

AMERICAN LITERATURE

Level 430



FUN FACT

Robert Burns composed a poem speaking to a louse crawling in a woman's hair.



Flint Hills
Alma, Kansas

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questions?**

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have answers.

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Literature Language Arts

American Literature

By the Sonlight Team

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’”

Genesis 1:26 (NIV)

Sonlight Curriculum® 430 “American Literature” Parent Guide and Notes,
Sixth Edition

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“Do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12).

“The worker is worth his keep” (Matthew 10:10).

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8042 South Grant Way
Littleton, CO 80122-2705
USA

Phone (303) 730-6292 Fax (303) 795-8668

E-mail: main@sonlight.com

NOTE TO PURCHASER

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Instructor’s Guide Overview

We’ve designed your Sonlight Instructor’s Guide (IG) to make your educational experience as straightforward and helpful as possible. We have carefully organized your materials to help you and your children get the most out of the subjects covered. For help reading your schedule, see **“How to Use the Schedule”** page just before Week 1.

Your IG includes an entire 36-week schedule of all the books you’ll read, followed by notes, assignments, readings, and other educational activities. For specific organizational tips, topics and skills addressed, the timeline figure schedule, and other suggestions for you, take a look at some of the great resources in **Section Three** so you’ll know what’s there and can turn to this section when needed.

If you are new to Sonlight this year, please look in **Section Four**, where you’ll find helpful resources for new users including tips for getting organized, ideas for adapting the curriculum to your needs, record keeping suggestions, an overview of the structure of your Instructor’s Guide, and more.

What helpful features can you expect from your IG?

First, everything you need is located right after your schedule each week. If a note appears about a concept in a book, it’s easy to find it right after your schedule on the day the relevant reading is scheduled.

Second, using the blank maps provided, students will plot assigned locations for each book. Map answer keys are located in Section Three of the Parent’s Instructor’s Guide.

Third, your Instructor’s Guide includes a complete ready-to-use 5-Day schedule, which has been carefully planned to optimize use of the curriculum resources.

Fourth, “To Discuss After You Read” sections help you hone in on the basics of a book so you can easily gauge how well your children have comprehended the book. The questions are numbered to help you reference between the Parent Guide and the Student Guide.

Fifth, “Vocabulary” includes terms related to cultural literacy and general usage terms [words printed in **bold**] in one easy-to-find place.

Sixth, notes labeled **“Rationale”** contain information about specific books to help you know why we’ve selected a particular resource and what we trust children will gain from reading it. Other notes marked with **“Note to Mom or Dad”** will provide you with insights on more difficult concepts or content from some books.

Finally, don’t forget to have fun as you learn at home together!

About “American Literature”

For a nation that hasn’t yet reached its 300th year, America has contributed a great deal of powerful literature to the world. *430 American Literature* provides an engaging opportunity for students to read the authors they should know before leaving high school.

We’ve included more than a dozen award-winning books. A sampling of what students will encounter includes *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain; *The Best Short Stories of O. Henry*; the play *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder; *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck; *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller; *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*; *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne; and other literature including a selection of poetry in *100 Best-Loved Poems*. Interspersed among some heavier classics are more recent works such as the engaging science fiction story *Ender’s Game*, as well as *The Elements of Style*—a fantastic resource for improving writing skills.

Further Assistance

We trust you will heartily enjoy your homeschool journey with your children. If we can be of further assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact us or visit our Sonlight Connections Community (sonlight.com/connections). This community of Sonlighter’s provides a place for you to interact with other homeschoolers, seek advice, offer your insights, give words of encouragement and more.

We also recommend that you visit sonlight.com/subscribe to sign up for our free email newsletter. When you sign up, you’ll receive regular homeschool encouragement, news, announcements and be the first to know about Sonlight’s special offers. ■

Section Two

Schedule and Notes

How to Use the Schedule

Write in the week's date for your records.

The 🗺️ symbol indicates you will find a map assignment in the notes for that day.

The 🕒 symbol indicates there is a timeline suggestion in the notes for that day.

Additional space for your record keeping.

130 Parent Guide Days 1–5
Literature / Language Arts Date: _____ to _____

Week 1

Date:	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Literature					
<i>Peace Child</i>	chaps. 1–2 🗺️🕒	chaps. 3–4	chap. 5 🕒	chaps. 6–7 🗺️🕒	chaps. 8–9
<i>A Treasury of Poetry for Young People</i>	pp. 9–13	p. 14	p. 15	pp. 16–17	
Language Arts					
Creative Expression	Literary Analysis Overview & Two Perspectives 📖				
Spelling					
Alternative Spelling	Pretest	Write	Write	Sentences	Posttest
Optional: Wordly Wise 3000 Book 8	Lesson 1A		Lesson 1B		Lesson 1C
Other Notes					

Peace Child

Day 1 Chapters 1–2

Initial Comments

Note to Mom or Dad: Please be aware that the people group in this book, the Savi of New Guinea, engage in killing, cannibalism, and horrible acts with corpses. These acts are described to share the experiences of the author. Why include a book with such incredible darkness? Because the light of God shines brighter, and He can completely change a culture.

Overview

Although chronologically this book takes place near the end of American history studies (in the 1960s), the people group the Richardsons went to lived a primitive life, a Stone Age existence, probably similar to how some of the original inhabitants of America lived. Hence, we include this in the beginning of the course to correspond to readings on the first settlers on the North American continent. The power of the Gospel transforms. Prepare to be amazed.

When Don Richardson and his wife and growing family go to live among a cannibal tribe in New Guinea, they need to find a connection to the people, a “redemptive analogy.” The Savi valued treachery above all other “virtues,” so in their view, Judas was the hero. But when Don demanded peace, or he (and his axes) would leave, the enemy peoples each took a child and exchanged them. As long as these adopted children lived,

📖 Note to Mom or Dad 🗺️ Map Point 🕒 Timeline Suggestion

American Historical Literature | Parent Guide | Section Two | Week 1 | 1

More notes with important information about specific books.

The 📖 symbol on the Schedule provides you with a heads-up about difficult content. We tell you within the notes what to expect and often suggest how to talk about it with your kids.

Week 1					
Date:	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Literature					
<i>The Elements of Style</i>	chap. 1 #1–2				
<i>How to Read a Book</i>	chaps. 1–2; pp. 222–228	chaps. 3–4	chap. 5	chap. 6	chap. 7
<i>100 Best-Loved Poems</i>	“Lord Randal” p. 1		“Sir Patrick Spens” pp. 2–4		“The Lover ...” pp. 4–5
Language Arts					
<i>On Writing Well</i>	Intro. and chap. 1	chap. 11			
Creative Expression			The Common Application: prep work	The Common Application: first draft	Optional: Write, rest or respond
Other Notes					

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The Elements of Style

Day 1 Chapter 1 #1–2

Introductory Comments by Amy Lykosh

Cornell Professor William Strunk, Jr. taught E.B. White (*Charlotte’s Web, Stuart Little*), using a self-published little book as a text. After Strunk’s death, White edited that little book. With over ten million copies in print, *Time* magazine listed *The Elements of Style* as one of the 100 best and most influential books written in English since 1923. It is a best seller, a classic, a guide to good writing.

My junior year of high school, the teacher assigned this book. I enjoyed it then.

Fifteen years later, I reread it, and continue to find most of the directives spot on. Of course we should omit needless words. The active voice (which I didn’t really understand until college) captivates the reader and is more precise. The last word in a sentence holds the most power.

You may need to come to terms with some of the grammar words. Note the Glossary in the back, to help refresh your memory about appositives, modal auxiliaries, and nonrestrictive modifiers, among others. The examples define both the problem and solution in most cases, though: unfamiliar vocabulary should not hinder your understanding too much.

This is, perhaps, the classic practical book for good writing. If you study this book and use it, your writing will improve. I hope you read through it carefully, and refer to it often.

How to Read a Book

Day 1 Chapters 1–2; pp. 222–228

Introductory Comments

Yay! Welcome to a new year of great books and learning! This year has fabulous books, and I am excited to walk through them with you!

As a college prep course, one of the things I hope you take away from this literature class is how to read, and how to digest, a book. Right around the time I went to college, I found *The New Lifetime Reading Plan* by Clifton Fadiman and John Major, and being both a list person and a book person, I set out to read as many of the books as I could. College was a great time for that: looking back, I had more free time in college than at any other point.

But what I found, as I read the classics on my own, was that I had no framework to really process a book. I would get to the end of, say, *The Iliad*, and gasp over the beauty of the final line (with my book in storage, something like, “Thus was the end of Hector, breaker of horses”). I would read the little commentary notes in my *Lifetime Reading Plan*, and move on.

I read Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, but it seemed only like beautiful words, connected in a pleasant flow. Somehow I missed the underlying meaning. The same with *The Brothers Karamazov*: I’m embarrassed to say that I was more concerned with finding out the identity of the murderer than with understanding what Dostoevsky was trying to say.

At one point, too, I realized that I had allowed Fadiman and Major to be my literary tutors without allowing myself the courage to say, “I don’t care that ‘everyone’ thinks this book is a classic. It contains much immorality of the basest sort, and I am not interested in filling my mind with such.” How did I somehow overlook the reality that some books would take me where I didn’t wish to go?

Which is to say that I have had my eyes run along the pages of a good many great books, so I could call myself reasonably well read. However, as for wrestling with those books, or internalizing their messages, either incorporating or rejecting what they have to say—well, I missed that. Until the flurry of the child-raising years are done, I doubt I will have much time to revisit the classics on a deeper level.

You have the time! I am thrilled that you are about to start this course, to read not only great classics of American literature, but to practice really thinking about them, figuring out what they say and mean.

So while this book is not the most enticing (as it is devoid of plot), it may be the most important book in this course. I hope it will change the way you read, both for this course and in your future.

This book is challenging. We start the year off with it, because the other books we read will be richer for having read this one.

But please don’t take this book as indicative of either the level of delight, nor the difficulty of reading. Most of the rest of the books this year are a good bit higher on the “delight” scale, and a good bit easier to read.

So don’t be alarmed if some of these assignments might take you a bit longer than a normal English assignment might. (Perhaps you’ll have some extra homework.) Expect it! This is an intensive introduction, and the authors are writing on a high level.

And we won’t read beginning to end; after the ground-work is laid, we’ll put into practice what we’ve learned here with readings in the various types of literature: mostly fiction, but some biography, social studies, and such, too.

To Discuss After You Read

Notes: “[T]oo many facts are often as much of an obstacle to understanding as too few” (4). Interesting that over 60 years later, Malcolm Gladwell, in his fascinating book *Blink*, says the same thing. He gives multiple examples of cases where the more details are known, the more errors come. For example, one professor realized that he could analyze whether a couple was headed for divorce almost immediately. If a couple showed signs of contempt, that was a death knell for the relationship. However, looking at all the other data (how tense they appeared, how angry their voices sounded) did not aid the analysis, but covered it. More information was not helpful.

1. How is reading like a pitcher, catcher, and baseball? [chap. 1] ➔ *the reader is like a ball being thrown, but like a catcher, working in concert with the pitcher-author; both are vital to the game; the main difference is that the ball is entirely caught or missed, while in reading, the reader may catch all, part, or none of what the author intends to express*
2. Is it best to understand a book thoroughly as you read? [chap. 1] ➔ *not necessarily: you may have gained a bit of information, but not an increase in understanding*
3. How do you read for understanding? [chap. 1] ➔ *take the portion of the book you don’t understand and, using the book and your mind, you lift yourself from “a state of understanding less to understanding more” (7)*

For years, I read the Bible and relied on sermons or “experts” to help me understand what I read. To read it, instead, so that it defines itself, was revolutionary for me. How does the Bible define the kingdom of God? Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (as the KJV says). If a wife is a crown to her husband, how else is crown used in the Bible? You might try it: a great way to put reading for understanding into practice.

4. What is the difference between learning for entertainment, for instruction, and for understanding? [chap. 1] ➔ *entertainment is pleasurable, and may not have anything to teach; instruction is informative, and the end result is a greater collection of facts; when reading for understanding, the author begins with greater understanding, and the reader with less, though by the end, the reader hopes to have gained most or all of the author’s understanding; this is the most difficult, and most rewarding, of the types of reading*
5. How are medicine, agriculture, and teaching similar? [chap. 1] ➔ *in each, the practitioner helps another: the doctor helps the patient, the farmer the crops and animals, the teacher the student*

6. How do aided and unaided discovery differ? [chap. 1] ➔ **aided:** *uses teaching or instruction; unaided:* *applies to additional research, investigation, and reflection*
7. The remainder of the book will flesh out the four levels of reading, but for now: what are they? [chap. 2] ➔ *elementary, inspectional, analytical, syntopical*
8. What are the rules for reading Lyric Poetry? [pp. 222–228] ➔ *read all the way through without stopping, even if you don't understand it, and read it aloud*
9. What should the reader watch for, in reading poetry? [pp. 222–228] ➔ *what words pop out at you, whether through rhythm or rhyme, repetition; what is the main conflict (either explicit or implicit); revisit the best poems, and don't be too concerned about knowing much biographical information about the author*

Emphasis can certainly change the meaning of a sentence. Perhaps my favorite example of this is the sentence, “You spent what for that dress?” Emphasis on You means, “The price you paid really surprises me based on what I know about your normal shopping habits” (either because the dress was so expensive, or so cheap). Emphasis on what means, “That’s a ridiculous amount of money to pay for that dress.” Emphasis on that is about the dress itself: either the dress is so far superior to its price, or so far inferior, that the speaker is shocked.

Day 2	Chapters 3–4
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To Discuss After You Read

10. What are the stages of learning to read? ➔ *1) reading readiness, in which the physical body and the mind develop, usually in preschool and kindergarten; 2) basic reading, in which simple words are sounded out, around first grade; 3) increasing abilities in reading, with greater vocabulary and in different genres, both for education and for fun, which is about fourth grade competency; 4) to ability to cross-pollinate, in a way, what is read, to compare and contrast various reading materials, achieved around the start of high school*

Notes: Perhaps the best argument for doing the Pre-Reading in inspectional reading is this: “[Readers who do not] are thus faced with the task of achieving a superficial knowledge of the book at the same time that they are trying to understand it. That compounds the difficulty” (19). I can agree with that by experience.

Worried that reading the last few pages may spoil your reading experience? It may seem counterintuitive, but in August 2011, the following study made the news. “According to a recent study at the University of California San Diego, knowing how a book ends does not ruin its story and can actually enhance enjoyment. It suggests people may enjoy a good story as much as a good twist at the end, and even if they know the outcome, will enjoy the journey as much as the destination. ‘It could be that once you know how it turns out, you’re more comfortable processing the information

and can focus on a deeper understanding of the story,’ says co-author Jonathan Leavitt. Researchers gave 12 short stories to 30 participants where two versions were spoiled and a third was not. In all but one story, readers said they preferred versions which had spoiling paragraphs written into it. Even when the stories contained a plot twist or mystery, subjects preferred the spoiled versions. ‘Plots are just excuses for great writing,’ says social psychologist Nicholas Christenfeld. ‘As a film director, your job isn’t really to come to the conclusion that the butler did it. A single line would do that.’”¹

11. Why should a reader not look up every difficult word immediately? ➔ *because if the reader gets bogged down in details, the overall argument is lost, and the main ideas left out; a reader quits in frustration, rather than getting half a hard book, the reader gets basically none; read superficially first, even though that seems backwards*
12. When does speed reading not serve the reader well? ➔ *when a book deserves thorough, thoughtful treatment; a good reader should know when to read quickly and when to read slowly*
13. “Every book should be read no more slowly than it deserves, and no more quickly than you can read it with satisfaction and comprehension” (43). In your life, what should you read slowly, and what quickly?

Day 3	Chapter 5
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Chapter 5

To Discuss After You Read

14. What are the four main questions to ask a book? ➔ *what is the book about as a whole? What is being said in detail, and how? Is the book true, in whole or in part? What of it?*
15. What are the two ways of owning a book? ➔ *actual purchase, and understanding and interacting with the ideas in the book*
16. How may a pencil help your understanding of a book? ➔ *a good student should mark up the book: underlines, asterisks, questions, comments; the end pages can record an outline, and the front pages a summary*
17. What are the three kinds of note making? ➔ *structural: the kind of book, what it's about, the order of the work; conceptual: the author's arguments, and whether you agree with them or not; dialectical: comparisons between different books, or the shape of a discussion*
18. What is the difference between knowing the rules and having a habit? ➔ *if you know what to do, there's no guarantee that you'll do them: you might know that you should brush your teeth, but if you don't have the habit, knowing the rules doesn't help much*
19. Do the authors think physical or mental acts are more difficult? ➔ *mental, as we are unaccustomed to think about thinking*

1. <http://news.slashdot.org/story/11/08/16/0237204/do-spoilers-ruin-a-good-story-no-say-researchers>. Accessed 3/28/12.

Vocabulary

Rationale: Knowing definitions is critical to understanding. That's why we've included important vocabulary terms in your Instructor's Guide. More common terms that your children may not know are listed first, followed by, where applicable, cultural literacy terms that provide depth to stories but may not be commonly known. Read the vocabulary sections aloud to your children, then have them guess the meanings of the **bold italic** words. See how your children's definitions compare to the definitions we provide. From time to time you and your children may also want to look up words in a dictionary to compare what other sources offer as definitions.

... a classification scheme with fairly **perspicuous** categories ... (clearly expressed and easily understood; lucid)

... not mean that they deny its **utility**. (the state of being useful, profitable, or beneficial)

The contrast should not be **invidious**. (likely to arouse or incur resentment or anger in others; also, unjust, unfairly discriminating)

To Discuss After You Read

20. What is the first rule of analytical reading? ➔ "You must know what kind of book you are reading, and you should know this as early in the process as possible, preferably before you begin to read."
21. An obvious question: what's the difference between fiction and expository writing? ➔ *expository writing is supposed to be factual; fiction is not*
22. What is the difference between theoretical and practical books? ➔ **theoretical:** knowledge, answers "that," uses the word "is"; **practical:** action, answers "how," uses words like should, ought, good, bad, ends, means
23. What are some topics practical books cover? ➔ *guide-books of all sorts, whether this book or engineering or painting manuals; also ethical, economic, and political works (including speeches and other rhetorical works)*
24. What three topics do theoretical books cover, and how can you tell them apart? ➔ *history has a narrative, as it occurs in a place and time; science emphasizes things that lie outside your normal life (experiments that require special equipment, for example); philosophy emphasizes things that need no special equipment: you can know and experience them simply by thinking*

Vocabulary

... a **variorum** edition of a Shakespeare play ... (having notes by various editors or commentators; including variant readings from manuscripts or earlier editions)

... stating the **perquisites** and **emoluments** of members of both branches ... (**perquisites:** also perk; a thing regarded as a special right or privilege enjoyed as a result of one's position; **emoluments:** a salary, fee, or profit from employment or office)

To Discuss After You Read

25. What is the second rule of analytical reading? ➔ "State the unity of the whole book in a single sentence, or at most a few sentences (a short paragraph)."
26. The third rule? ➔ "Set forth the major parts of the book, and show how these are organized into a whole, by being ordered to one another and to the unity of the whole."
27. How is a good book like a house? ➔ *it is a unity, as a house is one, but has different parts that serve different purposes, as a house has different rooms; to really know a book, you need to know both the unity and the parts*
28. Do most good writers seek to obscure their plan for writing? ➔ *no; they offer help to the reader as much as they can*
29. The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32) is a familiar story. Note that Jesus tells this parable in response to the Pharisees comment that, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." State the unity of this parable. ➔ *a man's younger son squanders his inheritance. When he's broke, filthy, and starving, he returns home, hoping to be a servant in his father's house. Instead, the father runs to meet him and celebrates his lost son's return. The older son refuses to enter the celebration, but the father comes and pleads with him. (This is my summary: if yours differs somewhat, that is acceptable and expected.)*
30. State the major parts of the parable, in outline form. ➔ *I. At home. A. The younger son asks for his inheritance. B. The father gives the boys what is theirs. II. Younger Son. A. Wealthy. 1. Wasted money on riotous living. 2. All spent. B. Impoverished. 1. Found a job tending pigs. 2. Envied the pigs their food. C. Plan for Reunion. 1. Realizes life is better in his father's house. 2. Determines to go and ask for a job. III. Reunion. A. Father's Response. 1. Father saw him and had compassion. 2. Father ran to greet him. B. Younger Son's Response: repentant speech. C. Household Response: robe, ring, shoes, food, party. IV. Older Son's Response. A. Angry, bitter words with father. B. Father entertains him. C. Open ended: no resolution*
31. What does it mean that writing should have unity, clarity, and coherence? ➔ **unity:** forming a complex whole; **clarity:** clear; **coherence:** logical and consistent; in the parable, it was a single story (unity), the reader should not be confused at any of the events (clarity), and the story is easy to imagine, easy to see people behave as each of the three men do (coherence)

32. What does it mean that expository books “can be much more autonomous” than imaginative works (91)? ➔ *an expository work may have sections that can be analyzed independently, while an imaginative work needs to be seen as a whole, since the author’s purpose runs through the whole thing; if you took the Prodigal Son parable and stopped it when the son returns home and the father rejoices, that’s a very different story than adding the older son’s disapproval*
33. What is the fourth rule? ➔ *“Find out what the author’s problems were.”*
34. What was the problem Jesus was answering in his Prodigal Son parable? ➔ *as stated, “Why do you eat with sinners?”*

100 Best-Loved Poems

Day
1

“Lord Randal” p. 1

General Introduction

Do not read poetry as you do prose. Poetry is “concentrated” writing—every word counts.

While an author of normal, high-end prose literature will include allusions, metaphors, and second-level meanings, high-end poets weave literary tapestries in which, sometimes, every sentence and almost every word is laden with multiple meanings.

Please *slow down* when reading poetry. Savor every word. Take your time. Think about the images, the cadence of the words, the sounds, the flow, and, most of all, the meaning.

As you read serious poems, even those with a strong meter (“beat”) and rhyme, you need to pay closer attention to the *meaning* of the words than to the stylistic elements of meter and rhyme. In other words, read poetry, as much as possible, with a normal “prose” cadence. *Fight* the urge to read in a cadence that galumphs along with the meter; *fight* the urge to emphasize rhyming lines. I don’t mean you ought to *deemphasize* these characteristics when they fit into the normal meaning of the sentences. But you ought not to permit the rhyme and meter to *overwhelm* the meaning! Instead, read poetry as if you were reading any *unrhymed, unmetred* work. Such discipline ought to help you to understand each poem’s unique meanings.

As an educated reader of poetry, you should be asking yourself constantly: what allusions is the author making? What meanings are present?

If, after reading all the way through once, you don’t understand something, or have no idea what the author is talking about, see what you can discover through dictionary or encyclopedia research: *when* was the poem written? Is there some clue about the author’s possible meaning based on what historians know of his or her political, social, philosophical, religious, or other views? Of course you should *always* look up words about whose meanings you are unsure!

On Writing Well

Introduction

As you prepare to leave home, whether for the workplace, college, or ministry, you’ll need to write. If you want to be an author, obviously; if you want to be a scientist, you’ll still need writing skills for grants, papers, and basic communication.

As a high schooler, I strongly disliked writing assignments: writing required something I didn’t care about for an indifferent teacher. Research papers were torture: looking up information in a variety of sources and hoping to reach the minimum number of sources required.

As an adult, I smile when I remember those teenage antipathies. Today I write daily for my job, and multiple times a week for my personal blog. The one-to-two page papers that I dreaded as a teen I now churn out multiple times a week. If I’m upset but don’t know precisely why, I type all my reasons for anger until the underlying issue surfaces. (Writing as therapy: free and private. I like it.)

Writing doesn’t have to be mysterious or stressful. It’s a way to communicate what you think.

Research, too, doesn’t need to be stressful. Research is simply finding out information, answering questions you may have. Today, I research daily, from the fun (oatmeal cookie recipe online) to the deadly serious (what is afflicting my bull, and is it possible to preserve his life?).

I read recently that writing is, in some ways, like math. If I taught math, I wouldn’t assign a single 2-hour calculus set one time a week. Math classes generally happen daily, with problem sets that build on each other over a year and a school career.

It makes sense that regular writing assignments would also improve ability. “If you went to work for a newspaper that required you to write two or three articles every day, you would be a better writer after six months” (Zinsser 49). The writing assignments this year come four times a week (with an optional fifth day). No assignment should take more than about 15 minutes.

Also, not every assignment requires new writing. You won’t end the year with 180 sloppy assignments. Instead, you will edit and rewrite for the majority of assignments. At the end of the year, you should have a portfolio of about twelve polished pieces.

We begin the year with short reading assignments and a couple of short essays. From there, we gradually move into longer works.

William Zinsser teaches through the delightful book *On Writing Well*. Humorous and enthusiastic in his own work, he uses excellent examples as well. Reading Zinsser makes me want to start writing. And after writing, Zinsser offers specific suggestions on how to revise. He makes revising sound fun and enjoyable.

If you haven’t enjoyed writing before, I think you will now.

Day
1

Introduction and Chapter 1

A friend worked for the chamber of commerce. “I would hire anyone who could write,” she said, “but no one can!”

If you can learn to write well, your chance to have a good job improves immensely.

I hope you learn “humanity and warmth” in your writing this year.

Day
2

Chapter 11

Were you surprised to read that the majority of writing is nonfiction?

“Ultimately every writer must follow the path that feels most comfortable. For most people learning to write, that path is nonfiction” (99).

When I write nonfiction, I appreciate that I don’t have to create characters or places; I get to write about what I know.

Creative Expression

Day
3

The Common Application: prep work

Before you do today’s assignment, please read “Go With Your Interests” on p. 91 in Zinsser’s book. Heed his advice, and choose a subject that interests you.

College applications require a short essay. I found the following prompt on The Common Application website. Whether you end up using this application or not, I like the assignment.

Please write an essay of 250–500 words on a topic of your choice or on one of the options listed below, and attach it to your application before submission. Please indicate your topic by checking the appropriate box. This personal essay helps us become acquainted with you as a person and student, apart from courses, grades, test scores, and other objective data. It will also demonstrate your ability to organize your thoughts and express yourself. NOTE: Your Common Application essay should be the same for all colleges. Do not customize it in any way for individual colleges. Colleges that want customized essay responses will ask for them on a supplemental form.

- Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
- Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.

- Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
- Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
- A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
- Topic of your choice.²

Today, please decide on your topic and write a rough outline (basically, what you want to cover).

If you choose the third prompt and want to write about your mother, you might say, “prepares organic food she grew from scratch and doses us with homeopathy, which keeps us very healthy” and a few other ideas. Just figure out roughly what you want to say.

Day
4

The Common Application: first draft

Please write your first draft of the prompt. Most likely, to get a finished product of 250–500 words, you will need to write around 1000 words.

Just do it. In my personal blog, I regularly write that much in a day. You can do it, too.

When finished, you might find it helpful to print it out with double spacing.

Day
5

Optional: Write, rest, or respond

If you need a rest day from writing, take it.

If you need to finish yesterday’s assignment, do it.

If you simply want to practice writing, write something.




Perhaps you have a response to something you’ve read. Then respond. Perhaps a striking event happened in your family. Then record.

Another option: copy some striking phrases, sentences, or poems into a literature journal. If some quote rings true for you now, it probably will in another decade or two as well. I still enjoy reading in my journal, which I began at age 18. A few minutes spent copying a master would be time well spent. ■

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2. <https://www.commonapp.org/CommonApp/DownloadForms.aspx>.

Week 2

Date:	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Literature					
<i>The Elements of Style</i>	chap. 1 #3				
<i>Eternity in Their Hearts</i>	Postscript, pp. 1–50 	pp. 50–96 		chaps. 3–4 	chaps. 5–7
<i>How to Read a Book</i>			chap. 8		
<i>100 Best-Loved Poems</i>	“The Passionate Shepherd ...” pp. 5–6		Sonnet XVIII: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” p. 6		Sonnet LXXIII: “That time of year thou mayst in me behold” p. 7
Language Arts					
<i>On Writing Well</i>	chap. 2	chap. 5	chap. 3	chap. 4	
Creative Expression					Optional: Write, rest or respond
Other Notes					

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Eternity in Their Hearts

Day 6 Postscript, pp. 1–50

Introductory Comments

Don Richardson offers a beautiful overview of how God has been at work in different cultures before the Gospel arrived; beautiful stories of how God is calling all men to himself. I love these stories.

It is also almost the perfect book to incorporate what we’ve already learned in *How to Read a Book*. Richardson’s work is not at the level of Homer or Shakespeare; as such, most of it is a great book to read at a more swift pace. Though the stories are wonderful, the words telling the stories are not particularly memorable.

There are some sophisticated arguments thrown in. These sections require a slower reading. My first time through, I tried to move quickly all the way, and found myself frustrated by my lack of comprehension. Of course!

I needed to slow down, and really concentrate, and think through, what Richardson is saying.

I think you are about to realize how much your reading ability has increased.

Before you begin to actually read Richardson’s book, please spend five or ten minutes doing an inspectional reading. Because this book is a mixture of great stories, intellectual arguments, and biblical study, a few minutes spent overviewing where Richardson is going will repay you in later comprehension.

During your inspectional reading, please be sure to read the Author’s Postscript.

To Discuss After You Read

1. Please read the verses in support of general revelation (p. 190). What do they say? ➔ *creation declares the glory of God, speaking to all peoples at all times; the created things reveal God’s power and Godhead, though unthankful people rejected God and turned away; further,*

 Note to Mom or Dad  Map Point

men have a conscience that tells them when they've done wrong, and they know they have offended God

2. Define general revelation. ➔ *what all men may know of God, even without missionaries to share the Gospel: a sense of right and wrong, knowledge that there is a Creator*
3. Define special revelation. ➔ *the Bible, Old and New Testaments, where God reveals himself in detail, a record of God's work on man's behalf*
4. From the Postscript: What is the primary thesis of this book? ➔ *God has left a witness (general revelation, or Creation and conscience) that prepares people for the message of the Gospel (special revelation). Human cultures have various specific practices that, when looked at scripturally, show that God has been calling them to himself. The general revelation actively prepares the way for the Gospel*
5. What historical meaning did "the unknown God" have to the Athenians? ➔ *the most powerful God, who had delivered them from a plague 600 years before, whose name was unknown but whose power was above all*
6. Were Abraham and his descendants to be the sole source of spiritual illumination? ➔ *no! God had a witness, the king of righteousness, among the unrighteous Canaanites*
7. Is it appropriate for God to be called by different names? ➔ *the testimony of Scripture says yes: Melchizedek calls God El Elyon; Abram calls him Yahweh*
8. Between Abram and Melchizedek, who is the greater and who is the lesser? ➔ *Melchizedek is the greater, for he blesses Abram, and the lesser is blessed by the greater*
9. "The thesis of this book is that Melchizedek stood in the Valley of Shaveh as a figurehead, or type, of God's general revelation to mankind, and that Abraham correspondingly represented God's covenant-based, canon-recorded special revelation to mankind" (28). Does this thesis make sense? Do you think the author proves his point? ➔ *personally, I don't think this thesis works. If general revelation is defined as creation and conscience, then all people have that general revelation. But Melchizedek, it seems, had some extra communion with God, even as Abraham had more communion with God than Lot, and Epimenides had more communion with (or at least knowledge of) God than the Athenians. Perhaps this is another type of revelation, a personal revelation. Despite my quibble with the accuracy of the Melchizedek argument, I think the author's point that God reveals himself to people even without the Bible is sufficiently proven in this book*
10. What does Sodom have to do with the story of Abram's rescue? ➔ *Abram rejected the gifts of the king of Sodom; the author's point being that we need to judge whether something is of God or not: some practices or traditions may be, but not all*

11. Do the followers of folk religions around the world dislike the Gospel when they hear it? ➔ *surprisingly, no: in many cases, the "Sky-God" has prepared them just in advance of the coming of the Gospel that the missionaries are emissaries to teach the people of himself; there is a witness to the people who walk in the darkness*

Timeline and Map Points

- 🌐 Athens, Greece ①; Knossos, Crete ②; Jerusalem ③ (map 1)
- 🌐 Cuzco, Peru ①; Machu Picchu, Peru ② (map 2)
- 🌐 Calcutta, India ① (map 3)

Day
7

pp. 50–96

To Discuss After You Read

12. A missionary protested some eager young missionaries desire to study the culture they had come to minister to: "One does not study hell. One preaches heaven!" (52). What's the problem with this perspective? ➔ *God has not left the people without a witness; thus, it would make sense to find where truth shows through in the culture, and build from there*

Timeline and Map Points

- 🌐 Ethiopia ②; Central African Republic ③; China ④; Seoul, South Korea ⑤; North Korea ⑥; Burma ⑦; Rangoon ⑧; Thailand ⑨; Laos ⑩; India ⑪ (map 3)

Day
9

Chapters 3–4

To Discuss After You Read

13. In chapter 9 of *How to Read a Book*, the authors cover how to follow an argument, and that, until you can restate the argument in your own words, you don't really understand it. With that in mind, please summarize Tylor's theory of the evolution of religion. ➔ *men wondered where dreams and other non-biological things came from, and so came up with the theory of the soul. They extrapolated that other parts of creation must also have souls, and so became animists. Then some places developed into social classes, and so polytheism developed, where some gods were over other gods. Lastly, some places had monarchies, and where there were monarchies, they also developed the idea of an all-powerful God*
14. What anthropological evidence overthrows Tylor's theory? ➔ *so-called "primitive" peoples, who hadn't developed either social classes, let alone monarchies, still had a belief in an all-powerful God*
15. Why is Richardson leery of liberal theology? ➔ *it has its roots in Tylor's theory, which was completely disproven; if the origin is false, it seems that what follows would be false also*

16. How was Nietzsche the forebearer of Hitler? ➔ *he developed a theory that all cultures are striving towards the same destination, and that Germans had advanced the farthest; Hitler then believed that he should be allowed to do what he wanted to make himself the Superman, beyond good and evil (which, in the end, meant much evil)*

Note: The work of Franz Boas reminded me that the idea that people with a high IQ are superior has been questioned; today, it is also proper to speak of multiple intelligences. A person may be extremely gifted physically (a professional athlete), or extremely gifted artistically (music, visual arts), and so on. Interesting that more than a century ago, Franz Boas applied a similar idea to societies: societies had different values, and even as it would be silly to judge Van Gogh on his IQ alone, it would be silly to judge a culture that seeks to live self-sufficient, peaceable lives as inferior to a society that values technology.

17. Why does Richardson believe Communists enforce atheism? ➔ *the founders of Communism learned Tylor's theory and either died or cut themselves off from the West before Lang and Schmidt refuted Tylor; this allowed them to teach atheism as the obvious scientific choice, and could squelch dissent more easily*

Timeline and Map Points

- ➔ Yugoslavia 4; Poland 5; East Germany 6; Czechoslovakia 7; Bulgaria 8; Romania 9; Hungary 10 (map 1)
- ➔ Labrador 3; Alaska 4; Baja California 5; Cuba 6; Panama 7; Tierra del Fuego 8 (map 2)
- ➔ Borneo 12; New Guinea (Papua Island) 13; Australia 14; Papua New Guinea 15; Vietnam 16 (map 3)
- ➔ Hawaii 1; Samoa 2 (see map below)



Day 10 Chapters 5–7

To Discuss After You Read

18. Should the Great Commission have been a surprise to the disciples? ➔ *it shouldn't have been, since Jesus had had ministry to the Gentiles, and had told his disciples in advance that they would be sent to Jews and Gentiles*

19. What impacted you most from these chapters? ➔ *I love that even the money used to betray Jesus was used to make provision for Gentiles. And I am struck that Jesus was crucified near, if not precisely, where Abraham offered Isaac, and the double meaning of the quote, "in the mountain of the LORD it will be provided" (Genesis 22:14)*

Wrapping Up

Let's put into practice what we've already learned in *How to Read a Book*.

- 20. What kind of book is this? ➔ *expository (not fiction), primarily history, and, thus, theoretical, not practical (this isn't a manual for evangelism, more a theoretical book on why evangelism is important)*
- 21. State the unity of the book, as briefly as you can. ➔ *God wants to bless the peoples of the earth. And so he reveals himself to peoples even before they hear the Gospel. The Bible as a whole points to God's desire and purpose to bless*
- 22. What are the major parts of the book, and how do they relate to the unity? ➔ *I. God's witness to those without the Bible: many case studies of cultural practices, traditional stories, even Chinese characters that point to Christ. II. The Scriptures reveal God's desire to bless all peoples. (What doesn't fit fully is the chapter on Tylor's theory of the evolution of religion, and how actual anthropological data entirely refuted it, along with the implications in history over the last century. While the evidence presented in Richardson's book certainly underscores this chapter, it is out of place in light of what the book is trying to prove.)*
- 23. What do you think the author's problems were? ➔ *for the first section: initially, he needed to know how to reach the Sawi: their strange cultures proved the key, both for the Sawi and for hundreds of other cultures with strange customs; in the second section: does the Great Commission come out of nowhere, a command issued as an afterthought?*
- 24. What are the key terms in the book? ➔ *Melchizedek Factor, Abraham Factor, Sodom Factor; redemptive analogies; general revelation, special revelation; the previous notes have already dealt with some of the difficulties about these terms*
- 25. Earlier we covered the author's thesis. What are his solutions? ➔ *how to reach different peoples? find their redemptive analogies; should we be evangelistic? the Bible preaches it from Genesis 12 on*
- 26. So we've covered what the book is about as a whole, and we've covered the details. Is the book true, in whole or in part? ➔ *without going through the various references, I expect the anthropological data is correct, and I think Richardson's take on the Scriptures is also correct*

27. What of it? Does this book mean anything to you? ➔ *personally, I rejoice that God is so good, to draw all men to himself. And I'm challenged to be more purposeful in evangelism, since I see that's God's heart*

How to Read a Book

Day
8

Chapter 8

To Discuss After You Read

28. What is the fifth rule of analytic reading? ➔ *"Find the important words and through them come to terms with the author."*
29. How are terms different from words? ➔ *terms are "the basic element of communicable language," or, perhaps, the smallest unit of important thought; a term may be a single word, or it may be a phrase that explains the meaning ("reading" or, more specifically, "the process of passing from understanding to understanding more by the operation of your mind upon a book")*
30. Why are terms important? ➔ *the author uses them to communicate ideas; to the extent that the author's understanding may be different than yours, you may need to determine the author's definition in order to understand the author's ideas*
31. How do you discover the meanings of the terms you're unsure of? ➔ *examine the meanings of the words you do know in the context*

On Writing Well

Day
6

Chapter 2

After reading Zinsser's Chapter 2, go through your essay. Have you said what you wanted to say? Mark your paper and make changes.

Day
7

Chapter 5

I like Zinsser's perspective on audience: my audience is *me*. When I write, I am happy when people read, but I am also happy even if no one else does. I like to reread what happened in my family; what insights I had; what challenges frustrated me. I like to write for me.

Do you like your essay?

Day
8

Chapter 3

- Bracket unnecessary words in your essay.

Day
9

Chapter 4

- Have you cut your essay in half? Or a bit more?
- Did you use "I"? Are you confident and relaxed?

Creative Expression

Day
10

Optional: Write, rest, or respond

If you need a rest day from writing, take it.

If you need to finish yesterday's assignment, do it.

If you simply want to practice writing, write something.

Perhaps you have a response to something you've read.

Then respond. Perhaps a striking event happened in your family. Then record.

Another option: copy some striking phrases, sentences, or poems into a literature journal. If some quote rings true for you now, it probably will in another decade or two as well. I still enjoy reading in my journal, which I began at age 18. A few minutes spent copying a master would be time well spent. ■

Week 3

Date:	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15
Literature					
<i>The Elements of Style</i>	chap. 1 #4–5				
<i>How to Read a Book</i>	chap. 9	chap. 10	chap. 11	chap. 12	chap. 13
<i>100 Best-Loved Poems</i>	Sonnet XCIV: “They that have power to hurt and will do none,” p. 7		Sonnet CXVI: “Let me not to the marriage of true minds,” pp. 7–8		Hamlet’s Soliloquy
Memorization	Shakespeare’s Sonnet 116				
Language Arts					
<i>On Writing Well</i>	chap. 6	chap. 8	chap. 9–p. 63	p. 63–end of chap. 9	
Creative Expression					Optional: Write, rest or respond
Other Notes					

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How to Read a Book

Day 11	Chapter 9
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Vocabulary

... or a suspicion of **legerdemain** ... (*deception, trickery; skillful use of one’s hands when performing conjuring tricks*)

To Discuss After You Read

1. What is the sixth rule of analytic reading? ➔ “Mark the most important sentences in a book and discover the propositions they contain
2. The seventh? ➔ “Locate or construct the basic arguments in the book by finding them in the connection of sentences.”
3. What is the problem with investigating sentences that interest you, rather than sentences that puzzle you? ➔ *the sentences that interest you may not be the most important to the main argument, but rather interesting*

because of their novelty; what is most valuable are the sentences that you don’t understand: those are the ones to focus on, since you need to read those to reach the same level of understanding as the author

4. To demonstrate that you understand a proposition, the authors suggest that you should be able to both restate it in entirely new words, and come up with an example (either from your own life, or a realistic made up example) to prove the proposition. Going back to our Prodigal Son parable, the father attempts to persuade his son to rejoice with these words: “It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.” Or, in a more modern translation, “But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” Can you restate the proposition and come up with a realistic example? ➔ *“When repentance happens, it doesn’t matter how much bad behavior came before: it’s*

time to rejoice." If my son does something very mean, and then asks for forgiveness, the beauty of the restored relationship overshadows the nastiness just before. I totally believe this scenario

5. Is it good to memorize important passages of good books? ➔ *the authors suggest that it's more important to know the underlying meaning than to simply regurgitate the sounds; except in the case of poetry, when the sounds are vital to the meaning, I agree with them*

Note: Did you follow the difference between reasoning by induction versus reasoning by deduction? As I understand it, reasoning by induction would be to use experiments to prove your claim (say, opposite poles on a magnet attract: you can experiment and prove that). Reasoning by deduction involves only thought. For example, the famous syllogism, "All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; therefore, Socrates is mortal."

6. What is the foundation for every argument? ➔ *either assumptions that both author and reader agree to, or self-evident propositions, which cannot be denied*
7. What is the eighth rule of analytic reading? ➔ *"Find out what the author's solutions are."*

Day
12

Chapter 10

To Discuss After You Read

8. What is the ninth rule of analytic reading? ➔ *"You must be able to say, with reasonable certainty, 'I understand,' before you can say any one of the following things: 'I agree,' or 'I disagree,' or 'I suspend judgment.'"*
9. The tenth? ➔ *"When you disagree, do so reasonably, and not disputatiously or contentiously." Basically, winning the argument is not as important as learning the truth. Don't read a book in order to find things to disagree with.*
10. What is the eleventh rule of analytic reading? ➔ *"Respect the difference between knowledge (opinions that can be defended) and mere personal opinion (unsupported judgment), by giving reasons for any critical judgment you make."*

Day
13

Chapter 11

Vocabulary

Controversy without **partisanship** is, of course, impossible. (*prejudice in favor of a particular cause*)

To Discuss After You Read

11. In order to have a good disagreement, what three conditions must be met? ➔ *1) Acknowledge the emotions you bring to a dispute. 2) Make your assumptions and prejudices explicit. 3) Read a book sympathetically, at least trying to see the author's point of view*
12. How can you properly disagree with an author? ➔ *Four ways: 1) You are uninformed, are missing an important piece of information that will change your argument. 2)*

You are misinformed: you believe something erroneously, and it changes your argument. 3) You are illogical, and your reasoning doesn't follow. Either your propositions are incorrect, or your conclusion does not follow from your propositions. Either one makes your argument invalid. 4) Your analysis is incomplete, in these ways. (Since all books are finite, in some measure, every book is incomplete.)

Day
14

Chapter 12

To Discuss After You Read

13. How is relevant experience an aid to reading? ➔ *common experience, or experience the majority of people have, informs both imaginative literature, philosophy, and history: would I behave like this person? have I had a similar experience, or felt similar emotions? does this view of man match my experience? If you can give a concrete example to back up or refute the author, you are using your relevant experience. Special experience, that which requires specific equipment or unusual tasks (moon walking, for example) informs mostly scientific work: the reader must be able to follow the special steps reported*
14. How are other books aids to reading? ➔ *except for, perhaps, science and fiction (especially novels and plays), great books are part of a great conversation: the example given is that The Federalist Papers didn't spring into being from nowhere, but were informed by the Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, Locke, Rousseau, and so on; philosophers, especially, interact with one another from one generation to the next: to fully understand a specific book, the reader should read the rest of the conversation*
15. What are some of the benefits and drawbacks of commentaries and abstracts? (An example in literature: CliffsNotes has been the standard help for test takers who skipped reading the assigned book.) ➔ *commentators are not always correct, or, if they are correct, they may be incomplete in their analysis, but if they seem self-assured, the reader will be tempted not to think further about the book's meaning*
16. You already know that you should read the author's preface and introduction before you read the book. When should you read introductory material written by someone else? ➔ *after you finish the book; if you read then, both you and the preface author are equals, while if you read J. Doe's commentary before you read Shakespeare, you are letting J. Doe teach you, rather than Shakespeare; very interesting, helpful tip!*
17. What two instances are appropriate for reading abstracts? ➔ *first, as a memory aid: what was the book about? second, to find out whether the full book will be helpful for your studies*
18. What four things do you have to know before you can use a reference work? ➔ *1) what you want to know, 2) which reference work to check, 3) how to locate it in the reference work, and 4) that it's considered knowable by the authors*

19. What is the dictionary's primary intention? ➔ *to help a reader get through a book that might be too difficult otherwise*
20. Besides spelling, pronunciation, and definition, what else will a good dictionary tell you? ➔ *a good dictionary records the roots of a word, and examples of how the word has been used (both good and bad examples), so the reader has an understanding both of how "conversation" is used today, and how it was used in 1600 (as in, "our conversation is in heaven," as the KJV says)*

Note: Please check out the *Oxford English Dictionary* online. While the complete, 20 volume set (22,000 pages) sells for about \$1000, you can get a taste of the OED simply by looking at their "word of the day" on their website. Very different than a standard dictionary entry! And if \$1000 is out of the budget but the OED haunts you with its awesomeness, you might look for one of the compact editions: one or two volume sets that reproduce the entire thing in extremely small type (they come with a magnifying glass).

21. Encyclopedias deal with facts. Are facts true? ➔ *they are supposed to be, but over time, some "facts" become disproved, and some facts are cultural*
22. What do encyclopedias omit? ➔ *arguments or opinion writing, and poetry and imaginative literature*
23. Based on the author's description of encyclopedias, do you think they would have any objections to an online encyclopedia, such as Wikipedia? ➔ *after doing minimal poking around the main page, I couldn't find any infrastructure information, such as a table of contents might offer; I see, though, that there are portals, such as arts, history, technology, so it seems there is some infrastructure in place, and it is certainly easy to navigate from one topic to the next*

Day 15 Chapter 13

To Discuss After You Read

24. Why can a practical book not solve the problem with which it is concerned? ➔ *the reader has to do the things in the book in order to solve the problem. For example, when I got married I wasn't a very good housekeeper. I read several books on decluttering, or cleaning rotations, and I loved them, because I could imagine myself doing them, and really making progress on keeping a more clean house. But usually, I didn't put much into practice from what I'd read, and so my housekeeping never improved much, despite much good instruction*
25. What is the difference between a theoretical and a rules-based practical book? ➔ *theoretical books deal with the principles that make up a good way to live; rules-based books simply give commands for specific practices, without telling all the whys; the theoretical and rules-based books are on a continuum, as most rules-books have some of the whys behind the rules included, and most theoretical have some practical application*

26. How is practical truth different from theoretical truth? ➔ *theoretical truth is either accurate or not (2+2=4 is true), and you either agree or disagree based on the accuracy of the author's statements; practical truth needs to both work and to get you to an end that you want; if you read this book about how to read a book, even if the steps work, if you have no desire to be well-read, you will not agree with the authors in the end; the ends or goals are the key to practical truth*
27. Why must a practical author be something of an orator? ➔ *because in order to persuade you to act as desired, the author must reach your heart, not just your mind; the author must show you what a worthy goal he or she is advocating*
28. How do the four main questions change for a practical book? ➔ *1) What is the book about? Make an outline and figure it out. 2) Find out what the author wants you to do, and find out how the author proposes you do this. 3) Do the author's means and ends correspond to what I think is right to seek, and the right way to seek? 4) If the author convinces you, both as to means and to ends, you must do as the author wishes you to*
29. When done with this book, if you do not read books analytically, is it because you are lazy or tired? ➔ *no; it's because either you don't think reading analytically is worthwhile, or because you don't think the author's rules are the proper way to read; the authors would have failed to convince you to act*
30. What is the difference between a general or universal applicability, and a more localized applicability? ➔ *universal applicability applies to all: the Golden Rule, for example; a localized applicability does not apply to all, and so, as a reader, if you are not a part of the group the book applies to, then the suggestions are not actionable (my beekeeping books, for example, are not useful for my children: they are helpful books, but should my children read them, the children won't act on the suggestions)*

100 Best-Loved Poems

Day 11 Sonnet XCIV: "Let Me not to the marriage of true minds," pp. 7–8

Here's a paraphrase of this poem: "I would not admit that anything could interfere with the union of two people who love each other. Love that alters with changing circumstances is not love, nor if it bends from its firm state when someone tries to destroy it. Oh no, it's an eternally fixed point that watches storms but is never itself shaken by them. It is the star by which every lost ship can be guided: one can calculate its distance but not gauge its quality. Love doesn't depend on Time, although the rosy lips and cheeks of youth eventually come within the compass of Time's sickle. Love doesn't alter as the days and weeks go by but endures until death. If I'm wrong about this then I've never written anything and no man has ever loved." (from <http://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/sonnets/116/>)

I hope that helps as you memorize Shakespeare's sonnet over the next six weeks.

Take the time to meditate on it!

Day
15

Hamlet's Soliloquy

"Hamlet's Soliloquy" by William Shakespeare

To be, or not to be; that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep:
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die; to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: aye, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death—
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveler returns—puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

Memorization

Day
ALL

Shakespeare's Sonnet 116

Over the next six weeks, memorize Shakespeare's Sonnet 116.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixes mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height
be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I will writ, nor no man ever loved.

On Writing Well

Day
11

Chapter 6

Do you know where your thesaurus is? Your computer should have one, even if you don't have a paper version.

Find three words in your essay that you think could be more precise or more interesting. Look up synonyms. Are any of them better?

Day
12

Chapter 8

- Does your essay have unity? Check to make sure you keep the same person (hopefully either first or third). Have you shifted tenses?
- Answer Zinsser's questions: in what capacity are you addressing the reader? (Are you teaching, entertaining, or something else?)
- What style do you use, and do you maintain it throughout?
- What is your attitude toward your subject?
- What one point do you want to make?
- What one provocative thought are you leaving with your reader?

Day
13

Chapter 9–p. 63

Now that you've learned about the lead, look at your essay. Can you make your lead more powerful?

Day
14

p. 63–end of Chapter 9

- Does your ending stop well?
- When you're satisfied with it, read through your essay one more time and make any final changes.
- Is your essay better than anything you've written before?

Creative Expression

Day
15

Optional: Write, rest, or respond

If you need a rest day from writing, take it.

If you need to finish yesterday's assignment, do it.

If you simply want to practice writing, write something.

Perhaps you have a response to something you've read.

Then respond. Perhaps a striking event happened in your family. Then record.

Another option: copy some striking phrases, sentences, or poems into a literature journal. If some quote rings true for you now, it probably will in another decade or two as well. I still enjoy reading in my journal, which I began at age 18. A few minutes spent copying a master would be time well spent. ■

Section Three

Instructor's Guide Resources

Appendix 1: Teaching Writing to High School Students

Since we know that no two budding writers will grow and develop at the same pace, we have designed the writing program in this guide to be flexible. We also understand that parents may feel unprepared to teach writing. Some parents feel like they're not good writers themselves. Other parents may write well, but do not understand how to communicate what they know in a meaningful way to their students. To all these parents, we say, "Don't worry! You can do it." The following suggestions will help you know how to use the tools we provide and, if necessary, how to modify this program to best meet your and your students' needs.

Allow Students to Write at Their Own Pace

In the same way that we wouldn't teach a toddler to ride a bike with a 10-speed on a nice steep hill, we don't expect beginning writers to produce polished work on a tight schedule either. If you find that the pace we present in this guide is too much for your students, simply allow your students to work through the assignments at their own pace.

Start with our first writing assignment in Week 1. Ask your students to work on it for a set amount of time each day as it fits into your daily schedule. For older students, this could be part of their independent work time, but be careful not to let it consume all of their time. Of course we're happy if they're enjoying a project and don't want to put it down, but don't hesitate to set a timer so that they can have time to accomplish other work, too. A timer might also help when they're struggling with an assignment, so they know that there is an end in sight to their writing time.

If your students can complete some of the brainstorming activities in the time we suggest, have them do so. But we'd understand if the creative writing portion takes longer. Therefore, if your students seem to need more days to complete the assignments than outlined in our guide, give it to them. Don't feel as though you have to move on to our next assignment if they're still working on the last one. Writing is a creative process and at this level, please let the creative juices flow.

If you'd like to spend a day reviewing your students' work with them when they complete an assignment, consider it time well spent. It is during these review sessions that you can reinforce any grammar and mechanical skills they might have learned that week by correcting issues and pointing out things they've done well in their own

writing. You could then cement lessons learned in your discussion by having them use your edits to write a final draft. Simply give them the time they need to complete each task successfully. Then, pick up with the next assignment in the guide in whatever week you happen to be in when you're ready.

Now that your students are older, however, we recommend you use this slower-paced method only in the beginning of the year and work toward increasing your students' writing pace as the year progresses. High School and college-aged students need to be able to complete assignments within a provided time-frame, so since we expect their ability to express themselves on paper is now more developed, they should focus instead on applying time management techniques to the writing process so they can complete assignments both well and on time.

High School students should apply *time management skills* to the *writing process*.

The Writing Process

Coaching the Writing Process

For their first drafts, ask nothing more of your students than to simply put their thoughts on paper. At this stage, anything goes. If you're working with them, resist the urge to correct their spelling or revise their sentence structure, and help them do the same—you will have the opportunity to edit later. Build their writing confidence and show you value their creativity by giving them the freedom to "just write," and not interrupt their creative flow. Pay more attention to the fact that they're meeting the requirements of the assignment: Are they successfully writing a fairy tale? A poem? Are they impressing you with their inventiveness or imagination? If so, applaud them!

Have your students write their first drafts on wide-ruled paper, by skipping every other line on notebook paper, or typed and double-spaced in word processing software so you (and they) will have room to write edits directly on their rough drafts. At review time, sit with your students and ask them to read their pieces aloud while you read them over their shoulders. Watch for misspelled words and other mechanical errors that don't align with the way your student reads what he or she wrote. Help them

think through the corrections as you go, but more importantly, help them make the words say on paper what they dreamed up in their heads. By now you can expect them to catch some of their own mechanical errors, so applaud them when they do. Your inputs at this level will likely have more to do with content than with mechanical and grammatical correction, but offer assistance with both if needed. Ask questions about what they wrote to point out where they need more support, or where they need to clarify their thoughts. Suggest adding transitions to improve flow, or ask if they can say something more succinctly if you notice wordiness. Through your studies with our curriculum, you have both read so many accomplished authors, you can trust your ear to tell you when writing is smooth and clean and where it needs improvement.

For example you might say “You made these two statements, but didn’t tell me any more about them. Could you add a supporting sentence that helps me better understand how they’re connected?” or “This feels a little choppy here. Can you write a transition sentence that would help a reader better follow you as you change from one idea to the next?” or “I like the claim you make here. I’m ready to agree with you, but you didn’t provide any evidence to support it. I think telling me more about your reasons for this claim would better help me form a clear opinion.” Practice review skills together that you’d like them to be able to use on their own. If they’re writing a narrative, think about the elements they use for literary analysis. If you see aspects in their narrative that leave gaps in the reader’s understanding of these elements, ask questions as though you’re an interested reader to help them revise and correct. For example, “Okay, you said that this character did this, but I’m not really sure why. Can you explain that a little better? ...Okay, how could you work that information into your piece?”

If the dialogue between you about your student’s writing gets lengthy, take a break from questions and simply quietly mark corrections on their paper while they read. Remember to use the review session to also show that you value what they created, and try to avoid nit-picking every little mistake. You can make a global suggestion like “Don’t forget to work through the spell check when you’re finished.” if you notice that your critique is starting to frustrate your students. If they still enjoy reviewing their papers

*Coach
the writing
process and
edit as a
team.*

with you, the more we hope you’ll both get to cherish this work time together as they’re growing more and more independent.

When your students were younger, we recommended that you review their writing with them each time. Now that they are older, even if you work through coaching sessions together, we do recommend that you ask your students to submit a final paper by a defined time that you will formally evaluate. We provide rubrics for you at the end of each assignment to make your review process easier, but we hope that by adding a degree of formality to the end of a project now, your students will be better prepared for submitting final papers in college. We hope you really enjoy your reviews of their work, and the chance to marvel at the strong writers they’ve become.

How DO I Evaluate Writing Assignments?

Using Sonlight’s Rubrics

We understand that the idea of evaluating your students’s writing may be just as overwhelming for you as it was for them to write it. And yes, evaluating writing can be highly subjective. Therefore, we’ve included evaluation checklists or **Rubrics** for most assignments in your weekly notes that will help you focus your thoughts on the most important skills each assignment addressed. These rubrics should help you make the evaluation process more concrete and less subjective. And by the time you get to the evaluation stage, you should be very familiar with your students’ work and the skills addressed because you’ve often coached their progress along the way. Feel free to adjust or modify our rubrics at any time if you feel your student worked on skills we didn’t include on our list.

Much of literary critique is subjective, but we understand that sometimes its helpful to have a concrete way to help you focus your critique. A rubric is a simple form that will help you give point values to certain characteristics of an assignment

When your students were younger, we suggested you place more emphasis on the writing process rather than the final result. Now that they are more accomplished writers, they shouldn’t need as much of your support to work through the process itself, so now is a good time to start honing their actual writing skill. And the best way to do that is to critique their work.

As we suggested earlier, lean on your experience as a reader to help you catch rough patches in your students’ writing. Help them improve the structure of their writing by asking to see (or think about their piece in light of) an

outline. An outline can also help you check to ensure arguments are well-supported, but you can also rely on your own understanding as a reader. If you're not convinced by their argument, suggest they provide more support or clarification. If a sentence is unclear, suggest they say it differently. Suggest they find ways to combine choppy sentences and split or condense long wordy passages. You don't always have to model how to do each of these things. Make the suggestion and see if they can make the correction on their own. It could be they just need fresh eyes to help them find places in their writing they should improve. As you review, think about the elements we present in the rubric for that assignment so you can give those elements a score when you're finished reading.

Creating your own Rubrics

If you'd like to modify our rubric or create your own for each assignment, please feel free. Please note that the items we chose to emphasize on our sample are just ideas of things you might want to include on a rubric of your own. As their teacher, only you will know how your students are writing—where they shine and what they need to polish up—so be sure to include both potential challenges and potential successes on rubrics you compose.

When you create a rubric, first draft a list of all the things you hope the assignment will accomplish, or you hope your child will learn or practice as they complete the assignment. Sometimes it's helpful to list skills by category, so you're sure you've thought of everything you want to evaluate.

Next, assign a point value for each item, giving more points to skills you want to weigh more heavily (or see as more important). Add up all of the points in the rubric

Sample Rubric		
<i>Content</i>		
_____	5 pts	Presented a clean, polished, final copy
_____	5 pts	Successfully revised the description from Week 1
_____	5 pts	Included at least 1 simile
<i>Mechanics</i>		
_____	5 pts	Worked with Mom or Dad to edit this assignment
_____	5 pts	Used the dictionary to research the spelling of a word
_____ ÷ 25 pts possible = _____ %		
Total pts		

to determine the number of points that will equal 100%. After that, simply read through your students's work, thinking about each point on your rubric as you go. Divide the number of points your students earned by the number of points possible to determine a percentage.

Now that your students are older, it may help to hand them a copy of your evaluation rubric when they first begin an assignment. Isn't it easier to hit the target when you can see what you should be aiming for? Afford this same opportunity to your students when they work on writing assignments.

If you think your students would benefit, you might put together an Editing Checklist with them if you'd like to help structure the editing they accomplish on their own.

*Rubrics:
Writing
Evaluation
made simple.*

Draft such a checklist together, and be sure to include both basic content you always want them to check, and common mistakes you know they're still working on. Most importantly, use rubrics to help you more clearly gauge the areas in which your students could use more work and revise your instruction accordingly.

Additional Resources

Over the years, we have noticed that many parents who otherwise feel confident and competent to teach their students at home nonetheless experience some anxiety when it comes to teaching them how to write well. Such writing-related anxiety often stems from a feeling that writing is not one of their strengths, combined with the fact that judging "good" writing is a somewhat-subjective endeavor. While 2+2 will always equal 4, the quality of a particular paragraph can often be open for debate.

Does this describe you? If so, don't worry—you're not alone. What you feel is perfectly normal. But let us reassure you about a couple of things. First, you probably write better than you think you do. But even if writing is not your strong suit, you don't have to be an exceptional writer to help your students learn to write well.

Second, don't be afraid of the evaluation process. Trust your instincts. You know when something just doesn't sound right. Be supportive and encouraging and work with your students to make their assignments better. Never forget that writing is a collaborative process. Even professional writers rarely get things perfect on the first try.

Lastly, don't be afraid to show your students that you still have things to learn, too. We can never really stop learning, can we? Share with them when you pick up something you hadn't known before about anything you're learning together, and acknowledge mistakes when you make them. Let them see you correct mistakes and model for your students how you learn from them—you'll be showing them how to be a humble, mature, patient, and teachable student (or teacher!) when you do.

If you do, however, feel like you could benefit from further resources, check out *Writers INC.* (available on our website, item #RL04). This book contains a complete guide

to the writing process, as well as information on basic writing fundamentals, like constructing sentences and paragraphs, to information on style, grammar, documentation and more. You can find more information about how to write a Research Paper from our Research Paper Packet, also located in **Section Three**. And, for additional grammar help, check out our various grammar programs also available on our website.

You can teach your students to write well. Keep the faith and work together with your students to improve their writing. You'll be glad you did! ■

Eternity in Their Hearts—Map 1

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Eternity in Their Hearts—Map 2



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Eternity in Their Hearts—Map 3

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Appendix 6: “American Literature”—Scope and Sequence: Schedule for Topics and Skills

Week	Literature	Creative Expression	Geography
1	types of books; analytic reading	The Common Application—rough draft	
2	How God calls people to Himself; analytic reading	The Common Application—revise	<i>Mediterranean; Middle East; Peru; India; 10-40 Window; South Pacific; Ring of Fire; Europe</i>
3	analytic reading	The Common Application—Word Choice; Unity and Coherence; Leads; Polish	
4	analytic reading; imaginative literature; short stories	The Common Application Essay #1—rough draft, edit, word choice, unity and coherence	
5	<i>The Chosen</i> : religious differences; life reflection	The Common Application Essay #1—edit: eliminate being verbs; passive voice; word choice; eliminate problem sentences	<i>Williamsburg; Crown Heights; Carpathian Mountains; Poland</i>
6	<i>The Chosen</i> : interpersonal relationships; character foils; Jewish Holocaust	A Special Place—brainstorm; outline	<i>Russia; Europe; New York</i>
7	<i>The Chosen</i> : final lessons; how to read plays; play: <i>Our Town</i> ; finding value in daily life	Travel Essay—outline	<i>Middle East; Europe; New Hampshire;</i>
8	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i> : public sin and the community response	Travel Essay—draft	
9	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i> : private sin; guilt; repentance; consequences of; forgiveness	Travel Essay—revision	
10	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i> : forgiveness; temptations; laws; confession	Essay on Community	
11	short stories	Short Writing	
12	philosophy; nonfiction essays; interpreting literature; literary Naturalism; detachment; determinism	Memoir Essay—brainstorm	<i>Ecuador; Amazon River; Galapagos Islands</i>
13	<i>My Ántonia</i> : descriptive writing; coming of age	Memoir—write; edit	<i>Midwest United States; Austria; Ukraine; Rocky Mountains; Norway</i>
14	<i>My Ántonia</i> : descriptive writing; coming of age; finding happiness in life despite its challenges	Memoir—edit	<i>Western and Central United States; Boston; New York City; Florida; Europe</i>
15	<i>Jacob Have I Loved</i> : coming of age	Interview—plan interview and interview someone	<i>East Coast</i>
16	how to read history and biographies; <i>Brave Companions</i> : biographies	Interview—draft	<i>Europe; Central and Eastern United States; South and Central America; Caribbean; Canary Islands; China; India</i>
17	<i>Brave Companions</i> : biographies; <i>Death of a Salesman</i> : play- an example of the destruction sin can cause	Interview—revise	

(continued on the following page)

Week	Literature	Creative Expression	Geography
18	<i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> : classic American literature; race and identity in an historical context	Science Paper—determine subjects; outline; research	
19	<i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> : classic American literature; race and identity in an historical context	Science Paper—draft; revise	
20	<i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> : classic American literature; race and identity in an historical context	Résumé—objective; assertions; evidence	
21	<i>Up from Slavery</i> : overcoming the setbacks of slavery to become full members of society; work ethic; education; pride in one's work	Résumé—formatting; editing	
22	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> : snapshot of African American culture in Florida in the early 1900s; application	Review (Movie, etc.)—outline; draft	
23	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> : snapshot of African American culture in Florida in the early 1900s; application	Review (Movie, etc.)—edit	Florida
24	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> : snapshot of African American culture in Florida in the early 1900s; application; <i>Evidence Not Seen</i> : missionary biography	Poetry	Florida
25	<i>Evidence Not Seen</i> : missionary biography	Compare and Contrast Paper	
26	<i>A Separate Peace</i> : overcoming internal struggles	Sports Writing	
27	<i>A Separate Peace</i> : overcoming internal struggles	Humor—draft	
28	<i>The Portable Edgar Allan Poe</i> : use this challenging work to grow personally	Humor—edit	Florida; South Carolina
29	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> : more personal challenges — inequality, false religion, injustice	Research Paper—select topic and sources	Oklahoma
30	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> : more personal challenges—inequality, false religion, injustice	Research Paper—acquire information	Central and South Western United States
31	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> : more personal challenges—inequality, false religion, injustice	Research Paper—informational outline	California
32	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> : more personal challenges—inequality, false religion, injustice	Research Paper—working outline	Ohio; California; Oklahoma
33	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> : more personal challenges—inequality, false religion, injustice; <i>Ender's Game</i> : science fiction	Research Paper—first draft	
34	<i>Ender's Game</i> : science fiction	Research Paper—edit	North Carolina; Florida
35	<i>Outliers</i> : success	Research Paper—final draft	
36	<i>Outliers</i> : success	Final Instruction—letter to Sonlight	

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