

INTRODUCTION . . .

Dear Students,

Welcome to writing class! Writing happens all the time. It happens when you chalk out a pretend story on the sidewalk, journal how you feel, make lists of what to take on vacation, or design a card for Grandma. Swirls, flourishes, and swoops characterize your handwriting and give your letters and lists a personal feel.

I began noticing how people write when I was in sixth grade. I read reports that other people had written and thought, "surely this doesn't have to be so boring! Why does everyone write the same old way?" So I began rethinking how to begin my reports and essays. I wrote stories in my spare time. I poured my heart into every paper I handed into the teacher. Once my teacher wrote back to me in a note, "Jennifer, someday you'll be an author of a book. I hope to read it." I was stunned. Could I be a writer? Although that note went to my head, one positive thing it did was give me the encouragement I needed to pursue writing with a passion. Later that same teacher gave me an editing book to help me along even more. She was the biggest instrument in helping me get several stories published and in pushing me towards writing.

Writing is not confined to stodgy blank pages and reports for science. Writing is observation and creativity. Ask yourself, "How can I word this in a way that is fresh? How can I convey my message in a way that nobody else has before"? It makes you start looking at life through a new lens. When you write creatively, you try to write with interest, pop, and reality. The mundane can become fascinating depending on how we portray it.

Write things down! That is one way to become a good writer. Recording details, conversations, article titles, funny happenings, and things you like or dislike suddenly becomes your "writer's ammunition". You have a wealth of true-to-life tidbits to add to any non-fiction or fiction writing. It's authentic. It's you.

Another way to become a good writer is to observe how others do it. When you read something, notice how you feel about it. Did it bore you and make you toss it aside with a sigh? Or did you reread parts, cling to every word, and formulate a response in your mind? If you did the latter, take note of how that author did it. What style of sentences did he use? What word choices? How can I do that?

Writing doesn't come easily or naturally all the time. But it's something that is worth doing with your whole heart. The more you write, the more comfortable you'll be and success will come quickly. This creative writing course is designed to add some fun and flair to the writing process, divided into small, manageable lessons. I hope you enjoy it! Live with your eyes wide open. Acknowledge the Creator of life. And write with gusto.

Practice makes perfect,


~Jennifer Goder

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 like 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 so he/she can record in your report card that you have been doing good writing.

Normally, the lesson plans follow this order: Free writing, Mini Writing Lesson, Reading Response, Mini Writing Lesson, Mini Writing Lesson. . .


Another thing. . . whenever you see this symbol  it means that 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 5

ASSIGNMENT:
MINI WRITING EXERCISE

NAME _____ DATE _____

Today, practice writing strong, concrete nouns to be more specific instead of dull and vague. Here is an example of a dull noun in a sentence: The *flower* shone triumphantly. Here is an example of the same noun replaced with a specific noun: The *Tiger Lily* shone triumphantly.

Strong, concrete nouns give your sentence clearness and spark your audience's interest. Practice replacing vague nouns with concrete nouns.

1. **House:** Example – mansion, igloo, Uncle Tom's Cabin, abode, flat, tepee
2. **Child:** Example – toddler, infant, youngster, pupil, ragamuffin, lass
3. **Bang:** Example – pop, crash _____, _____
_____, _____, _____
4. **Piece of wood:** Example – splinter, log, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____
5. **Bird:** Example – flamingo, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____
6. **Way:** Example – highway, lane, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____

Now, finish out this lesson by writing sentences. ☺

Write a sentence that uses the word "bang" in it. Then dress up the sentence by replacing it with one of your examples. Do the same for the rest of the words. See the difference that using concrete nouns makes?

LESSON 6

ASSIGNMENT: MINI WRITING EXERCISE

NAME _____ DATE _____

Today, learn the benefits of using a thesaurus. As you may already know, a thesaurus is a book that has lists of synonyms for the given word. Any writer should use this little book to find the perfect word for his writing. Get used to using a thesaurus almost every time you write. It helps make your writing specific and interesting.

Look up the following words, and add three synonyms to the group of words.

1. Happy, delighted, merry, satisfied
2. Pretty, attractive, handsome, elegant
3. Fast, _____, _____, _____
4. Head, _____, _____, _____
5. Grim, _____, _____, _____
6. Fastidious, _____, _____, _____
7. Lethargic, _____, _____, _____
8. Flamboyant, _____, _____, _____
9. Coax, _____, _____, _____
10. Apparatus, _____, _____, _____

When you are finished, pick twelve random words from your list. Assemble them into four groups. Then write a sentence with each group using all three of the words.

Example sentence using synonyms for happy and pretty:

Our merry chorister gave a satisfied smile after we sang an elegant new song.

LESSON 7

ASSIGNMENT:
FREE WRITING

NAME _____ DATE _____

What matters to you?

The souvenir from the Grand Canyon, my collection of rocks, my pocket knife, my Raggedy Ann doll I don't play with anymore, cotton candy, Ronald my pet chicken, a killdeer nest I just found, hearing mom say, "time to get up, its daylight in the swamp!", the memory of dad taking me fishing, mint ice-cream... these all matter to me.

Give yourself a shady circle of lawn and at least five minutes to think before you start writing. Be specific!

To expand the lesson after the free writing is done...

Write why you like five of the things you wrote down.

LESSON 8

ASSIGNMENT: MINI WRITING EXERCISE

NAME _____ DATE _____

A well-developed paragraph is a small piece of writing consisting of at least five good sentences. A paragraph includes a topic sentence which states the main idea and is usually at the beginning. The rest of the sentences support, explain, and develop the topic sentence. A summarizing sentence should be at the end of the paragraph to tie all the sentences together.

Example paragraph:

Question: What are the benefits of peanut butter?

Paragraph:

I think that one of the most important benefits of peanut butter is its excellent taste. A chocolate, peanut butter s'more is one of the best foods in the world because it's creamy, smooth, and slides down your throat into a begging tummy. Peanut butter also gives you energy to go fishing, do chores, or ride bike. It can even calm your nerves before you give a speech in front of your classmates. I definitely think that everyone should like peanut butter!



You try it! Don't forget to start out with a strong topic sentence, and end your paragraph with a summarizing sentence. Use your imagination, add your opinion to the paragraph, create reasons for why you agree or disagree, or write observations on the subject.

Question: Do you think that there are more libraries in the United States, or more McDonald's?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page or a sheet of stationery.

STUDENT TIP:

This is a gold piece lesson. Restudy, edit, and revise your work. Refer to the rubric on the back page on the book for writing tips. Please write the final draft on the following blank page for your teacher to grade.

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