caring
 4. Helpful
 5. Wearing blue denim pants and white collared shirt with small colorful designs
 6. A nurse
 7. Named Janet
 8. A super lady
 9. Loved by her children
 - While these are all admirable qualities, they don't really tell anything about the mom's appearance except for her clothing. You'll want your student to add information about eye color and appearance (*sparkling, scowling, squinting, hazel, etc.*); hair color, texture, style, length; complexion; facial features (*dimples, laugh lines, smile, etc.*); build (*slim, tall, petite, etc.*); actions (what is she doing as you describe her appearance?).

Lesson 4: Describing a Circus Performer

□ PROBLEM: Narrative rather than descriptive.

- *Solution:* See Lesson 3 for help, since similar problems will arise.

□ PROBLEM: Focuses on observer rather than performer. *Thrilled and excited, I notice a juggler as I enter the circus tent.*

- *Solution:* The performer should be the subject of each sentence, not the observer. *Agile and coordinated, a smiling juggler tosses flaming torches into the air.*

□ PROBLEM: Borrows heavily from (or copies) the sample instead of coming up with original thoughts (a problem that will repeat itself in future lessons).

Author's example from Lesson 3:

The brass buttons of his red and white striped blazer strain across an ample belly. A skinny bow tie adorns the collar of his starched white shirt.

Student's "work":

The red and white striped jacket stretches across his pudgy belly to the smooth and shiny brass buttons. On this man's starched ivory shirt there is a scarlet bow tie with snow-white dots.

- *Solution A:* Use the examples to gain an idea of assignment expectations. If your students are prone to borrowing from original works, it will help if they choose a subject that is completely different from the sample.
- *Solution B:* Work entirely off of the Observing a Circus Performer Worksheet without referring to the example in the lesson.

Lesson 5: Describing a Food

□ PROBLEM: Focus is on the writer, not on the food. "When I think about how tart and sour pickles are, it makes me desire them even more." (In this sentence the writer is the subject.)

- *Solution:* It would be better to say, *Tart and juicy, this bumpy pickle tastes sour.* (Now the pickle is the subject.)

□ PROBLEM: Awkwardness: "While grasping the whopping pickle I begin to see the waxy look to it" and "Vinegary and juicy make it the best part of the pickle" are both pretty awkward sentences.

- *Solution A:* Suggest that students use their most concrete words as paired adjectives.

Tart and juicy, this delicious sour pickle bursts with intense, vinegary flavor.

Green and bumpy, this whopping pickle fills my mouth with a tart, vinegary taste.

- *Solution B:* If awkwardness persists, try the following idea: say *what it is* and *what it does* (or how it feels, sounds, looks, smells, etc.).
 1. *First*, say what it is: "This *pickle* _____"
 2. *Second*, say what it does: "This *pickle crunches*."
 3. *Third*, fill in with adjectives and adverbs: "This *juicy sour* *pickle crunches noisily*." OR, "*Juicy and sour*, this *pickle crunches noisily*."
 4. *Fourth*, add extra thoughts to your sentence: "This *juicy sour* *pickle crunches noisily when I take a bite*." OR, "*When I take a juicy bite*, this *sour pickle crunches noisily*." OR, "*Juicy and sour*, this *pickle crunches when I take a bite*."

□ PROBLEM: Student fails to describe the food or description is too vague.

- *Solution A:* See Solution B above under "Awkwardness."
- *Solution B:* Here are some comments made to a student whose descriptions were vague: *When I saw your title, I got excited to read your composition. I love Chinese food too—especially orange chicken! However, after reading your paragraph, I was surprised to find you didn't provide a single description of this tasty dish. First of all, your assignment was to choose one food, rather than a general category. (i.e., "orange chicken" rather than "Chinese food"). Second, you should have described it with your senses. Here is the gist of your paragraph:*
 1. Sometimes your dad brings home Chinese food. (*vague, too broad a subject*)
 2. You love its taste. (*vague - doesn't tell why*)
 3. You always order orange chicken (*vague, not descriptive*)
 4. Your dad opens the door and sets the food on the table. (*Dad is the subject, not the food*)
 5. The delicious aroma from the brown paper bag fills the house. (*describes the bag, not the food!*)
 6. You're impatient and starving; you finally eat. (*you are the subject, not the food*)
 7. The excellent taste makes you joyful. (*vague—doesn't tell why*)

Pretty vague, wouldn't you agree? Where is the focus? (On you!) Remember to read instructions carefully so you can describe with colorful, interesting words.

□ PROBLEM: Wordy, too many adjectives. *The dainty, circular, sandy brown snacks feel greasy and rough on my fingers.*

- *Solution:* A better sentence would be: *These circle-shaped, sandy brown snacks feel rough.*

- PROBLEM: Unappetizing word choices used to describe appetizing foods: *burnt, greasy, oily, grainy, lumpy*.
 - *Solution*: Choose more appealing words: *smoky, buttery, creamy, crumbly, chunky*.
- PROBLEM: Focus is on the preparation rather than the food itself.
- PROBLEM: Student writes in second person (“you”): *Its golden brown crust tempts you to take a bite*.
 - *Solution*: Always avoid second person in this type of writing. Use first or third person: “_____ tempts me to take a bite.”
- PROBLEM: Does not choose synonyms for the food being described.
 - *Solution*: Brainstorm together when the thesaurus doesn’t help. Your students may not know other words to name the food, but you might have some ideas for them!
- PROBLEM: Overuses “general appeal” words, like *delicious, enjoyable, tempting, appetizing, mouth-watering, scrumptious, dainty, rich, luscious, and tasty*. While there is nothing wrong with a few of these, they do not actually describe the food. These words do not tell about a food’s texture, flavor, or appearance.
 - *Solution A*: Texture words include *doughy, chewy, crumbly, flaky, crunchy, crisp, brittle, chunky, creamy, sticky, tender, smooth, thick, gooey*.
 - *Solution B*: Flavor words include *sour, tart, zesty, peppery, sweet, spicy, salty, buttery, savory, nutty, seasoned, chocolaty, cheesy, fruity, lemony*.
 - *Solution C*: Appearance words include *coated, clear, glazed, frosty, bubbling, simmering, rounded, domed, puffy, browned, golden brown, steaming, melted, moist, fluffy, sliced, topped with _____, sprinkled with _____, chunks of _____*

Lesson 6: Describing a Season

- PROBLEM: Focus is on the narrator or other people: *On my way up the lift, I go through an icy cloud that seems to hail ice into my numb face. I take a break and head for the ski lodge, the wind howling in my face*.
 - *Solution A*: Avoid talking about what you (the narrator) are doing or where you are going.
 - *Solution B*: Encourage the student to look outward instead of inward. Instead of writing about the effect the elements have on the narrator, the student should explain the effects that the elements have upon other features of the environment. For example, rather than tell how the wind numbs my face, I could explain how it blows the snow, whips at the branches, or ruffles the pine boughs.

- *Solution C:* Combine sentences to place the focus on the season. “Numbing my face, the icy wind (does what — howls? whistles?) through the (adj.) branches of the (name a tree).”
- PROBLEM: Tendency to write a narrative, focusing on a series of events or activities. *The sidewalk burning beneath my feet makes me go faster.* (explains an action)
- *Solution:* Focus on description and details of what the senses experience: colors, flavors, aromas, textures, and sounds. *Drops of melting pink popsicle sizzle as they plop onto the burning sidewalk.* (Gives pure vivid description.)
- PROBLEM: Tendency to say *I see, I hear, I smell.*
- *Solution:* Students should let their writing imply these things. When the writer says *The aroma of buttered popcorn drifted through the air*, the reader knows he or she smelled it even though he or she did not actually say, I smelled buttered popcorn.
- PROBLEM: Paragraph gives information without much description. “Trees offer shade from the heat like an umbrella.”
- *Solution A:* Suggest: *Like a (leafy) umbrella, (size adj.) (kind of tree) trees offer (adj.) shade from the (adj.) heat.* Can you see the difference?
 - *Solution B:* Ask questions to help your student think of creative description. Here are some questions to ask a student who wrote a *winter* paragraph:
 1. *Tell about the silhouettes of the trees. Describe them for me. Are they leafless? Brown or black?*
 2. *If it's misty out, are the trees shrouded in the mist? If it's sunny, what is the sun doing to the snow? Is it making it sparkle or making it slushy?*
 3. *Do icicles hang from eaves? Do they drip as they melt? If not, what are they like?*
 4. *As you walk, do you smell anything? Pines? Wood smoke? Crisp fresh air?*
 5. *Do you hear anything, like the tinkle of bells on a sleigh, or the gurgle of water as snow is melting and getting slushy?*
 6. *Do you see anything else, like twinkling lights or icicles? When you step into your house after your walk, what do you notice?*
 7. *Do you smell anything cooking, baking, or brewing?*

- PROBLEM: Season confusion (student includes contradictory statements about the season).
 - *Solution:* It's important to choose a very short period of time (an hour or two), rather than a broad expanse, like a whole day or more. One student's paragraph indicated at different points that it was alternately snowing, gray, and sunny. It was snowing in the opening sentence, yet icicles were melting and the snow was crunching. (Fresh snow doesn't crunch; it has to freeze first.) Finally, it was just *beginning* to snow, yet a neighbor was shoveling his driveway! Help the student focus on one type of weather in this short paragraph.
- PROBLEM: Describing too broad a scene can cause the student to shift back and forth from activity to activity, making the paragraph sound disjointed. A common problem occurs when the student jumps around from outdoor to indoor to back outside again, or when a winter paragraph concludes with the arrival of spring.
 - *Solution:* Students should describe an isolated time and place. They should decide if they are inside or outside and describe what their senses experience in that moment and place. The exception would be when they transition from inside to out or outside to in *at the very beginning or end* of their paragraph OR when they are inside and can also observe the out-of-doors.

Lesson 7: Describing a Place

- PROBLEM: Tendency to wander over the course of a whole day instead of sticking to a particular time.
 - *Solution:* See ideas under Lesson 6.
- PROBLEM: Tendency to write narratives instead of descriptions.
 - *Solution:* See ideas under Lesson 6.
- PROBLEM: Tendency to focus on oneself instead of on the environment.
 - *Solution:* See ideas under Lesson 6.

Lesson 8: Explaining a Process

- PROBLEM: Students begin with "I'm going to tell how to _____."
 - *Solution:* Remind them that they are stating the obvious, since that is the purpose of the assignment.
- PROBLEM: Student offers too much unnecessary information, including giving exact measurements for a recipe or listing every single step in the process, every utensil, and/or every tool.
 - *Solution:* It isn't necessary to go into such itemized detail. The major ingredients and utensils are fine. For instance, measuring can be stated in general terms,

like this: *Then measure all the ingredients into a blender, mixing (how?) until (smooth? creamy? lump-free?).*

- PROBLEM: Students leave out description when explaining the process.
 - *Solution:* Remind them to look for places to insert interesting adjectives and adverbs or to add other colorful writing.
- PROBLEM: Transition word problems.
 - *Solution A:* Students who OVERUSE transition words need not begin every single sentence with a transition word, especially the word *then*.
 - *Solution B:* Students who did not use transition words should refer to their “Transitions and Conjunctions” word list.
- PROBLEM: Cannot find places to use the required sentence variations.
 - *Solution:* Topic and closing sentences sometimes lend themselves to the use of paired adjectives and participles. Also, action participles like *beating, spreading, sanding*, etc., can begin a sentence within the paragraph. Note: paired adjectives should describe either the *process* or the *product*, not the person or her efforts.

Lesson 9: Writing a Factual Paragraph

- PROBLEM: Students copy word-for-word from their sources.
 - *Solution:* When students take notes, have them jot down key words from each sentence containing information they want to include in their paper. After they have taken all their notes, they must put the source away, organize their information, and reconstruct their own sentences.
- PROBLEM: Students cite information that they did not find in their sources (such as *Elephants roam the jungles of Africa*) when their source said otherwise (*Elephants live in the open grasslands*).
 - *Solution:* Encourage students to take more careful or accurate notes.
- PROBLEM: Students jump around within the paragraph.
 - *Solution:* They need to keep similar topics together. All description of the animal’s appearance, all description of its habitat, etc., must be grouped together to preserve the flow of the paper.
- PROBLEM: Nouns and pronouns do not agree. *What land mammal needs to keep mud on their skin for protection against sunburn?*
 - *Solution:* Create agreement: *What land mammal needs to keep mud on its skin for protection against sunburn? (or mammals/their)*
- PROBLEM: Student capitalizes common animal names (the *Wolf*; the *Polar Bear*; African *Elephant*).
 - *Solution:* Adjust capitalization errors: the *wolf*; the *polar bear*; African *elephant*.

- PROBLEM: Student fails to capitalize proper adjectives (*siberian* tiger; *indian* rhino)
 - *Solution*: Make appropriate changes: *Siberian* tiger; *Indian* rhino.

Lesson 10: Writing a Five-Sentence Biography

- PROBLEM: Student includes unnecessary information.
 - *Solution*: Since this is a lesson in conciseness, the student must weed out information that is not pertinent to the topic.
 - Here is a comment written to a student who wrote a biography on Noah Webster: “Although it is important for you to mention that Webster wrote the dictionary, the number of *words* in his dictionary does not add meaning to your paragraph.”
- PROBLEM: Does not stick to the subject. Student may wander down a rabbit trail and describe secondary characters instead of focusing intently on the main subject.
 - *Solution A*: If the Biography Worksheet worksheet seems sparse, have student do a bit more research, adding additional information about his biographical subject.
 - *Solution B*: Ask questions of your student to help redirect his or her thinking.
- PROBLEM: Does not use details to develop the biography.
 - *Solution*: One suggestion is to introduce the student to the concept of writing sentences with multiple items in a series. *Abraham Lincoln sought to free slaves, end the Civil War, and reunite the people of this broken nation.* A sentence with multiple items in a series allows the student to include more information than he or she could write in an otherwise simple sentence.

Lesson 11: Introducing Journalism

- PROBLEM: Student’s lead sentence or paragraph offers too much detail.
 - *Solution*: A lead sentence or paragraph introduces the article with the basic facts (the five Ws). The body of the article then supplies the details. With this in mind, ask the student to revise the lead so it gives only the essentials.
- PROBLEM: Student analyzes, interprets, or adds his opinion to the article’s facts: (*Even though the Japanese wiped out most of our ships, we still have the strongest military.*)
 - *Solution A*: News articles should be unbiased and should stick to the facts (*The Japanese attack destroyed most of the aircraft carriers stationed in Pearl Harbor.*)
 - *Solution B*: Turn the opinion into a quote (“*Even though the Japanese wiped out most of our ships, we still have the strongest military,*” said Harry Liu of Honolulu.)

- PROBLEM: Includes some first-person references (*It is unknown of Simba's current whereabouts, but we believe her to be still in the park.*)
 - *Solution:* Rewrite in third person (*Simba's whereabouts remain unknown, but zoo officials believe she is still in the park.*)
- PROBLEM: Student's use of sentence variations creates a non-journalistic "sound," a subtlety that may be difficult to spot.
 - A student wrote: *Escaping, the gas burst into flames, ignited by sparks.*
 - *Solution:* This information would be more appropriately written in one of these two ways: *Escaping gas ignited by sparks quickly burst into flames.* OR *Ignited by sparks, escaping gas burst into flames.*
- PROBLEM: Student uses the thesaurus for synonyms but ends up with vocabulary words that exceed the 5th to 8th grade reading level of the typical newspaper.
 - *Solution:* *Erecting* would be better replaced by *building* or *constructing*. *Rendered homeless* would be better replaced by *left homeless* or *now homeless*.
- PROBLEM: Poorly organized information or illogical content.
 - *Solution:* The problem may be a result of the students' choice of subject matter. Students who base their article on a factual event generally have greater success with their piece than those who report on a fictitious situation. Suggest a historical event as the basis for a news article.
- PROBLEM: Important information/facts are omitted; the article wrongly assumes that the reader is knowledgeable about the subject.
 - *Solution:* Review students' News Article Planning Worksheet to make sure they filled it in with plenty of detail. Also check to make sure they answered the five W questions. Remind them to assume the reader is fairly ignorant about the subject.
- PROBLEM: Article contains information that would not be known at that time (*Forty feet below the harbor's surface, the USS Arizona entombs the bodies of 1,177 men.*)
 - *Solution:* Make sure the information in the article would have been available to the media *at the time of writing*. Avoid facts that wouldn't be known for days or weeks.
- PROBLEM: Incorrect use of time reference words, such as "On May 10, 2001" or "Yesterday, June 5, an explosion rocked the seaside community of _____."
 - *Solution:* Do not use full dates. Since the student is reporting the event as though it took place a day or two before, he should replace complete dates with words such as *Saturday night* or *yesterday*. Suggest referring to a current news article for actual examples of time reference words.

□ PROBLEM: Headline is incorrectly written.

- *Solution:* Determine which of the following needs to be addressed:
 1. Capitalize title like a sentence (first word and proper nouns only) OR capitalize title like a book title (first word, nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs). Newspapers vary. Use your community’s paper as a guide, but be consistent.
 2. Headline should not include “to be” words or helping verbs.
 3. Headline should not include articles (a, an, the).
 4. No period should appear at the end of a headline.
 5. Headline should be written in *present* tense.

□ PROBLEM: Fails to use transition words between paragraphs.

- *Solution:* Refer to students’s “Transitions and Conjunctions” word list.

Lesson 12: Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event

□ PROBLEM: Narrative is vague and lacks descriptive details.

- *Solution:* Check for vague, weak, or repeated words; look for places to insert colorful adverbs and adjectives.

□ PROBLEM: Paragraph lacks a sense of drama.

- *Solution A:* Add emotion words. Use “Emotions” and “Characteristics/ Expressions/ Behaviors” word lists from the student workbook.
- *Solution B:* Look for places in the narrative that lend themselves to emotional response. Ask: *How did this make you feel? Were you nervous? Afraid? Excited?*

□ PROBLEM: Students write too broad a narrative (for example, a narrative about a favorite vacation or a day at an amusement park).

- *Solution:* Focus on only one *event* (rappelling at Hume Lake, water skiing with the Tylers, riding “Colossus”) and develop this *singular* event in dramatic detail.

□ PROBLEM: Now that prepositional phrases have been introduced, students exhibit confusion between certain prepositions and subordinate conjunctions.

- *Solution:* A word that is a preposition in one sentence may be a subordinate conjunction in another (such as *after*, *before*, or *during*). Both make fine sentence starters, but students need to be aware of and understand the difference *and* must correctly use a prepositional phrase sentence starter whenever it is required. Refer to your English handbook for further clarification.
 1. Prepositional phrase: *After dinner, the boys played baseball.* (*After dinner* is a prepositional phrase; *after* is a preposition whose object is *dinner*.)

2. Subordinate conjunction: *After the boys ate dinner, they played baseball.* (*After the boys ate dinner* is a dependent clause; *after* is a subordinate conjunction.)

Lesson 13: Writing a Narrative of Another Person's Experience

- PROBLEM: Does not tell the story from the third-person point of view OR mixes up points of view.
 - *Solution*: Sometimes students can become confused with the first-person comments written during the interview. Help them see that they are narrating the story and must tell it from the third-person perspective.
- See Lesson 12 for solutions to other problems typical of narrative writing.

Lesson 14: First-Person Point of View (Personification)

- PROBLEM: Does not express the object's feelings, emotions, and/or sensations (A sentence from "I Am a Knife" might say: *I hear footsteps coming closer.*)
 - *Solution*: Suggest that the student "ask" the object, "How do you feel?" (Anxious? Afraid? Joyful? Nervous?) Ask what other emotions the object might feel if it were a human in a given situation (like being angry or embarrassed after . . .).
 - Two possibilities: *Fear gripped me as I heard the approaching footsteps.* OR, *Listening to the approaching footsteps, I anxiously waited, hoping he would choose me.*
- PROBLEM: The paragraph provides narration, behavior, and emotion, but does not give enough physical personification to the object. ("I Am a Car"): *I drove through the alley on my way home.*
 - *Solution A*: Ask how the object's physical features are like a human's. (headlights are like eyes, fender is like a mouth . . .)
 - *Solution B*: Ask how these physical characteristics would express themselves in human fashion. (*I flashed a bright, chrome smile. My headlights peered cautiously into the alley.*)
 - *Solution C*: Ask how the object can express itself like a human. For example, *What could someone or something do to it to make it feel ticklish, itchy, in pain?*
 - *Solution D*: Ask what physical sensations it would experience if it were a human in this situation (like the feeling of a chilly wind on its face as it races over the road).
 - *Solution E*: Ask whether this object possesses other human qualities.
 - *Solution F*: Ask more specific questions. ("I Am a Knife") *How did the peanut butter feel on your body? Smooth? Bumpy? Squishy? When dipped into the*

peanut butter, were you swirled around and around? Did your head spin? Did you feel dizzy? When he threw you into the sink, did he bruise you? When the plate landed on you did you feel smothered? Helpless? Trapped? Unable to breathe?

- MORE IDEAS: (“I Am a Shoe”) You can compare the *rubber or leather to skin*, you can have *dirt on your face*, causing your *nose to itch* or to *feel like sneezing*, you can talk about having a *sore body* from all the jolting and scraping, you can talk about *swallowing* your owner’s foot.

□ PROBLEM: Student’s descriptions are weak.

- *Solution*: Refer to *Sound; Visual; Textures; Taste and Smell; Personification Verbs; Characteristics, Expressions, and Behaviors; and Emotions* word lists.

Lesson 15: First-Person Point of View (Limited Omniscience)

□ PROBLEM: Students use “blah” titles, like “Androcles and Me” or “Androcles and the Lion”

- *Solution*: Encourage them to be descriptive (“A Friend in Freedom,” “A Lion and his Friend,” “Thumbs Up in the Arena!”)

□ PROBLEM: Students write in first person as Androcles, yet their titles are in third person.

- *Solution*: Not “Androcles’s Triumph over the Lion” but “My Triumph over the Lion.”

□ PROBLEM: Student writes in both past and present tense.

- *Solution*: Be sure the composition maintains the same tense throughout.

□ PROBLEM: Student tends to repeat words like “slave,” “battle,” “lion,” OR tends to reuse the same synonyms.

- *Solution A*: Make use of appropriate pronouns.
- *Solution B*: Think of a good synonym for “lion” (*beast*) or for “Androcles” (*slave*) and look it up in the thesaurus.

□ PROBLEM: Use of pronouns without an antecedent.

- *Solution*: Be sure there is no confusion about whom the pronoun is referring to.

Lesson 16: Third-Person Point of View (Omniscience)

□ PROBLEM: Student’s second paragraph tells only what is happening to the pet.

- *Solution*: Add more detail about the pet’s agitated state.

□ PROBLEM: Student fails to stick to the required topic for each paragraph.

- *Solution A*: Make sure the **first paragraph** is *about the enthusiastic child*. The child’s actions should be startling or disturbing to a pet. The child (not the animal, the parent, shopkeeper, breeder, etc.) must be the focus.
- *Solution B*: The **second paragraph** must be *about the nervous animal*. The entire paragraph should describe the animal’s agitated behavior. If the animal

is playing, exploring, or relaxing, it is not exhibiting anxiety! Suggest emotion words as well as words that describe skittish or wary behaviors. Furthermore, the subject of each sentence in this paragraph should be the pet, not the child.

- *Solution C:* The **third paragraph** should explain *how the pet calms down*. This must involve removing the child from the situation, since he or she is part of the problem! If the paragraph tells how the child calms the pet down, the student has not followed directions and must rewrite it.

□ PROBLEM: Student's topic sentence uses the appositive *a child of 8* or *an 8-year-old child*.

- *Solution A:* Encourage your students to stretch their own creativity rather than rely on the sample about Bobby and the parakeet. The appositive does not have to supply the child's age. It can also describe his or her appearance or behavior. (*Susie, a squealing, blonde toddler, banged on the cage where the puppies slept.* OR, *A shrieking youngster, Jeremiah Price, raced wildly into the feed store.*)
- *Solution B:* The first sentence does not need to contain an appositive at all. The student could begin with paired adjectives or a present participle, for example.

□ PROBLEM: Paragraphs are not the required lengths.

- *Solution:* Make sure each paragraph is three to five sentences long.

□ PROBLEM: Student switches from third person to first. Generally speaking, he starts out writing the composition in third person (*Susie squealed.*) but changes to first person later on (*when we walked in the door*).

- *Solution:* Keep all references in third person.

□ PROBLEM: Student switches pet pronouns back and forth. He may refer to the pet as *he* or *she* in one place and then call the pet *it* somewhere else.

- *Solution:* Keep pronoun usage consistent.

Lesson 17: Describing an Object

□ See comments for Lesson 1.

Lesson 18: Describing a Place

□ See comments for Lesson 7.

Lesson 19: Writing a Short Report

□ PROBLEM: Does not use transitions between paragraphs.

- *Solution:* Refer to Transition Word List in the student workbook.

□ PROBLEM: Jumps around with material.

- *Solution:* Keep similar topics together within a paragraph to improve flow of thought.

- PROBLEM: Includes unnecessary or unimportant information.
 - *Solution:* Watch for “carrots in the cookie jar.”
- PROBLEM: Paragraphs are not structured according to the outline (points are out of order).
 - *Solution:* Rearrange paragraphs so they follow the outline.

Lesson 20: Exaggeration

- PROBLEM: The two paragraphs do not discuss the same aspects of the resort.
 - *Solution:* Paragraphs need to parallel each other for the most part. However, they do not need to line up exactly.
- PROBLEM: Paragraphs are vague and lack embellishment.
 - *Solution:* Students should overstate the description of the exaggerated location; be sure they pad details in order to make the “ideal” resort appear more enticing. This is an excellent opportunity to choose dynamic, supercharged vocabulary to garnish and enrich the writing.
- PROBLEM: States information that is obvious to the reader. *Missing their oars, rickety boats that cannot be paddled bob about in the shallow, muddied lake. Because the water level is low, the boats cannot be used.*
 - *Solution:* Omit clearly understood information. Since the boat has no oars, it obviously cannot be paddled. Also a shallow, muddy lake implies that boats can’t be used. *Missing their oars, rickety boats bob about in the shallow, muddied lake.*
- PROBLEM: Student uses the word *you* (*As you approach the circular drive...*).
 - *Solution:* Write the paragraphs in third person.

Lessons 21 and 22: First-Person Point of View, Parts 1 and 2

- PROBLEM: Too much narration, too little description. Student tends to focus on activity.
 - *Solution A:* Focus more on the sensory experience. Suggest that students give a sense of being right there by using vivid word pictures to describe what they experience with their eyes and ears rather than describing the activity.
 - *Solution B:* Give a bigger picture of the picnic area, filled with vivid colors, sights, sounds, aromas. Say: *Help me see the entire scene in a more vivid manner. Is it sunny or overcast or windy? Any clouds? Dew on the grass? Trees? Sand or sidewalks? Give me a bigger picture of the busyness of the area.*
 - *Solution C:* Ask: *Besides steak (hamburgers, etc.), what did you eat? How did it smell, look? Was the table wood, metal, or concrete? Did the air smell of*

popcorn, wood smoke, or newly mown grass? How colorful was the park itself? Was it a swarm of soccer teams and skaters? Did people toss Frisbees or fly kites? Help me, your reader, get a sense of being right there!

- PROBLEM: Paragraph lacks adjectives and specific nouns. *Leaving crumbs and paper utensils behind, the people pack up and depart.* (At first glance this sounds like a good sentence, BUT you can ask questions to stimulate ideas.)
 - *Solution:* Ask for clarification: *What do they pack up? Beach chairs? Armloads of picnic gear? Food? Volleyball equipment?*
- PROBLEM: Composition does not flow smoothly.
 - *Solution A:* Check to see if student used subordinate conjunctions.
 - *Solution B:* Check for “carrots.”
 - *Solution C:* Rearrange sentences, grouping similar thoughts together.
- PROBLEM: Inconsistent use of tense.
 - *Solution:* Change any past tense verbs to present tense.

Lesson 23: Narrative Voice

- PROBLEM: Tendency to be wordy.
 - *Solution A:* Use strong nouns and verbs to eliminate overuse of adjectives and adverbs.
 - *Solution B:* Replace a wordy phrase with a dynamic word.
- PROBLEM: Student includes inaccurate information.
 - *Solution:* Verify questionable facts by returning to the original source.
- PROBLEM: Student switches from one tense to another.
 - *Solution:* Choose a tense and stick with it.

Lesson 24: Writing a Persuasive Ad

- PROBLEM: Students do not establish a need for the toy.
 - *Solution:* Brainstorm with students, helping them develop reasons why this toy would be in demand.

Lesson 25: Opinion Essay

- PROBLEM: Fails to list or name the three main points.
- *Solution:* Be sure the outline is complete AND that the points are different enough to be supported individually.
- PROBLEM: Lists more than three main points.
- *Solution A:* Have student narrow essay to include just three points.

- *Solution B:* After narrowing essay to three main points, see if student can use the leftover points to develop and support the three main points.
- PROBLEM: Fails to list main points clearly.
- *Solution A:* Be sure the reader can easily identify each point.
 - *Solution B:* Make sure the student introduces each main point with a transition word. Initially, beginners find it easiest to use “First,” “Second,” and “Finally.” Refer the student to the word list titled “Using Transition Words to Make or Introduce Your Points” for further help.
 - *Solution C:* Make sure student’s points are parallel. Refer to the lesson and Skill Builder (or to your English handbook) for detailed help.
- PROBLEM: Does not develop points in the same order as they are listed.
- *Solution:* Do some rearranging.
- PROBLEM: Does not develop points with sufficient supporting details.
- *Solution:* Do additional brainstorming and/or research.
- PROBLEM: Student jumps around from point to point. The topic sentence introduces Point 1, Point 2, and Point 3; yet the supporting details are all mixed up throughout the paragraph.
- *Solution A:* He or she needs to rearrange points, sentences, or paragraphs in proper order.
 - *Solution B:* The parent should be able to write an outline from the student’s paper, identifying the three main points and determining whether each point was developed with examples, illustrations, other facts and details.
- PROBLEM: Multiple series of words in a sentence lack parallelism. *School uniforms promote better student behavior, eliminate expensive wardrobes, and student grades improve.* (Notice that *promote, eliminate, student grades* are not parallel—*promote* and *improve* are verbs, *grades* is a noun.)
- *Solution:* The new sentence could read: *School uniforms promote better student behavior, eliminate expensive wardrobes, and improve student grades.* (In this sentence, *promote, eliminate, and improve* are parallel—they are all verbs.)
- PROBLEM: Weak (or missing) introductory and closing paragraphs.
- *Solution:* The first or second sentence should state the student’s opinion, grab the reader’s attention, and, as a rule, list the three main points. The closing paragraph should restate the opinion and the three main points.
- PROBLEM: Difficult to determine student’s thesis statement.
- *Solution:* Help students clarify and reword their position or opinion.

- PROBLEM: Because this is a new way for students to express themselves, there is a tendency toward awkwardness.
 - *Solution:* Have them read their paragraph out loud when editing. They will be more likely to notice awkward or unclear sentences.
- PROBLEM: Student relies on poor logic or makes sweeping generalizations. *Because Nevada also ranks first in divorce and suicide and third in bankruptcy filings, it proves that gambling plays a part in ruining families.*
 - *Solution:* Be sure supporting details are accurate; don't jump to conclusions or make assumptions. Explain that these statistics may *suggest* that gambling plays a part in ruining families, but they do not *prove* it.
- PROBLEM: Student does not use transition words (or uses them incorrectly).
 - *Solution A:* Refer to "Using Transition Words to Make or Introduce Your Points" word list for help. (Note: He or she should not use the word *lastly*.)
 - *Solution B:* Make sure he or she does not begin the second or third point with *in conclusion* or *in summary*. These words are better suited for the conclusion.

Lesson 26: Letter to the Editor

- See Lesson 25 for comments and suggestions.

Lessons 27 and 28: Compare or Contrast

- PROBLEM: Chooses topics that are too similar to compare (like dogs and cats).
 - *Solution:* Offer suggestions for more diverse topics.
- PROBLEM: Jumps around from point to point.
 - *Solution:* See Lesson 25 for suggestions.
- PROBLEM: Student bases the essay on his or her opinion.
 - *Solution:* Remind him or her that this exercise is not about personal likes or dislikes, approvals or disapprovals; it should be an objective comparison or contrast. (Students may, however, draw a conclusion from their findings when they sum up their essays.)
- PROBLEM: Redundancy (tendency to overuse repeated words and phrases); essay may develop a "see-saw" sound.
 - *Solution:* If students have restated the same thought over and over, their main points may be too similar to be thoroughly developed with their own unique facts. Help them choose one or two stronger main points.

Lesson 29: Essays That Describe or Define

- PROBLEM: The essay does not seem to "say anything."

- *Solution A*: Redirect the student to answer the question and thoroughly address all of the topic's points.
 - *Solution B*: Look for vague repetition (the same obscure point is restated over and over). Require the student to strengthen the main point and add *concrete* details to support it.
- PROBLEM: The essay is too vague.
- *Solution A*: First, make sure the student chose three strong, valid main points. Second, double-check to ensure that each of these points is unique and has its own set of supporting details.
 - *Solution B*: Require the student to give two to three specific examples and details to support each main point. Reread some of the sample essays in Lessons 25-29 to see how main points are developed with details.
- Also look at the problems/solutions offered for Lesson 25 Opinion Essay, since similar problems often occur in both of these types of essays.
- Mainly direct students to follow their plan and sufficiently develop their points in an organized manner.

Lesson 30: Timed Essays

- PROBLEM A: Makes poor use of time by:
- Sending too much time thinking of a thesis statement
 - Spending too much time brainstorming or making an outline
 - Failing to leave enough time to write the essay
- PROBLEM B: *or* makes poor use of time by:
- Spending too little time brainstorming or outlining
 - Failing to have a plan when it is time to write; ends up rambling or repeating
- PROBLEM C: *or* makes poor use of time by:
- Finishing in plenty of time but not using remaining time to edit and revise
 - *Solution* to Problems A and B: Give students ample practice with timed essays. Use the suggestions outlined in Lesson 30 of the Teacher's Manual to walk them through a timed essay, calling out times to help keep them on track.
 - *Solution* to Problem C: Edit a few essays with them until they get the idea. Remind them when it's time to edit. Offer suggestions ("Did you include a few sentence variations?" "Did you replace repeated or weak words?" etc.).
- PROBLEM: Poor organization, lack of transition words, vague content.
- *Solution*: See Problems/Solutions for Lessons 25 and 29 for suggestions.

Common Problems of Mechanics

The following pages illustrate some of the most common errors of grammar and punctuation. In order to watch for these in your student's writing, you must be sure to have a clear understanding yourself. This is not intended to give complete instruction but to simply offer examples. Please refer to your English handbook for further clarification. If you see repeated problems, address them with a grammar curriculum.

CONFUSION BETWEEN PLURAL AND POSSESSIVE

Many students have trouble with this. PLEASE REVIEW THIS CONCEPT! Common examples include:

□ *It's* instead of *its*

1. An apostrophe shows ownership when used with a noun. For example: *This necklace is Mom's, the gentleman's book, or that dog's rawhide bone*
2. Possessive pronouns DO NOT use apostrophes. For example: *This necklace is hers, his book, or its bone*
3. *It's* is a contraction for *it is*.
4. **Tip:** When students are tempted to write *it's*, have them substitute *it is* to see if the sentence makes sense. If not, use *its*.

□ Making plural nouns possessive. Remember—*more than one of a noun is plural*.

But if a noun shows ownership, it is possessive. Here are some examples:

Incorrect: My **shell's** have a hollow cavity containing **grain's** of sand
(This example shows plurals incorrectly written as possessives.)

Correct: My **shells** have a hollow cavity containing **grains** of sand.
(Add /s/ to the end of most nouns to make a plural—no apostrophe!)

Also correct: My **shells'** hollow cavities contain grains of sand.
(This example shows ownership—*more than one* shell.)

My **shell's** hollow cavity contains grains of sand.
(This example shows ownership—*only one* shell.)

HOMONYM CONFUSION

□ Beware of homonym confusion. Students often misuse words like *are* and *our*.

1. *Are* (pronounced *ahr*) is a "be" word (is, am, **are**, was, etc.). *Our* is a possessive pronoun meaning *belonging to us*. If students start to spell the word

A-R-E, they should ask themselves if they meant to use a “to be” word. If not, then they should use the *O-U-R* spelling.

2. *There/their/they’re* and *your/you’re* are also commonly confused homonyms.

Incorrect: I hope **your** having a wonderful vacation. (*your* = possessive/ownership)

Correct: I hope **you’re** having a wonderful vacation. (*you’re* = *you* + *are*)

INCOMPLETE SENTENCES (FRAGMENTS)

- **A sentence must have a subject and a verb.**

Incorrect: My birthday, the most exciting day of the year. (no verb)

Correct: My birthday, the most exciting day of the year, **falls** on July 4th.
(verb) ^

Incorrect: And next visited the amazing Mt. Rushmore. (no subject; begins with “and”)

Correct: Next **we** visited the amazing Mt. Rushmore.
(subject) ^

RUN-ON SENTENCES

- **Comma splice** (two sentences separated by a comma)

Incorrect: I fan the pages, the musty smell of the book blows on my face.
^

Correct 1: I fan the pages. The musty smell of the book blows on my face.

Correct 2: I fan the pages; the musty smell of the book blows on my face.

Correct 3: I fan the pages, and the musty smell of the book blows on my face.

Correct 4: As I fan the pages, the musty smell of the book blows on my face.

Incorrect: The rosebush is in full bloom, it bears showy pink blossoms.
^

Correct 1: The rosebush is in full bloom. It bears showy pink blossoms.

Correct 2: The rosebush, in full bloom, bears showy pink blossoms.

Correct 3: When in full bloom, the rosebush bears showy pink blossoms.

Correct 4: When the rosebush is in full bloom, it bears showy pink blossoms.

INCORRECT USE OF COMMAS

□ Breaking up a sentence with a comma

Incorrect: Square dancing at Riley’s Farm, always makes my feet tired.

Correct: Square dancing at Riley’s Farm always makes my feet tired.

□ Comma suggestions

1. The comma tends to be overused. When in doubt, leave it out.
2. DO use a comma at the end of a phrase, like:

Suddenly lurching, the train jumped the tracks.

Gazing up at the stars, I marvel at the universe.
3. DO use a comma to set off an appositive:

Senator Smith, the man in the blue coat, spoke at the rally.

That shaggy dog, a pure-bred collie, needs grooming.
4. DO NOT use a comma to separate two complete sentences.
5. DO NOT use a comma where there is no natural pause. It helps to read the sentence aloud and pause dramatically at the comma. Does it fit? Does the sentence flow well? Does it sound better without the comma?
6. DO double-check usage in a grammar handbook when you are unsure.

MISPLACED MODIFIERS

□ Subject agreement

When writing a participial phrase, paired adjective phrase, or adverb phrase the subject of that phrase must appear **next to** or **near** the participial phrase. (Note: these phrases are usually set off by commas.)

1. Participial Phrase

Incorrect: Chasing their tails, **the crowd of children** laughed at the silly dogs.

Correct: Chasing their tails, **the silly dogs** amused the crowd of children.

When writing a participial phrase, ask yourself questions such as "Did the crowd of children chase their tails, or did the silly dogs chase their tails?" This will help you decide if your sentence makes sense. Notice that in the correct sentence, the subject of the sentence (*the dogs*) appears right after the participial phrase (*chasing their tails*).

2. Adverbial Phrase

Incorrect: Noisily squealing, **Dad** took the car to the brake shop for repairs.

Correct: Noisily squealing, **the car** needed to have its brakes repaired.

Again, ask yourself the same questions. “Did Dad squeal noisily, or did the car squeal noisily?” In the correct sentence, the car, which is obviously the right answer, appears right after the participial phrase that modifies it.

3. Paired Adjective Phrase

Incorrect: Crisp and brown, **I** ate my toast with butter and jam.

Correct: Crisp and brown, **my toast** tasted delicious with butter and jam.

Who or what is crisp and brown? This is the subject that should closely follow the comma. In this case, toast is the correct subject.

Student Writing Samples

One way of learning a new skill is to follow an example or model. For many parents and teachers, editing student paragraphs will seem daunting because you are entering unfamiliar territory. This section of the teacher’s manual provides you with numerous examples of actual student compositions from past WriteShop classes.

By studying the comments and suggestions for each paragraph, you can begin to understand what to expect from your own student and how to address various errors in his or her writing. Don’t be discouraged if at first you have trouble identifying problem areas. With time and practice, editing will become more natural for you.

Most of the following student writing samples have four pages:

1. The original paragraph as submitted by the student (sometimes we have written a comment to help you look for specific problems).
2. The Teacher’s Writing Skills Checklist. This is an example of how to fill out a checklist. Make helpful notes both on the paragraph itself and on the checklist. Don’t forget *positive comments* as well as *constructive suggestions*.
3. The student’s same paragraph with teacher comments and editing suggestions. We recommend that you edit your student’s first revision in a similar manner. (Remember: Students edit their own “sloppy copy” for content and style. Then they edit their first revision for mechanics. When they have done that, then you edit the first revision as we have shown in the samples.)
4. The student’s final draft. This shows how the student revised his or her paragraph based on teacher comments.

- All student samples have been retyped for clarity (some were originally handwritten).
- These pages have been edited in *black*. We recommend *colored pencils* to underline and circle repeated words, weak words, and forms of “to be.”

Teach yourself the editing process:

1. The first two student compositions in this section, “Describing a Pet” and “Describing a Person,” are designed for you to use to practice editing.
2. First, take out the page titled “Student First Revision (*Teacher Practice Page*)” containing the paragraph of “My Pet.” Use the Teacher Writing Skills Checklist provided to help you edit it with comments and colored pencils.
3. Then compare your suggestions with our edited version. What did you catch? What did you miss? Did you include a positive remark? (Remember: our

comments are only *suggestions*. Your remarks may differ. It does not mean you are wrong!)

4. Now, pretend you are a student who must write your final draft. Rewrite the pet paragraph using our comments and suggestions. When you have finished, compare your paragraph to the student's final draft titled "Boots the Cat."
5. If you still feel insecure about editing, you may want to photocopy other student paragraphs from this section for additional practice.

When students' first revisions need even more help:

WriteShop encourages you to work directly with your teens through each step of the writing process. Editing is no exception.

When you edit your child's first revision, don't rely exclusively on written comments and suggestions. You have a tremendous opportunity to offer personal feedback, something not normally possible for a classroom teacher. Take advantage of this!

Sometimes, however, your student's paragraph will need *even more* individual attention. If you can't communicate your suggestions without making a complete mess of the first revision, take extra time to explain your recommendations.

When would you need to do this? Typically, it's when the student misses the point of the assignment entirely, or when the paragraph contains many irrelevant or awkwardly written sentences. In these cases, a few scattered comments on his or her paper simply won't do the trick.

Since our WriteShop classes only met once a week, we couldn't possibly sit down with each of our 20 students to review and discuss their paragraphs. We found a more effective way to take them step-by-step through the revision process—a "teaching letter." Because of its friendly, conversational style, a teaching letter allows you to more thoroughly explain, instruct, and suggest. You can make general comments about the assignment or specific comments about each sentence.

You won't need to write a teaching letter if you can sit with your child for an extended editing session and talk about options. By working directly with you, the student can make changes then and there as you walk through the paper together.

Lesson 6 of this section contains a sample letter that may give you ideas either for fruitful discussion or for writing a teaching letter of your own. For a short version of a different teaching letter, see the Chinese food example on TM p. 111.

Common Proofreading Terms and Symbols

Note to Student	Margin Note	Mark the Text	After Correction
capitalize	cap	the <u>american</u> flag	the American flag
use lower case	lc	my G randma	my grandma
insert word or phrase		adj. her hair ^	her long, golden hair
delete word or phrase		the old, cracked , chipped vase	the old, chipped vase
close space		Answer  the phone .	Answer the phone.
increase space		Mrs. Smith arrived early.	Mrs. Smith arrived early.
indent (or increase indent)		→ Soon after, the . . .	Soon after, the . . .
spelling error		sp benifit	benefit
insert period		Read your book 	Read your book.
insert comma		Tom, Elise and Mark 	Tom, Elise, and Mark
begin a new paragraph		Fido followed me home.  The next day we ran an ad in . . .	Fido followed me home. The next day we ran . . .
sentence fragment (incomplete)	frag (or inc)	frag Before the movie began. ^	Before the movie began, Dad bought popcorn.
run-on sentence	ro	The water felt like ice we  jumped out right away.	The water felt like ice. We jumped out right away.
misplaced modifier	mm	Crisp and buttery, Mary  makes delicious cookies.	Crisp and buttery, Mary's cookies taste delicious.
awkward	awk	awk  Blooming with delicate pink roses describes my garden.	My garden blooms with delicate pink roses.

Lesson 2: Describing a Pet

Student's First Revision (Unedited)

My Beautiful Pet

My beautiful dog Princess is a shepherd lab mix. Her short coat is caramel colored with black highlights. Under her belly lays a soft ivory fur with an oatmeal tint. Warm to the touch, her inky black nose reminds me of soft leather. Above cinnamon-shaded eyes, her fuzzy ears flop over to a rounded tip. My favorite part of princess is her fun-loving expression when she looks up at me.

Lesson 2: Describing a Pet

Student's First Revision (Teacher Practice Page)

My Beautiful Pet

My beautiful dog Princess is a shepherd lab mix. Her short coat is caramel colored with black highlights. Under her belly lays a soft ivory fur with an oatmeal tint. Warm to the touch, her inky black nose reminds me of soft leather. Above cinnamon-shaded eyes, her fuzzy ears flop over to a rounded tip. My favorite part of princess is her fun-loving expression when she looks up at me.

Lesson 2: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described pet's physical appearance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described pet's expressions and behaviors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence introduces the paragraph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than three forms of "to be" (<i>is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that are specific, vivid, and sensory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided writing in second person (<i>you/your</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending |

MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used Writing Skills Checklist (including using colored pencils), circling and underlining as directed. Made corrections before revising. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your Writing Skills Checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included a portrait of the pet, drawn by an adult (and stapled to bottom of stack) |

Comments _____

Lesson 2: Describing a Pet

Student's First Revision (Edited)

My Beautiful Pet

My beautiful dog Princess is a shepherd lab mix. Her short coat is caramel

This sentence only describes fur color. Why not take the opportunity to tell about her shape or size? Could you add a texture word?

colored with black highlights. ^{Awk.} (Under her belly lays a soft ivory fur) with an oatmeal tint.

wow! Excellent sentence!

my _____'s

Warm to the touch, [^]her inky black nose reminds me of soft leather. ^{and ←}Above

cinnamon-shaded eyes, her fuzzy ears flop over to a rounded tip. My favorite part of

cap. princess is her fun-loving expression when she looks up at me. >

"Fun-loving expression" is a little vague. What tells you that her expression is fun-loving? (Hint: Maybe you could tie in her expression with her cinnamon-shaded eyes?)

I know what you mean to say, Sadi... but it sounds like her ears are stuck to her eyeballs and are flopping over into her eyes! 😊 Try rearranging some phrases.

Lesson 2: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience
- Followed instructions for this assignment
- Described pet's physical appearance
- Described pet's expressions and behaviors
- All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")
- Title captures the essence of the paragraph
"pet" is vague

Good job!

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- Strong topic sentence introduces the paragraph
- Used no more than three forms of "to be" (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)
- Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words "soft"
- Used concrete nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that are specific, vivid, and sensory
"fun-loving" "pet"(in title)
- Avoided the use of "weak" words
- Avoided writing in second person (*you/your*)
- Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending
Think of a way to end your composition—wrap it up with a final thought. Can you imagine your family without Princess? Is she adorable or playful or ...?

MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- Name and date in the upper right-hand corner
- Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)
- Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long
- Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph
- Skipped lines
- Used good spacing between words and sentences
- Double-checked spelling by circling and looking up suspected words
- Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns
- Avoided improper capitalization
- Used punctuation correctly
- Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences
- Writing is neat and easy to read
- Correctly used Writing Skills Checklist (including using colored pencils), circling and underlining as directed. Made corrections before revising.
- Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your Writing Skills Checklist
- Included a portrait of the pet, drawn by an adult (and stapled to bottom of stack)

Comments Your dog sounds quite special to you, Sadi—so many of your word choices are colorful and descriptive. Turn this checklist over for a few ideas to help make your excellent paragraph even better! 😊

Additional Comments and Feedback

You told me many wonderful things about your dog! However, you focused so much on her color & texture that you left out important details about her other features. For example:

- How big is she?
- Is she thin or plump?
- What can you say about her face? Snout? Whiskers?
- Are her legs long or short, skinny or stubby?
- Is her tail long and thin or short and fluffy? Does it hang? Does it wag?
- How about Princess's bark? Does she whine, growl, or yap?
- And what can you say about her behavior? Is she calm or frisky? Does she jump, dash, hop, or spin? Or maybe she just lies around all day?

Can you think of other details to add? Of course, you won't be able to use all of these ideas. Choose a few to spice up your composition and round out your description.

I'm looking forward to a terrific revision—let's see what you can do! 😊

Lesson 2: Describing a Pet

Student's Final Draft

My Beautiful Princess

My beautiful dog Princess is a shepherd-lab mix. Her large body is covered with a smooth coat of short caramel-colored fur with black highlights. When she rolls over on her back, I can rub the downy ivory fur on her belly. Warm to the touch, my pooch's inky black nose reminds me of soft leather, and her fuzzy ears flop over to a rounded point. Above cinnamon-shaded eyes, her black eyebrows raise in a "play with me" expression and her black whiskers wiggle as she pants loudly. There is no doubt that this adorable pup is a special part of our family.

Lesson 3: Describing a Person

Student's First Revision (Unedited)

My Dad

Cutting wood is one of my dad's favorite things to do. In his dark, blue jeans and white shirt he concentrates on cutting his designs. His black hair gets covered with sawdust. Thrilled and satisfied, my dad carefully inspects the finished project with his brown eyes. I will always remember my dad bent over as he enjoys his workmanship.

Lesson 3: Describing a Person

Student's First Revision (Teacher Practice Page)

My Dad

Cutting wood is one of my dad's favorite things to do. In his dark, blue jeans and white shirt he concentrates on cutting his designs. His black hair gets covered with sawdust. Thrilled and satisfied, my dad carefully inspects the finished project with his brown eyes. I will always remember my dad bent over as he enjoys his workmanship.

Name _____

Subject Describing a Person

Lesson 3: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described subject's physical appearance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described subject's activity without focusing on the activity itself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence introduces the paragraph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than two forms of "to be" (<i>is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that are specific, vivid, and sensory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Began one sentence with paired adjectives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending |

MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and <u>date</u> in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included someone's drawing of your subject based on your description |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used Checklist and colored pencils; made corrections before revising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and Writing Skills Checklist |

Comments _____

Lesson 3: Describing a Person

Student's First Revision (Edited)

My Dad

Cutting wood ^{how? with what?} is one of my dad's favorite things to do. In his dark blue jeans and

white ^{adj.} shirt ^{sp.} he concentrates ^{adv.} on cutting his designs. His black hair gets covered with ^{adj.}

can you add more description about your dad?

Good pairs!

sawdust. Thrilled and satisfied, my dad ^{sp.} carefully inspects the finished project with his

^{adj.} brown eyes. I will always remember my dad bent over as he ^{adj.} ^{what?} ^{admires?} (enjoys) his workmanship.

Brian,

Your "sloppy copy" contained a sentence about your dad's strong hands pushing a piece of wood. Because it would add even more description about his, see if you are able to find a place to use it, OK?

☺

Lesson 3: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience
- Followed instructions for this assignment
- Described subject's physical appearance — *add detail!*
- Described subject's activity without focusing on the activity itself
- All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")
- Title captures the essence of the paragraph
Try "MyDad, the ____" or "My ____ Dad"

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- Strong topic sentence introduces the paragraph — *but can you add more detail?*
- Used no more than two forms of "to be" (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)
- Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words — *cutting, my dad*
- Used concrete nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that are specific, vivid, and sensory
things to do
- Avoided the use of "weak" words — *gets*
- Began one sentence with paired adjectives
- Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness
- Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending
OK, but again, it lacks detailed description of your dad ☺

MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- Name and date in the upper right-hand corner
- Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)
- Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long
- Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph
- Skipped lines
- Used good spacing between words and sentences
- Double-checked spelling by circling and looking up suspected words
- Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns
- Avoided improper capitalization
- Used punctuation correctly
- Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers
- Writing is neat and easy to read
- Included someone's drawing of your subject based on your description
- Correctly used Checklist and colored pencils; made corrections before revising
- Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and Writing Skills Checklist

← Good job of using your checklist! ☺

Comments I'm excited to see what you can do to add sparkle to your already delightful composition, Brian! Even though you described your dad's clothes, hair, and eyes (somewhat), what else can you say about him? Height? Build? Eye and hair details? Hands? Facial expressions?

Lesson 3: Describing a Person

Student's Final Draft

My Dad, the Woodworker

Cutting wood with a scroll saw is one of my dad's favorite pastimes. In his dark blue jeans and white T-shirt, he concentrates on precisely sawing his designs. His dusty fingers brush the tiny fragments of sawdust out of his short, curly black hair. He grips and pushes the plank into a sharp blade with his large, strong hands. Thrilled and satisfied, Dad carefully inspects the finished project with his discerning dark brown eyes. I will always remember my tall, smiling father bent over his saw as he admires his workmanship.

Lesson 5: Describing a Food

Student's First Revision (Unedited)

FRESH GARLIC BREAD

My mom's garlic bread is a scrumptious, mouth-watering experience. Fresh and spicy, this aromatic loaf puts you in a trance. Oh, and the smell of this bread is tempting and zesty; you'll die to get a whiff. Hot, moist and soft describes my mother's baked goodie. Golden and yummy, this flavorful food never fails to satisfy your tast buds.

Lesson 5: Describing a Food

Student's First Revision (Edited)

Do not use all caps—title
should be same font
size as rest of ¶.

FRESH GARLIC BREAD

My mom's garlic bread is a scrumptious, mouth-watering

experience. ^{Just one whiff of this} ~~Fresh~~ and spicy, ~~this~~ aromatic loaf ^{tempts me to (do what?)} ~~(puts you in a~~

~~trance)~~ Oh, and the smell of this bread is tempting and zesty; ^{frag.}

*l.c. you'll die to get a whiff. ^{Hot} moist and soft describes my mother's ^{awk.}

baked goodie. Golden and yummy, ^{vague} this flavorful ^{vague} food never fails

to satisfy your ^{sp.} tast buds.

Try this:

"The moist, soft (what?) tastes
(adj.) and (adj.)."

→ Remove this sentence, Ben. It's a bit awkward, but it has some great words that I hope you'll pull out and use elsewhere!

(Note: For easier editing practice, we have increased the spacing of this paragraph. Normally you would ask students to retype paragraphs that cannot be edited because of improper spacing.)

Lesson 5: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience
- Followed instructions for this assignment
- Carefully described the food in a tempting way, using each of the five senses
- Described the food *without* focusing on the preparation
- All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")
- Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader
- Title captures the essence of the paragraph

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- Strong topic sentence that introduces the paragraph
- Used no more than **two** forms of "to be" (is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been)
- Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words
- Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory
- Avoided the use of "weak" words weak: puts, get slang: you'll die
- Began one sentence with paired adjectives - I'm glad to see you using this new sentence variation, but it's best not to use it more than once in a paragraph.
- Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness
- Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending
needs to be a bit more concrete

Oops! The garlic bread is not the experience — eating it is the experience. 😊

MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- Name and date in the upper right-hand corner
- Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)
- Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long
- Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph
- Skipped lines
- Used good spacing between words and sentences
- Double-checked spelling by circling and looking up suspected words
- Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns
- Avoided improper capitalization
- Used punctuation correctly
- Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers
- Writing is neat and easy to read
- Correctly used checklist and used colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed
- Included brainstorming sheet, mindmap, all drafts of this paragraph, and your checklist

Comments fantastic - so many wonderfully descriptive adjectives! I've suggested ways to move some of them around to make them more effective. Be sure to write in 1st or 3rd person, avoiding "you." Review the "Sample Page Model" for correct font size and line spacing. With a little effort, you'll have a delicious final draft!

Lesson 5: Describing a Food

Student's Final Draft

Fresh Garlic Bread

Eating my mom's zesty garlic bread is a scrumptious, mouth-watering experience. Just one whiff of this spicy, aromatic loaf tempts me to take a bite. Its light brown crust is dry and crisp. The moist, soft center tastes buttery and deliciously chewy. Golden and fresh, this hot, flavorful baked goodie never fails to satisfy my taste buds.

Lesson 6: Describing a Season

Student's First Revision (Unedited)

Winter

Stepping outside onto the icy path I take in the sights and sounds of winter, it feels as if I have entered into a whole new world. I slowly meander along the path and the sound of crunchy leaves and sparkling snow sound like fresh potato chips being eaten. The sound of children at play fills the air. The cool clean air fills my lungs as I trudge along the slushy sidewalk. Chocolaty, and warm the scent of coca being sipped by a snuggling couple nearby wafts to my nose. Scampering squirrels race quickly over the snow-white Wonderland, skillfully searching for their secret hideaway. The joy and coziness winter brings makes it a special time of year.

Lesson 6: Describing a Season

Student's First Revision (Edited)

Winter

Stepping outside onto the icy path I take in the sights and sounds of winter, it ^{r.o.} feels as if I have entered into ^{vague} (a whole new world) I slowly meander along the path and the sound of crunchy leaves and sparkling snow sound like fresh potato chips being eaten. The sound of children at play fills the air. The cool clean air fills my lungs as I trudge along the slushy sidewalk. Chocolate ^{sp.} and warm the scent of coca being sipped by a snuggling couple nearby wafts to my nose. Scampering squirrels ^{redundant} (race quickly) over the snow-white wonderland, skillfully searching for their secret hideaway. The joy and coziness winter brings makes it a special time of year.

Good use of description
in this sentence! 😊

Casey ~ are you sure you looked
for repeated words??

Lesson 6: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience
- Followed instructions for this assignment
- Used at least three of the five senses to describe the season
- Included contrasts of color, temperature, and/or texture
- Avoided "season confusion" (see Lesson Instructions for explanation)
- All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")
- Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader
- Title captures the essence of the paragraph - *vague title*

Reduce narration and add more vivid description (colors, aromas, textures...)

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- Strong topic sentence that introduces the paragraph - *awkward, vague, run-on*
- Used no more than **two** forms of "to be" (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)
- Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words - *air, sound of/ sound like*
- Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory
- Avoided the use of "weak" words
- Varied sentence structure by correctly using each of the following:
 - began one sentence with paired adjectives
 - used a simile
- Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness
- Strong closing sentence

but avoid passive use of "being" (cocoa being sipped)

MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- Name and date in the upper right-hand corner
- Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)
- Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long
- Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph
- Skipped lines and used good spacing between words and sentences
- Double-checked spelling by circling and looking up suspected words
- Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns
- Avoided improper capitalization
- Used punctuation correctly
- Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers
- Writing is neat and easy to read
- Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed
- Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your checklist

Comments I didn't make many marks on your paper, but don't assume a lack of comments means you're in the clear! 😊 You've got loads of great ideas to work with, Casey — sparkling snow, cool clean air, etc. I've attached a "helping letter" with tips for editing and polishing your composition. You're off to a good start!

Lesson 6: Describing a Season

Teaching Letter

Note to the Teacher: You may not need to write a teaching letter like this if you can sit down with your student and walk him or her through the paragraph. Just jot down a few notes ahead of time to help you stay on target. The tips listed here may help you with your dialogue. On the other hand, if you are teaching several students together and you cannot meet one-on-one with each, attach a teaching letter to your Teacher's Writing Skills Checklist.

I was encouraged to read your paragraph and discover some excellent word choices! I also noticed, however, that you seemed to have a bit of trouble understanding the purpose of the assignment, which is *descriptive* writing.

I'm sure you remember that descriptive writing focuses on the details of what the senses experience: sights, flavors, aromas, textures, and sounds. Narrative writing often includes description, but focuses on a series of events or activities. Your paragraph is more of a narrative.

Your goal is to appeal to the reader's senses. Yes, you tell about some of the sights and sounds around you, but many of these descriptions sound vague and general. Let's look at your composition sentence by sentence and talk about ways to make your picture of winter come alive.

First, however, I need to point out that I spotted several similarities between your composition and the autumn paragraphs on pp. 6-1 and 6-2. Because I'm confident that you can write creatively and descriptively on your own, I suggest that in the future you *put away the examples before you write*. This will help you with originality, OK?

Topic sentence: This sentence has two problems: it's a run-on, and it's wordy. By eliminating some unnecessary information, you'll end up with a clear, concise opening sentence.

Sentence #2: This sentence's awkwardness should disappear after you change some of the content. First, let's address *season confusion*. Here, you overlapped fall and winter. It's not likely you'd find leaves on the ground after it snows, but if you did, any strays would certainly be soggy and damp, not crunchy. Second, your comparison with the potato chips borrows too heavily from the example on p. 6-1. Please think up a different simile.

Sentence #3: Vague. What sounds are the children making? Do you hear laughter? Giggles? Shouts? What are they wearing? (Adj.) hats, (adj.) scarves, or (adj.) mittens? Are they bundled in (adj.) coats? What are they playing? Are they throwing snowballs? Building a snowman? Skating on a/an (adj.) pond? Paint a word picture of a winter scene for your readers.

Sentence #4: I like the first part of this sentence! Be careful, though—*slushy sidewalk* is another example of season confusion. The sidewalk would not be icy (Sentence 1) and slushy at the same time! Maybe you can think of other wintry sights.

Sentence #5: (1) The comma should follow the second adjective: *Chocolaty and warm, the scent...* (2) This sentence will benefit from more vivid description. Are the couple wearing special winter clothing? Are they watching something? What could make this scene seem cozier and more colorful? (Note: If you add more detail, you'll probably need to rearrange the sentence so it doesn't sound wordy or awkward.)

Sentence #6: Super! This is a very descriptive sentence. Could you expand your description of the squirrels even further?

Sentence #7: Doesn't tie in too well with your paragraph. What is joyful? What is cozy?

Additional ideas: Is it snowing? Is the sky clear or cloudy? Do you see bare tree branches or snow-laden evergreens? What about icicles? Look through your paragraph for nouns and verbs that could be dressed up with an exciting adjective or adverb! Can you add some color words so the paragraph does not feel so "white"?

A Note about Editing

I noticed some repeated words and vague words in your composition, but on your Writing Skills Checklist, you marked off those boxes. Don't get sloppy about proofreading. Remember—using your checklist correctly counts toward your composition grade.

Finally, when you edit, especially when you need to make a lot of changes, be sure everything sounds good in its new place. Keep similar descriptions together. The sentence about the children and the sentence about the snuggling couple might work well together, especially if the couple are watching the kids!

Read your new paragraph out loud to see how the changes work together. Because I don't know which of my suggestions you will use or how you will rearrange your sentences, it's your job to see that your final draft makes sense and meets all the requirements of the Writing Skills Checklist.

I always enjoy your compositions. You're very teachable and willing to take suggestions. Please don't feel discouraged when you need to make big changes. Advanced writers go through this same process. It takes lots of practice before it becomes easy—and you're on your way! I'm looking forward to your revision.

Lesson 6: Describing a Season

Student's Final Draft

Winter Wonderland

Stepping onto the icy path, I take in the sights and sounds of a sunny winter day. Grey and fuzzy, scampering squirrels dart quickly over the glittery white wonderland, skillfully searching for their secret hideaway. The cool clean air fills my lungs as I walk carefully along the slick sidewalk, and I notice gleaming icicles hanging from snow-covered eaves like shimmering diamonds. Children wrapped in colorful striped scarves and knit caps sled down the snowy hillsides. A cozy couple, watching their little ones play, snuggle under a woolly red blanket sipping mugs of steaming cocoa. The chocolaty scent drifting through the brisk air makes me hungrily turn toward home. I never tire of winter, the brightest, cheeriest season of all.

(Note: After receiving her teaching letter, this student revised her paragraph and wrote the final draft. However, it still ended up needing one more revision. This is actually the "second final draft.")

Lesson 8: Explaining a Process

Student's First Revision (Unedited)

How to Make Chocolate Chip Cookies

Making chocolate chip cookies is a simple process. Before you cook, you wash your hands, get all the eggs, salt, baking soda, and water out, and preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Preparing the dough can be a little bit harder. First, mix the ingredients in a large bowl until they are smooth. Second butter the cookie sheets. Third make small balls out of the batter and put them on the sheets. Baking is one of the easiest steps. You put the trays in the oven and set the timer for ten minutes. Then when the time is up, you take the cookies and put them on a plate. The easiest step is cleaning up. Finily you can eat.

Lesson 8: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience
- Followed instructions for this assignment
- All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")
- Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader
- Title captures the essence of the paragraph

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- Strong topic sentence that introduces the composition
- Used no more than **two** forms of "to be" *5-yikes!*
- Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words *- put, you, cookies*
- Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory
- Avoided the use of "weak" words *- get, put*
- Varied sentence structure by correctly using each of the following:
 - began one sentence with paired adjectives
 - 3 began one sentence with an "-ing" participle
 - used Transitions Word List*> Since 3 of your sentences begin with a participle, see if you can replace one with paired adjectives.*
- Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness
- Implied *you/your* instead of using the actual words (as much as possible)
- Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending *One idea: combine the last two sentences, eliminating one "to be" word. Then add more description.*

MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- Name and date in the upper right-hand corner
- Paragraph is 5-9 sentences long *(11)*
- Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph
- Skipped lines
- Used good spacing between words and sentences
- Double-checked spelling by circling and looking up suspected words
- Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns
- Avoided improper capitalization
- Used punctuation correctly *- use a comma after transition words*
- Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers
- Writing is neat and easy to read
- Correctly used checklist and colored pencils (circling and underlining) as directed ***
- Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your checklist

Comments Terriific start, Danielle! As you revise, look for ways to introduce some colorful adjectives to describe the cookies or ingredients. Instead of listing "blah" ingredients like salt, baking soda, and water, how about including ingredients that appeal more to the senses: butter, sugar, chocolate chips?

**Spend more time (or be more careful) when editing your sloppy copy. You missed circling several "to be" words and had too many sentences. You also checked that you used paired adjectives, but I couldn't find them. ☺*

Lesson 8: Explaining a Process

Student's First Revision (Edited)

How to Make Chocolate Chip Cookies

Making chocolate chip cookies is a simple process. Before you ~~(cook)~~, you wash

* your hands, get all the eggs, salt, baking soda, and water out, and preheat the oven ^{(to}
^{unnecessary info} 350 degrees) ~~Preparing the dough can be a little bit harder.~~ First, mix the ingredients in

a large bowl ^{until they are smooth.} ^{Second} butter the cookie sheets. ^{Third} ^{into} ^{make} ^{small}
 balls ^{shape} ~~out of the batter~~ and put them on the sheets. Baking is one of the easiest steps.

^{Simply} You put the trays in the oven and set the timer ~~for ten minutes~~. Then ^{when the time is}

up, you take the ^{find a synonym} (cookies) ^{adj.} and put them on a plate. The easiest step is cleaning up.

^{sp.} Finily you can eat. ^{what? (Remember - be descriptive :)}

* Use your English handbook to find out when to use commas and/or semicolons when listing items in a series.

(You might want to use "dough" rather than "batter." Batter is runnier (like cake batter). Dough is stiffer and moldable.)

Lesson 8: Explaining a Process

Student's Final Draft

Melt-in-Your-Mouth Chocolate Chip Cookies

Buttery and crisp, chewy chocolate chip cookies are a scrumptious snack. Before you make a batch, wash your hands; gather eggs, creamy butter, semi-sweet chocolate morsels, flour, and sugar; and preheat the oven. First, mix the ingredients in a large bowl until they make a smooth dough. Second, butter the cookie sheets. Third, shape the softy, sticky dough into small balls and place them on the sheets. Baking is one of the easiest steps. Simply slide the trays into the hot oven and set the timer. Then, when the timer buzzes, remove the browned cookies and gently lay them on a plate. After cleaning up, you can finally enjoy your tasty treat.

Lesson 12: Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event

Student's First Revision (Unedited)

A Wild Adventure

A few summer's ago, on a camping trip to Yosemite, my friends and I went down the river rapids. As we walked to the river bed with our tubes in hand we could feel the warmth of the jagged rocks beneath our feet. Entering the water was an experience all by itself, the bite from the frigid water could be felt all through your body. Once in the unbelievably cold water, and situated in our tubes, we set off for the bumpy ride. Bouncing along we learned that about every five minutes we would come across pretty rough waters. Not paying attention to what was coming up ahead, I glided over an extremely sharp rock. Like a giant serpent with huge fangs it grabbed my tube and tore it wide open. Laughing like little girls in a tickle factory, my friends and I tried to figure out what to do. Here I am floating down the river with no tube and more rapids coming up. Sarah, one of my friends, quickly helped me up onto her tube. The rest of the rime no one fell off and we enjoyed the remainder of the ride. Sad yet satisfied, I saw our thrilling experience coming to an end. We all got out and talked about what a fun time we had.

Lesson 12: Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event

Student's First Revision (Edited)

A Wild Adventure

A few summer's ago, ^{while} ~~on a~~ camping trip ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ Yosemite, my friends and I went down

the river rapids. (As we walked to the river bed with our tubes in hand we could feel the

warmth of the jagged rocks beneath our feet.) ~~Entering the water was an experience all~~

"carrot" ---
sentence is
not about the
ride itself.

^{r.o.} ~~by itself,~~ I felt ~~could be felt~~ ^{cut through my} ~~all through your~~ body. Once in the

unbelievably cold water, ^{and} situated in our tubes, ^{we} set off ^{on} ~~for~~ the bumpy ride.

Wordy ---
try to
combine
these
sentences

Bouncing along we learned that about every five minutes we would come across pretty

rough waters. Not paying attention to what was coming up ahead, I glided over an

extremely sharp rock. Like a giant serpent with huge fangs it grabbed my tube and tore it

great
simile!
😊

* you don't
need two
similes

^{wide open.} ~~(Laughing like little girls in a tickle factory)~~ ^{desperately,?} ^{laughingly,?} my friends and I ^{sp.} tried to figure

out what to do. (Here I am floating down the river with no tube and more rapids coming

> tense change;
also wordy

* "My friend
Sarah" is less
wordy

^{up.} Sarah, one of my friends, quickly helped me up onto her tube. ~~The rest of the time~~

^{cap.} ~~no~~ ^{else} ^{after that,} ^{sp.} ^{adj.} <sup>(may not be
best word
choice)</sup> ^{sp.} ~~Sad~~ yet satisfied, I saw our

thrilling experience coming to an end. We all got out and talked about what a fun time

we had.

Try ending your ¶ with a prepositional phrase sentence starter :

- "After our _____ ride, we knew..."
- "By the end of our _____, we agreed..."
- "Until today, I had never experienced such..."

Lesson 12: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

Edit your composition one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.

CONTENT

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited topic to one incident |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited paragraph to one or two main characters, keeping the primary focus on self |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited paragraph to one setting or location |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited time frame to a few hours or less |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Communicated clearly, expressing strong emotions with <i>specific</i> words |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described the <i>physical</i> aspects of your emotions as they related to your experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title appeals to the reader's emotions |

Excellent!

STYLE

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Began with a sentence that introduces the narrative and hooks the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word (4) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of repeated words - <i>water, tube, rock, ride, rapids, river</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words and avoided "weak" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by <i>correctly</i> using each of the following |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | began one sentence with paired adjectives |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | began one sentence with a present participial phrase |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | began one sentence with an -ly adverb phrase |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | used a simile (optional) |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | used an appositive |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | began one sentence with a subordinate conjunction |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | began one sentence with a prepositional phrase |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used the same tense consistently throughout the composition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending (<i>weak ending</i>) |

Some of these words may be hard to replace. Occasional repetition is OK. But do try to cut down the number of times you use "water" and "tube".

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 7-10 sentences long (13) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines and used good spacing between words and sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized correctly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; <u>avoided (run-on sentences)</u> and misplaced modifiers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and used colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming, <u>all</u> drafts of this paragraph, and your Writing Skills Checklist |

Comments Exciting narrative! By eliminating wordiness, you'll take the reader to the heart of your experience. Remember to use all of your sentence variations.

Too many "to be" words, too many sentences, didn't use all sent. variations, didn't circle weak/repeated words

Lesson 12: Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event

Student's Final Draft

A Wild Adventure

A few summers ago, while camping in Yosemite, my friends and I ventured down the river rapids. Entering the stream, I felt the bite from the frigid water cut through my body. Once in the unbelievably cold water and situated in our tubes, we set off on the bumpy ride. Bouncing along and not paying attention, I glided over an extremely sharp rock. Like a giant serpent with huge fangs, it grabbed my tube and tore it wide open. Laughingly, my friends and I tried to figure out what to do. My friend Sarah quickly helped me up onto her tube. No one else fell off after that, and we enjoyed the remainder of the exciting ride. Disappointed yet satisfied, I saw our thrilling experience coming to a close. By the end of our rafting trip, we agreed that this was the best part of our vacation.

Skill Builder Keys

Skill Builders play an important role in WriteShop: they introduce new concepts and give students a chance to practice them before using them in their compositions. In particular, sentence variations will be taught primarily through Skill Builders; then, students will be expected to use them in their daily writing.

Please be sure to grade each day's Skill Builder before your student moves on to the next one. It is important that he or she completes the assignment correctly. Since all three days usually present different versions of the same assignment, you will want to make sure your student understands what is being asked of him or her before he or she makes unnecessary mistakes on the rest.

Skill Builder Lesson 1

Day One *(Answers will vary.)*

- Name an animal: horse, squirrel, spider, rabbit, etc.
- Tell how it moved: galloped, scampered, crawled, hopped, etc.
- Another word for ground: plains, forest floor, sidewalk, dirt, etc.
 1. The horse galloped across the plains.
 2. The squirrel scampered across the forest floor.
 3. The spider crawled across the sidewalk.
 4. The rabbit hopped across the dirt.

Day Two *(Answers will vary.)*

- (animal)*
 - rabbit: frightened, white, furry, curious, . . .
 - squirrel: gray, frisky, chattering, bushy-tailed, . . .
- (movement)*
 - galloped: smoothly, easily, gracefully, swiftly, . . .
 - crawled: hesitantly, slowly, rapidly, erratically, . . .
- (ground)*
 - dirt: packed, hard, rocky, red, . . .
 - forest floor: sunny, shady, deserted, damp, . . .

Day Three *(Answers will vary. Students must choose most of their words from their Day One and Day Two word lists.)*

1. The frightened rabbit hopped quickly across the packed dirt.
2. The curious rabbit hopped energetically across the hard dirt.

3. The black spider crawled erratically across the brick sidewalk.
4. The sleek horse galloped swiftly across the vast plains.
5. The chattering squirrel scampered noisily across the damp forest floor.
6. The gray squirrel scampered nervously across the deserted forest floor.

Skill Builder Lesson 2

Day One (Answers will vary.)

- synonyms for “good” (*instead of “good” book or “good” pizza, etc.*):
 - wholesome book; appetizing pizza; qualified worker; reliable friend; obedient toddler
- synonyms for “nice” (*instead of “nice man” or “nice” time, etc.*):
 - refined manners; winning personality; kind man; rich flavor; enjoyable time
- synonyms for “pretty” (*instead of “pretty” rose or “pretty” voice, etc.*):
 - delightful view; lovely rose; beautiful girl; silvery voice; delicate tea cup

Day Two (NOTE: Watch for correct tense—these answers should all be written in past tense: i.e., “ambled,” not “ambles.”)

- synonyms for “went”: ambled; trekked; traveled; proceeded; walked, etc.
- synonyms for “said”: uttered; replied; declared; mentioned; whispered, etc.
- synonyms for “had”: possessed; obtained; acquired; contained; owned, etc.

Day Three

- synonyms for “get”: receive, achieve, reach, buy, collect, etc.
- synonyms for “make”: manufacture, produce, construct, build, bake, etc.
- synonyms for “big”: huge, colossal, gigantic, vast, bulky, etc.

Skill Builder Lesson 3

Caution:

- Watch for redundant pairs, such as “quick and fast,” which mean the same thing.
- Make sure the student does not overuse words. It is not unusual for a word like “quick” to appear in five or more sets of paired adjectives.
- Make sure paired adjectives make sense! “Tall and strong, Grandpa loves to tell stories” would not make a good sentence. “Tall and strong” are not related to the fact that he tells stories. “Animated and funny” or “Inspiring and enthusiastic” would fit the context of the sentence better.
- When the word *yet* or *but* connects two paired adjectives, be sure the adjectives are opposites or vastly different.

Day One (*Answers will vary.*)

1. Crunchy and salty, the nuts make me thirsty for a cool glass of lemonade.
2. Sweet and flavorful, this peach tastes good.
3. Delicate and fragile, Mom's collection of glass swans sat on a high shelf.
4. Dainty and colorful, butterflies flutter throughout the garden.
5. Well-written and absorbing, the novel kept my attention.
6. Cunning and quiet, the fox slowly stalked his prey.
7. Shaggy and adorable, my puppy looks like a mop.
8. Crisp yet juicy, this green apple tastes sour.

Day Two (*Answers will vary.*)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Fragrant and golden, . . . | 5. Cold and tired, . . . |
| 2. Crusty yet moist, . . . | 6. Scared but hopeful, . . . |
| 3. Motivated and energetic, . . . | 7. Snarling and growling, . . . |
| 4. Exhausted but determined, . . . | 8. Cautious but curious, . . . |

Day Three (*Make sure students' phrase or sentence begins with paired adjectives.*)

Skill Builder Lesson 4

Day One (*Answers will vary.*)

1. The zoo, an interesting place to visit, houses animals from around the world.
2. The library contains a world of adventure.
3. Soft and comfortable, my bed provides a cozy place for long talks with my friends.
4. Cherished treasures clutter the inside of my closet.

Day Two (*Answers will vary.*)

1. Saturday morning dawned clear and bright.
2. Blazing hot, the sun beats down on Uncle Jake's corn field.
3. Easily trained, whales entertain spectators at Sea World.
4. Elephants help people in many ways.

Day Three

1. Chocolate chip cookies melt in my mouth.
2. Nothing refreshes me like a frosty ice cream cone on a hot day.
3. Tall pines towered above me as I hiked along the winding mountain trail.
4. Desolate yet scenic, the desert attracts campers and hikers.

Skill Builder Lesson 5

Day One

1. A 2. B 3. B 4. C 5. A

(Answers will vary.)

1. A Glimpse of Yellowstone 3. An Exhilarating Ride
2. The Extraordinary Arctic Wolf 4. The Daring Wakeboarder

Day Two (Students should have capitalized “It’s” or “Its” if it appears as the first word of the sentence.)

1. It’s 4. its; it’s 7. it’s; it’s 10. Its
2. Its 5. it’s; its 8. it’s 11. it’s; it’s
3. its 6. it’s 9. its; it’s

Day Three (Answers will vary.)

Caution

- Correcting this Skill Builder will take a little more effort on your part. Catching errors may take extra attention, especially if you also struggle with *its/it’s* confusion.
- Remember the “it + is = it’s” rule.
- “Its” is a possessive pronoun like “his” (it wouldn’t be “hi’s”) 😊

Skill Builder Lesson 6

Day One (see chart on following page; answers will vary.)

Choosing Concrete Season Words—possible ideas follow:

- tree oak, maple
- bird crow, blue jay
- falling drifting, floating
- wind breeze, draft

Day Two

A. (Underline these phrases.)

1. like crystals
2. like a quilt (of flowers)
3. as smooth as glass
4. like tiny firecrackers

5. like a steam engine
6. as bright and colorful as tropical parrots
7. as hot as July
8. as refreshing as a dip in a mountain stream
9. as cold as an ocean mist
10. like chattering teeth

B. (*Answers will vary.*)

1. . . . a field of poppies
2. . . . dry autumn leaves
3. . . . stars in the night sky
4. . . . a mother's touch
5. . . . like quaking aspen leaves

Day Three (*Answers will vary.*)

1. . . . as sleepy as a hibernating bear.
2. . . . soothes me like a warm hug.
3. . . . feels as soft as velvet.
4. . . . like a brittle carpet.
5. . . . like clothes in the dryer.
6. . . . like crystal.
7. . . . like loose change.
8. . . . like golden feathers.
9. . . . like shooting stars.
10. . . . as gently as tiny feet.

Cautions:

- Just because the sentence contains the word *like* or *as* doesn't mean it's a simile.
- Avoid awkward answers like these:
 - "My cup of tea is like lava." (Should be "as adj. as lava.")
 - "Waves tossed as snow in an avalanche." (Should be "like.")
 - "Windows rattled as keys on a ring." (Should be "like.")
 - "Spring rain pattered as children's feet." (Should be "like.")
 - "The kitten's fur is like silk." (Should be "as adj. as silk.")

Choosing Concrete Season Words

SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN/ FALL	WINTER
Nouns (place or thing)			
<i>garden</i>	<i>barbecue</i>	<i>leaves</i>	<i>icicles</i>
birds	ice cream	tree	cocoa
flowers	popsicle	smoke	snow
clouds	bees	fire	ice
grass	lawn mower	apples	evergreens
buds	sun	pumpkins	lights
creek	water	squirrels	blizzard
rain	shade	wind	quilt
Adjectives	Adjectives	Adjectives	Adjectives
<i>lavender</i>	<i>refreshing</i>	<i>red</i>	<i>drifting</i>
fragrant	cool	yellow	bare
puffy	droning	cozy	frosty
sweet	blazing	crisp	icy
trickling	rushing	chilly	bleak
gentle	blue	golden	barren
fluttering	green	bushy	powdery
soft	bright	polished	white
Verbs (nature action words)			
<i>to bloom</i>	<i>to melt</i>	<i>to swirl</i>	<i>to glisten</i>
to fly	to hum	to fall	to sparkle
to float	to splash	to spin	to freeze
to drift	to bake	to blaze	to drift
to blossom	to sizzle	to crackle	to wrap
to shower	to jump	to crunch	to cuddle
to melt	to lick	to rake	to sip
to sway	to flash	to stroll	to inhale
Adverbs	Adverbs	Adverbs	Adverbs
<i>gently</i>	<i>temptingly</i>	<i>lazily</i>	<i>contentedly</i>
tenerly	quickly	crisply	fragrantly
warmly	loudly	busily	quietly
calmly	smoothly	slowly	carefully

Skill Builder Lesson 7

Day One *(Answers will vary.)*

1. sprinting, racing, dashing, chasing, pursuing, following, etc.
2. building, constructing, erecting, hammering, climbing, leaning, sitting, bending, etc.
3. playing, sitting, performing, strumming, fiddling, etc.
4. sipping, drinking, sharing, slurping, cuddling, swallowing, etc.
5. sledding, laughing, clinging, holding, sliding, racing, whizzing, etc.
6. speeding, driving, riding, steering, motoring, racing, rolling, traveling, etc.

Day Two

A.

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. sleeping | 3. washing | 5. trying | 7. traveling |
| 2. dreaming | 4. hiding | 6. cleaning | 8. celebrating |

B. *(Answers will vary.)*

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Flying overhead | 4. Shouting loudly |
| 2. Dancing gracefully | 5. Hoping for good weather |
| 3. Swimming quickly | |

C. *(Answers will vary.)*

Day Three

A.

1. ☺ ; the children
2. ☹ ; the rain
3. ☹ ; John
4. ☺ ; Janie and Pam
5. ☺ ; Leslie
6. ☹ ; Thanksgiving
7. ☹ ; Shannon
8. ☺ ; the swimmers

B. *(Answers will vary.)*

Skill Builder Lesson 8

Day One

2, 3, 1, 4 4, 5, 3, 2, 1

Day Two

6, 4, 2, 3, 1, 7, 5 4, 3, 1, 5, 2

Day Three

4, 3, 7, 1, 9, 5, 8, 2, 6

Skill Builder Lesson 9 *(Answers will vary.)*

Day One *(Be sure students capitalized the first word and added a comma at the end.)*

A. Smiling

1. Smiling broadly,
2. Smiling at her mother,
3. Smiling joyfully,

D. Following

1. Following closely,
2. Following the directions on the map,
3. Following in his father's footsteps,

B. Waiting

1. Waiting for the train,
2. Waiting patiently,
3. Waiting in line,

E. Camping

1. Camping in the forest,
2. Camping with the Boy Scouts,
3. Camping near a gurgling creek,

C. Strolling

1. Strolling along the garden path,
2. Strolling lazily,
3. Strolling by the lake,

Day Two

A. *(Students should not use "to be" words in their sentences.)*

1. . . . stood up and waved colorful pennants at their team.
2. . . . painted the elderly couple's weather-beaten picket fence.
3. . . . performed in the Fourth of July parade.
4. . . . dug up Grandma's prize roses.
5. . . . tossed the Sunday edition onto the front porch.

B. *(Be sure student added a comma after the introductory participial phrase.)*

1. . . . , my brother treated his buddies.
2. . . . , we sang our favorite songs.
3. . . . , the children entertained the grateful residents.
4. . . . , the toddler threw a tantrum in the store.
5. . . . , my dad left for work.

Day Three

1. . . . my brother snoozed on the couch.
 2. . . . the politicians argued their points.
-
1. . . . Tom searched the refrigerator for a snack.
 2. . . . the cubs rolled down the hill like windblown tumbleweeds.
 3. . . . the ballerina twirled across the stage like a top.

Skill Builder Lesson 10

Day One

A.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. , my neighbor, | 2. , the Wizard of Menlo Park, |
| 3. , Peter, | 4. , yellow roses, |

B.

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. , Tom's mom, | 2. , Daisy, |
| 3. , a dangerous reptile, | 4. , a genius, |
| 5. , a science professor, | |

Day Two

A.

1. Mary Mullin wrote an article for the *Daily Journal*, our local paper.
OR, Mary Mullin wrote an article for our local paper, the *Daily Journal*.
2. My dad, a terrific fisherman, takes me to Lake Georgia every Saturday morning.
OR, Every Saturday morning my dad, a terrific fisherman, takes me to Lake Georgia.
3. Senator Rockwell, the man in the dark gray suit, gave an interesting speech.
OR, The man in the dark gray suit, Senator Rockwell, gave an interesting speech.
4. The twins played with Lee's puppies, the ones with brown spots.

B. *(Answers will vary.)*

1. George Washington, the first president of the United States, led our country with integrity.
2. Don's favorite jeans, the ones with the patch on the knee, lie in a wrinkled heap on the floor.
3. Burger King, a fast-food restaurant, is located on the corner of Second Street and Cherry Avenue.
4. My drama teacher, Miss Sparks, reads interesting stories.
5. Cindy and her brother, Kevin, enjoy reading the comics.

Day Three *(Answers will vary.)*

A.

1. . . . died last night.
2. . . . is an outstanding baseball coach.
3. . . . did not survive the rugged hike.

B.

1. Undoubtedly,
2. Diligently,
3. Finally,
4. Obviously,

C. *(Make sure each sentence begins with an "-ly" adverb.)*

Skill Builder Lesson 11

Day One *(No Skill Builder today.)*

Day Two *(Answers may vary slightly.)*

1. a mother (or Shelley Smith) and her two children (or Jessica and Lance Smith)
2. survived a kitchen fire
3. early Friday
4. Creekside
5. smoke detector had been disconnected
6. Write the lead. (The lead is the first paragraph.)

Day Three *(answers may vary slightly)*

1. holiday travelers
2. stranded
3. Thursday
4. O'Hare Airport, Chicago
5. flight delays due to sleet, snow, and freezing rain

□ Possible lead paragraphs (Answers will vary.)

- Holiday travelers were left stranded at O'Hare Airport Thursday due to a severe snowstorm as sleet, snow, and freezing rain caused flight delays.
- Sleet, snow, and freezing rain left flights delayed and holiday travelers stranded at O'Hare Airport as a severe snowstorm hit the Chicago area Thursday.
- Thursday, as a severe snowstorm hit the Chicago area, sleet, snow, and freezing rain left holiday travelers stranded at O'Hare Airport.

The following paragraphs include more detail. If your students are creative, they may have come up with something like this:

- O'Hare Airport was shut down Thursday by a severe snowstorm that blasted Chicago with snow, sleet, and freezing rain, stranding disappointed holiday travelers.
- A severe snowstorm Thursday left holiday travelers stranded at O'Hare Airport when sleet, snow, and freezing rain pelted Chicago and caused massive flight delays.
- Stranded and disappointed, holiday travelers waited as a snowstorm ravaged the Chicago area Thursday, shutting down runways and delaying flights at O'Hare Airport.

Skill Builder Lesson 12

Day One

A.

1. (example)
2. M E under the table; after dinner
3. B E at noon; past the general store
4. M E for two hours; since Monday
5. M E with building blocks; until nap time
6. B E by tonight; in the closet
7. B M in the theater; behind the woman
8. M E around the corner; of the schoolhouse

B.

1. Since the accident, I have not been myself.
2. In grandpa's pond, a beaver built a dam.
3. Without a word, she turned quickly and left.
4. Before John knew what hit him, the car had crashed.
5. Beyond the bend in the road, a waiting wolf crouched.

6. Throughout the stormy night, the fierce wind howled loudly.
7. Without food and water, Rover would surely die.
8. Like packed sardines, we were stuffed into the small car.

Day Two (*Answers will vary.*)

A.

1. . . . , tiny cabins nestled among the trees.
2. . . . , Jason built a LEGO castle.
3. . . . , the terrified family called for help.
4. . . . , the weary children slept without a peep.
5. . . . , Fred stored water and canned food.

B.

1. Among the trees, blue jays flitted and squawked.
2. Beneath the surface of the pond, orange koi darted through the shadows.
3. Throughout the long afternoon, the men worked quickly to complete their tasks.
4. During summer vacation, the Walkers visited Washington, D.C.
5. Since March, we have not seen a drop of rain.

Day Three (*Answers will vary.*)

A. (*Watch for capitalization of the first word.*)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Under the bed | 4. In the desk drawer |
| 2. Last summer | 5. After their car drove away |
| 3. Since her operation | 6. Through the fog |

B. (*See example on student page.*)

Skill Builder Lesson 13 (none)

Skill Builder Lesson 14

Day One

A. Circle

Underline

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. snowflakes | danced, twirled |
| 2. wagon | weary, groaned |
| 3. clock | supervises |
| 4. car | proudly boasted |
| 5. Daffodils | nodded their heads in agreement |

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| 6. cat | scowled, complained |
| 7. squirrel | laughed |

B.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Earth | felt |
| 2. rainbow | held out its shiny hand |
| 3. windows | gaze |
| 4. sunshine | threw his hat |
| 5. wind | stood up and gave a |
| 6. moon | shout climbed |

Day TwoA. object/animal human trait

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| cat | — |
| fiddle | — |
| cow | jumped |
| dog | laughed |
| dish, spoon | ran away |

B.

1. I shivered with terror at the sight of the burly batter.
2. I bathe the room in a warm glow.
3. In the quiet of the darkened kitchen, I chatter and hum all night.
4. Stretching happily, I turn my face toward the warmth.
5. Boldly, I stared into the blackness.
6. As my water begins to boil, I whistle merrily for the cook.

Day Three

Hearing Bob's alarm clock, I watch through the crack in the door of the medicine cabinet. When the bathroom light turns on, I mentally prepare myself for the morning ritual. Crabby and tired, Bob grabs my handle roughly and rinses my bristles under the faucet. Carelessly, he squeezes a blob of minty toothpaste onto my head and jams me into his mouth. As my head rotates dizzily over Bob's teeth, I anxiously await the end of this foamy ordeal. Finally, Bob washes me off under the faucet, smacks me soundly against the sink, and replaces me in the cabinet.

Skill Builder Lesson 15

Day One (Student may change the sentences to either past or present tense)

- | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|---------|--|
| 1. past | used | present | is |
| 2. past | scrambled | present | sit, hurry |
| 3. past | (correct) | — | — |
| 4. past | drove, parked | present | opens |
| 5. past | circled | present | drops |
| 6. — | — | present | (correct) |
| 7. past | brought | present | visits, takes (only works if "last week" is crossed out) |
| 8. past | went | present | curl, eat, watch |
| 9. past | determined, was | present | examines |

Day Two

Circle this verb:

Change it to past tense:

- | | | |
|----|--------|---------|
| A. | are | were |
| | makes | made |
| | builds | built |
| | warms | warmed |
| | does | did |
| | will | would |
| B. | comes | came |
| | stands | stood |
| | opens | opened |
| | points | pointed |
| | is | was |
| | stare | stared |
| | talk | talked |

Day Three

Circle this verb:

Change it to present tense:

- | | | |
|----|---------|-------|
| A. | were | are |
| | chopped | chops |
| | made | makes |
| | ate | eat |

B.	sat	sits
	wanted	wants
	stared	stares
	ran	runs
	came	comes
	shouted	shout
	pointed	point

Skill Builder Lesson 16

Day One *(Answers will vary.)*

1. Tired, a jogger *paused to catch his breath.*
2. Cornered, the frightened raccoon *knocked over the garbage can.*
3. Surprised and delighted, the children *giggled when a clown burst into the room.*
4. Terrified, the three girls *turned off the scary movie.*
5. Endangered, the rare birds *face extinction.*
6. Crushed, the glass figurine *lay in tiny pieces on the tile.*

Day Two

1. Taught to sew, Tara *makes her own clothes.*
2. Followed by a growling dog, *the terrified paper boy dashed away on his bike.*
3. Determined to win, *the swimmers practiced four hours each day.*
4. Hurt by their unkind remarks, *Shelley left the party early.*
5. Braided tightly, *Grandma's colorful rag rug looks beautiful in her entryway.*

Day Three

1. a. Defeated again, the Tigers *determined to practice harder before the next game.*
b. *The Tigers, defeated again, determined to practice harder before the next game.*
2. a. Caught in a tree, Mike's kite *hung limply from a branch.*
b. *Mike's kite, caught in a tree, hung limply from a branch.*
3. a. Nestled beneath a warm blanket, the puppy *dozed contentedly.*
b. *The puppy, nestled beneath a warm blanket, dozed contentedly.*
4. a. Trained as a lifeguard, Matt Smith *worked at Huntington Beach during his summer vacation.*
b. *Matt Smith, trained as a lifeguard, worked at Huntington Beach during his summer vacation.*

Skill Builder Lesson 17

Day One

A.

1. Confused and hungry, the orphans huddled together in the dark alley.
2. Tired yet exuberant, Jamie won the drag race.
3. Gentle and peaceful, the rolling ripples of the lake lapped the shore.

B.

1. Surprised and shocked, I hit a home run.
2. Enthusiastic and animated, Dad told me tales about his childhood adventures.
3. Huge yet gentle, my St. Bernard likes to play fetch.
4. Cut and bruised, the hurricane victims emerged wearily from their shelter.

C.

1. Kind to animals and gentle-natured, Jeremy cared for the injured sparrow.
2. An enthusiastic pilot and avid fisherman, Uncle Bob loved to fly to Lake Minnetonka.
3. Sweet as honey and golden brown, Mom's oat muffins melt in my mouth.

Day Two *(Answers will vary.)*

A.

1. . . . a moonless night; India ink
2. . . . crisp Fritos; homemade granola
3. . . . dewdrops on a spider web; sunlight on the water
4. . . . a mountain spring; a soft, cool breeze
5. . . . a child's pinwheel; leaves in the wind

B.

1. . . . tasted like summer.
2. . . . covered the ground like a soft down comforter.
3. . . . like fireworks over Dodger Stadium.
4. . . . crept into the harbor like a panther on the prowl.
5. . . . twinkled like a million bright fireflies.

Day Three

A. *(Answers will vary.)*

1. laughing at the clown; laughing uncontrollably

2. strolling through Central Park; strolling quietly
3. comforting the crying child
4. throwing aimlessly; throwing a blue ball; throwing in the towel
5. exploring the hidden cave; exploring secretly; exploring beneath the pier

B. (Answers will vary.)

1. Shouting encouragement; Clapping his hands in a cheer
2. Flying above the nervous crowd; Swinging from their platforms
3. Fighting a leg cramp; Struggling in the strong current
4. Leaving the bank; Waiting in the checkout line
5. Scoring in the third quarter; Kicking a field goal

C.

1. a. Running down the hall, the girl dropped her books.
b. The girl, running down the hall, dropped her books.
2. a. Watching a movie, his dad ate pretzels.
b. His dad, watching a movie, ate pretzels.
3. a. Expecting guests, Mom is baking a chocolate cake.
b. Mom, expecting guests, is baking a chocolate cake.
4. a. Floating like a butterfly, the ballerina danced gracefully.
b. The ballerina, floating like a butterfly, danced gracefully.

Skill Builder Lesson 18

Day One

A. (Answers will vary.) Here are three possibilities:

1. In the meadow, a doe and her young fawn drink from a peaceful stream.
2. Since last week's earthquake, numerous aftershocks have rattled Los Angeles.
3. Above the playing field, a small plane pulled an advertising banner.

B. (Answers will vary.)

Day Two

A. (Answers will vary.) Here are three possibilities:

1. Swiftly, a herd of wild mustangs raced across the open plain.
2. Weakly, the dehydrated hiker stumbled into camp.
3. Certainly, George Washington earned the title "The Father of Our Country."

B. (Answers will vary.) Here are three possibilities:

1. Anxiously pacing, the nervous groom waited for the officiant to arrive.
2. Vigorously practicing, the polo team prepared for Tuesday's match.
3. Happily playing, the toddler built with plastic blocks.

Day Three

1. "x" on "is"; Margaret Smith, the museum curator, supervises the dinosaur exhibit.
2. "x" on "is"; Mr. Elway's mailbox, a red airplane, attracts attention in our neighborhood.
3. "x" on "is"; I delivered flowers to Mrs. Monroe, my piano teacher.
4. "x" on "is"; My uncle, a policeman, visited Parker School to talk about neighborhood crime.
5. "x" on "is"; We camped at Yosemite, a majestic national park.
6. "x" on "is"; Please take this note to Sen. Smith, the man in the striped shirt.
7. "x" on "was"; Joy's desire, to visit Mexico, became a reality last March.

Skill Builder Lesson 19

Day One

A. Circle

1. (example)
2. porch
3. squirrel
4. Chevy
5. wind
6. crows

Underline

- groaned
bossed
proudly boasted
sighing loudly
mocked

Day One

B. Circle

1. rain
2. Moon
3. winter
4. sun

Underline

- silver sandals for dancing
comes to peep (or comes every night to peep)
shakes the door
kiss, puckered

Day Two and Day Three (Answers will vary; do not accept sentences containing "to be" words.) See Day Two of the student's Skill Builder for an example (p. 19-12).

Skill Builder Lesson 20

Day One (Answers will vary according to your dictionary.)

- concise*: brief and to the point; containing few words; using as few words as possible.
- effective*: producing a definite or desired result.
- flowery*: highly embellished with figurative language.
- grandiose*: flaunting; showy; pompous.
- pompous*: self-important; flamboyant; boastful.
- pretentious*: showy; flamboyant; ostentatious.
- verbose*: abounding in words; using or containing more words than necessary; wordy.

Day Two

1. chateau: cabin, shanty
arboreal formations: trees, pine trees, . . .
2. obfuscated: obscured
infinitesimal: small, tiny
3. adumbrations: silhouettes, shadows
nugatory: worthless, run-down, dilapidated, shabby, weather-beaten

Day Three (Answers may vary slightly.)

1. Before the creaking, overloaded wagons arrived at the majestic mansion, they stopped (*or paused*) to rest in front of a (*choose one: dilapidated, weather-beaten, or shabby*) shanty.
2. The snowman began to melt in the driveway.
3. Sam's shaggy black and white dog solemnly waits on the front porch with his tail between his legs. He lingers until Sam returns victorious from his baseball game.

Skill Builder Lesson 21

Note: Make sure your students are stretching themselves with interesting vocabulary and detail. Do not accept half-hearted, vague, or skimpy sentences.

Day One (*Answers will vary.*)

1. Disabled, the airplane dove precariously toward the pond.
2. Pitching their pup tents in the woods, the Boy Scouts enjoyed the crisp mountain air.
3. As his master backed out of the driveway, Snoopy whimpered anxiously while digging a hole under the fence.
4. Nervous and panicked, John drove his pregnant wife to the hospital in his Chevy truck.

Day Two (*Answers will vary.*)

1. Confidently, the star basketball player dribbled the ball down the court.
2. Lurking mysteriously near the deserted shore, two sleek sharks circled in the green water.
3. In one of Disneyland's famous long lines, we waited impatiently to board the Indiana Jones ride.
4. While washing dishes, Carla accidentally dropped her mother's favorite cut crystal vase.

Day Three (*Answers will vary.*)

1. As Katy purposely released her blue balloon, she watched it gently float away and disappear over the roof.
2. Clumsy and distracted, Jerry bumped into Sharon, knocking a stack of library books from her arms.
3. Joanne, a local artist, entertains beachgoers with her delightful sidewalk sketches.
4. Nestled in a chenille blanket, Susan sat by the crackling fire as her sister softly played the piano.

Skill Builder Lesson 22

(Paragraph content will vary; be sure student adds plenty of vivid description to expand the original paragraph. Keep returning the paragraph for further revision if it lacks description or sentence variations.)

Breathless, he sprinted through the busy city, dodging shoppers and pedestrians and weaving in and out of New York's rush hour traffic. His pursuer followed close behind. It seemed hopeless when, out of the corner of his eye, he saw a subway tunnel. Glancing over his shoulder, the undercover agent slipped unnoticed into the darkness. As he crept deeper into the empty tunnel, the whining of sirens and the honking of horns seemed to disappear behind him. Suddenly, he found himself in front of an old door. Plucking up his courage, he cautiously turned the loose knob. The rusty hinges creaked loudly in the silence as he pushed the door open. Inside sat an old table, a couple of broken chairs, and a heavy iron box. Setting himself on a wooden chair, he caught his breath. Josh Cameron, one of the top secret agents, had outwitted his enemy once again.

Skill Builder Lesson 23 (none)

Skill Builder Lesson 24 (none)

Skill Builder Lesson 25

Day One *(Answers may vary.)*

1. a. Laura danced with grace, elegance, and charm.
b. Laura danced gracefully, elegantly, and charmingly.
2. a. The stunt plane dipped dangerously, spun crazily, and landed smoothly.
b. The stunt plane dangerously dipped, crazily spun, and smoothly landed.
3. a. A fierce bull charged wildly across the meadow, over the footbridge, and through the neighbor's pansies.
b. A fierce bull charged wildly across the meadow, stampeded over the footbridge, and trampled through the neighbor's pansies.
4. a. I admire President Lincoln for his courage, perseverance, and honesty.
b. I admire President Lincoln for his courage, his perseverance, and his honesty.
5. Reading worthwhile literature stretches the imagination, improves vocabulary, and increases knowledge.
6. a. Untreated water, unwashed hands, and improperly cooked food can promote deadly diseases such as salmonella.
b. Drinking untreated water, failing to wash hands, and eating improperly cooked food can promote deadly diseases such as salmonella.

Day Two (Answers may vary.)

1. a. Camping, fishing, and hiking make ideal vacation activities. (noun - Note that these are *gerunds*, which are *verbals that function as nouns*.)
 b. To camp, fish, and hike are ideal vacation activities. (noun - gerund)
 c. Ideal vacation activities include camping, fishing, and hiking. (noun - gerund)
2. a. Microwave ovens are convenient, inexpensive, and easily operated. (adjectives)
 b. Microwave ovens are convenient to use, inexpensive to purchase, and easy to operate. (adjective + infinitive)
 c. Microwave ovens are conveniently used, inexpensively purchased, and easily operated. (adverb + verb) (noun - gerund)
3. a. As a child, my favorite blanket kept me warm, gave me security, and comforted me. (verb OR verb + adjective)
 b. As a child, my favorite blanket gave me warmth, security, and comfort. (noun)
4. Yosemite National Park provides sanctuary for wildlife, hiking trails for backpackers, and breathtaking scenery for all visitors. (noun + prepositional phrase)
5. a. Restricting children's television time encourages them to develop their imaginations through play, to interact with family members during the evening, and to enjoy outdoor activities on weekends. (infinitive verb + prepositional phrase)
 b. Restricting children's television time encourages them to develop their imaginations through play, interact with family members during the evening, and enjoy outdoor activities on weekends. (infinitive verb + prepositional phrase)
 c. Restricting children's television time encourages the development of their imaginations through play, interaction with family members during the evening, and enjoyment of outdoor activities on weekends. (noun + prepositional phrase)
6. a. When holding babies, handle them gently, carefully, and lovingly. (adverb)
 b. When holding babies, handle them with gentleness, care, and love. (noun)
 c. Be gentle, caring, and loving when holding babies. (adjectives)

Day Three (Answers may vary.)

1. a. Leading by example, supporting my activities, and disciplining me with love, my mom inspired me to follow in her footsteps.
 b. My dad has impressed me to become a committed father by his example of leadership, support, and loving discipline.

2. a. Attending college exposes young adults to new ideas, helps them become more well-rounded, and opens the door to greater career opportunities.
b. Attending college provides young adults with exposure to new ideas, experiences that develop a more well-rounded person, and opportunities for greater career advancement.
3. Already parallel - no corrections needed.
a. Through budgeting wisely, avoiding credit card debt, and saving for college, young people can learn the importance of money management.
b. Young people can learn the importance of money management by budgeting wisely, avoiding credit card debt, and saving for college.
4. a. A good book develops an exciting plot, fascinating characters, and a positive moral message.
b. A good book has an exciting plot, develops fascinating characters, and promotes a positive moral message.
5. a. Smoking is habit forming, causes emphysema and lung cancer, and offends non-smokers.
b. People who smoke may develop a habit they cannot break, suffer from emphysema or lung cancer, and offend nonsmokers.

Lesson 1a: Concrete Writing

(Answers will vary.)

The enormous trash truck slowly rumbled down the back alley.

The fluttering hummingbird sipped sweet nectar (from the yellow lilies).

The box of blocks tumbled off the coffee table and clattered on the wood floor.

The contented grandmother rested on the flowered sofa by the potted fern.

My dad barbecued juicy hamburgers at my sister's birthday celebration.

Lesson 3: Elements of a Character Sketch, Part 1

(Answers may vary slightly.)

1. She is painting.
2. sister, girl, she, (possibly her)
3. (*orange*) project, dots of blue paint (splatter), artwork, mess, paints a round yellow sun, picture
4. tongue, mouth, tummy, eyes, bangs, face, arms, cheeks, hands
5. (*red*) pokes (out), lying, squints, brushes, smiles, wipes, carries
6. (*yellow*) concentrates, seriously, absent-mindedly, determined, busy, satisfaction, beaming, proud
7. tongue pokes out of her mouth, squints her eyes, absent-minded, too busy to notice the mess
8. faded denim overalls
9. (*green*) beaming and proud
10. one ("is")

Lesson 3: Elements of a Character Sketch, Part 2

(Answers will vary.)

Obedient and helpful, my younger sister cheerfully unloads the dishwasher. Wearing a red knit shirt and denim overalls, she carefully carries plates in her slim hands. Only as tall as the counter, Katie stretches on her tiptoes to reach the high cupboards. Her bright blue eyes sparkle whenever Mom compliments her. As she puts away the silverware, she pushes her short blond hair behind her ears. With a sunny smile on her freckled face, she quickly finishes her chore and dashes out to play catch with Dad.

Lesson 6: Describing a Season

Example 1

blew

trees

were

warm

sat

blankets

get

drank

played

was

Example 2

arctic

howled

fiercely as a wolf

crystals

bent pines

gust

icy breath

threatened

windowpanes

nestled

comfortably

snug

cozy

fleecy

crackling

defrosting

chilled

cupped

mugs

steaming

adrift

clouds

melodies

floated

Lesson 7: Identifying Elements of a Descriptive Paragraph

1. *(green)* swift as an eagle
2. *(red)* Salty and fishy,
3. *(orange)* Strolling along the sandy shore,
4. *(yellow - choose three)* break, rolls, covering, cries, dives, stings, dig
5. *(blue)* waves, flood, white foam, surf
6. none
7. A Walk on the Beach

Lesson 10: A Five-Sentence Biography

Daniel Boone, Bold Frontiersman

1. *(red)* Marking the trail as he went,,
2. *(green)* Unquestionably,
3. *(orange)* Undaunted and adventuresome,
4. *(yellow)* a daring pioneer
5. *(blue)* Daniel Boone, pioneer, Boone, he
6. *(does not say)*
7. little education
8. forged the way that would become the Wilderness Road
9. Any of these would be correct: daring, undaunted, adventuresome, determined, hardworking, bold, persevering

Mother of the Civil Rights Movement

1. *(red)* Refusing to give up her bus seat,
2. *(green)* Clearly,
3. *(orange)* Alarmed and upset,
4. *(yellow)* mother of the civil rights movement
5. *(blue)* Rosa Parks, mother, heroic figure, Mrs. Parks, remarkable woman
6. Any of these would be correct: segregation or Jim Crow Laws or racial injustice
7. Any of these would be correct: fear, intimidation, existing laws
8. taking a stand for equality
9. Any of these would be correct: remarkable, brave, heroic, courageous

Lesson 11: Examining a Lead Paragraph

Who? the president

What? expected to veto a tax cut

When? as early as today

Where? the White House

Why? believes it will hurt America's economy

Note: Students may be tempted to say “returned from a trip” “Thursday.” The veto, not the president’s return, is the focus of the article; therefore, these would not be correct answers. However, the following article poses *two* possibilities.

Who? Hurricane Floyd

What? knocked out power, flooded streets, uprooted trees

When? Wednesday night

Where? South Carolina

Why? because the storm took a turn inland

OR

Who? residents

What? braced for a hit from Hurricane Floyd

When? Wednesday night

Where? South Carolina

Why? because the storm took a turn inland

Lesson 12: Details of a Narrative Event

1. First paragraph: one day; Second paragraph: last dive of the day
2. (*orange*) I have a tropical fish tank at home.
3. (*red*) First paragraph: none; Second paragraph: water feels cool, hot skin, sun-dappled rocks, tiny iridescent fish, swish, small bodies brush, tickling, sensitive skin, brilliant fish, lemon yellow, black, fluorescent green, clear, blue-green ocean, yellow fins
4. (*dark green*) First paragraph: afraid, enjoyed; Second paragraph: thrills, exhilarated, free, regretfully, eager
5. (*black*) First paragraph: **who** - my family and I, **what** - went snorkeling, **where** - Lahaina, Maui, **when** - on our trip; Second paragraph: **who** - my dad and I, **what** - went snorkeling, **where** - shallows off the Hawaiian coast, **when** - last plunge of the day
6. (*pink*) First paragraph: On our trip to Maui, my family and I went to Lahaina for a day of snorkeling. Second paragraph: The water feels cool on my hot skin as I take my last plunge into the sheltered cove.
7. (*yellow*) First paragraph: none; Second paragraph: like feathers
8. (*purple*) First paragraph: none; Second paragraph: Peering through my mask at the sun-dappled rocks below me,
9. (*dark blue*) First paragraph: none; Second paragraph: Exhilarated and free,
10. (*brown*) First paragraph: 3 (all "was"); Second paragraph: none
11. (*light green*) First paragraph: none; Second paragraph: Finally, Suddenly,
12. (*light blue*) First paragraph: On our trip to Maui; Second paragraph: Upon reaching the shore

Lesson 16: Elements of a Narrative

- How many sentences are in the *first* paragraph? 5 the *second*? 4 the *third*? 5
 - parakeet, bird, Petey, pet
 - Bobby, youngster, boy, child
1. (*green*) stared, hopped up and down, begged and pleaded
 2. (*red*) longingly, anxiously, excited, proudly, disappointed

3. *(blue)* flapped, flitted, scratching, ruffled, pecking, biting
4. *(yellow)* frantically, nervously, helplessly, trembling, jittery, anxious, fear, frightened, its heart ceased its wild pounding, fell into a peaceful sleep
5. *(orange)* Glancing, Scratching, Disappointed
6. *(purple)* Anxiously, Finally
7. *(brown)* At last, Inside the box
8. *(gray)* a child of eight; his beloved new bird
9. Trembling and jittery

Lesson 18: Practicing with Two Paragraphs

(Student answers will vary. They should try to use all sentence variations.)

*Hiking down a desert trail, my brother and I kick clouds of dust behind us. Although we try to walk quietly, our feet crunch along the gravelly path. The sun, lowering in the afternoon sky, bakes us with its intensity. Heat waves rise from the ground like shimmering ribbons, distorting the scenery. Even the twisted old Joshua trees seem to quiver in the blistering air. **I wonder how wildlife can exist in this harsh place.***

Around the bend, I come across a wary jack rabbit, his long ears at attention. Unfortunately, he notices me and disappears into the brush. As I continue on my way, a shadow crosses my path. Startled, I glance up. A lone hawk circles lazily overhead. Up ahead his unsuspecting prey, a kangaroo rat, hops over a sand dune. Inspired and amazed, I marvel at the hidden beauty of the desert.

Lesson 20: Exaggeration

□ Read for ideas.

- Look for key words similar to the following examples. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

luxurious, rustic, pastoral, provincial, exotic, rare, spacious, lush, panoramic, elegant, serene, tranquil, comfortable, peaceful, tropical, paradise, private, view, soaring, utopia, friendly, perfect, Shangri-la, exciting, romantic, exquisite, exclusive, fine dining, scenic beauty, magnificent, spectacular, hidden, nestled, fresh, cozy, ideal, gourmet dining, private porches, hilltop, heavenly, complementary (beverages, breakfast, . . .) secluded, distinguished, historic, authentic, quaint, island paradise, dream vacation, splendor, adventure

Lesson 20: Practicing With Exaggeration

(Student answers will vary; this is one possibility of an exaggerated paragraph.)

Paradise Palms Resort

Secluded yet inviting, the Paradise Palms Resort sits nestled among a grove of leafy palm trees. Spilling onto the quaint bungalow's sunny veranda, fuchsia bouganvilleas add a touch of tropical color. Many of the resort's comfortable rooms offer a panoramic ocean view. Wildflowers bloom along the scenic trail that leads to the beach. Under bright blue skies, guests sunbathe on the deck around a sparkling pool. After swimming, visitors may stroll through the adjoining vendors' shops, sampling sweet papayas and juicy pineapples. Local natives sell handmade souvenirs. A wide selection of jeeps and bicycles allow sightseers to tour this lovely Shangri-la. Originally a sugarcane plantation, Paradise Palms, a lush island retreat, now offers enticing getaway packages for the discerning vacationer.

Lesson 20: Exaggeration Worksheet (Practice Paragraph)

(Answers may vary. Your students may come up with different answers for their ideal resort.)

The Resort's Actual Features	The Resort's Features (Ideal Condition)
❖ Facilities ❖	❖ Facilities ❖
<i>chipped paint</i>	freshly painted
<i>sagging porch</i>	sunny veranda
weathered	
overgrown with bougainvilleas	fuchsia bougainvilleas
aging canvas umbrellas	
droopy beach chairs	deck for sunbathing
yellowed pool	sparkling pool
old, dilapidated motel	quaint bungalow, comfortable rooms
thatched hut	vendors' shops
❖ Scenic Environment ❖	❖ Scenic Environment ❖
<i>deserted highway</i>	secluded, inviting
<i>sparse grove of shaggy palm trees</i>	leafy palm trees
weedy trail	wildflowers bloom along scenic trail
sliver of ocean	panoramic ocean view
sweltering tropical heat	bright blue skies
soaring temperatures	
long way from paradise	lush island retreat, Shangri-la
❖ Activities ❖	❖ Activities ❖
<i>rusty old jeeps and bikes for rent</i>	wide selection for touring
swimming in the pool	deck for sunbathing
hiking trail to ocean	scenic trail
shopping for cheap trinkets	handmade souvenirs
local fruit	sweet papayas, juicy pineapples

Lesson 21: Identifying Descriptive Narration

Our Park Picnic

1. (*red*) animated, delighted, beams with pride
2. (*blue*) yanks, searching, reeling in, rushes, settled down, talk
3. (*purple*) ear-splitting whistle, yell
4. (*green*) red, navy, orange
5. (*orange*) smoke, pungent aromas

Lesson 24: Identifying Elements of a Persuasive Ad

1. Who is the consumer? *Parents.*
2. What features describe this toy's safety? *Durable.*
3. What features describe this toy's educational appeal? *Appeals to kids' curiosity and love of bugs and insects, comes with compass, magnifying glass, field guide.*
4. What tells you that the child will enjoy this toy? *"Kids and nature were made for each other"; colorful; outdoor toy; real canteen, hiker's belt, flashlight, and working compass; will entertain for hours; opens the door to fascinating adventures.*
5. What need was created? *The need to satisfy kids' curiosity, the need for kids to have fun, to be entertained, to discover nature, to explore the out-of-doors.*
6. How will this toy meet that need? *Provides realistic equipment and ideas.*
7. What claims does this manufacturer make about the toy? *It's colorful, durable, magnifying glass is powerful, will entertain, will satisfy child's curiosity, will open the door to adventure.*
8. Does this ad appeal to emotion or logic? *Can appeal to both. Emotional: Parents want their child to have this wonderful adventure or experience and to feel like a little adult. Logical: The toy is educational, functional, and practical.*
9. What are the toy's qualities? *Colorful, durable, realistic, working.*
10. What vivid adjectives describe the toy's components? *Colorful, durable, powerful, battery-operated, real, working.*
11. Find examples of informal writing. Give an example of each below, writing the phrase or sentence:

- Use of first person: *none*
- Use of second person: *your young naturalist; your yard*
- Incomplete sentence: *Know why kids . . . ; Because kids and nature . . . ; And that's why . . .*
- Use of a contraction: *That's, they're, there's*
- Use of questions: *Know why kids splash . . . ? What creepy crawlies live in your yard?*
- Short sentence: *Because kids and nature were made for each other.*
- Sentence beginning with *and, but, because, or so*: *Because kids and nature were made for each other; And that's why NatureFriends created . . .*

Lesson 25: Identifying Main Points and Transitions

Answers may vary. Students will use a **paragraph symbol** (¶) to mark where a new paragraph should begin. While these paragraph divisions should match the answer key, your student may have chosen different transition words or phrases or found another (or different) place to insert a transition. That's fine, as long as their choice makes sense. See word list "Using Transition Words to Make or Introduce Your Points." As long as students are consistent, they may circle parallel words or parallel phrases.

OPTION 1

Because gardening contributes to healthier diets, physical and mental wellbeing, and closer relationships, families and communities should garden together. ¶ **First**, eating right contributes to feeling right. Gardening encourages people to eat better by growing wholesome food. Just-picked fruits and vegetables inspire home gardeners to preserve their harvest, so by canning and freezing, everyone can enjoy tomato sauce, pickles, and luscious jams year-round. ¶ **Second**, working outdoors nourishes body, soul, and mind. Benefitting from exercise, sunlight, and fresh air, those who garden feel more energized. Instead of watching TV or playing video games, they are burning calories and strengthening muscles. Furthermore, mildly strenuous exercise, such as digging or weeding, reduces stress and improves attitudes. ¶ **Third**, because outdoor activities encourage social interaction, a common garden plot brings people together. Families, for example, build relationships as they cultivate their garden beds. In cities, gardening co-ops help neighbors turn empty lots or bare patio spaces into inviting green spaces. Most importantly, gardens encourage neighbors to get outside and interact as they work side by side, grow organic food, and share the bounty. ¶ **In summary**, everyone should

consider starting a garden project. Not only will participants enjoy vine-ripened fruits and vegetables, they will also reap the benefits of physical exercise and healthy relationships. Whether in a backyard, empty lot, or apartment courtyard, gardening makes a productive and meaningful social activity.

OPTION 2

Families and communities should garden together. Growing their own food helps people eat healthier, experience physical and mental wellbeing, and nurture relationships.

¶ **To begin with**, eating right contributes to feeling right. Gardening encourages people to eat healthfully by planting wholesome fruits and vegetables and harvesting them at the peak of freshness. Just-picked tomatoes, peppers, or berries inspire home gardeners to preserve their harvest, so by canning and freezing, everyone can enjoy tomato sauce, pickles, and luscious jams year-round. ¶ **In addition**, gardening benefits body, soul, and mind. Rather than spend time glued to an electronic device or TV, family members can dig, prune, mulch, pull weeds, and push a wheelbarrow. Invigorating and mildly strenuous, yardwork burns calories, strengthens muscles, reduces stress, and clears away mental cobwebs. Because exercise, sunlight, and fresh air are nature's energizers, these activities often feel stimulating and uplifting. ¶ **Furthermore**, gardening encourages social interaction. Whether families spend time on their rural or suburban backyard plot, or members of a gardening co-op transform a vacant lot into a thriving oasis, cultivating a vegetable patch brings together people of all ages. As neighbors and friends share tasks in their communal garden—such as planting and watering—they grow not only food, but lasting relationships. ¶ **In conclusion**, everyone should consider starting a garden project. Participants share in the bounty of vine-ripened produce, but more importantly, they reap the benefits of physical activity through a common, engaging experience.

OPTION 3

Families and communities should spend time planting and tending a vegetable garden together. ¶ **First**, growing and preserving their own food encourages people to eat more healthfully. Nutrient-dense strawberries, peppers, and other fruits and vegetables explode with flavor when picked at the peak of maturity and eaten right away. However, a glut of zucchini or peaches often inspires home gardeners to preserve their bounty. Canning and freezing, two popular methods, ensure that everyone can enjoy wholesome veggies, tomato sauce, or frozen fruit year-round. ¶ **Next**, working in the

garden benefits body, soul, and mind. Mildly strenuous, it burns calories, strengthens muscles, and relieves stress. Rather than spend time glued to an electronic device or TV, family members can head outdoors to break up ground, hoe flower beds, pull weeds, and push a wheelbarrow. Exercise, sunlight, and fresh air are nature's energizers, so activities like these contribute to physical and mental wholeness. ¶ **Finally**, gardening nurtures relationships. Whether families spend time growing food in their backyard plot, or community members transform a vacant lot into an abundant vegetable patch, cultivating a garden brings together people of all ages. A bountiful harvest is the obvious perk. But more importantly, shared tasks in a communal space—such as planting and watering—encourage social interaction and foster healthy friendships. ¶ **Clearly**, the gardening experience yields more than nutritious, vine-ripened produce: it contributes to an overall sense of wellbeing and promotes positive relationships. **Therefore**, friends, neighbors, and families alike would benefit from starting a garden project.

The Writing Process: Easy As 1-2-3-4-5

1. **Brainstorm.**

- Never skip this important step. It gets your ideas flowing so you can write!
- There are many ways to brainstorm, such as lists, mind-maps, charts, Venn diagrams, word banks, writing clusters, outlines, etc. All of your WriteShop assignments include brainstorming suggestions.

2. **Write a "sloppy copy."**

- It does not have to be neat—just make sure it's readable!
- Skip lines as you write, or double-space if typing.
- Check your "sloppy copy" against the "Content" and "Style" sections of your Writing Skills Checklist, making necessary corrections.

3. **Write your first revision.**

- This copy should be neatly written or typed.
- Continue to skip lines or double-space.
- When finished, check your newly revised copy against the "Mechanics" section of your Writing Skills Checklist, making necessary corrections.
- Recheck your paper for content and style, and make corrections.
- Staple or paperclip everything together in proper order.
 - Brainstorming sheet or worksheet on the bottom
 - "Sloppy copy" on top of that
 - First revision on top of "sloppy copy"
 - Student Writing Skills Checklist on top of first revision

4. **Give your composition to your parent/teacher for editing and comments.**

- Your teacher will staple the Teacher Writing Skills Checklist on top.

5. **Write your final draft.**

- Make corrections using teacher suggestions from the Teacher Writing Skills Checklist or your paper.
- Type or neatly rewrite your final draft. Pay close attention to details.
- Double-check your paper against your Writing Skills Checklist to make sure style and mechanics are still okay, especially if you added sentences or made other major changes.
- Keep all papers together in their original order, attaching your final draft to the top
- Hand in your finished composition.

Glossary of Writing Terms

"Carrot in a cookie jar": A phrase or sentence that is either unrelated to the topic of the paragraph OR detracts from the paragraph's unity of thought.

Concise, conciseness: Using the fewest words possible to convey clear meaning. It is helpful to avoid slang, as well as vague, weak, and repeated words. Choose a few concrete words, rather than many unclear words, to communicate concisely.

Concrete, concreteness: Using colorful, descriptive, precise nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs to appeal to the reader's five senses.

Content: The purpose of a composition is to convey meaningful ideas to others. This is first accomplished through its *content*, which includes the subject matter, the title, and the purpose of the written piece (typically to describe, inform, narrate, or persuade, but also to encourage, amuse, instruct, or comfort).

Descriptive writing: Describing objects, scenery, experiences, etc., through vivid, well chosen, sensory words to paint a word picture in the reader's mind.

Graciousness: Writing that demonstrates qualities of good taste and satisfies ideals of attitudes, thoughts, and speech. Gracious writing treats the reader with respect.

Informative writing: Informative writing, also called expository writing, is designed to explain. Factual details are presented in a sensible and organized manner. As with descriptive writing, specific, vivid words must be used to develop the subject matter clearly and logically.

Mechanics: Writing mechanics include the skills of spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Narrative writing: Often thought of as a *story*, narrative writing combines elements of description and explanation to recount an experience, event, or occurrence.

Paragraph: A division of a piece of writing typically formed by a group of three or more sentences. A true paragraph forms a unit of thought. Its first word is always indented. Generally, a paragraph has an introduction (topic sentence), some form of development (body), and a conclusion (closing sentence).

Parallelism: A pattern of repeated, similarly constructed phrases or sentences that use the same part of speech. Example A: Susan is *loyal*, *kind*, and *truthful* (each of these is an adjective). Example B: Exercising regularly helps teens *gain* strength, *develop* coordination, and *feel* more energetic (each is a verb).

Persuasive writing: Persuasive writing, also known as argumentation, presents facts and supporting details in a logical order to prove or disprove a point, to influence the reader's thinking or behavior, or to change someone's mind about an issue.

Sentence: A group of words that expresses a complete thought in the form of a statement, command, exclamation, or question. It contains at least a verb and a noun, and begins with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark.

Style: Style generally refers to writing technique. In order to express themselves meaningfully, writers select specific words and organize them in a specific way.

Wordy, wordiness (also known as **verbose** or **flowery**): The use of more words than are needed to express an idea; emphasizing style at the expense of thought.

Glossary of Sentence Variations

Using a variety of sentence types in one's writing creates a more interesting composition. The following parts of speech make effective sentence starters.

NOTE: For further discussion, explanation, or examples, rely on a good English handbook.

Also, *Easy Writing* by Wanda Phillips (ISHA Enterprises) gives extensive practice with many of these sentence variations.

Adverb/adverbial phrase: Modifies a verb. Tells how, when, where, and to what extent (how much or how long). Many times an adverb will end in -ly.

Gratefully, Scott accepted the gift from his aunt.

Yesterday a sudden storm interrupted our barbecue.

Appositive: A specific kind of explanatory word or phrase that identifies or renames a noun or a pronoun. It is placed by the word it explains and is set off by commas. The exception is something that is essential to the meaning of the sentence. In the last example below, *Jackie* is essential if there is more than one older sister. This is why the appositive is *not* set off by commas.

Marty, who lives next door, drives an old truck.

The women in navy suits, flight attendants for Worldwide Airlines, boarded the plane.

My older sister Jackie lives in Florida.

Infinitive: The simplest form of a verb, written as "to + verb" (to run, to shout, to eat). It takes practice to use an infinitive sentence starter yet avoid using a "to be" word.

To play the piano with skill **is** difficult. (Not recommended; uses a "to be" word)

To play the piano with skill **requires** hours of diligent practice. (Better; uses a concrete verb)

Metaphor: A word picture comparing things that are basically unlike but have striking similarities. A form of "to be" often expresses the comparison.

Puffy white clouds were marshmallows in the morning sky.

Lucinda was a bitter woman whose heart was made of stone.

Soldiers at attention, the row of trees guarded the old mansion. (Note: Comparison between trees and soldiers is made without the use of a "to be" word.)

Paired adjectives: A pair of related adjectives used to begin a sentence. As with participles, the subject must agree with the adjectives.

Incorrect: Serene and peaceful, the cradle held the sleeping infant. (The crib is not serene and peaceful.)

Correct: Serene and peaceful, the sleeping infant lay in her cradle. (The sleeping infant is serene and peaceful.)

Paired adjectives may be opposites, often useful in showing conflict of emotions or to demonstrate *in spite of* or *nonetheless*. Notice the use of *but* or *yet*. Scared but willing, Mark crept to the edge of the high dive.

Elderly yet fun-loving, Grandpa joined us for a round of miniature golf.

Participle/participial phrase: A participle is a verb form. Adding "ing" to a verb forms a *present* participle. To form a *past* participle, add "ed" or "en."

Looking at the moon, the dog began to howl. (present participle)

Stunned by the fall, the cowboy rested before remounting his horse. (past participle)

The subject of the sentence must closely follow the participle. The participle and the subject must agree with one another, thus avoiding a **misplaced modifier**.

Incorrect: Trembling with fear, the stream was difficult for Casey to cross. (The stream did not tremble with fear.)

Correct: Trembling with fear, Casey crossed the stream with difficulty. (Casey trembled with fear.)

Prepositional phrase: Prepositions are relational words that usually tell *where* (*near*, *beside*) or *when* (*before*, *since*). A prepositional *phrase* begins with a preposition and ends with its object (*near the boat*, *beside a quiet stream*, *before school*, *since early this morning*). Here are sentences that begin with a prepositional phrase:

Between lunch and dinner, the children played contentedly on the beach.

Under the bridge, a homeless drifter huddled in his thin blanket.

Note: It can be easy to mistake a subordinate conjunction for a preposition. A subordinate conjunction becomes a preposition only if it has an object:

Incorrect: After the boys escaped from the burning building, they dashed to safety.

(*The boys escaped* is an independent clause. In this case, *boys* is a subject, not an object. Therefore, *after* is a subordinate conjunction, not a preposition.)

Correct: After escaping from the burning building, the boys dashed to safety.

(*Escaping* is a special verbal called a gerund, which functions as a noun. In this sentence, it serves as the object of the preposition.)

Correct: After dark, the boys escaped to safety. (The word *dark* is the object of the preposition.)

Simile: The difference between a metaphor and a simile is the use of the word "like" or "as" to make the comparison.

Puffy white clouds floated like marshmallows in the morning sky.

Laurie thought Daddy's beard felt as rough as sandpaper.

Like soldiers at attention, the row of trees guarded the old mansion.

Subject-verb: The subject appears at or near the beginning of the sentence; the verb follows. This is the most common (and most overused) sentence type.

Susie wandered along the path.

Five birds sat on Mr. Spreckel's picket fence.

Subordinate conjunction: This expresses relationship between the main clause and the subordinate clause. It may begin a sentence or appear within a sentence. We encourage students to begin at least one sentence with a subordinate conjunction for yet another alternative to the subject-verb opener. Here is a partial list:

after	although	as	because	before	even though	if
since	though	unless	until	when	whether	while

Incorrect: Before sunrise, John's neighbors arrived to help build the new barn.
("Sunrise" is the object, making "before" a preposition.)

Correct: Before the sun came up, John's neighbors arrived to help build the new barn. (Don't make the mistake of assuming that "before the sun" is a prepositional phrase. "The sun came up" is a clause, making "before" a subordinate conjunction.)

Transition words (also called coordinate conjunctions): These words often connect thoughts between sentences and paragraphs. Some are useful as conclusions. They are usually followed by a comma. Here are some possible transition words:

accordingly	also	additionally	besides	consequently	furthermore
however	instead	likewise	meanwhile	nevertheless	therefore

Furthermore, a well-trained dog will not chew or dig.

Therefore, young children should be taught to speak a second language.

Sample Page Models

Page Model for Compositions Handwritten on Notebook Paper

1. All work written on notebook paper must use the headings shown in the following sample. Remember: *a/ways* indent the first line of every paragraph.
2. Get into the habit of writing on every other line. This leaves space for editing your work. (It is not necessary to skip lines for Skill Builders or other daily work.)
3. **Do not write on the back of the page.** Instead, continue on a second sheet of paper. Staple multiple copies together in the upper left corner.

●	<p style="text-align: right;">First and Last Name Date Draft (sloppy copy, etc.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>
	(skip this line)
	Indent the first line of a paragraph.
	(skip this line)
●	
	(skip this line)
●	

Page Model for Typed Compositions

1. All typed work must use the headings as in the following sample. Indent the first line of every paragraph about a half-inch (about 5 letters).
2. **Double-space** the body of the paragraph. This leaves room for editing your work. Type your name and date, single-spaced, in the upper right-hand corner. Then **triple-space** before typing the title, which should be centered. **Double-space** after the title to begin the body.
3. Use a **standard font** like Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri, preferably in 12 pt. Do not use bold print or excessively large or fancy fonts.
4. Do not print on the back of the page. Instead, continue on a second sheet of paper. Staple multiple copies together in the upper left corner.

(Leave a 1- to 1½-inch margin all around your paper.)

First and Last Name
Date
Draft (1st Revision, etc.)

(Triple-space after heading)

Title

(Double-space after title)

Indent ½" (about 5 letters) for each new paragraph.

Double-space the body of the composition. Double-spacing leaves plenty of room for editing.

If the composition requires a second or third paragraph, *do not* increase the spacing *between paragraphs*. The spacing *between* each paragraph should be the same as the spacing of the body.

Weak Words List

When editing your “sloppy copy,” underline in GREEN any of these words you find. Sometimes you will be able to replace them with more concrete words using your thesaurus or *Synonym Finder*. Write the new word above the weak one.

Vague Words

a lot, lots

awfully

big

come/came

cute

do/does/done/did

eat

fine

fun

get/got/gotten

go/went

good

kind of

like (OK when used as a simile)

look

make/made

move

nice

pretty

put

say/said

see

sorta/sort of

stuff/stuff like that

take/took

thing

Slang Words

awesome (as in: His skateboard is awesome.)

cool (as in: What a cool car you drive!)

neat (as in: I thought his shoes were neat.)

(plus other currently used slang terms)

Overused Words/Phrases

get/got/gotten

good

great (OK sometimes)

has/have/had (OK if used as a helping verb)

It has . . . /It is . . .

just

then (OK if not overused)

Unnecessary Words

really

so

very

“This story is about”

“What I want to tell you is”

“This is what happened when”

“The end”

Ingredients for a Tasty Paragraph

Think of your paragraph as a cookie jar. The most important part of the jar is what's inside . . . it doesn't matter how decorative the jar is; it's what's inside that counts.

A paragraph contains several sentences that discuss and develop one thought. It is held together by one main idea. Without that common thread, you have just a group of separate sentences, not a paragraph.

Suppose someone gives you a gift. If you open it and find a jar marked "COOKIES," what do you expect to find in the jar? Cookies, right? Imagine finding a carrot in there, too! Wouldn't that be strange? All the sentences in a paragraph need to be **about the same subject**, or the paragraph will be just as surprising. Consider reading a paragraph about surfing and finding in it a sentence about shopping along the pier. That would be like the jar of cookies with a carrot in it!¹

Next, think about taking the jar out of the box and finding no lid on it. Would that work? A jar without a lid would let the cookies spill out. It certainly would not be a complete cookie jar. A paragraph must also have a kind of lid, or it feels incomplete. The "lid" of a paragraph is a good, interesting **beginning sentence** that gets a paragraph off to a good start.

Finally, imagine that your jar of cookies arrived with the bottom broken out. What would you expect to happen? A jar without a bottom would not be a complete jar. Its contents would fall out. An **ending sentence** that makes the paragraph feel closed is the "bottom" of a paragraph. Without it, the paragraph does not feel finished.

So, remember the three "ingredients" for a strong paragraph:

1. **One main idea.**
2. **An interesting topic sentence to introduce the reader to your subject.**
3. **An ending, or closing, sentence to sum up your paragraph.**

¹Credit for the "carrot in a cookie jar" idea goes to Susan Bradrick, *Understanding Writing* (Port Orchard, Wash.: Bradrick Family Enterprises, 1991).

READ CAREFULLY BEFORE BEGINNING

FIVE MINUTES ONLY

How Well Do You Follow Directions?

1. Read all directions before doing anything.
2. Put your name in the lower right-hand corner of this paper.
3. Put the date in the lower left-hand corner of this paper.
4. Place a triangle around the number four.
5. Put a red "X" on the word "red."
6. Clap your hands two times.
7. Write the month of your birthday in the upper right-hand corner.
8. Turn this paper over and draw 3 squares in the upper left-hand corner.
9. Draw a circle around each of the squares.
10. Stand up and, out loud, count backwards from five.
11. Write your age on the back of this paper.
12. Loudly call out your last name when you get to this point of the test.
13. Underline your name at the bottom of the page with a blue pencil.
14. Stand up, turn around, and sit down.
15. Circle all the odd numbers on the left side of this paper.
16. On the reverse side of this paper, add 203 and 455.
17. Place a rectangle around your answer to the last problem.
18. Punch a hole with your pencil in each corner of this paper.
19. Write your phone number along the right side of this paper.
20. Now that you've finished reading the directions carefully, do only numbers 1 and 2.

Organizing Student Drafts

Two important pages follow this one:

- Here's Your Edited First Revision
- Please File in Your Notebook

It is vital that students learn to follow directions. They will need to prepare assignments according to teacher specifications for years to come.

WriteShop encourages them to organize their compositions in a particular way (see TM Appendix A-1). This will help the student guard against misplaced or lost copies. Furthermore, it will help *you* easily track your student's progress, since all copies of his or her work pertaining to a particular lesson will be fastened together in proper order.

The following two pages are reproducible reminders for your student. It is recommended that you copy them onto **colored** paper. After you have edited the first revision, paper-clip a "Here's Your Edited First Revision" notice to the top of the stack. This reminds students not to dismantle or separate their papers, as they may be prone to do. By keeping them in order, nothing will be lost.

After you grade the final draft, separate your student's stack of papers in two. One stack will contain (in order) all drafts from brainstorming through Teacher Writing Skills Checklist. Staple these papers together again, keeping them in the same order.

The second stack will contain the final draft with the Composition Evaluation or Essay Evaluation sheet stapled to the top. Paper-clip the two stacks together along with the instruction sheet "Please File in Your Notebook." Return them to your student.

He or she will then know to place them in his or her three-ring binder (see "personal supplies," TM p. 2), putting the final draft in the "Final Draft" section and the remaining copies in the "Rough Draft" section.

*HERE'S YOUR EDITED
FIRST REVISION*

Keep all copies together in proper order

- Do not separate or remove staples*

Final Draft

- Attach to the top of the Teacher
Writing Skills Checklist*

*HERE'S YOUR EDITED
FIRST REVISION*

Keep all copies together in proper order

- Do not separate or remove staples*

Final Draft

- Attach to the top of the Teacher
Writing Skills Checklist*

*HERE'S YOUR EDITED
FIRST REVISION*

Keep all copies together in proper order

- Do not separate or remove staples*

Final Draft

- Attach to the top of the Teacher
Writing Skills Checklist*

*HERE'S YOUR EDITED
FIRST REVISION*

Keep all copies together in proper order

- Do not separate or remove staples*

Final Draft

- Attach to the top of the Teacher
Writing Skills Checklist*

PLEASE FILE IN YOUR NOTEBOOK

Final Draft & Composition Evaluation

- . File together under "Final Drafts"*

All Other Copies:

- . File together under "Rough Drafts"*

PLEASE FILE IN YOUR NOTEBOOK

Final Draft & Composition Evaluation

- . File together under "Final Drafts"*

All Other Copies:

- . File together under "Rough Drafts"*

PLEASE FILE IN YOUR NOTEBOOK

Final Draft & Composition Evaluation

- . File together under "Final Drafts"*

All Other Copies:

- . File together under "Rough Drafts"*

PLEASE FILE IN YOUR NOTEBOOK

Final Draft & Composition Evaluation

- . File together under "Final Drafts"*

All Other Copies:

- . File together under "Rough Drafts"*

Guide to Using Supplemental Activities

Purpose of Supplemental Activities

- to help a struggling student master a concept
- to supply additional writing activities for the student who loves to write and hungers for more variety or creativity in his or her writing “diet”
- to give the average writer an opportunity to stretch himself or herself in new areas
- to provide ideas for writing across the curriculum (expanding writing into areas of current study, such as literature, art, music, science, or history)
- to offer students continued practice with WriteShop concepts once they have completed the curriculum

When to Use Supplemental Activities

- Students on the One-Week Plan
 - Because of the fast pace and intensity of this track, most of the supplemental writing ideas are not recommended.
 - Creative Exercises and some Creative Extensions may be offered occasionally.
 - Once WriteShop I and II are completed, you may wish to incorporate some of the composition ideas into next year’s language arts program.
- Students on the Two-Week Plan
 - In this track, each regular WriteShop lesson is completed over the course of two weeks. Creative Compositions or Creative Exercises may be offered on one or two of the days where no writing has been assigned.
 - Something from Additional Writing Activities may provide a welcome break.
 - Do not skip or eliminate WriteShop lessons in order to accommodate supplemental writing. If you do decide to take a break from WriteShop to complete a supplemental activity, always return to the very next WriteShop lesson.
- Students on the Individualized Plan
 - Supplemental activities *are a critical part of this track*. WriteShop I and II offer a total of 30 lessons. When spread over multiple years, students write only a few compositions a year. Assign three to five additional activities to round out the program.
 - To give students a different kind of writing experience, periodically offer them a chance to write either a Lesson Expansion or Creative Composition exercise. Devote the same amount of time to this activity as you would to any other. Then, pick up WriteShop II at the next lesson.
 - REMINDER: It is preferable for your student to complete WriteShop I before attempting most supplemental activities. An exception to this would be Lesson Expansions (see “Practicing with a Current Lesson” on the next page).

Lesson Expansion

Expanding WriteShop Assignments

□ Practicing with a Current Lesson

- If you notice students are struggling to grasp a concept from their current lesson, it may be wise to ask them to write another composition from the same lesson.
- If, for instance, they had trouble describing a pet (you could not draw a picture of it from their description), have them write another paragraph about a different pet. Help them focus on more concrete description of its physical features.
- Be sure they understand the expectations. You will probably need to review the instructions with them.

□ Increasing the Length of a Composition

- Once your students have completed WriteShop I, you must decide whether they are ready to move on to the more complex concepts presented in WriteShop II. If they are writing concretely and concisely, and can articulate abstract ideas, continue on to WriteShop II. However, if they are younger students or struggling writers, it may be more to their benefit to repeat WriteShop I.
- One way to teach your students to write longer compositions is to repeat a previous lesson, choosing a completely different subject. Students may either write one long paragraph (say, 10 to 12 sentences) or a multi-paragraph composition (two to three paragraphs).
- Older students or advanced writers may compose even longer narratives, informative short reports, or essays.

□ Expanding Specific Lessons

- **Changing tense** (works with many lessons - try Lessons 3, 4, 6, 7, 12-16 and 21-23): Using the same paragraph they wrote before, have students rewrite it, changing the tense. If it was written in past tense, ask them to write it in present, and vice versa. If the paragraph was written long ago, you may also want to have them increase the length, add more sentence variations, or expand description.
- **Describing a food** (Lesson 5): Students may write a restaurant review in which they vividly describe an assortment of foods, from appetizers to dessert. Expect this composition to be several paragraphs in length. Suggestion: visit a restaurant and have students take “brainstorming” notes as they sample various foods.
- **Describing a place** (Lessons 7, 18, 20): Students design travel brochures about a favorite vacation spot, famous landmark, city, country, or geographical region they would like to visit. Include text and pictures.

- **Explaining a process** (Lesson 8): Rewrite the process paragraph as a narrative in either first or third person. Students will add sensory description and action. For example, if writing about baking brownies, they may say, “After pouring the thick, rich mixture into the glass pan, I eagerly lick the sweet, chocolaty batter from the wooden spoon.” Their explanation of the process becomes woven into a story.
- **Writing a factual report** (Lesson 9): Write other one to two paragraph reports on other narrow topics. Choose a specific bird, plant, planet, weather phenomenon (like a tornado), geological phenomenon (like a volcano), etc. for each report.
- **Writing a concise biography** (Lesson 10): Instead of a biography, have students write an autobiography of a famous individual (autobiographies are written in first person) as if they were that historic person; assign one or more journal or diary entries; have them write a letter to someone, assuming the role of a historical figure. Any of these exercises should be expanded in length and be historically accurate, perhaps fitting in with a current topic of study.
- **News article** (Lesson 11): This lesson expansion lends itself well to a social studies unit by requiring students to write an entire newspaper about a historical era. Include local, national, and international news stories, advertisements, comic strips, entertainment, doctor’s column, literary news, sports, travel, vital statistics (births, deaths, marriages, crimes), editorials/ opinions/letters to the editor, etc. This activity should be spread over a longer period of time. Some research will be required to ensure historical accuracy. This can also be a group effort, with all students contributing to one newspaper.
- **Point of view** (Lesson 15): Change the point of view by writing as another character in the Androcles and the Lion story; choose a different story or a fable; write in third person instead of first.
- **Writing an ad** (Lesson 24): Dramatize the ad by writing a radio announcement or television commercial; design and build a toy or gadget and write an ad to sell it.
- **Writing additional essays** (Lessons 25-30): Once your students have completed WriteShop II, they should continue writing timed and untimed essays on a regular basis. An extensive list of topics may be found beginning in TM p. B-17. To expand an essay, try having students open with a human interest story to grab the reader’s attention. For example, if they believe the minimum driving age should be raised to eighteen, their opening paragraph may describe a car accident resulting from reckless teenage driving. Such illustrations help draw readers in by helping them relate to the writer’s point of view.

□ Writing Skills Checklists

- Regardless of the type of assignment you are giving to the student, always use the appropriate Writing Skills Checklist.

Writing across the Curriculum

By suggesting alternate topics for student paragraphs, you can adapt most WriteShop lessons to fit into a unit study, classical education approach, or literature-based curriculum.

This will not always be easy for the students, since their lesson instructions usually will ask them to write about a more specific, curriculum-directed topic. Teach them to think outside the box. “Black and white” thinkers will have the most trouble with flexibility.

WriteShop I

□ Lesson 1 Describing an Object

- Instead of describing a common household object, students can describe an object or artifact from history, such as an Egyptian bracelet, a sword or shield, a bowl or goblet, or a farm implement. DK books and *Eyewitness* Books contain vivid, detailed photographs that would work as suitable substitutes for real objects. If your student has trouble coming up with adequate texture words, perhaps you have fabrics, wooden articles, etc. for him to touch that will help him describe his relic more explicitly.
- Apply this lesson to a science study by observing an object such as a rock, mineral, or geode; a leaf, pinecone, or flower; or a patch of bark or moss.

□ Lesson 2 Describing a Pet

- A domestic animal from history can take the place of the student’s puppy or hamster. Perhaps he can describe an Egyptian or Siamese cat, a Japanese koi (fish), or an Arabian horse, for example. Rely on high-quality photographs if an actual animal is not available.

□ Lesson 3 Describing a Person

- Suggest that students pick a famous person to describe. Well-known figures like Lincoln, Washington, or Napoleon would make good choices because their portraits are easily accessed in art and history books. Once you have discerned the goal of the lesson you will be able to steer your students in the proper direction.

□ Lesson 4 Describing a Circus Performer

- Many historical figures lend themselves well to this assignment. Books that contain clear, colorful drawings or photographs of costumed people can serve as the foundation for this exercise, as can costumed dolls. Consider any of the following as substitutions for a circus performer: a Greek hoplite soldier, a Roman centurion, or another soldier from any era, a king or queen, a Pilgrim or Puritan, a cowboy or gypsy; a person from a country of study, dressed in native costume.

□ Lesson 5 Describing a Food

- As a hands-on activity, students can prepare a food from a certain time period or from another country they are studying. Your library should have a number of cookbooks featuring foods from around the world. *Slumps, Grunts, and Snickerdoodles* comes to mind as an excellent children's book containing colorful historical information and recipes from the days of the earliest American settlers.

□ Lesson 6 Describing a Season

- This topic may prove a bit more difficult to work with. However, a creative mind will come up with possibilities. For instance, if you are studying either the Revolutionary War or the Westward Expansion, perhaps your student could describe the harshness of winter (Valley Forge? Laura Ingalls Wilder's *The Long Winter*?) It is important to remember that this is not a narrative assignment.
- Caution students to describe the season itself and not the historical event that took place. The historical event should serve as a background and no more.

□ Lesson 7 Describing a Place

- Here, the student will write this composition in first person, adapting one of the lesson's suggested sentence starters. Perhaps he can be an adventurer in the desert, a native chef in an African jungle, or a Pilgrim in the Eastern woodlands. Students can use books with vivid photographs or watch scenic travel videos for ideas.
- A landscape painting from your country or period of study can also provide the setting for your student's "place" as well as offer an opportunity to discuss artists who painted during that time.
- As with "Describing a Season," caution students not to write a narrative or story.

□ Lesson 8 Explaining a Process

- This lesson offers endless possibilities for the creative student. Selecting a task from his history studies, he can explain how to make candles, paper, or a quilt; how to load and fire a musket or cannon; or how to joust in a tournament, build a log cabin, or make pemmican. From science he can describe a natural process, such as how a plant grows or how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly.

□ Lesson 9 Writing a Factual Report

- The student can learn more about the animals that inhabit his geographic region of study, whether he writes about a giraffe, fox, or whale. Remind him to pick a wild animal for his short report rather than a domestic animal, as in Lesson 2.

□ Lesson 10 Writing a Concise Biography

- Any notable figure from science or history will make a suitable subject.

□ Lesson 11 Introducing Journalism

- News articles should be written about an important historical event or scientific discovery.

□ Lesson 12 Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event

- Students can write a first-person narrative from the point of view of a famous historical figure, explorer, or scientist. Caution them to follow directions, limiting narration to one setting, one short time frame, etc.
- George Washington's military strategies would be too broad, but Washington's crossing of the Delaware River would make a perfect topic. Other ideas include writing a first-person account of Marie Currie taking the x-ray machine to the front lines during World War I, a plantation slave escaping to freedom, or a Pilgrim sailing on the Mayflower (again, limit narrative to a single experience). Encourage students to put themselves in the shoes of their historical figures.

□ Lesson 13 Writing a Narrative of Another Person's Experience

- This lesson is like Lesson 12, except that the student must interview another person about his or her own emotional experience. Ideally, the interview should be with a parent who has, for example, taken on the role of a Roman slave, a sailor, a soldier, or Florence Nightingale. The parent must limit the information to one brief incident in this person's life.

□ Lesson 14 First-Person Point of View

- Instead of merely choosing to personify an ordinary object from a historical period, students can consider objects whose "experiences" could be considered exciting or interactive. A silver bowl fashioned by Paul Revere would certainly work, but his saddle could narrate a more spine-tingling tale! Students could personify a mortar or pestle, a Roman shield, Thomas Edison's light bulb, Ben Franklin's kite, or an old English waterwheel. Encourage their imaginations!

□ Lesson 15 First-Person Point of View

- Choose a folk tale, another one of Aesop's fables, a Greek myth, or another short literary narrative that has at least two points of view.

□ Lesson 16 Third-Person Point of View

- This is probably the most challenging lesson to adapt. Students must write this third-person narrative from different points of view. If you can think of a creative way to customize this assignment, feel free to do so. If not, ask students to write the composition as directed.

WriteShop II

□ Lesson 17 Describing an Object

- This assignment asks the student to select a multifaceted object that has a little more detail than the one he picked for Lesson 1. Perhaps he could describe a monument, building, or statue. An exotic headdress, jeweled crown, or interesting period costume would also make excellent subject matter. Again, use

an Eyewitness book, National Geographic or Smithsonian magazine, or other detailed photograph, since the object will probably not be available firsthand.

- Science studies lend themselves to observing objects like Saturn or the moon; a flowering hydrangea bush or needle-covered pine tree; a cumulus cloud; or a spider web. When an object is not available, use a good photograph.

□ Lesson 18 Describing a Place

- See suggestions for Lesson 7.

□ Lesson 19 Writing a Short Report

- See suggestions for Lessons 9 and 10.

□ Lesson 20 Exaggeration

- In the early 1600s, the Virginia Company exaggerated the truths about the Jamestown settlement in order to lure settlers across the ocean. Suggest that students choose a historical site like a castle, fort, inn, or mine to “propagandize.” Ask them to think about claims that lured people to places like Africa, India, China, or the New World, or even to California or Kentucky, and to incorporate these ideas into their exaggerated paragraph.

□ Lessons 21 and 22 First-Person Point of View, Parts 1 and 2

- This lesson asks students to observe and write about the same event from the first-person perspective of two different individuals. Consider viewing a feast from the point of view of an Indian and a Pilgrim, a Roman patrician and a slave, or a medieval lord or lady and a servant. During the first Civil War battle at Manassas, wealthy citizens rode out to the battle site to picnic and watch the “show.” Journalists also came to watch and record. Both of these perspectives would make for excellent paragraphs. Suggest events such as the plague of frogs, a battle, a medieval joust, a coronation, or a performance by a Baroque musician. Again, no matter what event they choose, remind them that *observers*, not *participants*, write the paragraphs.

□ Lesson 23 Narrative Voice

- Students experiment with changing narrative voice and tense. See Lesson 9 for topic suggestions.

□ Lesson 24 Persuasive Writing (Writing an Ad)

- Encourage students to choose a popular child’s toy of the time period as the subject of their advertisement. It does not have to be a toy; other ideas include any invention, discovery, or object from their history or science studies. (You will have to adapt the lesson instructions if the object is not a toy.)

□ Lessons 25-30 Essays

- The supplemental section of your Teacher’s Manual (Appendix B) contains many suitable topics for writing across the curriculum. Examples include discussing the significance of a famous battle or contrasting two artists from a particular period.

Additional Writing Activities

Creative writing programs abound. You can find many wonderful books that teach creative writing and that offer clever and interesting topics. Always require use of a Student Writing Skills Checklist to be sure students are applying their newly learned skills.

Creative Compositions (Suitable for Editing and Revising)

□ Story Starters

- Students select a Story Starter from the list (see Appendix B-12).
- Using this as the topic sentence, they will write a fictional tale in which they must develop the plot (story line), character(s), place, and sequence of events.
- The student instructions suggest writing the composition a little at a time over the course of a week, as a once-a-week activity over the course of a month, or as a composition assignment (using “The Writing Process: Easy As 1-2-3-4-5”). You may also wish to allow additional “to be” words and more casual vocabulary, including contractions and certain weak words.
- Also, remind them to write graciously.
- Allow time in your lesson plans for editing and revising, especially if this assignment is a graded composition.

Creative Exercises (Not Suitable as Compositions)

□ Round Robin

- A “Round Robin” is a good activity for a group of students or siblings to practice narrative or imaginative story writing. Teach them that even though they may have fun with a topic, they must always remain gracious. Stories may be humorous but not crude, realistic but not graphic.
- “Round Robin” ideas may come from Story Starters or the “Writing Well.” Sometimes students like to come up with their own topics.
- As a rule, each student should begin with a different topic. Set the timer for two minutes and let them write. When the bell rings, pencils must be set down (they may finish the word but not the sentence). Students then pass their papers to the person on the left. The timer is set and they each add to the new story. They will continue exchanging papers every two minutes for as many rounds as you decide (four to six works well). Before they begin writing during the last round, inform them that they must now write a conclusion.
- Instruct students to write neatly and legibly, since others must read their work. If younger and older students are writing together, you may need to have everyone print rather than use cursive.

□ The “Writing Well”

- WriteShop repeatedly emphasizes the need for adequate brainstorming as a routine part of the writing process. When students have a deep “well” of words and ideas from which to draw, their compositions become more vivid and concrete.
- The “Writing Well” is designed to stimulate vocabulary, ideas, and impressions on a particular topic. It makes a good pre-writing activity. Results could be used as a resource or idea bank when writing future compositions.
- Your students may have trouble writing for five full minutes at first. Perhaps you could set the timer for three minutes, then increase it to four, and finally to five over the course of several weeks.
- If they brainstorm very generally about a topic, you might suggest that next time they narrow their topic even further. For example, if they write on the topic of animals, they will probably include a list of many kinds of animals. Next time, have them select one of those animals (*dogs, monkeys*) and make a “Writing Well” for that subtopic.
- If you find that students repeatedly make lists of words only, challenge them to begin writing descriptive phrases. Sometimes these will be factual and sometimes experiential

EXAMPLES

Red: *valentines from my family, embers glowing in the fireplace, fire engines, the crimson sunset on our vacation in Hawaii*

Grandma: *baking chocolate cookies together, lives in an apartment in Arizona, smells sweet like lavender, takes a ceramics class in her clubhouse*

- See Appendix B-14 for student instructions and topics.

Creative Extensions (Some May Be Suitable as Compositions)

Student writing need not always take the form of a composition. Perhaps you are familiar with Bloom’s Taxonomy, which categorizes thinking skills into six levels. Most standard curricula focus on the first two levels—**knowledge** and **comprehension**. Students are commonly asked to remember facts and details or understand the main ideas of a book or reading selection. Although valuable, such exercises do not offer opportunities for students to think critically.

The remaining levels, however, help young people stretch beyond the basics of *listing, recalling, explaining, summarizing, and discussing*. **Application**, for example, requires students to apply previously learned skills or information to a new situation. They might *give an example, illustrate a story, or interview a subject*. The fourth level, **analysis**, is the ability to break down information into parts and determine how each part relates to the whole. Student might *identify setting, plot, and character, compare or contrast, categorize, draw conclusions, or create an analogy*.

Synthesis, Bloom’s fifth level, calls on students to solve a problem by putting information together that requires original, creative thinking. At this level, they can *write a new story or predict a new ending, design, communicate ideas, and plan projects*. Finally, the sixth level, **evaluation**, asks students to make judgments based on specific criteria. Students may *recommend a book, sequence a series of events, determine an outcome, write an editorial, or tell why ()*.

Below are some practical applications for writing, many of which can incorporate use of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Some may be suitable as compositions. If so, require use of the Student Writing Skills Checklists and work the compositions into your lesson plan as writing assignments. If not, look for ways to weave them into other school work as part of **writing across the curriculum**. You will discover clever ways to integrate many of these into your students’ other subjects.

- autobiography of student
- autobiography of a famous person (written in first person by the student)
- book/movie reviews
- book jackets (illustrated)
- brochures/pamphlets/travel brochures
- children’s books (with or without illustrations)

- critiques (art or museum exhibit, ballet, theater production, opera)
- diaries or journals (personal, historical, nature observations with sketches)
- exposé
- fables/legends/tall tales
- fiction
- flashbacks
- historical accounts
- historical fiction
- historical scrapbooks
- interviews (authors, characters from a novel, historical figures, scientists)
- magazines (create/write/illustrate)
- mobiles
- monologues/dialogs
- mysteries
- newspaper/news articles
- observations
- oral presentations/speeches
- original stories
- poetry
- posters
- propaganda
- radio shows
- reports
- research projects
- restaurant reviews
- rewrites (student rewrites a fable, tall tale, Greek myth, etc. in own words)
- sports accounts
- summaries (books, articles, text chapters)
- “write your own . . .” (give students part of a short story or chapter and have them construct the beginning or missing paragraphs)

Story Starters

Directions:

1. Begin a fictional story and add to it each day for a total of four days.
 2. Or begin a story and add to it once a week for four weeks.
 3. Or follow the steps in “The Writing Process: Easy as 1-2-3-4-5” (p. i) to write a story as a composition assignment. **Note:** If you write a composition, you will complete the “sloppy copy” in one day.
- First day:** Begin by choosing a story starter from the list below. Write an *introduction* by adding *exactly* three sentences to the starter, but do not finish your third sentence. Leave your story “hanging.” Tomorrow you will get to add to it.
 - Second day:** Continue your story. First, finish the hanging sentence. Then add a *new paragraph* (three to five sentences) to form part of the body of the story.
 - Third day:** Continue your story. Finish the hanging sentence before adding a *new paragraph* (three to five sentences) to complete the body of your story.
 - Fourth day:** Again, first finish the hanging sentence. Complete your story with a *closing paragraph* of three to five sentences. Wrap it up with a strong finish!
 - Leaving a “hanging sentence” means to stop writing in the middle of your last sentence. This will give you some freedom and flexibility when you continue your tale the next time. Here are just a few ideas:

Mid-sentence Pauses:

- He heard an enormous . . .
- Before long, they came to a . . .
- Unexpectedly, . . .
- When it climbed out of the . . .
- All of a sudden . . .
- After awhile . . .
- Stuck in a(n) . . .
- . . . I fell into . . .
- . . . they landed on a . . .
- . . . when it decided to . . .
- . . . when suddenly . . .
- . . . she couldn’t believe what she saw in the . . .

Story Starter Ideas

- For my birthday, Uncle Max gave me a lying . . .
- In an underwater cave . . .
- What began as a pleasant day hike in the forest ended in . . .
- Let me tell you the first rule about being a hamster (a cat, a gold fish, invisible . . .):
- Shipwrecked on a lonely island . . .
- My (terrible, intriguing, unusual, frustrating, surprising . . .) day began . . .
- Last night my pillow talked to me.
- Today while Mom was gone, I decided to investigate the mysterious (package, box, trunk, door . . .) in the back of the closet.
- Be careful what you wish for; it might come true!
- In the darkest jungle . . .
- This afternoon I came home and found a(n) _____ on my (porch, couch, bed...). The note attached to it said, "Take care of me—my owner will be back in three hours."
- They say money doesn't grow on trees, but . . .
- I remember the year it snowed in July.
- Digging in my garden, my shovel struck . . .
- My love of (chocolate, money, baseball, penguins . . .) got me into big trouble!
- I dreamed I was only four inches tall.
- His mission was clear: Rescue _____ before . . .
- I learned my lesson the hard way!
- When I woke up yesterday morning, it was the year 1776 (1899, 3001 . . .).
- Life became interesting when we learned my little brother may never stop growing.
- I will never forget the day I became a whale (mole, giraffe, sea gull, ant . . .)
- When I saw the box begin to creep across the door, . . .
- Hearing a loud clicking noise in my yard, I rushed out to find a space capsule. As the top slowly opened, out popped . . .

The “Writing Well”

Directions:

1. You will find it helpful to keep your “Writing Well” in a spiral notebook for easy reference.
2. Use a separate page for each topic. You may use both front and back if you wish.
3. Before beginning, choose a topic and write it at the top of the page. Then set the timer; you will write for five full minutes.
4. The purpose of this exercise is to write down all the words, phrases, or sentences that come to mind about your chosen topic within the five minutes allotted.
5. If you get stuck, you can try several things. Picture the topic in your mind. Use your five senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell—to describe details. Ask yourself questions about the subject matter—who? what? when? where? why? how? Use a photograph or magazine picture to jog your thoughts.
6. At first this activity may seem difficult. “How can I write about one thing for five whole minutes?” Over time you will discover that it will become more natural to transfer ideas from your head to your paper.
7. Some of these exercises will lend themselves to becoming compositions. Put a colorful star at the top of the page if you might like to develop this into a paragraph or story.

General Topics

- my neighborhood (Sit on your front curb with your clipboard; set the timer and write about what you observe with your senses. You can do this in other places as well.)
- sounds (Take your clipboard someplace where you can hear different noises: the kitchen, the front yard, a parking lot, the beach . . . Set the timer and write about what you hear. Listen carefully for unusual or distant sounds.)
- a famous place I would like to visit
- a holiday
- a scary (embarrassing, funny, tense, memorable . . .) experience
- Alaska (Hawaii, California, Florida, New York . . .)
- animals (wild animals, farm animals, jungle animals, pets, birds, fish, insects . . .)
- autumn, winter, summer, or spring
- birthdays
- books
- chores
- collecting

- computers
- flowers (trees, weeds)
- games
- gardens (parks)
- heaven
- hobbies
- “I wish I could . . .”
- keeping promises
- music
- my childhood toys
- my dream car
- my family
- my favorite amusement park
- my favorite dream (craziest dream, funniest dream . . .)
- my favorite individual sport (skateboarding, rollerblading, skiing, swimming . . .)
- my favorite meal
- my favorite team sport (baseball, football, hockey, basketball, water polo . . .)
- my favorite things (or my special treasures)
- my favorite time of day
- my grandpa (grandma, aunt, uncle, cousin, brother, sister, mom, dad)
- obeying
- occupations
- our pantry (or our refrigerator)
- places I would like to visit
- rain
- Saturdays
- school
- snow
- sounds that make me happy (nervous, afraid . . .)
- special times with Mom (Dad, Grandma . . .)
- the beach (forest, desert, jungle, deserted island)
- the city
- the color “red” (orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, black, white, pink)
- the zoo (circus, farm)
- things I do to serve others

- things I like about myself
- things I would change about myself
- things that make me feel cozy
- “When I grow up . . .”
- why I like to daydream
- why my dad is a great man (or great father)

Inventions and more

- things I would like to invent
- invent a brand-new toy for a six-year-old
- invent a new breakfast food
- invent a new candy bar
- invent a new way of waking people in the morning
- invent the perfect mode of transportation, inside and out
- invent _____
- new uses for duct tape
- new uses for paper
- new uses for Scotch tape
- new uses for _____
- why you are suited for a particular job (baby-sitter, algebra tutor, lawn mower, baker, computer repair . . .)

What would happen if . . .

- cars (or clocks) ran backwards?
- everyone began growing younger after 30?
- spiders grew to four feet?
- people could walk through walls?
- you got stuck in an elevator?
- cars could fly?
- you could become invisible?
- you could read minds?
- your house began to float in the air?
- you had to live underwater?

Essay Topics

The following list of possible essay topics is by no means complete. End-of-chapter sections in history, literature, and science books often provide questions that would also make suitable essay topics. A subject your students are studying may offer an excellent launching place for an interesting essay. Their own life experiences will help contribute to their opinions on any number of topics.

Be aware that not every topic listed is suitable for every student. Several of the following ideas are more appropriate for high school students, since discussion of certain themes or subject matter requires the maturity, critical thinking skills, and acquired knowledge a younger student may still lack.

Explain to your students that they will not always have a choice of topics. You may select a certain topic for their essay based upon a current area of study, for example. In addition, when they write timed essays the subject will be given to them at that time.

Consider offering students a choice when possible, especially when giving timed essays. Select two topics from the following list and write them on the dry erase board. Try to choose fairly different topics, perhaps even taking them from different essay categories.

Essays That Persuade (Opinion Essays)

- Explain to a skeptic the advantages of homeschooling.
- Explain why children should obey their parents.
- Explain why mothers should/should not work outside the home.
- Explain why parents should/should not give their teenagers a curfew.
- Explain why cities should/should not have a curfew for teenagers.
- Explain why teenagers should/should not keep their rooms any way they wish.
- Explain why skateboarders/cyclists should/should not be required to wear helmets.
- Explain why young people should/should not have restricted social media access.
- Explain why the trades (sewing, cooking, electrical work, plumbing) should/should not be taught during school hours.
- Explain the advantages of having an adult mentor.
- Explain why minors should/should not be allowed unsupervised access to YouTube videos or streaming services.

¹ Credit for some essay topic ideas goes to *CHSPE: How to Prepare for the California High School Proficiency Examination* (Hauppauge, N.Y.: Barron's Educational Series, 1997).

- Explain why cats should/should not be licensed.
- Persuade a friend to choose veganism. Discuss the philosophy of the vegan lifestyle, offer background, and explain the advantages.
- Explain why young people should/should not receive an allowance.
- Explain why a particular hobby is beneficial or detrimental to the participant.
- Tell why it is important to graduate from high school (go to college, enlist in the armed forces, etc.).
- Explain why teens should/should not listen to classical music.
- Explain why physical education classes should/should not be mandatory for high school students.
- Explain how you have contributed positively to your community and/or family.
- Explain why teens should/should not work part time while attending high school.
- Write a letter to a friend persuading him or her to try something new (read for pleasure, join a club or organization, volunteer, play an instrument, etc.)
- Explain why on-line learning (or in-class learning) works to the student's advantage.
- Explain why the speed limit should/should not be set at 55 miles per hour.

Essays That Describe or Define

- Describe three qualities you look for in a friend and give examples of 1) how one friend exhibits each of them or 2) how each quality is exhibited by a different friend.
- Describe your best friend, the one with whom you can share your frustrations and triumphs. Who is this friend? How did you meet? What sets this friendship apart from others?
- Describe the characteristics of a good parent (teacher, coach, mentor, employee).
- Choose a person who has influenced your life. Tell how he or she inspired, affected, and/or impressed you.
- Describe the benefits of owning a pet, or explain how animals benefit society.
- Write an essay based on a famous quote.
- Describe three virtues or character traits you believe are necessary for successful living.
- Describe the qualities of a great role model.
- Describe your idea of the perfect vacation. Where would you go? What would you do there? Why would you enjoy this trip?

- Imagine that you are stranded on a desert island. If you could have only one person with you, whom would you choose, and why? How would you and your companion pass the time?
- Imagine that you must evacuate your home quickly without the possibility of ever returning. What three possessions would you choose to take with you? Explain the significance of each and tell why it is meaningful to you.
- Describe your favorite holiday. Explain what the holiday celebrates and what you do to celebrate it. Why is this holiday of special significance to you?
- Tell a favorite possession you treasured as a child. Describe its appearance. Tell why it was so important to you. What happened to it?
- What is your favorite book or movie? Explain why.
- Discuss the significance of a famous battle (Gettysburg, Bunker Hill, Waterloo).
- Define three characteristics of a great leader.
- Discuss what made George Washington (Ronald Reagan, etc.) a great president.
- Discuss the significance of the Statue of Liberty (Declaration of Independence, etc.).
- Discuss three examples of metaphors.
- Describe your favorite style of music in detail. Explain why you like it, what effect it has on your emotions, and what role it plays in your life.
- Describe the best gift you ever received. Who gave you the gift, and under what circumstances was it given to you? What made this gift special to you?
- Tell the story of your life as a reader. What were your earliest experiences with reading and books? What was your favorite book as a child? What role does reading play in your life today?
- People often have strong memories about a place where they lived or visited. Write about a place you particularly like and explain what you like about it. Describe one of your experiences visiting this place.
- If you had a million dollars to give to a charitable organization, what organization would you choose? Why? What would you expect them to do with the money?
- Describe your dream job. What are the responsibilities of the position? Explain what gifts or natural talents you possess that would make you well-suited to such a job. What training would you need to qualify for this position?
- Describe your favorite high school course/class. What made it interesting, inspiring, or fun? What role did the teacher play?
- If you were to run for political office, for what position would you choose to run, and why? What qualifications or skills would you bring to the job? What changes would you like to make once you are elected?

- If you could spend an afternoon with a famous person (dead or alive), whom would you choose? Why? What would you want to ask (or tell) him or her? Why?
- Most of us associate certain foods with special memories. Write a short essay about a food that brings back certain memories to you. Describe the food and when it was served to you. What memories does it trigger? How does it make you feel?
- If you could have lived in another era, what time period would you choose? Why? How would you have filled your time? What contribution would you like to have made to society?
- If you could live in another country, which one would you choose? Why? What landmarks or special places would you want to visit? What lifestyle or occupation would you like to have there?

Essays That Compare or Contrast

- Compare or contrast two national parks, theme parks, or vacation spots.
- Compare or contrast two gardening methods.
- Compare or contrast Mac computers with PCs.
- Compare or contrast two styles of ethnic or regional cooking (Japanese vs. Chinese, Southwest vs. Southeast, etc.).
- Compare or contrast two vintage automobiles.
- Compare or contrast soldiers' clothing during two different wars (or the clothing of soldiers on opposing sides of the same war).
- Compare or contrast women's fashions during two different decades.
- Compare or contrast two types of governments (republic vs. democracy; monarchy vs. dictatorship).
- Compare or contrast two decades or time periods (1950s vs. 1980s, the Romantic period vs. the Enlightenment).
- Compare or contrast the protagonists or antagonists from two different novels.
- Compare or contrast two artists from the same period (Impressionists, cubists, etc.).
- Compare or contrast two authors or poets from the same period (Neoclassical, Victorian, modern).
- Compare or contrast two wars.
- Compare or contrast two presidents (scientists, explorers).
- Compare or contrast two mythological Greek gods (Zeus and Apollo, Hera and Athena, etc.)
- Compare or contrast two different types of candy or desserts.

- Compare or contrast two different vacation spots. (the beach vs. the mountains, Paris vs. Las Vegas, etc.)
- Compare or contrast two philosophies or ideologies (socialism vs. capitalism).
- Compare or contrast your way of life with another's (Amish teen, tribal villager).
- Compare or contrast homeschool and public school or private school vs. public school.
- Compare or contrast two different kings from history (King Henry vs. King Louis the XIV).
- Compare or contrast Greek and Roman culture.
- Compare or contrast two different video games or gaming platforms.
- Compare or contrast a movie with the book on which it was based.
- Compare or contrast one of your siblings and a famous person.
- Compare or contrast your bedroom and a friend's bedroom.
- Contrast two different social media platforms.
- Contrast old-fashioned ways with modern conveniences (candle/electric lamp, horse/car, washing dishes or clothes by hand/using a dishwasher or washing machine).
- Contrast living in the city with living in the country.

Writing a Research Report

When students enter high school, they should become familiar with the process of writing a research report. Their first efforts need only be short reports of one to three pages, using two to four resources. Encourage them to explore and utilize a variety of media, including books, periodicals, newspapers, encyclopedias, almanacs, videos, and the Internet. In particular, do not let them overuse the Internet. Teach them the old-fashioned art of using the library and its vast resources.

You can find many excellent resources in school supply stores, curriculum catalogs, and the library. Choose one of these to teach your students to research, take notes, outline, and write a bibliography, as well as to write the report itself.

Because of this wealth of available material, we have opted not to teach advanced report writing in WriteShop. With the tools students have learned, they may confidently write more extensive papers. However, we have provided you with some specific helps for editing, proofreading, and polishing a long report.

Writing the Final Draft

After all their hard work researching, preparing note cards, and writing the rough draft, the time will finally come for your students to polish their reports and turn in the finished products. Encourage them to do the following:

1. After you (the teacher) edit the report and make suggestions for improvement, students should neatly rewrite (preferably type) a revised version.
2. Have them print a copy of the report and read it aloud to an adult OR suggest that they ask someone to read it aloud to them.
3. Have them listen for repeated words and obvious grammatical errors, like run-on sentences or punctuation problems.
4. Have them listen also for any errors in style.
5. Give them the Problem Solving Chart (Appendix B-24 to B-26) to help find errors and make corrections. Write corrections *directly on the printed copy*. If they need to move sentences or paragraphs around, use arrows to show the new placement.
6. Once they have finished proofreading their papers, they should make these corrections on the computer and print a fresh copy.
7. Have them repeat Steps 3 and 4 above. By now, they should have to make only minor changes on their papers.
8. Finally, they may insert these new changes into the computer and print the final copy.

Presenting an Attractive Report

1. Students should neatly type or neatly write their reports on fresh, unwrinkled paper.
2. All corrections and erasures must be clean. If they use white-out to correct errors, it must not be thick, lumpy, or show through. Suggest using a dry-line correction tape for a cleaner look.
3. Maps, charts, and other photocopied material and visuals must also be clear, sharp, neat, and attractive. Students should also present this material on fresh, unwrinkled paper.
4. Remind them to place their report in a 3-pronged or other report folder and not to insert any material into pockets.
5. The report should be assembled in the following order:
 - Title page
 - Report
 - Visuals (visuals may also be inserted within the report, if appropriate)
 - Bibliography

Problem Solving Chart for Reports

To the student

At this stage of editing, it is often helpful to pair up with an adult who can help you proofread and trouble-shoot.

1. First, glance through the problems listed on the following pages.
2. Next, ask an adult to read your report aloud to you.
3. As you listen to the report, note places where some of these problems appear, and make appropriate changes.
4. You should plan to go through this process a few times. The first time, listen to see how the report flows. Does it make sense? Does it sound interesting? Does any information need to be explained better? Each time, listen for something different, like vague or repeated words, grammatical errors, sentence structure.
5. Finally, read through the report one last time to look for visual errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and proper format.

Problem	Solution
Vague, dull, or unclear wording.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your thesaurus to find interesting synonyms. • Reword the sentence so it makes more sense.
Repetition of main words. (Note: In a long report, some repetition is expected. You should notice when repetition becomes bothersome.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your thesaurus to find synonyms. • If the <u>main word is a location</u>, try to think of other ways to name it now and then (for example: New York City, the “Big Apple,” downtown, the city . . .). • If the <u>main word is a person’s name</u>, use variations (for instance: Babe Ruth, “The Babe,” this baseball great, the slugger, Ruth, Babe . . .). • Don’t overdo variations. Some repetition is expected.
The first <u>sentence</u> of each <u>paragraph</u> tends to start with the same (or similar) word. OR The first <u>word</u> of each <u>sentence</u> tends to be repeated (“the,” “her,” “Lincoln,” etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence variations will solve this problem. You probably began too many sentences with a subject, instead of using a participle, adverb, or preposition.

Problem	Solution
<p>Facts do not seem to flow logically.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Some thoughts do not make sense.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try moving sentences around. • Try moving whole paragraphs around. • You may need to restate a fact in a clearer way. • You may need to add more information. • You may need to use transition words. • You may need to eliminate some information if it just does not seem to fit anywhere.
<p>The content of the report seems dull and uninteresting when read aloud.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more human interest, like a story, legend, or intriguing quotation. • Be descriptive of people, places, scenery, actions. (Just because this is a report, don't forget to use all your tools of creative, descriptive writing.) • Use more concrete, colorful wording. Choose vivid, specific nouns, adjectives, and verbs. • Look for places where you stated facts but did not add interesting details . . . then add some! • Your readers want <u>more</u> than facts. <u>If you wrote a biography</u>, they want to feel like they know your subject's likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams, personality, and character qualities, not just when he or she was born, went to school, and worked. • <u>If you are describing an incident</u>, whether a battle or a baseball game, write about it using the five senses to help your reader experience the sights, sounds, etc., of the event. • <u>If you are writing about a technical subject</u>, it is more difficult to make it appealing. It is especially important to use interesting words. Pull out that <i>Synonym Finder!</i> Or, perhaps you can relate a story about a person in that field of study, or an interesting related discovery that has affected the world! Make sure your report is more than just a string of facts.

Problem	Solution
The report sounds monotonous when read aloud.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again, check to see if you wrote too many subject-verb sentences, rather than using other sentence types. • Vary your <u>sentence structure</u>; you most likely did not use enough variations, such as beginning a sentence with paired adjectives or with a prepositional phrase. • Remember to use adverb phrases, appositives, and participial phrases to make your sentences more appealing. • Vary <u>sentence lengths</u>. Too many of similar length can produce a monotonous-sounding composition.
Too many short, choppy sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine some of these sentences, turning two short sentences into one longer sentence.
Long, rambling sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break overly long sentences into two or more shorter ones. • Watch for wordiness. Eliminate unnecessary words. • Make sure you do not have any run-on sentences.
Transitions from one paragraph to another do not seem smooth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you have placed information in the right order. Sometimes switching the order of your facts or moving paragraphs around will help. • Use the “Transition Words” list to help you find just the right word to tie two paragraphs together. • This list will help you link both related <i>and</i> unrelated thoughts, as well as similar ideas with contrasting ones.
Errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you read aloud, do you need to place a comma wherever you pause within a sentence? • Is your ending punctuation correct? • Double-check questionable spellings in a dictionary. • Proofread for words that spellcheck will miss. These are usually typed errors (like <i>to</i> for <i>too</i>, <i>tow</i> for <i>two</i>, <i>on</i> for <i>of</i>, <i>go</i> for <i>got</i>, <i>hit</i> for <i>hint</i>, <i>form</i> for <i>from</i>, or <i>mild</i> for <i>milk</i>).