

INTRODUCTION

Dear Student,

Welcome. I am glad you are here. I think maybe I've seen your type before. Writing comes easy for you. It captures and holds your interest. You dream of becoming an author someday. You pen letters and stories and dash off a bit of poetry as well. The ease of writing persuades and charms you into the future. I might have a few literary techniques to teach you. We'll get your ideas out into the world. Come along!

But maybe that's not you. I've also seen your type before. Composition has always been stifling to you. Trapped, you stare at the blank page rebelling against feeling anything. Do you feel like there is no way that words on a paper will express your feelings and experiences correctly? I understand. I think you have valuable things to write, though. Perhaps you need some encouragement in writing practice. As a writer myself, I care about the success of your writing. What if you would just write with us a couple times a week. Could you do that?

Writing is a learned skill, no matter how easy or hard it is for you to express yourself. God used writing to preserve His Word and He asks us to handle our words with care, precision, and joy. The first step to becoming a good writer is to notice the notable and commonplace around you. Look for sparkles in life and acknowledge the sad things. Write about them all. We need to draft words that resonate with people and bring change.

This book is the perfect writing tool for you to pick up. With consistent practice, your writing will develop a sparkle and shine. I love making lists, so we've got some dandy ideas to list about. We've got easy sentences to practice on, some wily words to catch, and some punchy paragraphs to craft. With some book excerpts from classics to delve into and surprise riddles to concoct, you're always interacting with words. There's a little sketching and doodling if you care to, plus easy poetry to model.

Open the book with me, let's look for the sparkles.

-Jennifer Goder



Hi, my name is Clive, in honor of a well known Christian author who never used his first name, and here is what I think:

"Write about what interests you, whether it is real things or imaginary things, and nothing else. (Notice this means that if you are interested in only writing you will never be a writer, because you have nothing to write about...) - C.S. Lewis

INSTRUCTIONS

There are three basic kinds of lessons in this writing course. Each lesson will be labeled with one of the following kinds of lessons: (1) Free Writing, (2) Reading Responses, and (3) Mini Writing Lesson exercises.

Free Writing is a technique used to help you get comfortable with writing whatever you want to. You are expected to write non-stop for a set amount of time (eight minutes or ten minutes, whatever the teacher requires). Write whatever comes to your mind. Normally, the free-writing lessons will have a writing prompt, a picture, a poem, or a question for you to respond to. If, however, you'd rather write about a different subject, that is ok too! If you run out of words in your mind, fill in with, "What shall I write next, what shall I write next, what shall I write next," till your creative juices get flowing again. Eventually some other topic will come to your mind!

Reading Response lessons are to help you analyze other people's writings, and critically think about the given situation. It is good to constantly have wholesome literature in front of us, and this is one way we can do that. Also, we wanted a way for you as students to develop critical thinking skills. One way to do that is to write a response to what you just read. Writing is thinking in this case and it helps summarize your opinions about the writing. We also want you to be able to discern between light and darkness spiritually, especially in reading materials. Is it "first pure, then peaceable, of good report. . ." (Phil. 4:8)?

The Mini Lesson Writing activities are geared toward fun writing experiences where you have to get out of your box for a bit and try something new! Some lessons might be similar to what you learn in English Class. All the better! It'll help you know how to make English class a really good experience for yourself, your classmates, and your teacher. Some of the writing activities are labeled with a symbol  that stands for a "gold piece". Those are the written pieces that we want you to edit and polish until they're perfected and you are satisfied. It also gives something for the teacher to put a grade on in your report card.

A story writing project combines lessons 60-62. We will guide you through the creative process so you end up with a great story. You can go check it out now. We are excited about the adventure you will have with your character.

Another thing. . . whenever you see this symbol  it means it's a friends lesson. You get to pull aside a friend and do the lesson together! Remember that when you do it with a friend, only help each other think - don't copy each other's work.

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LESSON 1

ASSIGNMENT: MINI WRITING EXERCISE

Write an “all about me” acrostic.

Make an acrostic with your name. Use phrases beginning with each letter to describe yourself. If your first name has six or fewer letters, add your last name.

Read the example, then you try it!

Talented with inventing things

Happiest when surrounded by chickens

Eats popcorn by the bucketful

Owens a python snake for a pet

Daring swimmer

Opinionated about Paul Bunyan

Red-headed

Eeyore liker

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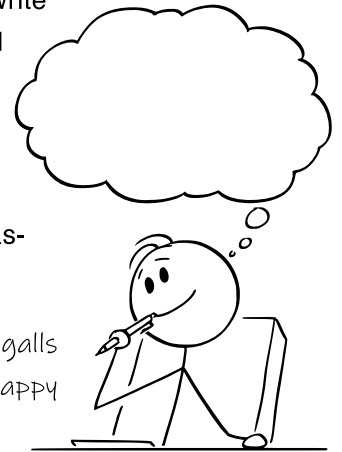
LESSON 2

ASSIGNMENT: FREE WRITING

Today, write whatever comes to your mind. Start out by writing phrases, words, exclamations, stories, opinions. After a while your thoughts will be more continuous. If you get stuck not knowing what to write next, simply pen a few phrases like the following: What shall I write next? What shall I write next? What shall I write next? Soon a new idea will come to mind. In free writing lessons you don't need to worry too much about correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure, but do make it readable.

Free writing starter question: How do you feel right now? Start by writing at least five phrases that describe how you feel.

I feel "stick-to-my-seat" warm, with an ice cream brain freeze. I feel like Laura Ingalls wilder when she met Nellie Olson. I feel like I'm rolling on cracker crumbs. I feel happy because I get to run races with my brother Joel tonight...

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LESSON 3

ASSIGNMENT: MINI WRITING EXERCISE

NAME _____ DATE _____

Write the reasons, or pros and cons, for having a smart phone. Here you don't need to worry about grammar and punctuation. Write phrases and bursts of ideas under the headings. Team up with a friend and see what you can come up with.

Write a list of five reasons why everyone should have a smart phone.

Write a list of five reasons why everyone should not have a smart phone.



Now, in the space below, draw a smart phone.

LESSON 4

ASSIGNMENT: READING RESPONSE

NAME _____ DATE _____

Read:

“...Very soon she heard the soft rustling flight of wings again and she knew at once that the robin had come again. He was very pert and lively, and hopped about so close to her feet, and put his head on one side and looked at her so slyly that she asked Ben Weatherstaff a question.

“Do you think he remembers me?” she said.

“Remembers thee!” said Weatherstaff indignantly. “He knows every cabbage stump in th’ gardens, let alone th’ people. He’s never seen a little wench here before, an’ he’s bend on findin’ out all about thee. Tha’s no need to try to hide anything from him.”

“Are things stirring down below in the garden where he lives?” Mary inquired.

“What garden?” grunted Weatherstaff, becoming surly again.

“The one where the old rose trees are.” She could not help asking, because she wanted so much to know. “Are all the flowers dead, or do some of them come up again in the summer? Are there ever any roses?”

“Ask him,” said Ben Weatherstaff, hunching his shoulders toward the robin. “He’s the only one as knows. No one else has seen inside it for ten year.”

Ten years is a long time, Mary thought. She had been born ten years ago.

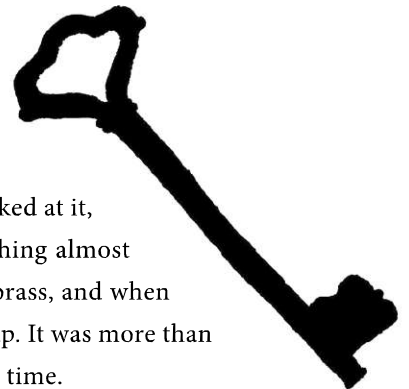
She walked away, slowly thinking. She had begun to like the garden just as she had begun to like the robin and Dickon and Martha’s mother...

.....

The robin hopped over a small pile of freshly turned up earth. He stopped on it to look for a worm. The earth had been turned up because a dog had been trying to dig up a mole and he had scratched quite a deep hole. Mary looked at it, not really knowing why the hole was there, and as she looked she saw something almost buried in the newly-turned soil. It was something like a ring of rusty iron or brass, and when the robin flew up into a tree nearby she put out her hand and picked the ring up. It was more than a ring, however; it was an old key which looked as if it had been buried a long time.

Mistress Mary stood up and looked at it with an almost frightened face as it hung from her finger. “Perhaps it has been buried for ten years,” she said in a whisper. “Perhaps it is the key to the garden!”

-EXCERPT FROM *THE SECRET GARDEN* BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT, CHAPTER 7



Answer the following questions:

1. Who do you think Ben Weatherstaff was?
2. What is the author telling you by using the term “wench” for Mary in the third paragraph?
3. Why do you think Mary wanted to get inside this garden?
4. Have you ever talked to a bird or an animal? Write a short dialogue that you could have had with a pet or animal.

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LESSON 5

ASSIGNMENT:
MINI WRITING EXERCISE

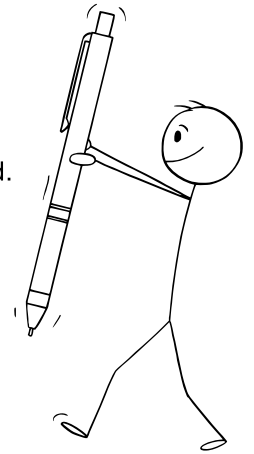
NAME _____ DATE _____

One writing skill that is important to develop is the use of concrete, specific nouns. Good writers use exact nouns to create scenes in your mind instead of general nouns. These nouns make your writing vivid and convey exactly what you want it to. Notice the difference specific nouns make in the following sentences:

We picked flowers and had fun with them.

We picked dandelions and painted our faces yellow

Today, practice replacing the common nouns with better choices. You may work with a friend.



1. **House:** mansion, igloo, Uncle Tom's Cabin, abode, flat, tepee

2. **Child:** toddler, infant, youngster, pupil, ragamuffin, lass

3. **Bang:** pop, crash, _____

4. **Piece of wood:** splinter, log, _____

5. **Bird:** flamingo, _____

6. **Way:** highway, lane, _____

Now, finish out this lesson by revising these bland sentences. Replace these boring nouns with the best from your list above. You will have a much more concrete and interesting word picture.

A piece of wood lay across the way leading through the woods to the house. As the child climbed over it, a bird called as if to say, "Stop! Stop! Look out!"

[illegible]